

Level of Mental Health among Middle Managers in Algerian Institutions -A field study at Ferial, Annaba-

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Abstract:

This study investigated the level of mental health among middle managers at Ferial in Annaba, Algeria, across five dimensions: emotional stability, happiness and satisfaction, self-actualisation, psychological adjustment and self-development. A descriptive method was employed alongside analytical techniques. Due to the small size of the sample, a comprehensive survey method was used, resulting in 70 participants. To achieve more accurate results, a questionnaire was used alongside various statistical methods. The findings indicated that the level of mental health among middle managers at Ferial in Annaba, Algeria, across the five aforementioned dimensions, is high.

Keywords: health, mental health, middle managers.

Introduction:

Since ancient times, humans have had a keen interest in mental health, which is of great importance to individuals and groups due to its role in their lives. Mental health helps to free people from conflicts and disturbances, fosters feelings of comfort and happiness, and provides communities with individuals who are capable of facing stressful situations that affect their mood and mental state. These situations can potentially lead to a spiral of inner and external conflict. This often compels individuals under pressure to seek help from a psychologist for diagnosis and treatment, a role that psychology has

played since its emergence in 1879, when Wilhelm Wundt opened the first psychological clinic to address this demographic.

The connection between psychology and mental health is ancient and dates back to the beginning of humanity, as evidenced by the drawings and inscriptions left by ancient civilisations, which were primarily confined to the fields of medicine and religion. However, it evolved with successive civilisations into what we see today. In organisations, for instance, psychology has developed to encompass care and support, as well as psychological assistance for individuals both within and outside organisations. This improves the quality of mental health and occupational safety services, addresses all psychological, social and professional issues, and ensures effective solutions to confront and mitigate them.

As mental health is primarily an individual issue, it affects all areas of life and has a significant impact on many different areas of organisation. This includes not only the care of victims of disasters and wars, but also a systematic strategy involving proactive scientific solutions designed to address psychological and social problems in various environments. Issues such as anxiety, stress, repression, isolation, frustration, fear, burnout, sexual harassment and alienation pose a looming threat to individuals' mental health. Whether experienced individually or collectively, these issues negatively affect individuals, diminishing their performance and productivity. Consequently, individuals may become passive and seek to escape work by causing problems, taking sick leave and having accidents at work, which has an adverse impact on the organisation's overall performance and ability to achieve its goals.

Recognising its importance in professional settings, many organisations have started to adopt mental health principles by implementing comprehensive, continuous programmes providing psychological and social support to all employees at all organisational levels. This includes opening communication channels, establishing

listening committees to support individuals under pressure and dealing with critical cases, and activating the role of occupational health, along with the responsibilities of psychologists who conduct regular diagnostic interviews with workers to identify cases of mental health problems early on and provide psychological care.

First: The Conceptual Framework of the Study:

1. The Problem:

As a legal entity, an organisation is constantly seeking to maintain its health and safety, which stem from the well-being of its employees. The more psychologically robust its employees are, the stronger the organisation's presence in its environment. This is evident in the integrity of its organisational structures, resources, decisions, mission, culture and goals, enabling it to avoid psychological and organisational problems that negatively impact individuals' mental health and undermine the organisation itself. As the saying goes, "health is a crown on the heads of the healthy", and it serves as the foundation for public health. Intervening in professional settings helps to contain mental health issues such as psychological fatigue, professional stress, fear, anxiety and burnout. It also cultivates positive values and organisational cultures that are rooted in the surrounding society. This reduces organisational conflicts, fosters understanding among individuals, enhances effective communication and promotes a model of human resources that is characterised by positive thinking and is free from mental and behavioural disorders. This model is also deeply loyal and committed to the organisation. This reflects a high level of performance and productivity, which benefits the organisation by improving products, gaining competitive advantages and achieving profits, thus ensuring the realisation of the institution's goals.

Mental health is one of the administrative terms that has attracted significant interest from researchers in psychology, management and organisational behaviour. They have thoroughly studied and analysed it, providing insights that make the concept easier to

understand. In this context, we define mental health as a state of psychological well-being that enables employees to effectively cope with stressful situations in professional environments. It also refines human resource behaviour and helps individuals realise their potential and assert their capabilities.

