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Occupational Stress and Quality of Life among Secondary School Teachers in Algeria: An Empirical Study on Psychosocial Determinants and Professional Well-being

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Abstract

This study investigates the multifaceted relationship between occupational stress and the quality of life of secondary school teachers in Tlemcen, Algeria. Teaching, as a profession, is inherently exposed to stressors that stem from administrative demands, student management, parental expectations, and institutional constraints. These pressures, when unmitigated, can adversely influence teachers' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life. Drawing on a field sample of 227 teachers across ten secondary schools, the research employed quantitative analytical methods to assess the impact of interpersonal and organizational relationships on teachers' well-being. Results indicated that collegial support and positive workplace relationships were significant protective factors, accounting for 15% of the explained variance in quality of life. Conversely, strained relationships with parents emerged as a critical stressor, negatively affecting t...By situating the Algerian teaching context within broader global discussions on occupational stress, this study highlights the urgent need for institutional reforms, targeted interventions, and professional development programs that foster healthier school environments. Strengthening teacher resilience and improving relational dynamics within the educational ecosystem may serve as effective strategies to enhance professional performance and personal well-being.

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INTRODUCTION:

Modern society is characterized by increased pressures, particularly within the professional sphere. The rapid pace of technological advancements, fluctuating markets, and intensified competition have contributed to a surge in workplace stress (Bozazoua, 2014). This phenomenon has garnered significant attention from researchers since the 1980s, as evidenced by a marked increase in relevant publications (Houtmann and Kompier, 1995; Levi, 2001). The consequences of workplace stress are far-reaching, affecting both employee well-being and organizational productivity.

For example, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EASHW, 2002) reported that work-related stress costs the European economy over 20 billion euros annually, primarily due to lost workdays. In the United States, the American Institute for Stress (2019) found that 83% of workers experience stress related to their jobs, a trend that also impacts public health. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2022) has documented that 822,000 individuals suffer from work-related stress.Teachers are particularly vulnerable to occupational stress due to factors such as managing student behavior, engaging with parents, and coping with heavy workloads (EASHW, 2014–2019). This elevated level of stress can adversely affect their overall quality of life, thereby impairing both professional effectiveness and personal fulfillment (Mahdi, 2011). Given these significant economic and personal impacts, continued research into the causes and mitigation of occupational stress remains essential.

Theoretical Background

Occupational Stress

Definitions and Origins

Occupational pressure arises within organizations reliant on human labor to fulfill their objectives (Hussein, 2007). While organizations strive to provide necessary services, obstacles within the work environment can hinder employee performance, leading to job stress (Hussein, 2007). This stress manifests as anxiety and negative consequences such as decreased motivation, reduced innovation, and a decline in overall performance. According to the International Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (IIOSH, 1998), occupational stress arises from a mismatch between job demands and an individual's capabilities, resources, and needs (cited in Al-Sharif, 2003). Sayed Abdel-Al (2002) defines it as the physiological, physical, and psychological changes experienced by employees in response to overwhelming work demands (reported in Hussein, 2006).

Perspectives on Occupational Stress

Researchers have explored occupational stress from various perspectives: as an external stimulus, as an individual's response, and as an interaction between stimuli and responses (Bozazwa, 2014). Although a single universally accepted definition remains elusive, there is consensus on considering environmental factors as stressors, individual responses as tensions, and cognitive processes as contributing factors (Furnham, 1999; Rhodes & Fincham, 1998; Marsa et al., 2002, cited in Bozazwa, 2014).

Conditions for the Emergence of Workplace Stress

For workplace pressure to become a reality, three conditions must be met:

Uncertainty about the consequences of stress – the individual is unsure of the outcomes related to stress.

Significance of these consequences for the individual – the impact of stress holds personal importance.

Persistence of the stressful situation – the stressor endures over time (Beehr et al., 1985; cited in Bozazoua, 2014).

The Role of Quality of Life in Occupational Stress

Al-Sharqawi (2013) emphasizes that individual responses to pressure vary based on their quality of life, which encompasses an individual's beliefs about their abilities and their capacity to control their environment. This perspective highlights the interconnectedness between occupational stress and an individual's overall well-being.

