



The Influence of Perceived Faculty Support on Psychological Health among Jordanian University Students

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aimed to assess the levels of stress, depression, and anxiety among Jordanian university students and whether faculty support plays a role in ameliorating student's depression and anxiety.

Methods: A cross-sectional study used a convenience sample of 18-25-year-old undergraduate students from five public and three private Jordanian universities. An online survey via EasyQuest was employed with prior university approvals. The survey link, including the consent form, was distributed through university websites, student union pages, and online student groups. The survey collected data on perceived stress, depression, anxiety, and student-faculty interaction from 1,067 university students (64.9% female).

Results: The findings showed that Jordanian university students experience a substantial amount of stress, depression, and anxiety. While students' stress increased their depression and anxiety, perceived faculty support had a significant ameliorating effect. Students scored their faculty interaction to be highest on the subscales of validity, respectful interactions, and approachability. On the other hand, having off-campus interaction with faculty and feeling a sense of connectedness had the lowest scores. Male university students expressed more depression and experienced less respectful interactions with university faculty than female students.

Conclusion: The findings highlight the need to implement effective strategies to improve faculty interaction with university students and extend their role to support the psychological well-being of those students.

Keywords: University students, psychological health, student-teacher interaction, stress, depression, anxiety, faculty support.

أثر دعم أعضاء هيئة التدريس في الصحة النفسية لدى طلبة الجامعات الأردنية

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ملخص

الأهداف: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم مستويات التوتر والقلق لدى طلبة الجامعات الأردنية وما إذا كان دعم أعضاء هيئة التدريس يلعب دورًا في الحد من هذه الأعراض.

المنهجية: جرى استخدام التصميم المقطعي الوصفي والتنبؤي لاختيار عينة ملائمة لطلاب المرحلة الجامعية الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 18 و 25 عامًا من جامعات أردنية (5 حكومية و 3 خاصة). استُخدم برنامج استطلاع عبر الإنترنت (EasyQuest) لإنشاء استبانة الدراسة وتوزيعها. أُخذت موافقة الجامعات المشاركة وكذلك استخدام المواقع الإلكترونية الرسمية الخاصة بها، وصفحات اتحاد الطلبة، ومجموعات الطلبة الأخرى التي جرى التحقق من صحتها عبر الإنترنت لأهداف الدعوة للمشاركة في الدراسة. جُمِعت البيانات باستخدام مقاييس محكمة تتعلق بتحديد مستويات التوتر والقلق لدى الطلبة. إضافة إلى تصورات الطلبة بطبيعة تفاعلهم مع أعضاء هيئة التدريس. شملت عينة الدراسة ما مجموعه 1067 طالبًا جامعيًا (64.9% إناث).

النتائج: أظهرت النتائج أن طلبة الجامعات الأردنية يعانون من مستويات مرتفعة من التوتر والقلق. كما أظهرت أن الدعم المتصور لدى الطلبة من أعضاء هيئة التدريس كان له تأثير كبير في التخفيف من حدة القلق والالتئاب لديهم. وسجل الطلبة أعلى مستويات لتفاعل أعضاء الهيئة التدريسية معهم في المقاييس الفرعية المتعلقة بأهمية التفاعل، والاحترام المتبادل، وسهولة التواصل مع عضو هيئة التدريس. من ناحية أخرى، أظهرت المقاييس المتعلقة بالتفاعل خارج الحرم الجامعي مع أعضاء هيئة التدريس، والشعور بالارتباط بالجامعة أقل الدرجات.

الخلاصة: تشير النتائج إلى ضرورة تنفيذ استراتيجيات لتحسين تفاعل أعضاء هيئة التدريس مع طلبة الجامعة وتوسيع دورهم لدعم الرفاه النفسي للطلبة. **الكلمات الدالة:** الصحة النفسية، أعضاء هيئة التدريس، اكتئاب، توتر، طلبة الجامعات، قلق.

