

Separate But not Equal: Stressors in the Work of Arab Teachers in Israel

Yaffa Buskila

Orot Israel College of Education, Rehovot, Israel

Tarek Suliman, Dan Buskila, Ismael Abu Saad

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel

Teaching is a stressful profession characterizing the work of teachers. The Neoliberal reforms have added a further burden on teachers' work, increasing stress at work and resulting in negative health, occupational and economic consequences. The aims of the study were to examine the perceptions of stress factors among Arab teachers in Israel, and the relationship between Arab teachers' stress factors by types of school (elementary, middle school, and high school) and gender. Stress factors were measured by using an instrument developed by Ablin et al. (2010). Three hundred forty-two public school Arab teachers participated in the study, of whom 230 were female and 112 were male. One hundred twenty-five worked in elementary schools, 78 in middle schools, and 130 in high schools. The most stressful factors among Arab teachers were "busy schedule and lack of flexibility", "the student composition of the class", and "conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities". Significant statistical differences were found between teachers' stress factors by gender and school type. Female teachers rated stress factors "the student composition of the class" and "conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities" higher than male teachers. Elementary teachers rated stress factors "student parents", "lack of proper physical conditions", and "requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty" higher than high school teachers. Middle school teachers rated stress factors "school management", "general supervisor", and "requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty" higher than primary school teachers. The leading stressor in this study is a result of educational disparities between Jews and Arabs. Israel formally purports to embrace the liberal responsibility of providing educational and development opportunities to all of its citizens, enabling them to actualize their full potential as human beings.

Keywords: stressors in schools, Arab teachers, equality, Israel

Introduction

The education system in the State of Israel is divided into a Hebrew education system (which in turn is divided into sub-systems—the state system, the state religious system, and the ultra-Orthodox system) and an

Yaffa Buskila, Ph.D., Lecturer, Management and Organization of Educational Systems, Orot Israel College of Education, Rehovot, Israel.

Tarek Suliman, M.A., Graduate Student, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel.

Dan Buskila, M.D., Professor, Internal Medicine H, Soroka Medical Center, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel.

Ismael Abu Saad, Ph.D., Professor, Education Department, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel.

Arab education system. The school system differs in language of instruction, curriculum (particularly in the humanities and social sciences), and budget allocations. Although the subdivisions in the educational system give it an appearance of educational pluralism, an examination of the policy and curriculum shows that these subdivisions exist for the purpose of establishing physical, ideological, and socio-economic barriers between the Jewish majority and Palestinian Arab minority (Abu-Saad, 2015; Al-Haj, 1995; Halabi & Dabah, 2020; Kraus & Yonay, 2018). Despite the fact that Israeli society is heterogeneous, due not only to the split between Arab and Jewish cultures, but also to the existence of a variety of Jewish groups who immigrated to Israel from many different countries, the Israeli education system remains mono-cultural instead of being multicultural (Mar'i, 1978; Al-Haj, 1995; Abu-Saad, 2011; 2001; Kraus & Yonay, 2018). The goal of multicultural education is to provide people from a particular culture with the information and skills essential to their functioning in the society in which they live, as well as in other cultural frameworks within the same broad political and social environment (Mar'i, 1978; Abu-Saad, 2001). Indeed, an examination of the educational hierarchy, teaching staff, and curricula of the Hebrew education system shows a clear bias toward Western European ("Ashkenazi") culture rather than non-Western cultures, such as those of North African and Middle Eastern Jews ("Mizrahi" = "Oriental"). The curriculum in Jewish schools tends to ignore the culture, history, and contributions of these "Mizrahis" and other non-Western Jewish groups. It also tends to largely ignore, or provide only minimal exposure to, the Arabic language and culture (Swirski, 1999). The educational system of the Arabs has been, and continues to be, determined by a set of political criteria which they have no say in formulating (Mar'i, 1978; Al-Haj, 1995; Swirski, 1999; Abu-Saad, 2011; 2015; 2019; Kraus & Yonay, 2018). Lack of attention to Arab culture and its current social and political concerns (Abu-Saad, 2011) reduces the relevance of the educational experience for Arab teachers and students to the point that they feel a sense of alienation from their own schools (Mar'i, 1978).

The recruitment of teaching staff in the Arab education system is determined primarily by political considerations. The employment of teachers, principals, and supervisors is ultimately in the hands of the Ministry of Education, so that the final word in deciding who is qualified to work for it does not belong to the local Arab education system; training and certificates alone do not suffice for Arab citizens in Israel to receive a teaching position. Before being hired by the education system, they are required to undergo—without their knowledge—a security classification, and to receive a secret stamp from the General Security Services (GSS) (Abu-Saad, 2019; Agbaria, 2018; Sa'ar, 2001; Yanko, 2020). In positions that require an open tender, such as teaching and managerial/supervisory positions, candidates in Jewish schools are only required to present certificates attesting to their education, training and experience only. However, in the Arab school system, the requirements are different. Without the approval of the GSS representative—which is based on a GSS security check—it is impossible to appoint a teacher, principal, or supervisor in an Arab school (Agbaria, 2018; Lustick, 1980; Yanko, 2020; Al-Haj, 1995; Sa'ar, 2001).