Mental health is influenced by various factors, such as an individual's personality, organisational climate, unclear organisational messages and goals, dietary habits, occupational diseases and professional issues like alienation, conflict, ambiguity of role, injustice, inequality, poor communication, low motivation, dissatisfaction and poor professional adjustment. Physical conditions such as noise, heat, humidity, lack of ventilation and inadequate lighting also play a role.

As a preventive measure, most organisations, including Ferial – Annaba, have adopted mental health principles and established occupational health and psychology departments. This study therefore aims to reveal the state of mental health at Ferial – Annaba, encapsulated in the main research question:

What is the level of mental health among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba?

The following sub-questions arise from this:

- What is the level of emotional stability among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba?
- What is the level of happiness and satisfaction among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba?
- What is the level of self-actualisation among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba?
- What is the level of psychological adjustment among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba?
- What is the level of self-development among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba?

2. Hypotheses of the study:

2.1 General hypothesis:

The level of mental health among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is average.

2.2 Partial hypotheses:

-The level of emotional stability among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is average.

- The level of happiness and satisfaction among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is average.

-The level of self-actualisation among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is average.

-The level of psychological adjustment among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is average.

-The level of self-development among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is average.

3. Importance of the study:

This study is important because mental health is a significant topic within administrative terminology related to the study of individuals' psychological, emotional and behavioural states. It explains psychological phenomena in professional environments, which can lead individuals to experience stress for a certain period, causing insecurity about themselves, others, and the organisation. In this context, mental health intervention provides psychological support, guidance and care to mitigate these risks and restore individuals to their previous state of normality. The importance of this study is also reflected in its outcomes, as the results obtained can serve as a basis for future research and contribute to cumulative knowledge. Additionally, the study aims to offer suggestions and recommendations based on the findings.

4. Operational concepts of the study:

4.1 Mental health: ‘The absence of mental and psychological disorders among Fertial – Annaba employees, alongside the alignment of their internal desires with the demands and constraints of the external environment.’

4.2 Emotional stability: ‘The ability of individuals to control their emotions when facing stressful situations at work at Fertial – Annaba.’

4.3 Happiness and satisfaction: ‘The feeling of individuals who are highly satisfied with themselves and with Fertial – Annaba, where they perform their tasks.’

4.4 Self-actualisation: ‘The success of individuals working at Fertial – Annaba in their personal and professional lives, and their ability to recognise and accept their capabilities.’

4.5 Psychological adjustment: ‘The complete harmony between an employee’s behaviours and professional standards, or the individual’s alignment with the prevailing values, attitudes and culture at Fertial – Annaba, leading to self-actualisation and a sense of psychological comfort.’

2.4.6 Self-development: ‘The elevation of an employee’s thinking, emotional, and psychological state while performing their tasks at Fertial – Annaba, reaching a high degree of maturity and self-awareness.’

2.4.7 Middle managers: ‘Those who perform their duties as department heads at Fertial in Annaba.’

5. Previous studies:

5.1 Study by Ben Hafidh and Maan (2015):

This study aimed to assess the level of mental health among midwives, and to understand how social status and work seniority impact these levels. The Leonard R. Lehman-Lenkoff Mental Health Scale was administered to a sample of 20 midwives.

The results indicated that midwives generally had an average level of mental health, with differences noted between married and unmarried midwives. However, no differences were found among midwives based on years of work experience. (Ben Hafidh & Maan, 2015, pp. 167–179).

5.2 Study by Rabah Allah (2019):

This study aimed to understand the roots of organisational problems related to mental health, and to identify ways to enhance individual well-being and prevent the deterioration of mental health conditions among employees. The study also sought to determine the causes of good mental health in the workplace, with the aim of establishing a preventive system to reduce the emergence and development of these psychological issues within the organisation. (Rabah Allah, 2019, pp. 57–66).

Secondly, the theoretical framework of the study is presented.