Introduction

Attending university can be a stressful time for students. Psychological, academic, and social difficulties may result due to the process of transitioning from school environment to university environment. Facing new methods of teaching and advanced academic requirements may lead to academic stress (Thawabieh & Qaisy, 2012). Academic stress resulting from homework, testing, and other school requirements is common among this population (Lovell et al., 2015; Shields, 2001; Al-Tarawneh RA, Kahtoon, 2014; Thawabieh & Qaisy, 2012). Social challenges in terms of facing new types of relations with faculty members and other students are considered other sources of stress (Thawabieh & Qaisy, 2012). Research shows that stress can interfere with students' ability to learn and may lead to academic underachievement (Elias, Ping, & Abdullah, 2011). Furthermore, chronic or unresolved stress can cause several physiological and psychological problems, in which depression and anxiety are the most common (Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Gollust, 2007; Hudd, Dumlao, & Erdman, 2000; Misra, McKean, West, & Russo). Findings from large-scale studies reported that 1 in 3 undergraduates reported feelings of severe depression that it was difficult for them to function and approximately one in 10 reported serious intents for attempting suicide (American College Health Association, 2008).

Adverse consequences of stress, depression, and anxiety are tremendous and affect the academic, social, and overall functioning of university students. Research shows that stress may lead to academic underachievement and result in physiological and psychological problems including pain, stomachache, muscle tension, restlessness, irritability, sleeping difficulties, anxiety, and depression (Elias, Ping, & Abdullah, 2011; Sharmila, 2015). Similarly, depression among undergraduates was found to result in physical complaints, poor academic achievement and dysfunctional social relationships in addition to feelings of inadequacy and suicide (Hojat, Gonnella, Erdmann, & Vogel, 2003). Regarding anxiety, it was also attributed to poor academic performance in the form of poor concentration on school homework, getting low grades, and difficulties in taking exams and tests (Nail et al., 2015). Some studies reported that untreated anxiety in young adults may lead to several physical, psychological, and behavioral difficulties such as hypertension, substance use, depression, and suicidality (Goodwin, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2004; Volgelzangs, Seldenrijk, Beekman, vanHout, deJonge, & Penninx 2010; Yan et al., 2003). Furthermore, mental health problems among university students often persist for several years. Zivin et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal study on 763 students and observed that mental health problems continued 2 years later. Compared to baseline, 40% of students continued to have self-injury behavior, 35% reported suicidal thoughts, and 27% had persistent depression.

In Jordan, the majority of studies focused on stress prevalence and coping strategies among specific groups of Jordanian college students, mainly nursing and dental students (e.g., Al-Zayyat & Al-Gamal, 2014; Abu Ruz, Al-Akash, & Jarrah, 2018; Hamaideh, 2011; Rajab, 2001). For example, in the study of Hamaideh (2011), a significant percentage of nursing students had high level of stress particularly among female students and they ineffectively coped with such stress through utilizing emotional reactions to stress instead of cognitive ones. Regarding anxiety and depression, few studies reported that a sufficient percentage of college students suffer from both. Some of these studies found that 8% of university students felt depressed most of the time (Hamdan-Mansour, Halabi, & Dawani, 2009) and 16% met the criteria for severe depression (Hamdan-Mansour & Marmash, 2007). In a recent study conducted in one of the Jordanian universities, the Hashemite University, Hamaideh (2018) found that rates of depression and anxiety among students from different faculties were 28.5% and 38.4% respectively.

Sources of stress attributed to Jordanian university students include the nature of curriculum requirements and heavy academic work, high parental expectations, and lack of faculty support (Shdaifat, 2018). Interestingly, a study that was conducted in one of the Jordanian universities found that academic difficulties were the primary source of psychological distress among Jordanian university students (Al-Tarawneh RA, Kahtoon, 2014). Jordanian culture places high emphasis on education and most importantly to excel in the academic field.

Mortenson (2006) stressed on the importance of academic support for university students and this extends to the informal support from faculty members. In the meta-analysis conducted by Lei, Cui, and Chiu, (2018), teacher support was a significant predictor of students' academic positive emotions especially for university students. Teacher support can take different forms; autonomy-oriented, cognitive, and emotional support. Support for autonomy occurs through provision of

choice, relevance, and respect for students. Cognitive support relies on clarify of expectations from students. Emotional support stems from provision of warmth, empathy, understanding the student, and referral to resources (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 20008). Findings extrapolated from studies of secondary and high-school settings had documented the positive effect of teacher support on ameliorating anxiety and depression among students (Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall, 2003; Skinner et al., 2008; Van Ryzin, Gravely, & Roseth, 2009).