Due to these procedures of employment and promotion, despite the appearance of recognizing and taking into account cultural differences by establishing separate Arab schools, the Arab education system is actually not, as Freeland puts it, an example of "local control over education and true multiculturalism" (Freeland, 1996, p. 182). Rather, the Arab education system was and still is governed by the Jewish majority and by a system of political criteria which Arabs do not participate in formulating at all (Abu-Saad, 2019; Agbaria, 2018; Mar'i, 1978; Al-Haj, 1995; Halabi & Dabah, 2020; Kraus & Yonay, 2018; Swirski, 1999). Mar'i (1985) described the conditions for appointing, promoting, and dismissing Arab teachers and educators:

In Arab society in Israel, the concept “kosher” (meaning “legitimate”) is often heard. If you are not “kosher”, you will not get a job and/or will not be promoted. Being “Kosher” is not a professional attribute defined by skills and learning; rather, it is political. You must be a “Yes-Man” who not only accepts the status quo but also strengthens and justifies it. Teachers and educators are selected for their positions based on considerations that are more political than professional. (p. 34)

An examination of the structure of the education system—from the level of goals and curriculum to the level of infrastructure, facilities, and teaching staff—reveals the significant role it plays in putting Palestinian Arabs in their “proper” place within the social, economic, and political hierarchy in Israel.

Of course, this situation has a direct impact on, and implications for, the functioning of teachers in the Arab education system in Israel in general, and on the stressors that affect them in particular (Eres & Antanasosk, 2011). This article aims to examine the stressors among Arab teachers in primary, middle, and high schools in northern Israel.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical basis for this study is the cognitive theory on coping with psychological stress developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). According to this model, psychological stress develops when one feels an imbalance between the demands of his/her surroundings and his/her personal resources. This cognitive model is based on the interaction between the individual and his/her environment. Stress is not objective, but rather is subjective; and it is the interpretation attributed to it by the individual that makes it objective for him/her. This interpretation depends on the individual’s cultural background, gender and age. A person’s experience of stress is shaped by his/her personality, life events and ingrained cultural conditioning (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Stressors in the Work of Arab Teachers in Israel

Teaching is considered a stressful profession worldwide (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Jepson & Forrest, 2006), as well as in the Jewish (Buskila & Chen Levy, 2020) and Arab (Hadad Haj-Yahya & Rudensky, 2018) public education systems. The term “stress” refers to the disruption of a person’s state of balance due to a physical or mental threat (Kaufman, 2007). Stress is also defined as the interaction between a person and his/her environment, in which he senses it to be making excessive emotional and personal demands on his/her resources. As a result, the gap between the person’s ability and resources disrupts his/her daily functioning and the quality of his/her work (Ayub, Hussain, & Ghulamullah, 2018). Psychological stress is not an objective phenomenon (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); it can vary from one person to another, and may also change in accordance with place and time (Griffith, 2004). There are many causes of stress, including: unclear expectations, lack of resources, dissatisfaction, working late hours (Eres & Atanasosk, 2011), work overload and work intensity (Buskila & Chen Levy, 2020). Unsatisfactory work conditions are also a source of stress for teachers, and these may include low wages, a low professional self-image and a lack of opportunities for advancement and promotion (Jarvis, 2002). All of these factors can impair teachers’ motivation and ability to cope with professional challenges at work.

The neoliberal ideology promoted by the World Bank in the late 1980s, with the aim of improving peoples’ lives, has penetrated education systems throughout the world, including Israel. It followed three central principles: the principle of equality, which facilitates quality education for all (e.g., the poor, the rich, those with special needs); the principle competition on standardized tests; and the principle of economic efficiency. Local authorities were requested to encourage the establishment of private schools that were supposed to

encourage competition, raise standards and allow students more choice in terms of schools they could choose to attend. They believed that this competition would encourage teachers to improve public education. According to the principle of economic efficiency, education was required to be of good quality while also being inexpensive and providing excellent teachers for all types of student populations (Carnoy, 1995). Local authorities' influence in educational matters was expanded and also encompassed the pedagogical field. Principals were required to be accountable not only to the Ministry of Education but also to local authorities, resulting in principals feeling that they have "two bosses" (Addi-Racah & Gonen, 2013), which in itself contributed to increased pressure.

The education systems in many countries followed the neoliberal ideology and carried out reforms accordingly. Among them are USA, UK, Spain, New Zealand, France, Chile, Colombia, Austria, and Israel. These reforms led to major changes in education systems (Nir, Ben David, Bogler, Inbar, & Zohar, 2016). They greatly added to the workloads of teachers and principals (Cuban, 2006), and led to the establishment of standardized tests and to competitiveness in the national and international tests. The changes, the work overload and the competition to improve student achievement have greatly increased the pressure on teachers and principals, in addition to the inherent pressures of their work. The reforms carried out in Israel, *Ofek Hadash* and *Oz LaTmura*, also led to significant changes in the structure and nature of teachers' weekly schedules. The amount of time they are required spend at school increased by 30%. Primary school teachers are required to work 36 hours a week: 31 teaching hours and five planning and preparation hours (Ministry of Education, 2020). The planning and preparation hours are to be used for preparation for classes, preparing worksheets and assignments for students, assessment of students' achievements, writing and checking tests, and also planning trips and cultural and social events, such as ceremonies and parties. During these hours, teachers are also supposed to hold work meetings with the school principal, colleagues, school counselors/psychologists, students, and parents, and to deal with unexpected issues that may arise (Buskila & Chen Levy, 2020).

In middle schools, teachers are required to work 36 hours a week, of which 27 are teaching hours and nine are planning and preparation hours. In high schools, teachers are required to work 40 hours a week, of which 30 hours are teaching hours and 10 are planning and preparation hours (Taub, 2015). This number of planning and preparation hours is inadequate for all the preparations required of teachers, and as such, results in the exploitation of the teaching staff. A sample of teachers in the Israeli education system ($N = 321$) who participated in a study regarding stressors in their work (Buskila & Chen Levy, 2020) reported that the primary stress factor across the sample as a whole, and in each type of school separately, was their tight teaching schedule with only two short (15-20 minute) breaks per day. These minimal breaks did not allow teachers enough time to refresh themselves between classes, eat, drink, or have bathroom breaks. Schechter (2015) wrote on this topic, stating that it could harm teachers' health.