1. Concept of mental health:

Mental health is defined as: ‘A relatively permanent state in which an individual is psychologically, emotionally and socially compatible with themselves and their environment.’ This involves experiencing happiness, being capable of self-actualisation, utilising one’s abilities and potential to the fullest extent possible, and meeting the demands of life. Their personality is integrated and sound, and their behaviour is normal and virtuous, enabling them to live safely and peacefully. (Al-Qass & Ben Ghadeqa, 2022, p. 664).

Maqarius defined it as follows: ‘The degree to which an individual achieves internal harmony between their various motives and impulses, and external harmony in their relationships with their surroundings, including objects and people’ (Ahmed, 1999, p. 18). (Ahmed, 1999, p. 18).

From these definitions, mental health can be defined as follows: ‘A state of well-being experienced by an individual who does not suffer from any problems or disorders that negatively affect their mental or physical health, and whose internal desires are aligned with the constraints of their external environment.’

2. Indicators of Mental Health:

Researchers and scholars in the field of mental health studies are currently focusing on the mental health of individuals and groups. This focus relies on two types of indicator: negative and positive. Mental health is no longer defined solely by the absence of negative symptoms and pathological reactions such as anxiety and depression; positive signs of mental health must also be included, such as happiness, emotional stability, self-esteem, self-control and positive social attitudes. However, a low level of psychological stress does not automatically imply a high level of mental well-being or personal soundness.

Negative indicators: This type of indicator measures mental health by the absence or low presence of symptoms, representing the pathological model. Other evidence that can be cited in this context includes indicators of psychological disturbance, which can be divided into four types:

Physical indicators: These include fatigue, back pain, a feeling of heaviness in the chest and stomach, muscle tension, a rapid heartbeat and insomnia.

Cognitive indicators: Notable examples include difficulty making decisions, being easily distracted, forgetfulness, problems with concentration and attention, a lack of confidence, pessimism, and a negative outlook on the future.

Emotional indicators include irritability, anxiety, depression, anger and emotional volatility.

Behavioural indicators include protests, aggression, mood swings, isolation, lack of expression, rigid and negative attitudes, and substance abuse.

Positive indicators refer to individuals possessing positive characteristics that help them adapt effectively to their social and physical environments, freeing themselves from negative traits or pathological symptoms that hinder this adaptation. In this regard, Othman Labib Farraj and Samuel Magar Yous mention a set of mental health indicators.

A sense of psychological security: The individual accepts themselves, feels valued, recognises their worth and accepts their limitations. They exhibit an appropriate degree of spontaneity and initiative, and are successful in establishing effective and fulfilling relationships with others. They have a realistic view of life, enjoy their social relationships and are able to form relationships both within and outside the family. They are successful in their work, find satisfaction in it and approach life with enthusiasm. They feel competent and capable in the face of frustrations and unpredictable circumstances. (Jallouli & Ismaili, 2022, p. 99).

The study also identified the most significant mental health indicators, which can be summarised as follows:

3.2.1 Emotional stability: This refers to an individual's ability to control their emotions and express them appropriately in different situations. It involves having an appropriate level of emotional steadiness and psychological stability, as well as self-control.

3.2.2 Feeling of happiness and satisfaction: This represents a state of psychological comfort stemming from a positive outlook on the past, present and future. It involves benefiting from daily experiences, satisfying basic psychological needs, feeling secure and assured, having a forgiving attitude towards oneself, and having self-respect and confidence. It also involves developing a positive self-concept and self-esteem. Satisfaction can refer to overall job satisfaction, as well as satisfaction with specific aspects of the work environment. The overall job satisfaction scale enables employees

to evaluate each aspect of their work in relation to how important it is to them. Professional satisfaction measures cover many interrelated aspects indicating professional adjustment, including salary increases, promotions within the organisation, job security, mobility, employee reputation and utilisation of individual capabilities.

3.2.3 Self-actualisation involves understanding oneself, conducting realistic self-assessments, accepting the realities related to one's abilities objectively, recognising individual differences, respecting differences among individuals, valuing oneself appropriately and utilising one's capabilities and potential.

3.2.4 Self-development: This is defined as 'improving and developing personal, professional, spiritual and emotional skills and capacities through learning' (Khatab & Moutala, 2023, pp. 7–8).