Faculty support is an important construct to assess among Jordanian university students for the following reasons: (a) these students experience significant psychological distress as reviewed in the studies above, (b) academic difficulties constitute the major stressor for university students and such stress can lead to anxiety and depression, (c) the majority of students who have psychological distress do not seek therapeutic or counseling services (Zivin, Eisenberg, Gollust, & Golberstein, 2009), and (d) stigma towards mental illness and attitudes towards seeking professional help is highly prevalent among Jordanian university students (Rayan & Jaradat, 2016). To the best of our knowledge, no study thus far has investigated the role of faculty support on depression and anxiety among university students including Jordanian ones. Therefore, the aims of this study were to: (a) examine levels of stress, depression, and anxiety among Jordanian university students; (b) describe students' perceived quality of their interaction with faculty; and (c) investigate whether faculty support predicts psychological distress (i.e., depression and anxiety) among university students.

Methods

Design

The study utilized a cross-sectional, descriptive and predictive design. Daniel's (1999) formula was used to calculate the sample size needed for the prevalence estimate based on the following parameters: (a) a precision rate of 3% (appropriate if the prevalence going to be between 10% and 90%), (b) a prevalence of 30% (Hamaideh, 2018) (c) a population size of 22,506 (JUST, 2018) and d) a 95% confidence interval (CI). The yielded sample size was 863 subjects at minimum. A convenience sample of undergraduate students in the age range of 18 to 25 years old were recruited from selected public and private Jordanian universities. An online survey software program (EasyQuest) was used to create the survey questions. Approvals to collect the data were firstly obtained from the selected universities. The link that is generated for completing the survey (which also included the consent form) was then distributed using universities websites, students' union pages, and other validated online students' groups. The survey was anonymous; requiring no identifying information. The survey was designed to elicit one response per student and the responses were saved automatically once the survey was completed. The study was reviewed and approved by the institutional Review Board (IRB) at Jordan University of Science and Technology.

Measures

1. **Sociodemographic characteristics.** Students were asked to complete a sociodemographic data sheet containing student's age, gender, school year, residence, type of university, and GPA.

2. **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, 1988).** This scale asks participants to rate how unpredictable and overloaded they perceive their life. It consists of 10 items measured on 5-point Likert ranging from 0 "never" to 4 "very often" with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress. Reliability of the PSS has been widely reported and validity has been established through significant correlations with different measures specifically depression, anxiety, satisfaction with self, job, and life in general (Cohen, 1988). Psychometric properties of the Arabic version of the scale was also established (Al-madi, Cathers, Hamdan-Mansour, & Chow, 2012; Chaaya, Osman, Naasan, & Mahfoud, 2010). The Validated Arabic Version of the PSS was used to assess students' perception of stress (Al-madi Cathers, Hamdan-Mansour, & Chow, 2012). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the PSS was 0.61.

3. **Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) (Zigmond & Snaith, 1983).** The HADS is a self-rating scale assesses anxiety and depression in non-psychiatric population (Zigmond & Snaith, 1983). The scale consists of 7 items to measure anxiety and 7 items for depression assessment. Each item is answered on a 4-point likert scale ranging from 0 "not at all" to 3 "most of the time". Possible scores range from 0 to 21 for anxiety and the same for depression. Scores in the range of 0 to 7 indicate normal case, 8 to 10 borderline abnormal, and 11 to 21 indicate a diagnostic case. Reliability and

validity of the HADS scale has been widely established in several populations (Djukanovic, Carlsson, & Årestedt, 2017). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the PSS was 0.87.

4- Student-Professor Interaction Scale (SPIS) (Cokley et al., 2004). This scale consists of 40-items, divided into nine subscales, measuring the quality of student-faculty interactions. The subscales tap the following areas: Career Guidance, Connectedness, Negative Experiences, Approachable, Respectful Interactions, Caring Attitudes, Off-Campus Interactions, Accessibility, and a Validity. Each subscale has at least three questions measured on 7-point Likert responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Reliability of the SPIS total scale was found adequate and the reliabilities of the subscales ranged from 0.51 to .92 (Cokley et al., 2004). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha for the SPIS was 0.92.