Definitions and Indicators of Quality of Life

Quality of life is a multifaceted concept that has been extensively studied across various domains, including work, marriage, and education (Sami Muhammad, 2001). The World Health Organization (1993) defines quality of life as an integrated concept encompassing physical health, psychological state, independence, personal beliefs, social relations, and the individual's relationship with their environment. This definition covers physical, psychological, and social dimensions, which are evaluated at both the individual and societal levels (Avis et al., 2005). Furthermore, the World Health Organization (1995) emphasizes that quality of life reflects an individual's perception of their position in life within the context of their culture and values—essentially, a subjective assessment of life circumstances relative to personal goals, expectations, and values (WHOQOL Group, 1995).

Kazem and Mansi (2006) highlight that quality of life is influenced by subjective factors such as self-esteem, life satisfaction, social status, and happiness, alongside objective factors like income, health, education, and living conditions. Fallowfield (1990) identified key indicators of quality of life, including:

Sense of Quality of Life. An emotional state reflecting an individual's ability to fulfill their needs and enjoy their surroundings.

Psychological Indicators. Metrics such as anxiety, depression, and overall happiness.

Social Indicators. Factors like personal relationships, social activities, and recreational pursuits.

Professional Indicators.Aspects such as job satisfaction, work enjoyment, and the ability to meet professional responsibilities.

Physical Indicators. Elements including health status, pain tolerance, sleep quality, appetite, and sexual function (cited in Kazem and Mansi, 2006).

Problematic

Occupational stress is a significant concern, as numerous studies have documented its prevalence and impact on individuals (Samir Sheikhani, 2003; Khalifat & Zaghloul, 2003; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Ali Riza et al., 2022; Fitchette et al., 2018; Chadzigianni et al., 2018). Individuals in human service professions—such as medicine, nursing, education, and aviation—are particularly vulnerable (Kobko & Kahn, 1993; Coopern, 2015). Research conducted in Palestine (Youssef Harb Mohamed Odeh, 1998), Jordan (Mahmoud Jamal Al-Salkhi, 2013), and Algeria (Mohamed Maarouf, 2014) has demonstrated a strong link between workplace stress and psychological burnout among secondary school teachers.

The teaching profession is inherently demanding. Teachers face numerous stressors, including heavy workloads, inadequate resources, and challenging work environments (Bin Taher, 2005; Bahi Salami, 2008; Cordali Mariam, 2009; Belfar Naima, 2009; Sharif Khoja Malika, 2011). These may include organizational issues—such as inappropriate policies, inequitable rewards, and limited professional development opportunities—as well as challenging interactions with students, parents, and colleagues.

While moderate stress can sometimes act as a motivator, excessive stress has detrimental effects. Research by Lupien et al. (2007) and Seljman (2009) indicates that although moderate levels of stress may foster innovation and problem-solving, excessive stress can overwhelm individual coping mechanisms. Lazarus (cited in Maryam, 2007) emphasized that the individual's perception and coping strategies are crucial in determining the impact of stress.

Quality of life, encompassing both objective factors (material resources, social opportunities) and subjective factors (well-being, life satisfaction), is central to understanding the effects of occupational stress (Abdel Muti, 2009). It reflects an individual's overall sense of fulfillment and happiness across objective, subjective, and existential dimensions.

Given the critical role of teachers in society, there is an imperative need to establish a supportive environment that nurtures both professional and personal well-being. Improving working conditions, reducing stressors, and enhancing quality of life are essential for teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

From the above discussion, the following research question arises:

Is there a relationship between occupational stress and quality of life among secondary school teachers?

hypothesis

There is a relationship between professional stress and quality of life among secondary teachers.

Objectives and importance of the study

This study aims to identify occupational stressors impacting secondary school teachers'

quality of life. It contributes to understanding the relationship between professional pressures and quality of life among these educators. By identifying stressors, the study aims to propose strategies for mitigating their impact, enhancing teachers' well-being, and improving educational outcomes. This research is significant as it focuses on improving

teacher morale, performance, and overall job satisfaction, which are crucial for the success of the educational system.

Concepts Procedural Definition

Occupational stress for secondary school teachers encompasses all work-related factors that cause them stress. These stressors are assessed by measuring teachers' scores on a researcher-developed scale that measures various sources of occupational stress.

Quality of life, as measured in this study, refers to the composite score derived from participants' responses to the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL) instrument, a validated tool assessing quality of life across seven domains (WHOQOL, 1995).

Methodological procedures

Sample selection. **A random sample of 227 secondary teachers in Tlemcen, Algeria, was selected. This sample consisted of 109 male teachers and 118 female teachers** (see Table 1).