3.2.5 Psychological adjustment: Rushwan defined this as 'a social process involving sound solutions and reconciliation between competing or conflicting parties, with the aim of alleviating the exhaustion and tension resulting from competition and conflict' (Rushwan, 2005, p. 180).

Third: the field framework of the study.

1. Areas of the study:

1.1 Spatial domain: The study was conducted in Fertial, Annaba.

1.2 Temporal domain: The study took place in April and May 2024.

2. Method used: The descriptive method was employed, which is suitable for such studies, along with analytical techniques.

3. Population and sample of the study: The sample consisted of 70 middle managers from Fertial in Annaba. Due to the small sample size, a comprehensive survey method was used.

3. Data collection tools: The primary tool for data collection was a questionnaire consisting of five dimensions, each with five items, totalling 25 items. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree), with weights corresponding to (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) for positive items and (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) for negative items. For negative items, the weights were 1–2–3–4–5.

4.1 Validity of the questionnaire: The preliminary questionnaire was reviewed by five groups of specialist professors to evaluate its content.

4.2 Reliability of the questionnaire: Cronbach’s alpha was calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for each dimension of the questionnaire and the overall score. Reliability of the questionnaire: Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for each dimension of the questionnaire and the overall score using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following table illustrates this:

Table 1: Reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) among the study dimensions

Dimensions	Landmarks Correlation
- Emotional Stability	0,865
- Feelings of Happiness and Satisfaction	0,876
- Self-Actualization	0,765
- Psychological Adjustment	0,867
- Self-Development	0,891
- Overall Score	0,852

As can be seen from Table 1, all Cronbach’s alpha coefficients range from 0.765 to 0.891, resulting in an overall reliability coefficient of 0.85. This is considered a good level of reliability as it exceeds the acceptable threshold. This indicates that the questionnaire is highly reliable and can therefore be relied upon.

5. Statistical methods used: percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation.

6. Presentation, analysis and discussion of results:

In order to answer the study hypotheses, the total means and standard deviations were calculated for each dimension of mental health, namely emotional stability, feelings of happiness and satisfaction, self-actualisation, psychological adjustment and self-development, along with the overall score for the variable. The following table illustrates this:

Table 2: Responses of Sample Members Regarding the Level of Mental Health

Number	Dimensions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Level
1	- Emotional Stability	4,50	0,50	2	High
2	- Feelings of Happiness and Satisfaction	4,61	0,49	1	High
3	- Self-Actualization	4,46	0,50	3	High
4	- Psychological Adjustment	4,45	0,49	4	High
5	- Self-Development	4,57	0,49	5	High
Total score		4,51	0,61	/	High

Source: prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs.

The table above shows elevated levels for all five dimensions of mental health: emotional stability; feelings of happiness and satisfaction; self-actualisation; psychological adjustment; and self-development. The overall mean for the variable was 4.51, with a total standard deviation of 0.61.

Feelings of happiness and satisfaction were ranked first with a mean of 4.61 and a standard deviation of 0.49, indicating a high level of happiness and satisfaction among middle managers regarding their working conditions, the nature of their work, and the fairness of distribution, treatment, and evaluation at Ferial – Annaba.

- Self-development: Ranked second with a mean of 4.57 and a standard deviation of 0.49, suggesting that middle managers are strongly motivated to improve themselves, driven by a desire for career advancement, promotions and further education.

- Emotional stability: Ranked third with a mean of 4.50 and a standard deviation of 0.50, indicating a high degree of emotional stability. Workers demonstrate control over their behaviours and actions in administrative interactions, and do not tend to provoke conflicts or issues.

- Self-actualisation: Ranked fourth with a mean of 4.46 and a standard deviation of 0.50, suggesting that sample members experience a high degree of self-actualisation and satisfaction with their performance and contributions to decision-making. They also experience respect from colleagues and supervisors, alongside job stability and security.

- Psychological adjustment also exhibited a high level, with a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.49. This suggests that middle managers at Ferial – Annaba have the necessary qualifications and capabilities to perform their tasks professionally and balance their personal and professional lives.