Measures Translation

Except for the Perceived Stress Scale, all study measures were translated into Arabic. The translation procedure described by Brislin (1970) and Chapman and Carter (1979) was followed to ensure the validity, reliability, and sensitivity of the tools. First, a bilingual professional language editor translated the measures from English to Arabic. A different bilingual professional editor translated the Arabic version of the measures back to English. The translation of was then reviewed by a panel of three experts in the area of instrument development and validation. A consensus on the final version of the most accurate translation was reached and used in this study.

Results

Participants

A total of 1,067 university students completed and returned the survey. The mean age of participants was 20.5 (SD = 1.7). The majority of respondents were female (64.9%), studying in public universities (98.7%) and residing with their family (71.7%). About 31.3% of students were in their third academic year and 35.4% had a GPA of 70-79 (see Table 1).

Table 1: University students' characteristics

Characteristic	n (%)
Gender	
<i>Females</i>	647 (65 %)
<i>Males</i>	350 (35 %)
School Year	
<i>1</i>	64 (7%)
<i>2</i>	304 (31%)
<i>3</i>	310 (30%)
<i>4</i>	194 (20%)
<i>5</i>	87 (9%)
<i>6</i>	30 (3%)
Residence	
On campus	78 (8%)
Off campus, with family	716 (72%)
Off campus, without family	204 (20%)
University type	
<i>Public</i>	983 (98%)
<i>Private</i>	13 (2%)
GPA, n (%)	
<i>Excellent (90- 100)</i>	47(4.8%)
<i>Very good (80- 89)</i>	155 (15.9%)

Characteristic	n (%)
<i>Good (70- 79)</i>	345 (35.4%)
<i>Fair (69-60)</i>	294 (30.1%)
<i>Adequate (Less than 60)</i>	135 (13.8%)

Note. N= 1,067

Aim One: Assess the prevalence of stress, depression, and anxiety among Jordanian university students.

The mean score for perceived stress was 25 (SD= 7), ranging from 1 to 40. The mean score for anxiety was 11 (SD= 4), ranging from 0 to 21. The mean score for depression was 9 (SD= 4), ranging from 0 to 21.

About 25% (n = 250) of participants had borderline depression and 31.5% (n = 315) were abnormal cases. Regarding anxiety, more than half of the sample (56.7%, n = 567) were abnormal cases and 19% (n = 190) were on the borderline. According to Cohen (1988), scores of 20 or higher on the PSS are considered an indication of experiencing high stress. About 25.7% (n = 258) of participants reported high stress level.

Aim Two: Describe students' perceived quality of their interaction with faculty.

The mean score of the SPIS total scale was 152.4 (SD = 43.8) ranging from 4 to 265. The highest scores were for the following subscales: validity (M = 4.9, SD = 1.05), respectful interactions (M = 4.29, SD = 1.01), and approachability (M = 4.25, SD = 1.5). The subscales of off-campus interaction (M = 2.57, SD = 1.4) and connectedness (M = 3.43, SD = 1.4) had the lowest scores. Table 2 summarizes descriptive statistics of perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and student-professor interaction.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and student-professor interaction

Study Measure	(M ± SD)	Q1	Median	Q3	Range
Perceived Stress Scale	24.6 ± 6.8	20	25	29	1- 40
Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS)					
<i>Anxiety</i>	10.9 ± 4.4	8	11	14	0- 21
<i>Depression</i>	8.5 ± 4.3	5	8	11	0- 21
Student-Professor Interaction Scale	152.4± 43.8	127	154	182	4-265
Caring Attitude	3.9 ± 1.6	2.75	4.25	5.25	1-7
Off-campus Interaction	2.5 ± 1.4	1.5	2.25	3.25	1-7
Career Guidance	3.8 ± 1.5	2.75	4.0	5.0	1-7
Connectedness	3.4 ± 1.4	2.25	3.5	4.5	1-7
Approachability	4.2 ± 1.5	3.21	4.25	5.5	1-7
Accessibility	3.8 ± 1.3	3	4	4.75	1-7
Respectful Interactions	4.2 ± 1.0	3.77	4.42	5	1-7
Negative Experience	4.1 ± 1.3	3.25	4	5	1-7
Validity	4.9 ± 1.0	4.33	5	5.66	1-7

