



## Emotional Divorce and Its Relation to Demographic Variables

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### ABSTRACT

The study deals with emotional divorce and the demographic variables associated with it (gender, environment and work), through a comparative descriptive approach on a sample of 150 emotionally divorced husbands and wives in Port Said Governorate, and South Port Said (Bahr Al-Baqar), and their ages range from 30 to 60 years. The researcher relies on the use of the emotional divorce scale for married couples prepared by Ali Shaker Al-Fatlawy and Wafaa Kazem Jabbar (2012), and the emotional divorce reasons scale by Sajida Ibrahim (2019). After verifying the psychometric characteristics (validity and reliability), the researcher reaches several results, including the following: (1) There are no significant differences between the means scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the gender variable. (2) There are statistically significant differences between the means scores of emotional divorce according to the environment variable (rural-urban) in favor of the urban. (3) There is a statistically significant difference between the means scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the education variable (educated-illiterate) in favor of the educated (4) There is a statistically significant difference between the means scores of working and non-working wives in emotional divorce in favor of working wives.

*Keywords:* Emotional divorce, demography, marital life, marital interactions, social levels.

### Introduction

The stability of marital life is one of the goals that Islam is keen on, for marriage is considered a covenant between the spouses until life ends. The more the relationship between the spouses is based on affection and mercy, the more it is a source of satisfaction of the different needs between them, and the more it makes each of them feel that he/she belongs to the other party.

This is mainly due to the fact that it gives them the strength to face the difficulties they encounter in this life.

Positive marital interactions, on the one hand, may evoke feelings of affection, love, intimacy, and tenderness between the spouses. Negative marital interactions, on the other hand, may evoke feelings of hostility, aversion, and despair between the spouses, leading to emotional

separation, which affects the continuity of the relationship between them. (Amin, 2012, p. 2).

Marital life is not void of disturbances, as the spouses may face many challenges that may be a result of lack of harmony or inability to adapt, so life becomes disturbed and the relationship between them worsens. Among these disturbances is what is known as emotional divorce, which does not happen suddenly, but rather appears gradually in case there is a suitable environment available for its growth (Al-Baz, 2019, p. 1).

Social changes and the accompanying increase in education and work opportunities for women made her raise the slogan of equality between men and women. The emergence of movements demanding women's rights made the continuous relationship suffer from turmoil and imbalance, and this is due to the fact that these changes were not accompanied by sufficient awareness for women of the way in which they can obtain their rights. This, in turn, has caused a change in roles within the family, and with time the marital relationship may lose its color and taste between the spouses, and tension floats to the surface of their relationship, increasing the pressure on them, and then leading them to emotional divorce or official divorce. (Abu Zant, 2016, p. 35).

The woman's going out to work resulted in many psychological and social problems. The working woman is exposed to many stressful situations and difficulties in life that may cause a change in her lifestyle, which in turn leads to psychological and social pressures that affect her relationship with her husband and family. (Adel, 2022, p. 862).

The difference in the social and cultural level, traditions, customs, values, degree of education, social background and race are among the factors that affect the emotional relationship between the spouses and lead to an increase in the gap between them. Conflict may begin between the spouses when one of them wants to change the roles expected of him/her. Accordingly, new roles appear and others cease to exist. For instance, the

woman becomes involved in the financial responsibility and the man participates in raising children. One of the effects of a woman's work is that she becomes involved in multiple roles that she may not be able to reconcile with. That is, even if she contributes to the financial income, she still carries the full responsibility for the house and children, which in turn affects her relationship with her husband and children. (Mohammed, 2005, p. 66).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Marriage and divorce are two variables through which the family is built or dissolved, as they are its two basic pillars, and the family is the original building block that cannot be dispensed with when building a strong, civilized society. Accordingly, the form and content of marital life is very important; that is, the marriage process that has a great deal of emotional harmony fueled by an appropriate level of affection and compatibility is essential. However, it is noted that there is a pattern of marriage patterns that continue without love and affection, and that this form of marriage may create another pattern of divorce patterns, known as emotional or psychological divorce.

Based on the abovementioned, emotional divorce is misery for both spouses and has negative consequences for both of them, as well as health, psychological and social problems that negatively affect the upbringing of children and the health of the family, which is the nucleus of society. Therefore, the study problem was represented in the following questions:

- 1- Is there a difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the gender variable?
- 2- Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the environment variable (rural - urban)?
- 3- Is there a difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according

to the education variable (educated - illiterate)?

4- Is there a difference between the mean scores of working and non-working wives in emotional divorce?

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

1- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the gender variable.

2- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the environment variable (rural - urban).

3- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce for spouses according to the education variable (educated - illiterate).

4- There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of working and non-working wives in emotional divorce.

### **Significance of the Study**

Owing to its negative impact on family life, the emotional divorce variable is one of the variables in which research efforts must be continued. It constitutes a great danger to the spouses and their children psychologically, educationally, socially, and economically. This prompts many researchers to study it.

Emotional divorce is an internal variable, and its occurrence does not inevitably lead to the official separation of the spouses. Nevertheless, it casts serious shadows and repercussions on the structure of healthy family and community, particularly since children will be the first recipients of the harsh negative effects of that divorce. Consequently, divorce will establish for them a future with unfavorable consequences.