Conclusion:

Mental health is a multifaceted topic that intersects with many other concepts, such as organisational justice, occupational safety and health, psychological disorders, organisational change, motivation, loyalty and commitment, organisational conflict and communication. From this perspective, it is difficult to confine mental health to a specific area as it encompasses all aspects of life, including the psychological, personal, social and professional spheres. It is continually challenged by psychological and social risks in professional environments. The current study, conducted at a public institution, examined the state of mental health from the perspective of middle managers at Ferial – Annaba, exploring this issue.

The study and analysis produced the following results:

- The level of mental health among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is high.
- The level of emotional stability among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is high.
- Middle managers at Ferial – Annaba report high levels of happiness and satisfaction.
- The level of self-actualisation among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is average.

The level of psychological adjustment among middle managers at Ferial – Annaba is high.

The level of self-development is average.

Recommendations:

Given the importance of mental health in the organization, we propose several recommendations that we believe will be beneficial in this area and can be implemented in professional environments to address psychological and social risks:

1. Establishing a Medical Team: Form a medical team within organizations consisting of doctors and psychologists tasked with the regular monitoring of individuals' health, psychological, and emotional states, as well as providing psychological support.

2. **Opening Communication Channels:** Create communication channels within the organization to break the silence between management and employees, allowing workers' concerns to reach the highest levels of authority in the organization, while ensuring psychological support and guidance for all employees at all organizational levels.
3. **Conducting Awareness Meetings:** Organize periodic awareness meetings for employees, featuring experts in mental health, to highlight its importance for both the individual and the organization, address the main causes of psychological and social issues in professional environments, and present effective solutions.
4. **Comprehensive Surveys:** Conduct comprehensive surveys of common psychological and social phenomena and disorders in professional settings, aiming to understand, describe, and interpret them under the supervision of accredited mental health laboratories at the university, to monitor these phenomena, predict them, and thus control them, as they have become burdensome for organizations, costing them substantial amounts
5. **Developing a Proactive Strategy:** Implement a systematic, proactive strategy incorporating the rules and principles of mental health, with the aim of mitigating the severity of psychological disorders within organisations.
6. **Provide a mental health guide** to inform employees about general concepts related to mental health and psychological support.
7. **Create an online platform:** Establish a website for the mental health department within the organisation to facilitate direct communication between the examiner and examinee at all times, providing remote psychological support.

8. Submitting periodic reports: Ensure that psychologists submit periodic reports to management detailing the psychological and emotional states of all employees within the organisation.

9. Training psychologists: Subject psychologists to training courses that equip them with new mental health competencies in line with the latest scientific developments and approaches, with the aim of diagnosing psychological disorders among employees at their onset.

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Appendices:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Statements	Number	Dimension
					I am ambitious and want to advance in my job..	1	- Emotional Stability
					I enjoy helping my colleagues at work.	2	
					Workers in the institution have complete control over their emotions in stressful situations.	3	
					Free time is spent engaging in sports activities.	4	

					I feel uncomfortable when visitors are present at my workplace.	5	
					Workers are completely satisfied with the administrative decisions made by the institution.	6	- Feelings of Happiness and Satisfaction
					I am proud to belong to Virtual Annaba.	7	
					The institution always strives to improve social services for the benefit of its employees.	8	
					I am satisfied with the effort I put into my work.	9	
					I am eager to continue working at the institution.	10	

					I have great confidence in my abilities and qualifications .	11	- Self-Actualization
					Most workers are optimistic about their future careers within the institution.	12	
					I focus well before making appropriate decisions.	13	
					I have achieved most of my organisational goals within the institution.	14	
					I use all my skills to complete difficult tasks at work.	15	
					The monthly salary I receive is sufficient to meet my needs.	16	- Psychological Adjustment
					Workers strike a	17	

					balance between their personal and professional lives.		
					My scientific and physical abilities match the requirements of the job..	18	
					Workers demonstrate positive attitudes towards the organisation's message.	19	
					Workers adapt well to job changes within the institution.	20	
					The institution provides good opportunities for workers to succeed.	21	
					My professional ambitions align with the organisation's goals.	22	- Self-Development

					The prevailing organisational climate has encouraged me to develop my skills.	23	
					Employees have achievable professional and personal goals..	24	
					I always strive to improve my skills and capabilities at work.	25	