Note. N= 1,067, M = mean, SD = standard deviation, Q1= quartile 1, Q3 = Quartile 3

Regarding the association between students' sociodemographic data and the quality of student-faculty interactions, the results revealed that females reported significantly higher scores (Mean =4.3, SD=0.9) on the respectful interaction subscale than males (Mean =4.1, SD=1.1). No significant differences were revealed on the other eight subscales ($p > .05$).

Aim Three: Predictors of depression and anxiety using perceived faculty support, perceived stress, and university students' sociodemographic characteristics as predictors

A multiple hierarchal regression analysis was run to investigate predictors of depression and anxiety among university

students using sociodemographic characteristics in the first step (i.e., gender, age, school year, current residence, GPA, and university type), and perceived stress and student-faculty interaction in the second and third steps, respectively. Regarding depression, the model was able to predict a significant proportion of students' depression ($F(8, 534) = 41.4, p < .001, R^2 = .37$). About 37% of the variability in students' depression was accounted by the aforementioned variables. However, only gender, perceived stress and perceived student-faculty interaction were the only significant predictors (all $p < .001$). Male students experienced more depression compared to females ($\beta = .17, t(534) = 4.85, p < .001$) and higher perceived stress resulted in more depression ($\beta = .51, t(534) = 14.2, p < .001$). The more positive interaction faculty had with students, the lower depression was experienced ($\beta = -.18, t(534) = -5.21, p < .001$). Table 3 shows the model fit.

Table 3: Predictors of students' depression

	Predictor	DF	SE	t Value	b	B	P Value
Model 1	Gender	6	.383	1.252	.084	.731	.057
	Age	6	.143	.607	.035	.208	.544
	School year	6	.212	.983	.057	-.291	.326
	Current residence	6	.358	-1.63	-.072	-.586	.103
	GPA	6	.168	3.94	.172	.663	.000***
	University type	6	1.60	1.159	.049	1.85	.247
	$R^2 = .056$ $rR^2 = .056$ $F = 5.280$						
Model 2	Gender	7	.322	4.93	.182	1.59	.000**
	Age	7	.119	.535	.025	.063	.593
	School year	7	.176	1.39	.062	.230	.191
	Current residence	7	.298	-.718	-.026	-.214	.473
	GPA	7	.141	2.289	.084	.323	.022*
	University type	7	1.33	1.037	.037	1.378	.301
	Perceived stress	7	.024	15.616	.562	.368	.000***
	$R^2 = .343$ $rR^2 = .296$ $F = 41.417$						
Model 3	Gender	8	.315	4.859	.176	1.531	.000***
	Age	8	.116	.605	.028	.070	.546
	School year	8	.172	1.732	.081	.298	.084
	Current residence	8	.291	-.901	-.032	-.263	.368
	GPA	8	.140	1.266	.046	.178	.206
	University type	8	1.301	1.379	.048	1.795	.168
	Perceived stress	8	.024	14.243	.516	.338	.000***
	Faculty support	8	.004	-5.210	-.188	-.019	.000***
	$R^2 = .374$ $rR^2 = .031$ $F = 41.404$						

Note. $N = 1,074$; DF : Level of Freedom; SE : Standard Error; B : Regression Coefficient; b : Standardized beta

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Regarding anxiety, the whole regression model was also significant ($F(8, 534) = 50.31, p < .001, R^2 = .42$). Around 42% of the variability of student's anxiety score was accounted by the predictors entered in the regression model. However, only perceived stress and perceived faculty support were significant predictors. More specifically, the higher the stress the students experienced, the more anxious they became ($\beta = .60, t(534) = 27.43, p < .001$). On the other hand, the more positive the interaction between faculty members and students, the lower anxiety students' reported ($\beta = -.09, t(534) = -2.82, p < .01$). Table 4 shows the model fit.