On this basis, the theoretical and practical importance of the current study can be stated, which is summarized as follows:

### **Theoretical Significance of the Study**

1- The significance of the current study lies in the fact that it was not conducted—within the limits of what the researcher found—from studies or research dealing with emotional divorce between spouses and linking it to demographic variables.

2- Indicating the level or scores of emotional divorce among a sample of spouses according to the variable of education and environment.

3- Indicating the scores and level of emotional divorce among a sample of emotionally divorced working and non-working wives.

4- The significance of the study is clear from a theoretical point of view, as it can add to scientific knowledge about the extent to which the phenomenon of emotional divorce is affected by demographic variables (environment - education - work).

### **Practical Significance of the Study**

1- The study may contribute to conducting other studies in the field of emotional divorce between spouses within new variables, as there are no studies that dealt with the subject, according to the researcher's knowledge. This is in addition to the prevalence of the phenomenon of emotional divorce in Arab societies and the Egyptian society in which it began to become a widespread phenomenon between spouses, resulting in negative effects affecting children, and this is what future studies and research may show.

2- There is a possibility of benefiting from the results of this study in determining appropriate counseling and therapeutic methods for emotionally divorced spouses and their children.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1- Identifying the scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the gender variable.

2- Identifying the scores of emotional divorce

between spouses according to the environment variable (rural - urban).

3- Identifying the scores of emotional divorce according to the education variable (educated - illiterate).

4- Identifying the scores of working and non-working wives in emotional divorce.

### **Terms of the Study**

#### **1- Emotional Divorce**

Emotional divorce is a state that afflicts the marital relationship, in which the husband and wife feel the estrangement of feelings between them, and this is reflected in all interactions within the family. In this regard, it is the opposite of marital compatibility, which means that both the husband and wife find in the marital relationship something similar to their physical, mental, and social needs, which results in a state of marital satisfaction. (Meshakhas, 2020, p. 140).

#### **Operational definition:**

**Emotional divorce:** It is an imbalance and poor justice in rights and duties between spouses, which negatively affects communication, and thus apathy between spouses.

**Emotional divorce is defined operationally** by the score obtained by the respondent on the sections of the emotional separation scale prepared for the purposes of the current study.

#### **2- Demography**

The concept of demography is to count the population, that is, to know the number of people composing the population. (Louis Henry, 1984, p. 5).

As for "Achille Goyard," he defines the term demography as "the natural and social history of the human race in a numerical study of the population, their general movements, their

natural and civil conditions, and their mental and moral characteristics." (Al-Akhras, 1980, p. 15).

### **Methodology of the Study**

#### **Design**

The methodology of the current study is based on the comparative descriptive approach to reveal the variables of the study and the differences between them.

#### **Sample**

**A- Study group:** The study group is determined from emotionally divorced spouses in Port Said Governorate, and South Port Said (Bahr El-Baqar).

**B- Study sample:** The sample consists of 150 husbands and wives of emotionally divorced spouses from Port Said governorate and Bahr El-Baqar, south of Port Said. The sample will be selected in a simple random way.

#### **Instrument**

1- A scale of emotional divorce among married couples, prepared by Ali Shaker Al-Fatlawy, Wafaa Kazem Jabbar (2012).

2- A scale of the causes of emotional divorce by Sajida Ibrahim (2019).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Emotional Divorce**

Marriage is considered a sacred bond blessed by Allah Almighty, and society approves of it because of the embodiment and transcendence of the passion of love, and putting it in its finest form. Marital life is a participation between the spouses in all aspects of life. In addition, Affection, mercy, tranquility and sentimental feelings are considered among the most important pillars that strengthen the marital relationship. A happy marital life is a psychological security for a person and satisfaction for his psychological,

physiological and social needs. (Zaatar, 2012: p. 5).

Those interested in marital life have noticed that the spouses, with time, reach a stage ranging between commitment to the marital bond and withdrawal from it, particularly if the emotional relationship between them weakens or becomes stale. When the marital bond turns from a moral and spiritual bond to a formal bond based on benefit or fear from the point of view of society, customs and traditions, marital life may become a quiet life. However, if we look closely, we find that it is an empty, lukewarm life that is closer to death, and then emotional distancing occurs, or what is known as emotional divorce. (Al-Sattouf, 2015: p. 2)

### 1- Concept of Emotional Divorce

The legitimate term for emotional divorce is *hajr* (desertion), and *hajr* in language is called on leaving and distancing, and it is the opposite of connection; *Tahajr* (parting) is the intersection and refraining from communication. Desertion in the terminology of the mandate of discipline means the parting from, leaving him and refraining from continuing with the disciplined. In the marital relationship, it is the man leaving his wife, not caring for her, and losing emotional feelings between him and his wife in degrees and conditions that are to be explained. This is what is known as emotional divorce. (Al-Sadhan, 2013, p. 21).

It is that state of extinction of the relationship of passion/sex, or its diminution to an advanced degree, with the addition of the accumulation of contradictions in expectations. The marital bond may appear as if it has been drained in terms of passion and partnership in achieving goals alike. With this drain the contrast increases, the area of intersection between the two circles of the marital bond shrinks, and these two circles diverge, resulting in two different worlds, where each of the spouses begins to move in his own orbit on various levels and interests (Al-Sattouf, 2015, p. 23).