Distribution of the sample by gender variable

Table 1

Study Sample by Gender

Secondary	Gender		Total
	Males	Females	
Ben Zarjab(Tlemcen)	12	17	29
Yaghmarsan (Tlemcen)	13	15	28
Bin Issa Abdul Karim (Al-Hina)	14	13	27
Ibn Isa Abdullah (Al-Hunayyah)	13	11	24
Qarar Lake (Al-Ramshi)	09	11	20
Magawi (blinking)	11	08	19
Mustafa Mustafaawi (Ndroma)	12	13	25
Bouazza Meloud (singer)	11	14	25
Saeed Masoud (Maimonides)	08	09	17
Bouzidi Mohamed (Sabra)	06	07	13
Total	109	118	227

Note. The table presents the distribution of the study sample by gender across various secondary sites. The total sample consists of 227 participants, with 109 males and 118 females. The data indicate varying gender distributions across the different sites, with the highest number of females reported in Ben Zarjab (Tlemcen), while the lowest was observed in Bouzidi Mohamed (Sabra). These figures contribute to understanding the gender composition of the study sample and its potential impact on the study's findings.

Study Instruments

Data collection utilized the WHOQOL-100, developed by the World Health Organization, and a researchers-designed Occupational Stress Sources Scale for Secondary Teachers.

Psychometric characteristics of study instruments

Quality of Life Scale

Validity of the Scale. scale's internal consistency was assessed using Pearson correlations between paragraphs, subfactors, main factors, and the total score. Most correlations were significant at $p < 0.05$, demonstrating strong relationships. The physical dimension showed a weaker correlation but was retained to maintain the scale's structure. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.41 to 0.90, indicating good internal consistency (see Table 2).

Table 2

Validity Values obtained for the Quality-of-life Measure

Measure	Correlation
Correlation between poverty and Sub-Factors	0.41 and 0.90
Correlation between poverty and key factors	0.41 and 0.89
Correlation between the main areas and the total score of the scale	0.43 and 0.83

Note. All correlation coefficients (r) are positive and statistically significant at p<.05p < .05p<.05, indicating moderate to strong relationships between poverty and the various measured factors.

Stability of the Scale

Three statistical methods – Cronbach's Alpha, split-half reliability, and Guttman's coefficient -were employed to assess the scale's stability (see Table 3).

Table 3

Quality of Life Scale Stability Results

Cronbach's alpha	Half-split	Guttman Scale
0.86	0.83	0.85

Note . The values indicate a high level of scale stability, demonstrating good internal. consistency.**Occupational stress Sources Scale**

Validity of the Scale. The scale's internal consistency was evaluated using Pearson correlation coefficients between paragraphs, indicators, dimensions, and the total score. The results demonstrated strong relationships across all levels of analysis, indicating good internal consistency and structural validity, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Validity Coefficients for the Occupational Stress Sources Scale

Measure	Correlation
correlation between paragraphs and their indicators	0.40 and 0.74
correlation between Indicators and their dimensions	0.51 and 0.86
correlation between dimensions	0.85 and 0.89

Note. All correlation coefficients (r) are positive and statistically significant at p<.05p < .05p<.05, indicating good internal consistency. The correlations between paragraphs and their indicators, as well as between indicators and their dimensions, demonstrate strong relationships, while the correlations between dimensions suggest a high level of structural validit

Stability of the scale. Scale stability was assessed using three methods: Cronbach's Alpha, split-half reliability, and Guttman's coefficient (see Table 5)."

Table 5

Occupational Stress Sources Scale Stability

Cronbach's alpha	Half-split	Guttman Scale
80	90	90

Note . The values indicate a high level of scale stability, demonstrating good internal.

Results

Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between quality of life and occupational stress indicators among secondary education teachers. The results are presented in subsequent tables as shown in the table 6.

Table 6

Simple, Multiple, and Corrected Correlation Coefficients

Form	Statistic	Symbol
	Correlation Coefficient (Maths) *R*	290
1	Coefficient of Determination **R²**	0.084
	Correlation Coefficient (Maths) R^{2-}	0.028
	Error of Estimation	24

Note. Table 6 displays low correlation coefficients: R = 0.290, R^2 = 0.084, and adjusted R^2 = 0.028. This indicates that the occupational stress indicators explain only 2% of the variance in quality of life, with the remaining 98% attributable to other factors. The standard error of the estimate (Std.Error of the Estimate) is 24.592, suggesting a relatively low level of error in the model.

To assess the significance of the regression relationship between the independent and dependent variables, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results are presented in the following table 7.