This tight teaching schedule also explains the third most common stressor to emerge in the study—the conflict between home and school demands, stemming from the inadequate number of hours allotted to teachers for the necessary planning and preparations (Buskila & Chen Levy, 2020). This was confirmed by teachers' reports in Karsenti and Collins' (2013) study, stating that "there is too much work to do...and too heavy a workload" (p. 145). In addition, primary school supervisors and middle school principals, who represent the long arm of the Ministry of Education and its emphasis on improving student achievement, add to the pre-existing pressures experienced by teachers (Nir et al., 2016; Buskila & Chen Levy, 2020).

Teachers' work has stress-promoting properties for a variety of reasons: they have to work with many

people—other teachers, a principal, supervisors, instructors etc., and they are required to maintain good interpersonal relationships with all of them (Addi-Raccah & Gonen, 2013). They are required to demonstrate high levels of alertness and concentration. In addition, the school setting requires a broad range of emotional engagement from its employees (James & Vince, 2001); however, most school principals prioritize their administrative work (Grissom, Loeb, & Mitani, 2013) over addressing emerging interpersonal aspects in the school demanding their attention. Teachers have to deal with crises and conflicts between students, parents, teammates, and various school stakeholders (Crick, Barr, Green, & Pedder, 2017). They are required to adhere to a tight and intense schedule, cover the amounts of material determined by the Ministry of Education's curriculum, stick to the timetable and transition from class to class, and supervise recess times even if crises with or between children occur during breaks or lessons. This is a challenge requiring the mustering of significant mental resources on a daily basis. Stress is also associated with teachers' working relationships with parents, as they are required to respond to their demands and desires as well as to those of other school community members (Kyriacou, 2001).

Stress can also, of course, stem from students. In Buskila and Chen Levy's (2020) study, the second most severe stress factor found was students' difficulties related to their learning abilities, and aggressive, violent and/or hyperactive behavior (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Ayub et al., 2018). Teachers work with a wide range of students of various cultural origins, with a wide range of needs (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). They are required not only to teach and educate, but also to offer a wide range of programs, activities, ideas, goals, and objectives, while having very little freedom to decide what to teach (Ayub et al., 2018). Technology, which has penetrated school life, has also become an integral part of teaching, causing quite a few changes and placing new demands on teachers (T. Cox, Boot, S. Cox, & Harrison, 1988) thus increasing stress (Kniveton, 1991).

Challenges in the Arab Education System

Despite the increase and improvement in infrastructure and facilities in Arab schools over the years, this domain continues to have one of the most blatant gaps between the Jewish and Arab education systems. In the Arab education system, there is a shortage of classrooms and sports halls, and existing buildings are deficient (Hadad Haj-Yahya & Rudensky, 2018). In addition, the Arab student is discriminated against in terms of budget compared to the Jewish student, receiving only 78%-88% of the budget allocated to each student in the Jewish schools (Arlozorov, 2016). This causes dissatisfaction and alienation in Arab society and contributes to a lower level of achievement in the Arab as compared to the Jewish education system. The dissatisfaction and alienation are further exasperated by the curricular goals, values, and content in Arab schools, which are determined by Jewish policy-makers with no input from Arab educators and parents (Abu-Saad, 2011; 2015; Halabi & Dabah, 2020).

Arab society also suffers from tensions between its traditional cultural and political identity on the one hand and the values of Western and Israeli Zionist society on the other. The teaching profession in the Arab education system in Israel is circumscribed by the centralized, Jewish-dominated formulation of its educational aims, goals, and curricula, and a lack of autonomy under the Ministry of Education's rigorous supervision (Abu-Saad, 2018; 2019; Swirski, 1990). The teacher education and training, hiring of teachers, principals, and supervisory staff ultimately lies in the hands of the central Ministry of Education office. These processes have always been determined by political considerations that promote Jewish/Zionist aims, values, and narratives, often in contradiction to Palestinian Arab identity, values, and narratives (Abu-Saad, 2011; 2015; 2018; 2019; Al-Haj,

1995; Ettinger, 2004; Lustick, 1980). These factors all contribute to the pressures faced by teachers in the Arab sector, even before we proceed to contemplate the essential difficulties that exist in the teaching profession.

Consequences of Stress in Teachers' Work

Stress in teachers' work has many negative consequences as well as high costs both professionally and healthwise (Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2008). A recent study in Israel found a high prevalence (9.3%) of teachers with fibromyalgia syndrome related to stress at work, compared to the rest of the population (2.4%) (Buskila, Buskila, Giris, & Ablin, 2019). Other studies show back pain syndromes among teachers, including lower back pain (Bandpei, Ehsani, Behtash, & Ghanipour, 2014) and neck pain (Verma & Madahavi, 2017). Stress can also cause headaches, sleeping problems, digestive problems and fatigue (Chan, 1998; Cichon & Koff, 1980; Dunham, 1992; Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin, & Telschow, 1990). In addition, it can lead to depression, anger, anxiety, frustration, fear, self-blaming, difficulty in concentrating, and memory loss (Chan, 1998; Esteve, 1989; Fimian, 1984; Galloway, Panckhurst, Boswell, Boswell, & Green, 1984). Stress is detrimental to the quality of teaching, reducing commitment to the profession, lowering teachers' efficiency and reducing their job satisfaction (Cherniss, 1980; Niessen, Mader, Stride, & Jimmieson, 2017; Jepson & Forrest, 2006). It also harms the emotional well-being of teachers, and that of the school as a whole. As a result, student achievements are compromised, causing teacher absenteeism and even resignation (Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986) due to stress-related burnout (Jepson & Forrest, 2006) and abandonment of the profession (Karsenti & Collin, 2013).