## Stages of Emotional Divorce

### 1- Disrupting Trust

At this stage, one of the parties loses trust in the other party. The loss of trust, or its destabilization between the spouses or the other party, means doubt in word and deed. This is considered one of the main reasons for the occurrence of emotional apathy between the spouses. (see Hady, 2010, p. 62).

### 2- Love Apathy

Love apathy is when the two parties or one of them feels that one's feelings are no longer what they were before, and one is no longer attracted to the other, but rather one has become distant from the other party, and does not pay attention to or look at this party with the looks of love and admiration that were before. One, on the other hand, tends to focus on the other's faults and does not see the positive side in the other party. In addition to becoming reluctant to one's love and affection for the other party (see Al-Rashidy & Al-Khulaify, 2008, p. 36).

### 3- Selfishness

It is when both parties focus on themselves and their interests only without regard to the feelings, needs and circumstances of the other party. The husband or wife feels unwilling to sacrifice, lacks contentment with life, and regrets about getting married to the other party. They get preoccupied with themselves and are not committed to performing their duties towards the other party; that is, their sense of responsibility towards the other party decreases. This helps to destroy the family structure, and selfishness is considered an obstacle in the way of reform between the spouses (Morsy, 1991, p. 8).

### 4- Marital Silence

Marital silence is one of the deadlocks in the marital relationship, and it includes unwillingness to communicate and create a conversation with the other party. If the spouses are forced to speak to each other, it is in a sharp tone devoid of friendliness, respect and appreciation. Each of them tries to hurt the other by criticizing his/her style and speech, reprimanding or questioning his/her love and sincerity (see Al-Iraqy, 2006, p. 435).

## 5- Emotional Divorce

At this stage, the psychological barriers between the spouses abound, and the treatment between them is characterized by coldness and intensity, which is close to the official interaction, and not the friendly interaction that is supposed to be between the spouses. Both spouses are alone with themselves, intending to send moral messages to each other that include hatred and lack of interest in and contempt for the other party. This stage also includes sexual abstinence, which leads to adding new problems to that collapsing relationship, increasing the collapse. Moreover, both spouses lie down alone in their own bed, and the matter reaches estrangement, hatred and stubbornness, and the relationship becomes in a state of emotional rupture, where each party feels that he is a stranger to the other (see Al-Rashidy & Al-Khulaify, 2008, p. 176).

### Reasons for Emotional Divorce:

**The general reasons are represented in the following:**

#### 1- Stinginess in Feelings

Love is affected by conformity. That is, conformity in marital life is the striving of both spouses to realize, believe, and act in a direction in which they agree with the other spouse. In addition, marital interaction is badly affected when one of the spouses is not compliant, so the other feels a lack of interest, negativity, lack of interaction, and rushes to search for positive interaction outside the house. Overconformity has a great impact on the interaction between the

spouses when one of the spouses submits himself to the other party and follows him wherever he goes, so he is with him and is unable to contradict him in anything. This makes the followed marriage boring because of this party's negativity and underestimation, so the other party rushes to search for positive interaction outside the house. (Morsy, 1995, p. 128).

#### 2- Lack of Empathy

The capacity of empathy for spouses is the ability of each of them to put himself in the place of the other spouse, to feel his feelings, to share with him his joys and sorrows, and to appreciate his concerns and ideas. The effect is mutual between love and emotional participation, which develops love between them, and love develops sympathy between them. Neglecting emotional sharing and emotional communication, i.e. the exchange of emotions by touch, or what marital counseling specialists call an exchange of physical affection, such as foreplay and foreplay between the spouses leads the spouses to emotional divorce (previous reference).

#### 3-Poor Sexual Compatibility

Sexual incompatibility between spouses means that either spouses or one of them does not enjoy sexual satisfaction with the other and feels frustrated and stressed, which spoils their marital relationship and negatively affects their marital interaction in general. Many studies have indicated that sexual incompatibility is behind many family problems that have no relation to sexual satisfaction, including disagreements about aspects, habits, temperament, raising children, etc. This is mainly because sexual frustration makes the reactions in marital interaction unfriendly, and may lead to discord and conflict between the spouses. (Morsy, 1995, p. 118).

#### 4-The Economic, Environmental and Intellectual Level

The economic status of the spouses is an important factor in marital relations, as disputes

often arise between the spouses over financial matters that the spouses cannot afford. In other words, economic pressures have a negative impact on the spouses, and often lead to feelings of pessimism and depression, making the spouses less stable emotionally, which leads to many disputes between them. Shen Lu (2005) points out the importance of economic factors in the stability of marriage, which coincide with the absence of an emotional relationship between the spouses. Furthermore, the intellectual and social aspect plays an important role in the marital relationship, which contributes to encouraging the spouses to speak, discuss, and the share concepts and opinions adopted by each of them, and hence this enhances the emotional aspects between them. Nevertheless, the extreme difference in intellectual factors between spouses may lead to conflicts and disagreements (Mansour, 2009, p. 45).

