

## Psychological Stress among Preparatory Class Teachers

- A field study in certain elementary schools in the Commune of El-Wadi –

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### Abstract

This study aimed to identify the level of psychological stress among teachers of the preparatory stage in the educational district in the municipality of el oued, in light of some variables.

In our study, the appropriate descriptive approach was adopted for this study, and the psychological stress questionnaire was applied to teachers, and after collecting information, tabulating and analyzing it using the statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) and addressing the hypotheses of the study, the following results appeared:

The level of psychological stress among the teachers of the preparatory department is high

The results also showed that the partial hypotheses were not achieved according to: There are statistically significant differences in psychological stress due to the variables of gender, age and professional seniority among the teachers of the preparatory department.

**Keywords:** psychological; stress; teacher.

### Introduction

Psychological pressures are a tangible reality that individuals find difficult to avoid or overlook. Teachers, in particular, are highly susceptible to psychological pressures due to the various roles and tasks assigned to them. Consequently, they are more prone to experiencing excessive work burdens, finding themselves in life circumstances characterized by congestion, anxiety, and tension.

The teaching profession is one of the demanding social professions that leave teachers dissatisfied with their careers and uncertain about their lives. This negatively affects their dedication and competence. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on the psychological well-being of teachers, as they are the cornerstone of the educational process. This, in turn, positively impacts their personal lives as well as the lives of their students and the quality of their instruction.

Undoubtedly, the mental health of teachers plays a vital role in their psychological and social harmony, which is reflected in their performance, both negatively and positively. This is especially true for teachers in the early stages of education, as they form the fundamental basis for the success of subsequent educational stages (middle school, high school, etc.).

According to the aforementioned, our study focuses on the theoretical contribution regarding the topic of psychological pressure, specifically among preparatory stage teachers, in light of certain changes in primary schools in the municipality of Al-Wadi.

### **1- Problem Statement:**

In the era of technology and constant development, humans find themselves needing constant readiness and adaptation alongside the demands of daily life. Various pressures have become an integral part of their daily lives, affecting both their mental and physical health. Individuals often find themselves in a state of psychological and physical imbalance, as researchers have described the current era as an era of psychological pressures that require individuals to cope with them.

Teaching is considered one of the professions that require performing numerous tasks with high skills. It is a profession that demands significant effort, especially intellectual effort, given the long working hours spent by teachers in the instructional process. This leaves them physically exhausted. Teaching is recognized as a demanding profession due to the multitude of psychological pressures, burdens, responsibilities, and demands. Al-Musha'an found that 79% of teachers consider teaching as the primary source of pressure. Additionally, Murphy found that approximately 3% of the studied sample experienced moderate to high levels of psychological pressure.

Psychological pressure on teachers, as defined by Khalifa (2012), refers to the presence of stressful stimuli in their work environment. The response to these stimuli can be cognitive, physiological, or behavioral, which creates anxiety or chronic pressure on the teacher when attempting to meet work demands. This can lead to frustration resulting from the failure to achieve goals. These pressures may stem from work-related sources such as continuous changes and reforms in curricula, overcrowded classrooms, strict administrative instructions, relationships with colleagues, modernity undermining experience, and long working hours. Pressures can also arise from external factors such as social status and financial appreciation compared to other professions.

Psychological pressures have a direct impact on teachers, their psychological stability, and their harmony, which in turn affects their health and performance level. Muraco and Macaden (1982) pointed out the negative effects of psychological pressures caused by work on teachers, extending to physical symptoms such as insomnia, peptic ulcers, cardiovascular diseases, headaches, and psychological symptoms including episodes of depression, general anxiety, and low self-esteem. (Belegsa, D, S, p328).

The following questions are hence proposed based on what has been stated:

## **2- General Question:**

- What is the level of psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers?

## **Subsidiary Questions:**

- Are there differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of gender?
- Are there differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of age?
- Are there differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of work experience?

## **3- Study Hypotheses:**

The study aims to verify the following hypotheses:

- We expect the level of psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers to be high.
- There are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of gender.
- There are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of age.
- There are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of work experience.

## **4- Study Significance:**

- Enhancing and improving the performance of teachers by equipping them with the ability to confront and manage psychological pressure and exert control over it through providing them with proper support and care.