Table 4: Predictors of students' anxiety

	Predictor	DF	SE	t Value	b	B	P Value
Model 1	Gender	6	.393	-2.99	-.132	-1.166	.003**
	Age	6	.147	.834	.048	.122	.405
	School year	6	.217	1.059	.061	.230	.290
	Current residence	6	.368	-1.697	-.075	-.624	.090
	GPA	6	.172	2.208	.096	.380	.028*
	University type	6	1.64	1.548	.066	2.545	.122
	$R^2 = .038$ $rR^2 = .048$ $F = 4.541$						
Model 2	Gender	7	.311	-.614	-.021	-.191	.539
	Age	7	.115	.834	.038	.096	.405
	School year	7	.169	1.506	.068	.255	.133
	Current residence	7	.288	.684	-.024	-.197	.494
	GPA	7	.136	-.075	-.003	-.010	.940
	University type	7	1.283	1.55	.052	1.99	.120
	Perceived stress	7	.023	19.569	.631	.422	.000***
	$R^2 = .414$ $rR^2 = .373$ $F = 55.645$						
Model 3	Gender	8	.309	-.721	-.025	-.223	.471
	Age	8	.114	.870	.039	.099	.385
	School year	8	.169	1.725	.077	.291	.085
	Current residence	8	.286	-.778	-.027	-.223	.437
	GPA	8	.138	-.633	-.022	-.087	.527
	University type	8	1.277	1.736	.058	2.217	.083
	Perceived stress	8	.023	17.439	.607	.406	.000***
	Faculty support	8	.004	-2.922	-.098	-.010	.000***
	$R^2 = .421$ $rR^2 = .009$ $F = 50.319$						

Note. $N = 1,074$; DF : Level of Freedom; SE : Standard Error; B : Regression Coefficient; b : Standardized beta

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that Jordanian university students experience a substantial amount of stress, depression, and anxiety. While students' stress increased their depression and anxiety, perceived faculty support had a significant ameliorating effect. Students scored their faculty interaction to be highest on the subscales of validity, respectful interactions, and approachability. On the other hand, having off-campus interaction with faculty and feeling a sense of connectedness had the lowest scores. Gender variances were noted in two instances; male university students expressed more depression and experienced less respectful interactions with university faculty than female students.

Psychological distress exemplified in stress, anxiety, and depression are common among university students. In

congruence with other studies, Jordanian university students scored the highest on anxiety followed by depression and stress. For instance, Malaysian undergraduate students, reported rates of stress, anxiety and depression at 47%, 76%, and 60%, respectively (Fuad et al., 2015). Rates of the mental health symptoms in this study are also in line with those reported from other developing countries (e.g., Ahad et al., 2021; Iqbal, Gupta, & Venkatarao, 2015; Rathnayake & Ekanayaka, 2016; Samson, 2019). On the contrary, lower rates of mental health problems were reported on undergraduate students from developed countries such as the United States, Canada, and China (e.g., Chernoma, & Shapiro, 2013; Liu, Ping, & Gao, 2019). In Jordan, university students place high emphasis on academic excellence, creating an environment of competitiveness that may lead to psychological distress. Sources of stress may include heavy academic work and high parental expectations for academic excellence (Shdaifat, 2018). Moreover, academic performance is usually correlated with better job opportunities and higher tendency for acceptance in graduate studies. Interestingly, rates of stress, depression, and anxiety in this study are higher than other similar Jordanian studies. The Jordanian literature reported rates of depression between 8% to 28.5%; anxiety between 38.4% to 43.5%, and stress between 12.3% to 23.7% (Dalky & Gharaibeh, 2019; Hamaideh, 2018; Hamdan-Mansour, Halabi, & Dawani, 2009; Hamdan-Mansour & Marmash, 2007). The differences in the prevalence may related to the utilization of different measurement tools and the variation in sample size. This study recruited a higher number of undergraduate university students compared to similar Jordanian studies, which may have allowed for broader screening for the mental health problems of interest.

University students indicated mild to moderate perception of faculty support and their perception is lower than those reported in some Western literature (e.g., Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010). The highest scores for faculty-student interaction in the current study were for the subscales of validity, having respectful interaction and approachability. The validity subscale indicates students' acknowledgement of the importance of having interactions with their faculty members. More specifically, students indicated that their relationship with professors impact their academic performance and having a positive relationship would improve their experience at the university. They would also work hard to succeed in the class if the professor genuinely cares about them. These findings shed the light on the importance of improving faculty interaction and thriving to enhance the quantity and quality of such interactions.