Researchers also noticed that marriage in urban areas differs from rural ones in that it is more concerned with the economic level, appearances and social status in a greater way, and gives less attention to emotion. The husband continues to work so as to maintain the same level; in most cases, the wife is also working and work is an essential part for her. This, in turn, leads to a loss of family warmth and a weakening of the relationship between them (Shaimaa Muhammad, 2022: p. 125).

### **5- Woman's Work**

A woman's work may be a factor in negative interaction and family disintegration, as it depends on the mature personality of the wife and her understanding of her other marital responsibilities. It also depends on the maturity of the husband's personality, encouragement for his wife, his satisfaction with her work, and the suitability of her work for her feminine nature and family circumstances (Anwar Majeed, 2012: 443).

Here are some of the psychological reasons that lead to emotional divorce:

### **1- The Infantile and Immature Responses of the Spouses**

When marital life that is not based on compatibility, the responses of spouses to crises are infantile and immature. That is to say, either both spouses or one of them is affected by the stressful event, and perceives it and interprets it as children, such as excessive emotionality, irresponsible reactions, and lack of interest which results in exaggeration of anger, fear, or withdrawal. In this case, the spouses are preoccupied with the crisis more than they think about resolving it, and they resort to psychological tricks to justify the failure. They also resort to anger and become tense and distressed (Morsy, 1995, p. 205).

### **2- The Effect of Mental Illness**

Mental illnesses lead to severe disturbances in perception and thinking, or in the basic mental ability to distinguish between reality and imagination, and they constitute a general health problem and are characterized by the presence of internal conflicts and rifts in personal relationships. They are also characterized by the presence of many other symptoms, the most important of which are physical diseases of psychological origin (such as high blood pressure and diabetes), anxiety, feelings of depression, oversensitivity, unreasonable doubts, obsessive-compulsive disorder, pathological fears, sleep disturbances, or eating disorders. All of this does not help good sound communication and interaction between spouses (Mossa, 2008: p. 154).

The high level of depression leads to cognitive distortion of many facts in the marital relationship, which results in an imbalance in the family climate and poor marital compatibility (Saleh, 2004: p. 28).

### **3- Jealousy**

It is one of the diseases that afflict marital life, whether from the wife or from the husband. Jealousy in itself is a characteristic and a feeling

that is required between the spouses, as it is evidence of love. However, it has natural limits; if it goes beyond them it, it becomes destructive for both parties. If jealousy increases, it will immediately turn into suspicion and distrust, and if doubt increases, obsessive thoughts increase that force a person to do certain actions while he is not satisfied with them. Nevertheless, he is forced to do so, and he may denounce and regret them (Al-Iraqy, 2006: p. 75).

#### **4- Domination and Love of Control**

There is a type of wives who likes to dominate and control her husband, and to always be in the forefront in the family and her husband comes in the second place. One notices her interrupting her husband while speaking and opposes his views or diminishes their importance. She always shows her husband's faults and criticizes him for the slightest mistake he makes. Above all, she is characterized by talkativeness and love of argument and debate in many matters that are often trivial (Abdullah, 2004: p. 431).

#### **5-Anger**

Frequent anger attacks (tantrums) kill the one who has them and turn one's life into hell. Over time, they lead to apathy with the other party and turn love into hatred, and life turns into a terrifying nightmare. The pressures of life are one of the causes of anger attacks and feelings of tension for humans. Women are more prone to anger attacks because of the nervous, mental and physical exertion they are exposed to. Anger may arise from failure, boredom or the inability to adapt to reality or failure to change bad aspects of the other party. Sometimes the wife gets angry in order to draw her husband's attention because of his neglect and preoccupation, or vice versa, or the husband gets angry to assure himself that he is still in control in front of a wife with a strong, authoritarian personality (Mansour, 2009, p. 100).

#### **6- Immature Husband**

The behavior of this type of husbands is similar

to the behavior of children because of his upbringing, which did not accustom him to relying on himself and taking responsibility. In the light of this fact, he is always attached to his family and his mother in meeting his needs. According to his opinion, it is assumed that his wife's nature is like that of his mother, so he depends on her completely; however, the nature of the wife differs from that of the mother. Therefore, the wife often revolts in the face of the spoiled immature husband, and turmoil occurs between them. Besides, if he encounters problems, he quickly collapses, is unable to act, and rushes to his mother asking her for help. From an emotional point of view, he is inclined to possession and jealousy, and is always comparing between his wife, mother, and sister. He is also always proud that he is the son of such and such a family, and he suffers from a strong inferiority complex that pushes him to overcompensate (Abdullah, 2004: p. 433).

#### **Impacts of Emotional Divorce:**

If the marital relationship is based on love and friendship, then the warmth of feelings flutters over it, reviving hearts, illuminating eyes, and avoiding homes from the specter of destruction and dissolution. That is, each party turns a blind eye to the mistakes of the other party, closes its eyes to seeing its mistakes, and deafens the ear to track its missteps. This is what is understood from the words of the Prophet- may Allah bless him and grant him peace: (Your love for something blinds and deafens). However, if the feelings dried up, life turns upside down. Small things are magnified; virtues are exaggerated; homes become ruined caves for its people; and love is replaced by hate, affection is by contempt, and mercy by torment. (Youssef, 2002, p. 332).