- Serving as a starting point for further studies in the field.

## **5- Study Objectives:**

- To identify the psychological pressures among preparatory stage teachers.
- To determine the significance of differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of work experience.
- To determine the significance of differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of age.

## **6- Study Methodology:**

Every study follows a methodology chosen by the researcher to address the data, based on the nature of the subject and the objectives they seek to achieve. The methodology is defined as the means through which we can access the truth or a set of truths in any situation, attempting to test its validity in other situations and generalize it (Marwan, 2002, p. 42).

To answer the study's questions and identify the level of psychological pressure among the study sample, we used the descriptive-analytical methodology. Considering that the nature of the study determines the methodology used, the descriptive-analytical methodology aims to describe the

phenomena or specific events after collecting data. It also aims to interpret the phenomena, identify the conditions, and relationships that exist between variables in reality.

The descriptive methodology is a method of describing the subject under study through a valid scientific approach and presenting the results obtained in expressive numerical forms that can be interpreted (Mohammed Sarhan, PhD, p. 46).

### **7- Study Tools:**

The current study relied on the following tool:

#### **- Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire is an important tool in the data collection process, adopted by researchers to encompass all aspects of their subject. It consists of a set of organized, written questions that are posed to the sample participants in order to verify the research hypotheses. The questionnaire is defined as: "A direct technique for posing questions to individuals in a guided manner, where the answer options are predetermined. This allows for quantitative processing aimed at discovering mathematical relationships and making quantitative comparisons." (Raghani & Sengeli, 2020, p. 48)

The questionnaire contained 32 questions and was divided into two axes:

1. General information.
2. Psychological pressure scale.

### **8- Study Sample:**

The sample is one of the fundamental pillars in scientific research, representing a subset of the population intended to verify the research hypotheses. The sample is defined as "a partial group of the study population" (Majid, 2016, p. 29).

In our study, a simple purposive sample was chosen from the total study population. A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed to 50 male and female teachers in some elementary schools in the city of Al-Wadi.

### **9- Statistical Methods Used in the Study:**

To obtain scientifically reliable results, we used statistical methods in our research. Statistics is the real means and tool used to analyze the results based on actual evidence. It is the foundation for research and investigation. In this study, we employed the statistical method of percentages because we believed it would accurately represent the proportions of the participants. This was specifically used for analyzing personal data.

For analyzing the questionnaire results and testing the research hypotheses, we utilized the statistical software package SPSS. We used the Pearson correlation coefficient to assess the validity of the scale, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the reliability of the scale. The independent samples t-test was employed to determine differences in psychological pressure based on gender and marital status. Additionally, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine differences in psychological pressure across different categories of years of experience.

## I- Results and Discussion:

### 1- Presentation of Personal Data Results:

#### - Gender:

- Table (01): Shows the distribution and percentage of the sample by gender (male, female).

Sex	Number	Percentage c/o
Male	25	%50
Female	25	o/50c
Total	50	o/100c

Through our reading of Table (01), we find that the sample taken for our study is equal in number according to the gender variable. We see that the number of males is 25, representing 50%, and the number of females is also 25, representing 50%.

#### - Age:

Table (02):\* Shows the distribution and percentage of the sample by age.

Age	Number	Percentage %
From 25 to 30	4	%8
From 30 to 35	14	%28
More than 35	32	%64
Total	50	%100

Through our reading of Table (02), we find that the sample taken for our study is not equal in number according to the age variable. We see that the number of individuals aged "25-30 years" is 8%, the number of individuals aged "30-35 years" is 28%, and the number of individuals aged "over 35 years" is 64%.

#### - Seniority:

Table (03): Shows the distribution and percentage of the sample by seniority.

Years of Experience	Number	Percentage %
Less than 5 years	3	%6
From 5 to 10	26	%52
More than 10	21	%42
Total	50	%100

Through our reading of Table (03), we find that the sample taken for our study is not equal in number according to the seniority variable. We see that the number of individuals with "less than 5 years" of seniority is 6%, the number of individuals with "5-10 years" of seniority is 52%, and the number of individuals with "10 years and above" of seniority is 42%.