Teacher burnout is a cause for concern in many countries worldwide. In England, the teaching profession appears at the top of the list of stressful jobs and 44% of teachers leave the profession after the first few years (Dolton & Van der Klaauw, 1995). In Switzerland, Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand, 80% of teachers complain about stress and heavy workloads (Schneider-Levy, 2016). In the US, Israel, and Germany, about 50% of teachers leave the profession after up to five years, and, in Canada, the data from 2013 show that about 50% of teachers quit in the first two years due to the heavy workload and burnout (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). In Israel, the shortage of teachers is a serious problem. In May 2019, the Israel State Comptroller reported a shortage of about 3,000 teachers in the Israeli education system (Dettl, 2019). The financial cost of teachers' leaving the profession is high. It involves finding substitute teachers, training them and adapting them to the needs of the specific school and the entire system. In 2004, this cost was estimated by the American Organization of Excellence and by the OECD at about three billion dollars a year (OECD, 2005), and this cost is probably even higher today.

Although there is quite a bit of research dealing with stress in teachers' work, there is not enough information regarding stressors in the work of Arab teachers in Israel. Many countries have implemented reforms that have been influenced by the neoliberal ideology, and these reforms have led to changes in their education systems that have increased the workload and pressure on teachers (Cuban, 2006), including in the Arab sector in Israel. This study will contribute to understanding the impact of the neoliberal reforms on the Arab sector in Israel and the stressors in Arab teachers' work especially in light of the fact that schools are now required to be accountable to both the Ministry of Education and to local authorities, while the demands of these two parties are sometimes contradictory (Nir et al., 2016).

Research Objectives

1. To examine the perceptions of Arab teachers regarding stressors in their work in primary schools, middle schools, and high schools.
2. To explore the connections between stressors in the Arab schools and the type of school (primary, middle, or high), as well as gender, religion, level of religiosity, seniority at work, marital status and position in the school.
3. Examine whether there is a statistically significant difference between genders in terms of stressors.

Methods

Sample and Study Population

The sample was drawn from Arab teachers working in the Arab school system in the Northern District of Israel. Primary, middle, and high schools were included.

Instrumentations

The instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire on stressors developed by Ablin et al. (2010) and adapted for the Israeli education system by Buskila et al. (2019). The questionnaire included 12 items designed to measure stressors in schools, such as school administration, the general supervisor, the professional supervisors, students and their parents, peers/colleagues, conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities, the student composition of the class, lack of proper physical conditions, etc. Participants were asked to rate the stressors on a Likert scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being lowest and 10 highest. In addition, the questionnaire collected teachers' demographic data, including: age, gender, marital status, seniority in the school, education, number of weekly work hours at the school, type of school, religion, and level of religiosity.

Research Process

A research assistant studying for an M.A. in the Department of Education at Ben Gurion University went from school to school and introduced himself to the teachers and explained the goals of the research. The questionnaires were given out in the teachers' lounges. Study participants were informed that they could terminate their participation in the study at any time, and they were also assured that their identifying details would be kept confidential and would be used for the purpose of this study only.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire data were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS software, in accordance with the research questions. Phase 1 included descriptive statistics, distributions, averages, and standard deviations of the entire set of research variables. Phase 2 included a *t*-test to detect differences in stressors by demographic variables.

Results

In total, 342 teachers took part in the study, of whom 230 were women (67%) and 112 were men (33%). One hundred twenty five worked in primary schools, 78 worked in middle schools, and 130 worked in high schools. Additional information about the study participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Teachers by Demographic Variables and Type of School

Demographic variables		Total (N = 342)	Distribution of teachers by school		
			Primary school (N = 125)	Middle school (N = 78)	High school (N = 130)
Gender	Men	(33%) 112	36	29	47
	Women	(67%) 230	89	58	83
Age	29-20	(6%) 22	3	1	18
	39-30	(25%) 86	31	24	31
	49-40	(46%) 156	60	42	54
	59-50	(20%) 67	28	19	20
	60 ⁺	(3%) 11	3	1	7
Education	B.A.	(53%) 181	72	43	66
	M.A.	(45%) 153	48	42	63
	Ph.D.	(2%) 5	5	1	1
	other	(1%) 3	1	1	0
Religion	Muslim	(83%) 293	116	77	90
	Christian	(17%) 59	9	10	40
Level of religiosity	Religious	(60%) 206	79	56	71
	Non-religious	(40%) 136	46	31	59
	Role at school				
	Homeroom teacher	(44%) 152	67	39	46
	Subject teacher	(51%) 174	13	43	78
	other	(5%) 16	5	5	6
Seniority in the school (years)	1-4	(16%) 55	15	8	32
	5-10	(34%) 117	27	32	58
	11-20	(33%) 111	47	36	28
	21 ⁺	(17%) 59	36	11	12

Figure 1 presents the stressors, from the most to the least stressful, as rated by the total sample. The most stressful factors were the “lack of proper physical conditions”, “the student composition of the class”, and “busy schedule and lack of flexibility”.