#### **1- Impact on the Spouses (Psychologically, Emotionally and Healthily):**

The failure of the spouses in the emotional relationship inevitably leads to a weakening of their psychological stability, as studies indicate that individuals who faced difficulties in the field

of marital emotional relations were less stable than others (Davidoff, 1983, p. 642).

Lues (2007) indicates that emotional divorce is one of the most difficult behaviors experienced by spouses. This is because it makes marriage change from feeling satisfied and happy to feeling misery. (Al-Abdaly, 2019, p. 102).

Although emotional divorce leaves its negative effects on both parties, it is more and more difficult for the wife. On the one hand, she is the most in need of passion and attention. On the other hand, the husband can make up for what he may miss in this married life in another married life, but the wife cannot do that. Therefore, emotional divorce can be considered one of the most important reasons that push the wife to betrayal-Allah forbid-even if it was not justified. (Meshakhas, 2020, p. 149).

## **2- Impact on children:**

Emotional divorce has a negative impact on the children, as they are who loses the most, as the flower of their childhood is torn apart by the thorns of this incurable disease. That is, it implants its fangs and claws into the body of their family, turning it into a family captivating of childhood, confiscating of their beautiful dreams, and killing their happiness. The parents only pay attention to the daily needs of the family and are indifferent to the feelings of the children, which is reflected in the teenage stage in the form of a deviation in search of the tenderness that they lack within the family. In addition, there is the state of anxiety that accompanies them for the bad and tense relations between their parents, which may sometimes lead to insults and beatings. Therefore, most of the children in the event of emotional divorce suffer from depression and the inability to face life, in addition to the impression of a negative, distorted image of marriage in their minds. (Meshakhas, 2020, pp. 149-150).

The relationship between children and parents controls the ability of children to regulate their feelings such as anxiety and anger. Children who

have difficulty regulating feelings will have problems in their relationship with others (Amato & Booth, 2001, p. 629).

Horney indicates that the children's feeling of insecurity in their relationships with their parents, resulting from the emotional apathy between their parents, causes them anxiety and prompts them to take various consensual methods to mitigate it over time. Moreover, they may take unrealistic idealized images of themselves and drown in self-pity so as to gain people's sympathy. (Hall and Lindzey, 1969, p. 178).

## **Explanatory Theories of Emotional Divorce between Spouses:**

### **First: Psychoanalytic Theory**

Freud (1912) was the first to analyze the emotionally incompatible marital relationship. For an unknown reason, he considers the emotional incompatibility between the spouses as neurosis, i.e. a mental illness. He believes that in order to treat the gloomy marital relations, it is necessary to recognize the loss of the emotionally divorced husband, due to his feeling of frustration (Gottman, 1993; p. 55).

Many of the subconscious fears and conflicts that exist in the marital relationship are derived from early childhood relationships. This is owing to the fact that the past is very important and has a strong influence on present relationships, human feelings and thoughts. They do not occur randomly, but they have their roots and origins in the history and experiences of the individual, for the past is part of the present (Hady, 2012: p. 44).

According to the theory of psychoanalysis, the misery that the spouses experience, which leads to emotional divorce, is due to the difference between emotional demands and subconscious demands. The theory emphasizes the role of unconscious factors in driving the individual to choose his life partner. A young man may love a girl because she resembles his mother, and if the wife is unable to play the full role of the mother who satisfies the husband's desires, he will feel resentment and boredom, and emotional divorce

will be the end of this marriage (Kafafy, 2012).

### **Second: The Behavioral School Theory**

Behaviorists consider marital interaction an important requirement for the occurrence of marital compatibility through reward and punishment. This is because the reward of the individual for a behavior often supports and strengthens it to appear again. For instance, when the spouses interact and reinforce one another, that stimulates it, and hence this increases the rapprochement and marital compatibility between them. In other words, reinforcement strengthens, supports, and proves behavior by rewarding. On the other hand, if one punishes the other or deprives him of the reward, it makes him feel uncomfortable and the compatibility between them worsens. Therefore, marital compatibility occurs if the spouses interact positively and satisfy each other (Hady, 2012: p. 45).

### **Third: The Theory of Social Exchange**

This theory believes that the individual in his reciprocal relationships performs a specific activity as an optional behavior in order to obtain a reward. Among the reasons that push the individual to marry is that he naturally desires to feel love, respect, affection and comfort, and this is what marriage achieves through the relationship between the spouses. In addition, marriage achieves the material and psychological stability of the individual, as each party feels responsible for protecting and assisting the other party. The desire of the individual to marry is linked to the desire to exchange interests for the spouses according to the theory of social exchange (Nodelson & Notman, 1981: p. 1353).

### **Fifth: The Theory of Marital Dissolution (Gottman, 1994)**

According to this theory, there are four types of behavior through which the occurrence of emotional divorce between spouses can be predicted.

A - Criticisms that tend to humiliate the opposite person, which leads to a weakening of the marital relationship between the spouses, and then avoiding the emotional relationship between them.

B - The emotional distance increases and isolation follows between the spouses, leading to unexpected negativity between them, then the separation of their thinking about their vision for the future.

C - The spouses reach a level of despair in their emotional relationships, and their inability to change this situation.

D - When the spouses reach the point of despair, the sensory perception between them turns from contentment, love, respect and psychological stability to feelings of pain, sadness, anxiety and anger, and then the spouses tend to emotional divorce despite their marital bond (Gottman, 2000: p. 62).