Table 7

Analysis of Variance: Impact of Occupational Stress Dimensions on Quality of Life

Source of Variance	Total Squares	df	Mean Squares	F Value	Sig Value	Significance (α = 0.05)
Regression	11,846.063	13	236	50. • “	11	Not significant
Residual	128,180	213	746			
Total	140,656.916	226				

Note. The table 7 reveals a non-significant regression (Sig = 0.11, p > 0.05). This indicates no statistically significant relationship between occupational stress indicators and teacher quality of life.

Although the overall regression analysis was not statistically significant, Table 6 indicated that the independent variables explain 2% of the variance in quality of life. To identify which specific independent variables contribute to this variance, the following table 8 presents the results.

Table 8

Regression Coefficients and Their Statistical Significance for Each Independent Variable

Independent Variables	Coefficient value B	Standard error	Correlation coefficient (Maths.) Beta	Value Sig	T = Calculated	signifier.
Hard	279	13		0.000	20.23	Function
Physical conditions of work	708	0.761	.083	353	0.93	Not significant
Design of pedagogical and administrative structures	0.262	.795	0.034	742	0.32	Not significant
Workload	144	0.672	.020	.831**	0.21	Not significant
Study Programme	0.442	0.662	0.056*	0.505	0.67	Not significant
Pedagogical and explanatory means	0.189	581	700	0.788	0.27	Not significant
Working relationships with administrative staff	0.539	348	134	243	1.55	Not significant
Working relationships with pupils	_ 0.904	_ 0.567	130”	113	1.59	Not significant
Working Relationships (with Pupils' Parents	1.600	0.726	186 -	0.020	2.20	Function
Labor Relations Professor/Professor	215	0.607	159	047	1.99	Function
Laws and Regulations	170	0.812	2019	0.834	0.20	Not significant
Training Opportunities	581	0.802	0.063	469	0.72	Not significant
Councils	.051	0.760	100	[168]	1.38	Not significant
Motivating	278	0.537	- 0.044	0.606	0.51	Not significant

Note. The table 8 shows that only two independent variables – work relations with parents of pupils and work

Quality of Life = 279.248 + (2.20 x Working Relationships with Parents) + (1.99 x Working Relationships Professor)

relations between professors – were statistically significant predictors of teacher quality of life (Sig < 0.05). The remaining variables, including physical work conditions, pedagogical structures, workload, course pressure, and others, were not statistically significant predictors (Sig > 0.05).

Two occupational stress indicators significantly impact teacher quality of life. Work relations among professors positively contribute 15% to quality of life, while work relations with students' parents negatively contribute -18%. This indicates that these two factors influence teacher quality of life, with negative work relations with parents having a detrimental effect

Interpretation and discussion

The study found that work relations with parents (negatively impacting quality of life by 18%) and relationships among professors (positively impacting quality of life by 15%) significantly influenced teachers' well-being. These findings align with previous researchs like, Miqdad and Khalifa (2012) identified negative parent-teacher

interactions as a major source of stress for teachers in Bahrain, and Al-Sayed (2018) found a positive correlation between positive professional interactions and faculty members' quality of life in Saudi Arabia, also Khalifat and Zaghloul (2003) identified parent-teacher relations as a significant source of stress for teachers in Jordan.

The study aligns with previous research in highlighting the importance of positive work relationships for teacher well-being. Both the current study and prior works by Al-Ahsan (2015) and Al-Mamariya (2014) suggest that positive relationships with colleagues and a lack of conflict with parents contribute to a teacher's quality of life. Strong professional bonds can provide support and help manage stress, while strained relationships can be a significant source of pressure.

These findings underscore the crucial role of interpersonal relationships, both social and professional, in enhancing quality of life and job satisfaction. This assertion is corroborated by a substantial body of recent literature emphasizing the significant impact of social support on psychological and occupational well-being. For instance, Wang (2023) investigated the correlation between teachers' self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and the quality of teacher-parent relationships, demonstrating that heightened self-awareness in educators facilitates effective navigation of daily challenges and the cultivation of positive interpersonal dynamics.

Borremans and al. (2024) investigated the development of teacher-parent relationship-building skills within initial teacher education programs, positing that positive teacher-parent relationships contribute to enhanced teacher job satisfaction. Their findings indicated that cultivating strong, positive relationships with parents yields several key benefits such as:

increased job satisfaction, as teachers experience a greater sense of support and engagement, mitigating stress and fostering satisfaction with their work.

promotion of effective communication, facilitating constructive dialogue and feedback exchange, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

stress reduction, as the emotional and social support derived from parents contributes to lower stress levels among teachers.