## II- Presentation and Analysis of Study Hypotheses Results:

### - Presentation and Analysis of the General Hypothesis:

**The general hypothesis states:** "The level of psychological stress among preparatory school teachers is high."

This hypothesis was measured using a one-sample t-test on a hypothetical mean, through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS22). The results obtained are shown in the following table:

Table (04): Shows the one-sample t-test on a hypothetical mean for the level of psychological stress among primary school teachers.

Significance level	Degree of freedom	"T" calculated	Hypothetical average	0.000 freedom	
				Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean
0.000	49	-3.335	96	16.07392	88.4200

Through Table (04), we find that the number of individuals equals 50, the mean is 88.4200, with a standard deviation of 16.07392, and the hypothetical mean is 96. The calculated t-value is -3.335, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level with 49 degrees of freedom. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the mean level of psychological stress and the hypothetical mean of psychological stress. We find that the mean level of psychological stress is lower than the hypothetical mean of psychological stress. Therefore, we can say that the level of psychological stress among the study sample is low, and thus it can be concluded: the level of psychological stress among preparatory school teachers is low.

### B- Presentation and Analysis of the Partial Hypotheses Results:

#### - First Partial Hypothesis:

The first partial hypothesis states: "There are statistically significant differences in the psychological stress levels among preparatory teachers attributable to the gender variable (male, female)."

This hypothesis was measured using an independent samples t-test through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS22). The results obtained are shown in the following table:

Table (05): Shows the T-value and its statistical significance for the differences between genders (male, female) in the psychological stress variable.

Significance level	Degree of freedom	"T" calculated	Female sample n=25		Non-function freedom	
			Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean
Non-function	48	-1.738	15.26180	91.4516	16.53739	83.4737

Through Table (05), it is found that the mean of the male group is 83.4737 with a standard deviation of 16.53739. On the other hand, the mean of the female group is 91.4516 with a standard deviation of 15.26180. The calculated value of T equals 1.738, and the significance level (Sig) is 0.089, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the statistical test is not significant at a significance level of 0.05 and 48 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the first alternative hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the gender variable (male, female).

**- The Second Partial Hypothesis:**

"There are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the age variable."

This hypothesis was measured using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS22) software. The results obtained are presented in the following table:

Table (06): The F-value and its statistical significance for differences in age in the variable of psychological pressure.

statistical decision	Level of significance	F value	Standard Deviation	Arithmitic Mean	Number of individuals in the group	Statistical Data Age	Variable
Not statistically significant	0.869	0.141	21.32878	90.2500	4	From 25 to 30	Psychological Pressure
			15.46709	90.000	14	From 30 to 35	
			16.07392	87.500	32	More than 35	

The results obtained from Table (11) indicate that the mean of the group aged "25-30 years" is 90.2500 with a standard deviation of 21.32878. The mean of the group aged "30-35 years" is 90.000 with a standard deviation of 15.46709, while the mean of the group aged "over 35 years" is 87.500 with a standard deviation of 16.07392. The calculated value of "F" is 0.869, and the significance level (Sig) is 0.869, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the statistical test is not significant, indicating that there are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the age variable (25-30 years, 30-35 years, over 35 years).

**- The Third Partial Hypothesis:**

"There are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of seniority."

"This hypothesis was measured using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS22) software. The results obtained are presented in the following table:

Table (07): The F-value and its statistical significance for differences in seniority in the variable of psychological pressure.

Statistical Decision	Level of significance Sig	F value	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Number of individual in the group	Statistical Data Age	Variable
Not statistically significant	0.573	0.564	25.23886	93.000	3	Less than 5 years	Psychological Pressure
			14.87098	90.1154	26	From 5 to 10 years	
			16.07392	88.4200	21	More than 10 years	

The results obtained from Table (07) indicate that the mean of the group with "less than 5 years" of seniority is 93.000 with a standard deviation of 25.23886. The mean of the group with "5-10 years" of seniority is 90.1154 with a standard deviation of 14.87098, while the mean of the group with "10 years and above" of seniority is 88.4200 with a standard deviation of 16.07392. The calculated value of "F" is 0.564, and the significance level (Sig) is 0.573, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the statistical test is not significant, indicating that there are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the seniority variable (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 10 years and above).

### 3- Discussion and Analysis of Hypotheses Results:

#### A. Discussion and Analysis of the General Hypothesis:

The general hypothesis states that the level of psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers is average.