### **1- Johnson's Theory of Emotional Divorce**

This theory is concerned with troubled marital relations, and the following repercussions:

Theory Hypotheses:

A - The theory assumes that when spouses slide down the path of emotional divorce, each spouse is closer to independence from the other. B - There will be a painful chaos between the spouses and sadness will prevail. This reality will be difficult for the emotionally abandoned husband, who wants the marriage to remain intact and coherent. As a result, he loses patience and suffers from psychological pressures.

C- When an emotional divorce occurs, the spouses' relationship gets out of control because the spouses exhibit strange behaviors that lack emotions.

D- The abandoned husband behaves in strange and irresponsible ways, or his style is illogical. However, this does not mean that the spouses have become aggressive, but they are in the process of hating each other. According to this theory, emotional divorce is one of the most stressful psychological events of life, and these feelings may take a long time, up to more than two years. Concerning the leaving husband who wants to divorce himself emotionally from the

wife, he has a style that is characterized by control over the situation. As for the abandoned husband, he wants to do something that will attract his wife to him emotionally, because of the fear and emotional pain that he feels from his wife's emotional separation from him. In this regard, the emotionally divorced husband is the husband from whom the wife separated, and he is the victim of this divorce, which hurts his feelings and inflicts emotional pain on him (Johnson, 1987: 125).

## **2-Murray's Theory of Needs**

Murray believes that the psychological needs are more ambiguous and complex than the primary needs of the person. Besides, the emotional needs of the spouses are the essence of mutual satisfaction between the spouses; however, simultaneously they may be the basis of marital differences (Amal Baswell, 2008: 24).

## **3- Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development**

Erikson anticipated modern theories of successful marriage when he stated that intimacy makes a rich and meaningful marriage possible. This is owing to the fact that intimacy generates strength in the stage of love, in contrast to isolation that leads to failure to secure a close cooperative relationship with the husband.

Some researchers, along with Erikson, assume that all developmental crises are present in marriage from its beginning, and at every stage a crisis appears and its problems dominate the spouses. It bears the possibility of positive interaction, so growth strengthens if the crisis is resolved appropriately; or the possibility of negative interaction, then this relationship weakens (Al-Dahry, 2008: p. 65).

## **Methods to Overcome Emotional Divorce:**

1- The spouses are to strengthen their relationship with Allah and observe the religious obligations.

2- It is necessary for both spouses to know each other's psychological and physical nature, and to realize the differences between them, for this helps in understanding and explaining the problems related to emotional divorce. The psychological counselor also helps the spouses to reach this awareness of the nature of the difference between them.

3- Frankness and clarity between the spouses, and an attempt to understand the other's rights, duties, feelings, needs, thoughts, problems, and fears help to solve the problem of emotional divorce.

4- Both spouses should seek to solve problems before they accumulate, whether they succeed on their own or through well-known counseling channels. It is better not to postpone or suppress feelings so that the problem does not worsen.

5- Knowing the emotional requirements and needs that each spouse needs from the other. It is wrong for a man to offer love and affection to a woman in the way he prefers, and vice versa.

6- Each of the spouses should praise the other and express gratitude and appreciation for his actions, no matter how simple they are.

7- There should be an attempt to enjoy the intimate relationship between the spouses, change and break the usual routine in the relationship, understand the needs of the other, and avoid selfishness.

8- Exchanging words of love, admiration, praise and gifts between the spouses.

9- The spouses should avoid physical and verbal abuse, as this leads to emotional deficiency.

10- The spouses should avoid the method of comparison because it is a method of destruction.

11- Reducing the excessive use of social media, setting times for the spouses to talk, and spending enough time together.

12- Spouses' interest in personal hygiene and

outward appearance (Al-Nakithan et al., 2012).

The following are among the most important preventive means and possible solutions to reduce the high rates of emotional divorce in our society:

- Including the issue of emotional divorce within the educational and curricula in a more concerned way that illustrates the seriousness of emotional divorce in particular and its negative impact on the individual, family and society.

-Developing an integrated national policy concerned with addressing the causes and motives leading to divorce of all kinds in society.

-Activating the role of social and psychological service represented by the social worker and the psychologist through consulting offices to reduce divorce in general and emotional divorce, and studying its cases by social and psychological specialists. It is better to make these counseling offices available to those wishing to marry on a compulsory basis, as no marriage contract is concluded before making sure that the test is decided for the spouses to ensure a more stable marital life.

.-Focusing on the visual, audio and print media and providing marriage counseling programs in order to spread awareness in society.

-Raising the level of knowledge of the spouses because of its fundamental impact on reducing the phenomenon of emotional divorce.

-Establishing counseling centers specialized in marital relations, providing counseling services before and after marriage to solve the problem of emotional divorce. (Al-Hijlah, 2020, pp. 151-152)

-Developing counseling and awareness programs to be carried out by all relevant institutions, and adopting institutions that work to provide advice and guidance, whether for those about to get married or married couples who face family problems (Al-Najdawi, 2016, p. 65).

-Developing a material for marital counseling in all colleges and institutes to educate young people about to get married and qualify them for this responsibility.