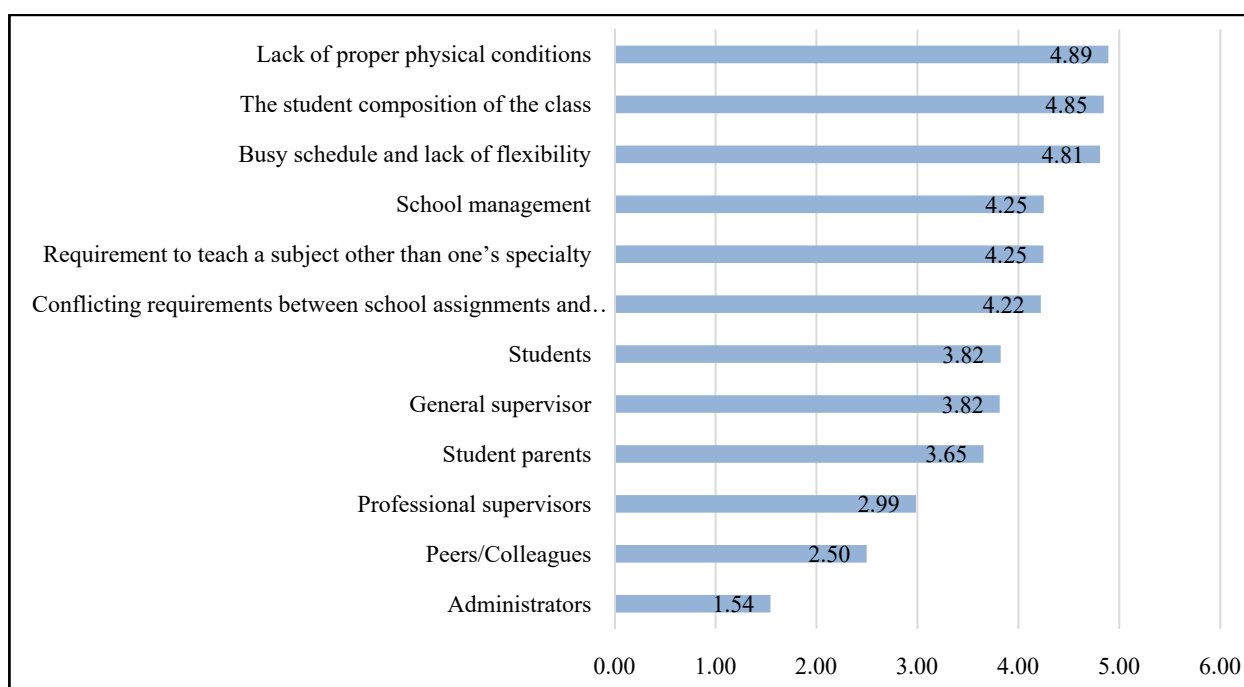


Figure 1. Rating of stressors in teachers' work, from highest to lowest (N = 342).

Tables 2, 3, and 4 present the average ranking of stressors in by school type.

Table 2

Ranking of Stressors Affecting Arab Teachers in Primary Schools (N = 125)

Stressors	Average score	SD
The student composition of the class	5.11	2.83
Busy schedule and lack of flexibility	4.83	2.01
Lack of proper physical conditions	4.46	2.74
Conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities	4.22	3.14
Students	4.20	2.97
Students' parents	3.92	2.80
School management	3.70	3.09
Requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty	3.38	3.20
General supervisor	3.18	3.13
Professional supervisors	2.95	2.78
Peers/Colleagues	2.47	2.52
Administrators (secretary, janitor, guard, logistics people and more)	1.65	2.80

Note. Scores range from 1 (minimal) to 10 (maximal).

Table 3

Ranking of Stressors Affecting Arab Teachers in Middle Schools (N = 87)

Stressors	Average score	SD
Lack of proper physical conditions	5.05	2.84
Busy schedule and lack of flexibility	5.02	2.90
The student composition of the class	5.00	2.89
School management	4.8	2.80
General supervisor	4.66	3.18

Requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty	4.51	3.57
Conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities	4.4	3.00
Students' parents	3.91	2.79
students	3.48	2.60
Professional supervisors	3.17	2.85
Peers/Colleagues	2.38	2.17
Administrators (secretary, janitor, guard, logistics people and more)	1.61	2.14

Note. Scores range from 1 (minimal) to 10 (maximal).

Table 4

Ranking of Stressors Affecting Arab Teachers in High Schools (N = 130)

Stressors	Average score	SD
Lack of proper physical conditions	5.20	2.84
Requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty	4.92	3.36
Busy schedule and lack of flexibility	4.65	2.90
The student composition of the class	4.48	2.73
School management	4.41	3.00
Conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities	4.11	3.04
General supervisor	3.86	3.18
Students	3.69	2.52
Students' parents	3.23	2.54
Professional supervisors	2.89	2.59
Peers/colleague	2.6	2.46
Administrators (secretary, janitor, guard, logistics people, and more)	1.4	1.84

Note. Scores range from 1 (minimal) to 10 (maximal).

Table 5

Six Strongest Stressors by School Type

Primary School (N=125)	Middle school (N=87)	High school (N = 130)
The student composition of the class (5.11)	Lack of proper physical conditions (5.05)	Lack of proper physical conditions (5.20)
Busy schedule and lack of flexibility (4.83)	Busy schedule and lack of flexibility (5.20)	Requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty(4.92)
Lack of proper physical conditions (3.46)	The student composition of the class (5.20)	Busy schedule and lack of flexibility (4.65)
Conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities (4.22)	School management (4.80)	The student composition of the class (4.48)
Students (4.20)	General supervisor (4.66)	School management (4.41)
Students' parents (3.92)	Requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty (4.51)	Conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities (4.11)
School management (3.70)	Requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty (4.40)	General supervisor (3.86)