Based on the obtained results, we find that the mean is 16.07392, while the hypothetical mean is 96. The calculated value for the t-test is 33.335, which is statistically significant at a degree of freedom of 49. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the mean of psychological pressure and the hypothetical mean of psychological pressure. Specifically, the mean of psychological pressure is lower than the hypothetical mean, suggesting that the level of psychological pressure among the study sample is low. Therefore, it can be concluded that the level of psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers is low.

This result can be interpreted by considering that teachers in this stage provide a less intense program compared to other stages. Thus, working in this stage provides a kind of relief. It is a preparatory stage for the following year, where teaching is relatively simple. Additionally, teachers in this stage usually have fewer commitments such as exams, meetings, and conferences. All of these factors may contribute to the reduction of psychological pressure among them.

#### B. Discussion and Analysis of the General Hypothesis:

##### • Discussion and Analysis of the First Sub-Hypothesis:

The hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the gender variable (male, female).

The results led to rejecting the first hypothesis and accepting the null hypothesis, which states that there are no statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the gender variable (male, female).

This can be explained by the fact that most modern families have become supportive of females, encouraging them to pursue education, excel in their careers, and hold positions similar to males. Additionally, there is a growing culture of women working and the necessity of their contribution in our Algerian society, which exposes them to the same psychological pressures as male teachers in the shared work environment.

Our study aligns with the findings of previous studies by Rafki (1996) and Yahoom (1991), which also reported no significant differences in psychological pressure among teachers attributed to the gender variable.

• **Discussion and Analysis of the Second Sub-Hypothesis:**

The hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the age variable (25-30 years, 30-35 years, above 35 years).

The results led to rejecting the second sub-hypothesis and accepting the null hypothesis, which states that there are no statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the age variable (25-30 years, 30-35 years, above 35 years).

This result can be explained by the fact that older teachers in this group may have accumulated work pressures due to their excellence and extensive experience in performing their professional duties. They may have developed strategies to cope with and overcome certain challenges that might otherwise cause them stress and pressure. Additionally, younger teachers in this age range come to work with high enthusiasm, motivation, and a drive to excel. They benefit from the guidance and mentorship of older teachers who have more experience and knowledge as senior colleagues or head teachers. Our study aligns with the findings of studies conducted by Al-Rakan (2012) and Yahyawi (2009), which also indicated that psychological pressure is not influenced by age.

• **Discussion and Analysis of the Third Sub-Hypothesis:**

The hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences among preparatory stage teachers in psychological pressure attributed to the variable of teaching experience (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, above 10 years).

The results led to rejecting the third sub-hypothesis and accepting the null hypothesis, which states that there are no statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of teaching experience (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, above 10 years).

This result can be explained by the fact that teaching experience is not a significant factor in the presence of psychological pressures among teachers. Individuals with longer teaching experience may have developed coping mechanisms, flexibility in their performance, and mental maturity to handle any emergent issues, which may contribute to the absence of psychological pressures. Similarly, individuals with shorter teaching experience may benefit from pedagogical training courses

that enhance their performance before and after their appointment. They can also benefit from the interactions and knowledge exchange with more experienced teachers.

Our study aligns with the findings of studies conducted by Al-Rakan (2012) and Khalifa Fadel (2012), which also showed no significant differences in psychological pressure attributed to teaching experience.

## **II- General Conclusion:**

Our study aimed to identify the level of psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers in light of certain variables. After applying the psychological pressure measurement tool, the study yielded the following results:

- The level of psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers is low.
- There are no statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the gender variable (male, female).
- There are no statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the age variable (25-30 years, 30-35 years, above 35 years).
- There are no statistically significant differences in psychological pressure among preparatory stage teachers attributed to the variable of teaching experience (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, above 10 years).

## **Study Recommendations:**

- ❖ Development of guidance and training programs to equip teachers with skills in stress management, enabling them to cope with or overcome pressures.
- ❖ Ensuring suitable physical conditions to facilitate teachers' performance, such as proper ventilation, cleanliness of classrooms, and adequate heating or cooling.
- ❖ Promoting awareness of occupational health, both physical and psychological, among teachers and facilitating the procedures associated with it.
- ❖ Considering and reducing the heavy workload for elementary school teachers, which can contribute to their stress.

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