-Building treatment programs that help spouses to deal with the problems they face, and work on distributing these programs to the Sharia Court and delivering them to those planning to get married. (Mansour, 2009, p. 191).

-Dedicating offices in the courts to follow up on such cases, similar to the offices of family guidance, but specialized in cases of emotional divorce, working to re-strengthening marital life.

-Establishing centers or institutions concerned with following up on the actual pre-divorce stage. (Gharabawi, 2020, p. 492).

-Having a competent authority to approve the spouses to complete the marriage in the event that they are psychologically and mentally rehabilitated for this responsibility, and to work to increase awareness significantly for those who did not obtain approval for applying again.

-Suggesting programs to raise awareness about how to choose a life partner, the importance of the environment surrounding each of them and equality in all respects for a more stable life. (Abdo et al., 2022, p. 130).

### **Literature Review**

There are studies that deals with the issue of emotional divorce, including the following:

Al-Shawashra and Heba Abdel Rahman (2018) aim at revealing the level of emotional separation and its relationship to irrational thoughts among married couples. The study sample consisted of 242 married individuals. The results of the study shows that the level of emotional divorce and the level of irrational thoughts came within the "lower level". The results also indicates that there were no statistically significant differences according to the variables of sex and duration of marriage, while there were statistically significant

differences according to the educational level variable.

Afraa and Al-Obeidy (2015) seek to identify emotional divorce in the light of some variables among married students at the University of Baghdad, as well as to identify the differences in emotional divorce among students according to the variables of gender (male - female), the duration of marriage, economic status, and age difference. The study sample consisted of 150 married male and female students. The results of the study shows that there are differences in emotional divorce according to the variable of the duration of marriage, and that married students with poor economic status are more emotionally divorced than those married with good economic status. However, the results did not show any differences in emotional divorce between the sexes.

Al-Fatlawy and Jabbar (2012) tackle emotional divorce and its relationship to the lifestyles of married employees in state departments. The study sample consisted of 300 (married) male and female employees and employees. The results of the study revealed a low level of emotional divorce among them, as well as statistically significant differences in emotional divorce according to the gender variable (male and female) in favor of females.

Atty and Zainab (2016) aim to measure emotional divorce among married employees in the Faculty of Arts, Al-Qadisiyah University, and to know the statistically significant differences in the causes of emotional divorce according to the variable of

sex (male and female). The study was applied to a sample of 100 husbands and wives, and the results indicates that there is no emotional divorce among the sample, and there are no statistically significant differences between the average males and females.

Al-Ghamdi, Halima, Al-Sumairi and Dalia (2020) aim to identify the level of emotional divorce among a sample of married women in the city of Jeddah, within a sample of 623 married women. The results shows that there are no differences in the total score of emotional divorce and the educational and economic level variable. However, there are differences in emotional divorce due to the wife's job in favor of the employed wives.

Wafaa Sabr and Bushra Enad (2015) aim at identifying emotional divorce among different social segments in Iraqi society, within a sample of 100 female employees and housewives. The results indicated a high rate of emotional divorce among female employees compared to housewives.

## Results

### \* Results of the first hypothesis:

The first hypothesis states that **“there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the gender variable”**. The researcher uses the "t" test for the independent groups. Table 1 indicates the results of this hypothesis:

**Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, "T" Value and Its Level of Significance for the Emotionally Divorced according to the Gender Variable**

Sample Variable	Gender						“t” Value	Significance Level
	Males			Females				
	No.	Mean	standard deviation	No.	Mean	standard deviation		
Emotional Divorce	75	135.7	17	75	134.1	16.6	0.58	insignificant

It is evident from the previous table that the value of "t" is not statistically significant, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the gender variable.

This result is consistent with the study of Hady (2010), which reveals the presence of emotional divorce in both sexes, male and female, to the same degree. However, it differs with the study of Al-Fatlawy (2012), which reveals the existence of differences in emotional divorce according to gender and in favor of females. This may be due to the fact that the feeling of emotional divorce and the behavior associated with it is not limited to gender, as both the male and the female affect and are affected by the other, and what one of them feels and translates into behavior is reflected negatively or positively on the other party. Moreover, it is consistent with the study of Shaimaa Mohamed (2022), which concludes that there is no correlation between the dimensions of emotional divorce (economic communication)

and demographic variables (gender, housing, duration of marriage, and family size); the study of Zainab Ati and Muhammad Jassim (2016) which aimed to measure emotional divorce among married employees, and the study concludes that there are no statistically significant differences between the average males and females; the study of Al-Obaidi (2015), which indicates that there is no emotional divorce between the sexes; and the study of Baswell (2008), which indicates that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female employees on the emotional divorce scale.

**\* Results of the second hypothesis:**

The second hypothesis states that **“there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the environment variable (rural - urban)”**. The researcher uses the "t" test for the independent groups. Table 2 indicates the results of this hypothesis:

**Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, "T" Value and Its Level of Significance for the Emotionally Divorced according to the Environment Variable (Rural - Urban)**

Sample Variable	Gender						“t” Value	Significance Level
	Rural			Urban				
	No.	Mean	standard deviation	No.	Mean	standard deviation		
<b>Emotional Divorce</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>114.2</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>142.4</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>0.01</b>

It is evident from the previous table that the value of "t" is statistically significant at the level of 0.01, which indicates a statistically significant difference between the average degrees of emotional divorce between spouses according to the environment variable (rural - urban) in favor of urban areas. The result of this hypothesis, which showed that the percentage of emotional divorce is greater for those who are emotionally divorced in urban areas from the rural ones, can be interpreted in the light that this is due to the inherited culture in the countryside that sanctifies

the idea of the importance of having a husband and an existing marital life, even if it is not a happy one.