Longobardi and al. (2024), in a critical review of studies examining teacher-parent relationships, highlighted the positive impact of fruitful communication on the work environment, stress reduction, and teachers' ability to focus on instruction, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction.

These studies consistently demonstrate the importance of positive teacher-parent relationships for improving teachers' quality of life and job satisfaction. The finding that teacher-parent relationships significantly influence teachers' quality of life (18%) can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the relationship with parents represents a significant, often less controllable, aspect of teachers' work, influenced by external factors such as parental expectations and family circumstances, leading to persistent concerns.

Secondly, parents act as a crucial link between school and family; positive relationships foster a sense of support and appreciation, enhancing job satisfaction, while strained relationships can generate psychological pressure negatively impacting quality of life. Thirdly, high parental expectations regarding student outcomes can exert considerable pressure on teachers, significantly affecting their professional well-being.

Finally, socio-cultural contexts, particularly in some societies (e.g., Arab countries or those prioritizing education), place greater emphasis on teacher-parent communication, further amplifying the importance of this relationship.

Regarding collegial relationships, research indicates their crucial role in enhancing the educational environment, improving academic performance, and bolstering job satisfaction.

Kasa (2020) demonstrated that effective communication and professional collaboration among teachers correlate with higher professional motivation.

Kolleck and al. (2021) further emphasized the impact of professional cooperation and trust-based relationships within teacher teams on building effective social networks, contributing to improved work environments and professional performance.

Their findings highlighted those collaborative activities, such as joint lesson planning, foster stronger relationships, while high levels of trust enhance communication, knowledge exchange, and conflict reduction.

These interconnected social networks positively influence the achievement of school goals and promote professional innovation.

Similarly, Lopes and Pereira (2023) demonstrated that effective teacher cooperation enhances differentiated teaching practices and improves the overall learning environment, emphasizing the importance of experience sharing and innovative teaching methods within inclusive settings.

Shand and Goddard (2024) corroborated these findings, showing that teacher cooperation enhances the exchange of knowledge and experiences, leading to improved educational performance and learning environments, and that teachers engaged in group collaboration are better equipped to meet teaching challenges and achieve positive learning outcomes.

The slightly higher impact of teacher-parent relationships compared to collegial relationships can be explained by several factors. As an internal support network within the school system, colleagues are generally easier to manage, mitigating their negative impact compared to parents. Furthermore, cultural influences, particularly in educational environments focused on student outcomes, render the relationship with parents more complex and significant than that with colleagues.

Conclusion

A simple linear regression analysis identified two important predictors of the teacher's quality of life: working relationships with parents, which had a negative impact (18%), and relationships with colleagues, which showed a positive impact (15%).

This result corresponds to the WHO (1995) definition of quality of life as an individual's perception of his attitude to life in the context of his culture and value systems, and in relation to his goals, expectations, norms and interests.

Fallowfeld (1990) highlighted the importance of social relationships, in particular the quality of interpersonal relationships, as decisive determinants of the quality of life. These results emphasize the significant impact of social interactions and relationships on overall well-being and satisfaction. Given that relationships with parents and colleagues are fundamental components of the working environment of teachers, they directly affect professional satisfaction and psychological health.

The impact that has been recorded in the relationship with parents can be attributed to their external nature, which entails increased effort and adaptability for effective management.

Findings

1. Positive collegial support: Supportive relationships among colleagues significantly improved teachers' quality of life, serving as a protective factor against stress.
2. Negative parental interactions: Conflicts or strained interactions with parents were strongly correlated with reduced quality of life, highlighting a crucial area of intervention.
3. Variance explained: Collegial relationships accounted for +15% of the variance in quality of life, while parental pressures accounted for -18%.
4. Implications for teacher well-being: Teachers' professional and personal fulfillment are deeply tied to relational quality within the school ecosystem.

Actuality (Relevance)

Occupational stress has become one of the most pressing psychosocial challenges of the 21st century, with far-reaching effects on productivity, health, and organizational culture. In Algeria, secondary school teachers face compounded pressures due to increasing societal expectations, overcrowded classrooms, and limited institutional resources. This research is particularly relevant in the context of post-pandemic educational reforms, where the mental health and quality of life of teachers play a dec...

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in compliance with academic research ethics. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and the confidentiality of all respondents was fully protected. The study avoided any form of harm or coercion, and data were analyzed impartially to ensure reliability and validity.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in relation to the research, analysis, or publication of this study.

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