Significant statistical differences were found between teachers' stressors and the following demographic variables: religion, gender, role in the school, and type of school. Women rated the stressors "the student composition of the class" ($M = 5.13, p = 0.01$), and "conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities" ($M = 4.51, p = 0.01$) higher than men ($M = 4.27, p = 0.01$; $M = 3.63, p = 0.01$) respectively. Primary school teachers rated stressors "parents" ($M = 3.92, p = 0.04$), "lack of proper physical

conditions" ($M = 4.46, p = 0.04$) and "requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty" ($M = 4.22, p = 0.00$) higher than did high school teachers ($M = 3.23, p = 0.04$) ($M = 5.20, p = 0.04$), $M = 4.11, p = 0.00$) respectively. Middle school teachers rated stressors "school management" ($M = 4.80, p = 0.01$), "general supervisor" ($M = 4.66, p = 0.00$), and "requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty" ($M = 4.51, p = 0.02$) higher than did primary school teachers ($M = 3.38, p = 0.01$; $M = 3.18, p = 0.00$; $M = 3.70, p = 0.01$) respectively.

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to examine the perceptions of Arab teachers regarding the stressors in their work in primary, middle, and high schools. The second aim of the study was to examine differences in stressors by the type of school (primary, middle, and high school) and teacher's demographic variables. The study findings show that the primary cause of stress among Arab teachers in Israel is the lack of satisfactory physical conditions, with a score of 4.89 out of 10. The lack of adequate infrastructure and facilities in Arab school has been widely discussed in the literature (Abu-Saad, 2019; Ak-Haj, 1995; Hadad Haj-Yahya & Rudensky, 2018). The inadequacy of infrastructure and buildings in Arab schools, i.e., classrooms, laboratories, sports halls, and poor condition of many of the existing buildings is well documented, and has been described as one of the most blatant gaps between the Arab and Jewish education systems.

The second most stressful factor was the composition of students in the class, with a score of 4.85. The composition of students in the classroom as a stress factor is described quite extensively in the professional literature and there can be many reasons for this. First, it is important to note that the composition of students in classrooms in schools in the State of Israel, both in the Jewish and Arabic education systems, is very heterogeneous: The system serves a wide range of ages and caters to diverse communities, nationalities, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. At the individual level, it addresses students with unique and different abilities, desires, and needs. This results in great variability between schools located in different places across the country, as well as within each class. In addition, a standard class from fourth to ninth grade has up to 40 students. Such large classes are challenging due to their size. In addition, it is possible that such classes have students varying needs (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). The State of Israel is integrating students with special educational needs into the regular classrooms, similar to many other countries in the world. In 2018, an amendment was made to the Special Education Law to mainstream special education students (Special Education Law, 2018). It came into effect in the 2019 school year and provoking many objections from educators because teachers in regular education were not trained to work with special needs students.

The third most stressful factor was the tight schedule of teachers' teaching hours. In other studies on stress among teachers in the Jewish school system in Israel, teachers described themselves as "breathless teachers"—"barely able to breathe", hardly able to rest between lessons or prepare for the next lesson (Buskila & Chen Levy, 2020). These working conditions are challenges that add to the pressures on teachers and increase their levels of stress.

Female teachers exhibited higher stress than male teachers due to the conflicting demands of school and home responsibilities. Similar differences in stressors between male and female teachers have been observed in other studies (Desouky & Allam, 2017; K. Abu-Saad, Horowitz, & I. Abu-Saad, 2011). Female teachers tend to have a higher total workload because of "their second work shift at home," and the multiple roles they must fulfill as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters or daughters-in-law, in addition to their teaching jobs (Desouky &

Allam, 2017, p. 194).

As for the greater difficulty among women teachers in dealing with the composition of students in the classroom, this may be related to the society's stereotypical perception of male teachers as have strong masculine characteristics and being better able to deal with discipline problems. In addition, studies show that men perceive themselves as belonging to a dominant academic culture with a certain prestige that emphasizes their masculine qualities at work (Naveh, 2010). Our findings also show differences in stressors between teachers from different types of schools. These findings, along with the findings on gender, are important, and should be further explored in future studies that also use qualitative methods to illuminate the reasons for these differences.

Conclusions

Understanding and preventing organizational stress factors may create better teaching conditions for Arab teachers in Israel, and create a more efficient and viable climate for academic success in Arab schools. The study results are relevant to educators, policy-makers, and institutes involved in training teachers and school principals. Identifying and preventing the causes of stress are likely to facilitate better teaching conditions.

The leading stressor in this study is a result of educational disparities between Jews and Arabs. Israel formally purports to embrace the liberal responsibility of providing educational and development opportunities to all of its citizens, enabling them to actualize their full potential as human beings. To fulfill this responsibility vis-a-vis the Arab community requires revising a developmental ideology that not only includes the Arabs, but that Arabs are partners in shaping; that entitles them to the distribution of national resources on a basis equitable all other citizens of the state; and that provides them with multiple educational and developmental opportunities.