This result is consistent with the study of Shaima Mohamed et al. (2022), which reveals that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the study sample (rural / urban) on the emotional divorce scale, in favor of the urban sample. The study also indicates that marriage in urban areas differs from rural ones, as it is more concerned with the economic level and

what the husband will offer to his wife during the proposal of marriage. They also pay attention to the social level of the two families, look for appearances and social status in a greater way, and give less attention to affection. The husband continues to work, and in most cases the mother is a worker, and work is an essential part for her, which makes them absent from home for a longer time. As a result, the relationship between the spouses weakens, and then the emotional gap between them increases, and the matter reaches emotional or formal divorce.

**\* Results of the third hypothesis:**

The third hypothesis states that **“there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the education variable (educated - illiterate)”**. The researcher uses the "t" test for the independent groups. Table 3 indicates the results of this hypothesis:

**Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, "T" Value and Its Level of Significance for the Emotionally Divorced according to the Education Variable (Educated - Illiterate)**

Sample Variable	Gender						“t” Value	Significance Level
	Educated			illiterate				
	No.	Mean	standard deviation	No.	Mean	standard deviation		
<b>Emotional Divorce</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>114.2</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>142.4</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>0.01</b>

It is evident from the previous table that the value of "t" is statistically significant at the level of 0.01, which indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of emotional divorce between spouses according to the education variable (educated - illiterate) in favor of the educated.

The result of this hypothesis, which showed that the educated are higher in the percentage of emotional divorce than the illiterate, can be interpreted as a result that marriage for the educated is not a marriage that aims at economic security but rather at emotional and social security. In addition, educated spouses are more aware of their marital and emotional rights, and therefore have the ability to realize the existence of a defect in the marital relationship, which leads to emotional divorce, and the matter may reach actual divorce.

It is consistent with the study of Al-Shawashra and Abdel-Rahman, (2018), as statistically

significant differences were found according to the educational level variable in favor of holders of a master’s degree or higher, followed by a bachelor’s degree.

This indicates that the breadth and flexibility of thinking, the presence of love between the spouses, and the wife's desire for the success of her marriage may reduce the importance of the educational qualification in the event that previous components are not available. This differs with the study Rania Mosaad (2019), as the results of the study shows that there are no statistically significant differences in the scores of emotional divorce among the sample that are attributed to the variable of academic qualification.

**\* Results of the fourth hypothesis**

The fourth hypothesis states that **“there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of working and non-working**

wives in emotional divorce". The researcher uses the "t" test for the independent groups. Table

4 indicates the results of this hypothesis:

**Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations, "T" Value and Its Level of Significance for the Emotionally Divorced according to Woman's Work Variable (Working – Non-working)**

Sample Variable	Gender						"t" Value	Significance Level
	Working			Non-working				
	No.	Mean	standard deviation	No.	Mean	standard deviation		
Emotional Divorce	38	144.8	12.8	32	122	12.3	7.5	0.01

It is evident from the previous table that the value of "t" is statistically significant at the level of 0.01, which indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of working and non-working wives in emotional divorce in favor of working wives.

The result of this hypothesis, which showed that the percentage of emotional divorce among working wives is higher than that of non-working ones, can be interpreted in the light that this is due to the neglect of some wives of their husbands, because the working wife suffers from the multiplicity of roles assigned to her, whether at home or work, and her role as a wife. This, in turn, leads to severe psychological pressure that leads to emotional divorce. It may also be due to the factor of dependence; that is, the husband's dependence on his wife financially, as a result of the husband's low income compared to his wife, which makes the husband's image shake in the eyes of his wife, and then she loses passion towards him, and the marital relationship is affected up to emotional divorce. This result agrees with the study Wafaa Saber and Bushra Enad, (2015), which indicates a high rate of emotional divorce among female employees, and this affects the high rate of emotional divorce among female employees. This is due to their preoccupation most of the time with work, which leads to disharmony and negative distancing between them and their husbands. As for non-working wives, they have a lower rate of emotional divorce because they have enough time to consult with their husbands and meet the

husband's needs, thus creating a spirit of cooperation and a sense of the other party.

Moreover, the wife's work may be a factor in the negative interaction and tension in the marital and emotional relationship. It depends on the mature personality of the wife, her understanding of her other marital responsibilities, the maturity of the husband's personality, his encouragement to his wife, his satisfaction with her work, his agreement with her on financial matters, and the suitability of her work for her feminine nature and family circumstances (Meshakhas, 2020).

### Recommendations:

- 1- Conducting more in-depth studies and research on the phenomenon of emotional divorce.
- 2- Establishing counseling centers specialized in marital relations, where they provide counseling services before and after marriage in order to reduce the rate of emotional divorce.
- 3- Guiding soon-to-be married couples with the techniques of marital life and strategies to face potential problems that may lead to emotional divorce.

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