Komarraju et al (2010) discussed the importance of respectful interactions and approachability on students' academic life. More specifically, students who perceived their faculty members to be respectful and approachable, were more likely to report confidence in their academic life in addition to being motivated, both intrinsically and extrinsically. On the other hand, students perceived difficulties in reaching out to their professors outside the university setting and to have a sense of connectedness with them. It seems that Jordanian faculty members limit their interaction with students inside the university setting or during their working hours, leaving them with some time to pay attention to other aspects of their life such as family and social relations outside the school. Furthermore, faculty members may perceive their role within the scope of teaching and academic advising, but not as a source of psychological support to students. These findings urge to implement some strategies to focus on the importance of having faculty members as a support person to students to provide them with psychological assistance in addition to their role as an academic advisor.

There is a paucity of current literature regarding the role of faculty support on university student's mental well-being. The majority of studies among university students' population investigated the influence of faculty support on student's academic life, reporting improved student's academic success, increased confidence in academic skills, and rating the learning experience as more enjoyable (e.g., Drew, 2001; Komarraju et al. 2010). The remaining literature that explored the relationship between faculty support and mental health for students are examined within the school context examining students below the university level. Congruent with this study findings, these studies reported the ameliorating effect teacher support has on student's levels of stress, anxiety and depression (Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall, 2003; Van Ryzin, Gravely, & Roseth, 2009). Mental health parameters and faculty support among university students was researched among nursing students where faculty support partially moderated the relationship between stress and substance use (Boulton & O'Connell, 2017).

According to the findings of this study, male university students reported more depression than females. These findings are inconsistent with some previous research indicating that females reporting higher level of depression than males. In a

systematic review of studies of depression prevalence among undergraduate university students, female gender was found a risk factor, with female students reporting higher depressive symptoms compared to their counterpart (Ibrahim, Kelly, & Glazebrook, 2013). On the other hand, other studies found no gender differences (e.g., Arslan et al., 2009; Eisenberg et al., 2007; Kaya et al., 2007); and very few found that males had a higher rate of depression (e.g., Wong et al., 2006). Ibrahim et al (2013) explained that male students are usually less willing to access support for their mental health problems compared to females. Females also tend to seek higher social support and to construct diverse social networks to receive support from compared to males (Kase, Endo, & Oishi, 2016). This has been explained by gender differences in self-disclosure as females are more willing to express their problems and to engage in more in-depth communication with others (Tam, Foo, & Lee, 2011). Male participants also reported receiving less respectful interactions with their faculty members which may further hindered them from seeking support. These findings suggest the need for the identification and management of depression in university setting, especially among male students. Effective interventions should be also implemented for faculty members to communicate more effectively with this population and understand the barriers that may prevent them from having respectful interactions. Future research should be carried out to validate these findings utilizing different research designs and populations.

Implications

Academic success for students is considered a vital outcome in any learning setting, but this outcome cannot be achieved without ensuring the mental wellbeing of learners. The current study showed that faculty support is a significant factor in ameliorating symptoms of depression and anxiety among university students. Findings also indicated that this can be accomplished by having faculty members interacting respectfully with students and being available and approachable to them. Faculty support to students may also be enhanced through providing students and teachers with opportunities to form a positive and supportive relationship through periodic informal meetings and social gatherings at the department, faculty and university levels. Educational training for faculty members on therapeutic communication and psychosocial support provision for students is also required.

Limitations

This study is considered the first to examine the role of faculty support on university students' depression and anxiety, however, this study has some limitations. First, this study used a cross sectional, quantitative approach and relied on student's self-report of the study variables, which may have introduced social bias in the findings. Future research needs to employ qualitative and mixed methods design to achieve better and deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon. Second, faculty support was assessed from students' perspective and thus, faculty perception of their interaction with students is required in future research. A final limitation is the low representation of students from private universities, and this requires the employment of research designs that ensure adequate representation of students from the private sector.

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