References

- Ablin, K., Cohen, H., Clauw, D., Shalev, R., Ablin, E., Neumann, L., Sarzi-Puttini P., & Buskila, D. (2010). A tale of two cities: The effect of low intensity conflict on prevalence and characteristics of musculoskeletal pain and somatic symptoms associated with chronic stress. *Clinical And Experimental Rheumatology*, 28(6), Suppl 63, 15–21.
- Abu-Saad, I. (2001). Education as a tool for control vs. development among indigenous peoples: The Case of Bedouin Arabs in Israel. *Hagar, International Social Science Review*, 2(2), 241-259.
- Abu-Saad, I. (2011). *Arab education in Israel and the policy of control: The case of education in the Negev*. Israel, Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press.
- Abu-Saad, I. (2015). *Arab society in Israel Vol. 4: Controversial issues: Education*. Israel, Ra'anana: The Open University Press.
- Abu-Saad, I. (2018). Teacher education policy and practice in Israel from the perspective of those outside the "common good". In N. Hobbel and B. Bales (Eds.), *Navigating the common good in teacher education policy: Critical and international perspectives* (pp. 195-212). New York: Routledge.
- Abu-Saad, I. (2019). Palestinian education in the Israeli settler state: Divide, rule and control. *Settler Colonial Studies*, 9(1), 96-116.
- Abu-Saad, K., Horowitz, T., & Abu-Saad, I. (2011). *Weaving tradition and modernity: Bedouin women in higher education*. Israel, Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press.
- Addi-Raccah, A., & Gonen, S. (2013). Perceptions of school principals of the role of supervision and local authority in different school environments. *Studies in Educational Administration and Organization*, 33, 105-130.
- Agbaria, A. (2018). The "right" education in Israel: Segregation, religious ethnonationalism, and depoliticized professionalism. *Critical Studies in Education*, 59(1), 18-34.
- Al-Haj, M. (1995). *Education, empowerment and control: The case of the Arabs in Israel*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Arlozorov, M. (2016). Arab child equal ninth Jewish boy. *The Marker*. Retrieved from <https://www.themarker.com/news/1.2814645>
- Ayub, A., Hussain, M. A., & Ghulamullah, N. (2018). Causes and impact of work stress on teacher's performance in urban

- primary schools. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 6(1), 81-100.
- Bandpei, M. M., Ehsani, F., Behtash, H., & Ghanipour, M. (2014). Occupational low back pain the primary and high school teachers: Prevalence and associated factors. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, 37(9), 702-708.
- Bellingrath, S., Weigl, T., & Kudielka, B. M. (2008). Chronic work stress and exhaustion in associated with higher allostatic load in female school teachers. *Stress: The International Journal of the Biology of Stress*, 12(1), 37-48.
- Blase, J. (1986). A qualitative analysis of sources of teacher stress: Consequences for performance. *American Educational Research Journal*, 23, 13-40.
- Buskila, Y., & Chen Levi, T. (2020). Teachers out of breath: Mapping stress causes in the work of teachers. *Gilui Daat: Multidisciplinary Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 16, 71-91.
- Buskila, Y., Buskila, D., Giris, J., & Ablin, K. (2019). High prevalence of fibromyalgia among Israeli school teachers. *Clinical Experimental Rheumatology*, 37(1), 21-26.
- Carnoy, M. (1995). Structural adjustment and the changing face of education. *International Labor Review*, 134(6), 653-673.
- Chan, D. W. (1998). Stress, coping strategies and psychological distress among secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. *American Educational Research Journal*, 35, 145-163.
- Cherniss, C. (1980). *Professional burnout in human service organizations*. New York: Praeger.
- Cichon, D. J., & Koff, R. H. (1980). Stress and teaching. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 64, 91-104.
- Cox, T., Boot, N., Cox, S., & Harrison, S. (1988). Stress in schools: An organizational perspective. *Work and Stress*, 2(4), 353-362.
- Crick, R. D., Barr, S., Green H., & Pedder, D. (2017). Evaluating the wider outcomes of schools: Complex system modeling for leadership deaccessioning. *Educational Management & Leadership*, 45(4), 719-743.
- Cuban, L. (2006). Reforming again, again and again. *Educational Research*, 19(1), 3-13.
- Desouky, D., & Allam, H. (2017). Occupational stress, anxiety and depression among Egyptian teachers. *Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health*, 7, 191-198.
- Dettl, L. (2019). Comptroller's report: This is how a lost generation of 3,000 missing teachers is raised—and those who teach have not been trained for this. *The Marker*. Retrieved from <https://www.themarker.com/news/education/1.7206718>
- Dolton, P., & Van der Klaauw, W. (1995). Leaving teaching in the UK: A duration analysis. *Economic Journal*, 105(429), 431-444.
- Dunham, J. (1992). *Stress in teaching*. New York: Routledge.
- Dworkin, A. G., Haney, A., Dworkin, R., & Telschow, R. (1990). Stress and illness behavior among urban public-school teachers. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26(1), 60-72.
- Eres, F., & Atanasosk, T. (2011). Occupational stress of teachers: A comparative study between Turkey and Macedonia. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(7), 59-65.
- Ettinger, Y. (2004). *Tirosh Admits: The GSS Checks Arab Principals*. HaAretz, August 25. Retrieved from <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.993767>
- Esteve, J. (1989). Teacher burnout and teacher stress. In M. Cole and S. Walker (Eds.), *Teaching and stress* (pp. 4-25). Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Fimian, M. J. (1984). The development of an instrument to measure occupational stress in teachers: The teacher stress inventory. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 57(4), 277-293.
- Freeland, J. (1996). The global, the national and the local: Forces in the development of education for indigenous peoples—The case of Peru. *Compare*, 26, 167-195.
- Galloway, D., Panckhurst, F., Boswell, K., Boswell, C., & Green, K. (1984). Mental health, absences from work, stress and satisfaction in a sample of New Zealand primary school teachers. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 18, 359-363.
- Griffith, J. (2004). Ineffective schools as organizational reactions to stress. *Social Psychology of Education*, 7, 254-287.
- Grissom, J., Loeb, S., & Mitani, H. (2013). *Principal time management skills: Explaining patterns in principals time use and effectiveness*. Stanford: Stanford University, Center for Education Policy.
- Hadad Haj-Yahya, N., & Rudensky, A. (2018). *Arab educational system in Israel: Current Status and Future Challenges*. The Israel Democracy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/25462>.
- Halabi, R., & Dabah, S. (2020). Between a rock and a hard place: Civic education in Arab schools in Israel. *Gilui Daat: Education of Journal Multidisciplinary Culture and Society*, 16, 95-122.

- Jackson, S. E., Schwab, R. L., & Schuler, R. S. (1986). Toward and understanding the burnout phenomenon. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 71*(4), 639-640.
- James, C., & Vince, R. (2001). Developing the leadership capability of head teachers. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership, 29*(3), 307-317.
- Jarvis, M. (2002). Teacher stress: A critical review of recent finding and suggestions for future research. *Stress News the UK. Journal of the International Stress Management Association, 14*(1), 12-16.
- Jepson, E., & Forrest, S. (2006). Individual contributory factors in teachers stress: The role of achievement striving and occupational commitment. *British Journal of Educational Psychological, 76*, 183-197.
- Karsenti, T., & Collin, S. (2013). Why are new teachers leaving the profession? Results of Canada-wide survey. *Education, 3*(3), 142-149.
- Kaufman, J. A. (2007). An Adlerian perspective on guided visual imagery for stress and coping. *Journal of Individual Psychology, 63*(2), 193-204.
- Kniveton, B. H. (1991). An investigation of factors contributing to teachers' job satisfaction. *School Psychology International, 12*(4), 361-371.
- Kraus, V., & Yonay, Y. (2018). *Facing barriers: Palestinian women in a Jewish-dominated labor market*. Kindle edition, Cambridge University Press.
- Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teacher stress: Directions for future research. *Educational Review, 53*(1) 27-35.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Lustick, I. (1980). *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's control of a national minority*. University of Texas Press: Austin.
- Mar'i, S. (1978). *Arab education in Israel*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Mar'i, S. (1985). Arab education in Israel: Students as educators and educators as students. *Politika, 4*, 34-36.
- Ministry of Education. (2020). The structure of the work week for teachers in primary school. Retrieved from <http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/MinhalCalcala/skifut8.pdf?lang=en-US>
- Montgomery, C., & Rupp, A. A. (2005). A meta-analysis for exploring the diverse causes and effects of stress in teachers. *Canadian Journal of Education, 29*(3), 458-486.
- Naveh, N. (2010). It is not related to sex but to female teachers-male teachers in the post-primary education system in Israel. In A. Herzog and T. Walden (Eds.), *On the back of the teachers—Power and sex in education* (pp. 537-566). Jerusalem: Carmel.
- Niessen, C., Mader, I., Stride C., & Jimmieson, N. L. (2017). Thriving when exhausted: The role of perceived transformational leadership. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 103*(Part B), 41-51.
- Nir, A., Ben-David, A., Bogler, R., Inbar, D., & Zohar, A., (2016). School autonomy and 21st century skills in the Israeli educational system: Discrepancies between the declarative and operational levees. *International Journal of Educational Management, 30*(7), 1231-1246.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2005). *Teachers matter: Attracting developing and retaining effective teachers*. Paris, France: OECD Publications.
- Parasuraman, S., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2002). Toward reducing some critical gaps in work-family research. *Human Resource Management Review, 12*(3), 299-312.
- Pullen, A., & Simpson, R. (2009). Managing difference in feminized work: Men, otherness and social practice. *Human Relations, 62*(4), 561-587.
- Sa'ar, R. R. (2001). A Yitzhak Cohen by any other name. *Ha'Aretz*. Retrieved from <http://www.haaretz.com/a-yitzhak-cohen-by-any-other-name-1.76645>
- Schechter, C. (2015). *Let us lead! School principals at the forefront of reforms*. Ramot: Tel-Aviv University Press.
- Schneider-Levy, L. (2016). The effects of inquiry based stress reduction (IBSR) on levels of burnout and wellness among teachers. (Ph.D. dissertation, Tel Aviv University, 2016).
- Special Education Law. (2018). Amendment No. 11. Retrieved from <http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/special/lows/%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%9F%20%D7%97%D7%95%D7%A7%20%D7%97%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%9A%20%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%95%D7%97%D7%93%2019.7.18.pdf>
- Strunk, K. O., & Robinson, J. P. (2006). Oh, won't you stay: A multilevel analysis of the difficulties in retaining qualified teachers. *NYU Scholar*. Retrieved May 13, 2020, from <https://nyuscholars.nyu.edu/en/publications/oh-wont-you-stay-a-multilevel-analysis-of-the-difficulties-in-ret>

- Swirski, S. (1990). *Education in Israel: Schooling for inequality*. Brirot: Tel Aviv. (in Hebrew)
- Swirski, S. (1999). *Politics and education in Israel: Comparisons with the United States*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Taub, R. (2015). A new educational reform in Israeli high schools affecting teachers' motivation and perception of the teaching profession. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 209, 503-508.
- Verma, R., & Madhavi, B. K. (2017). The effect of postural education on decreasing the severity of neck pain in female school teachers: A prospective cohort study. *International Journal of Therapies and Rehabilitation Research*, 6(1), 24.
- Villegas-Reimers, E. (2003). *Teacher professional development: An international review of the literature*. Paris: UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Vollanski, A. (2007). School autonomy for school effectiveness and improvement: The case of Israel. In Townsend (Ed.), *International handbook on school effectiveness and improvement* (pp. 351-362), New York: Springer.
- Yair, G. (2005). Not just location: LEAs and inequalities among schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(2-3), 295-316.
- Yanko, A. (2020). Education ministry chief discusses Arab school kids with Shin Bet. *Ynetnews*. Retrieved from <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/BJKFWgXXU>