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# The role of psychological resilience in reducing psychological stress among teachers

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## Abstract:

**BACKGROUND:** Workplace causes stress which negatively affects the physical as well as the emotional well-being of individuals. However, it is widely reported in the literature that a number of factors have received significant attention in the professional life, stressing their significance to the individual's psychological, social, and professional life.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** The research is a descriptive that study adopted a quantitative method, involving 40 female teachers. A survey method was randomly distributed to teachers who are identified to have worked with students with disability using randomly sampling, and data were then exposed to the descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation.

**RESULTS:** The results showed that respondents had good psychological resilience level with moderate occupational stress level. Furthermore, a significant correlation between psychological resilience and occupation stress is supported.

**CONCLUSION:** The present study indicated that the participants have acceptance level of psychological resilience which helps them to reduce their stress when performing their work. The study, therefore, encouraged decision academicians to regularly organize several positive counseling and psychological training to the teachers.

## Keywords:

Disabilities, psychology, resilience, stress, teachers

## Introduction

Literature has highlighted and discussed workplace challenges among several professions, particularly teachers, in the form of pressure and stress owing to issues related to communication, heavy workload and job satisfaction.<sup>[1,2]</sup> Occupational stress has a negative effect on the individual's physical and emotional well-being,<sup>[3,4]</sup> and it is widely acknowledged that several factors have received significant attention in educational and psychological fields, stressing their significance to the individual's psychological, social, and professional life. In relation to this, according to positive psychology theory promotes individuals

having positive life events awareness,<sup>[5,6]</sup> leading to the suggestion that psychological resilience is a crucial personality factor enabling individuals to invest in their personal resources and experience for their psychological and physical health enhancement.

Psychological resilience is a concept that was initially introduced as a positive psychology construct<sup>[6,7]</sup> in many study fields.<sup>[8-10]</sup> This covers the capacity of the individual to cope with daily life difficulties and to recover from challenging life experiences.<sup>[7,11]</sup> According to<sup>[7]</sup> psychological resilience refers to a character trait that is possible for the individual to learn and develop and that an individual is considered to have a control over developing a high/low psychological

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resilience. Individuals with low psychological resilience were found to have low self-efficiency and low adaptation to life, easily gets irritated and experience burnout from stresses in daily life, isolated and have no communication acumen with those in the society and continues to live life with little to no motivation.<sup>[12,13]</sup> In contrast, those with high psychological resilience had positive beliefs and feelings about life, high satisfaction and optimism levels, high social support and self-esteem.<sup>[7,14-16]</sup>

Recent studies have extended their scope to understand the psychological resilience role as well as its life stressors dimensions and variables as it is one of the leading determinants of workers' mental wellbeing.<sup>[17,18]</sup> Stress is generally referred to as the result of the individual interpretation of a situation that threatens his/her ability to successfully accomplish tasks.<sup>[19]</sup> Several other definitions of the stress concept have been proposed in literature, with the common theme among them being that individual experiencing stress are stressed out physically and psychologically, having issues and negative responses toward environmental adaptation.<sup>[20]</sup>

More specifically, job stress may arise when the individual is in the position where the workplace demand on him exceeds his coping ability, which would lead to an adverse reaction on his part.<sup>[17,21]</sup> Based on the findings of several studies, there is a significant relationship between job stress, negative health, and mental well-being outcomes (e.g., depression, burnout, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, dissatisfaction and poor mental health, and poor health).<sup>[17,22-24]</sup>

The consideration of each stressful life event is a risk factor, psychological resilient logically influences the stress experienced by individuals but studies stressed on the individual's need for such resilience to overcome life's stressful events and related issues.<sup>[25]</sup> According to,<sup>[9,26]</sup> high psychological resilient individuals have better coping mechanisms against stressful situations and abilities to meet challenges head on in life, while<sup>[27]</sup> found that spiritual resilience is the essence of life experiences and based on the respondents' feedback, they are sensitive toward life quality and have more resilience from their experiences in life. A similar study was conducted by,<sup>[28]</sup> who found a negative psychological resilience-psychological stress relationship among students.

Prior studies have explained the environment under which stressor roles may impact workers effectively/ineffectively as well as the work outcomes, including exceptions,<sup>[29-32]</sup> but has been largely ignored in literature is the role of personality factors, such as psychological resilience, in being a determinant of the role stressors.

A few studies of this caliber indicated the influence of resilience on stress but more are needed to provide insight into the resilience-job stress relationship from an inclusive viewpoint. Hence, this study primarily aims to examine the psychological resilience-occupational stress relationship among teachers.

## Materials and Methods

### Study design and setting

This study is a cross-sectional one and was conducted in the city of Almanofia, Egypt. The study setting was the high school teachers at Alazhari education.

### Study participants and sampling

The survey was distributed to 40 female teachers in Almanofia city, who willingly provided their consent to participate.

### Data collection tool and technique

The survey method used to determine the relationships among the study variables. The study used data collection measures to achieve the objectives, more specifically, the psychological resilience was measured by a scale that gauged both psychological resilience and occupation stress among the participants (teachers), using items adopted from.<sup>[33]</sup> This scale consisted of 3 sub-scales, measured by several items each, measured using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly disagree denoted by 1 to strongly agree denoted by 5. The psychological resilience sub-scales constituted psychological resilience, measured by 9 items, sources measures by 7 items and optimism measured by 9 items. High score of the measure shows the high level of psychological resilience among the respondents, and Cronbach's alpha value calculated and obtained for the construct is 0.893.

Moving on to the occupational stress construct measurement, the scale used also had 3 sub-scales, each measured by items gauged on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly disagree denoted by 1 to strongly agree denoted by 5. The construct was measured by the sub-scales job requirements, occupational control and occupational support, with 18, 16, and 15 items, respectively. High score on the construct's measurement shows the high level of occupational stress among the respondents. The Cronbach's alpha obtained for the construct was 0.852.

### Ethical consideration

This study's ethical approval was carried out based on the Ministry of Education and Al-Azhar University Committee guideline. In the first step, written permission was obtained from the university and verbal permission was obtained from the respondents to the study, and they

were informed that their answers to the survey would only be used for the purpose of the research.

### Data analysis

This study used statistical software Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the gathered data. Table 1 contains the study sample analysis results, with mean and standard deviation values of the dependent variables. Based on the table, the mean and standard deviation of psychological resilience are as follows;  $M = 52.50$  and  $SD = 1.81$ . The mean and standard deviation of psychological resilience sub-scales were also obtained, and they are for psychological resilience, mean is 18.40, with standard deviation of 1.53, for sources, mean is 15.30, with standard deviation of 0.85, and finally, for optimism, mean is 19.0, with standard deviation of 1.48.

With regard to psychological stress, the mean and standard deviation values are presented in Table 2 and they are  $M = 96.65$  and  $SD = 3.28$ . For the subscales of the construct, job requirements had mean of 36.02, with standard deviation of 1.20, occupational control had mean of 29.10, with standard deviation of 2.15 and occupational support had a mean of 31.35 with standard deviation of 1.81.

Pearson correlation analysis was also conducted to determine the significance of the relationships among the variables or lack thereof. Table 3 tabulates the mean value and correlation among the variables. From the table, a significant correlation between psychological resilience and occupation stress is supported ( $r = 0.23^*$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the psychological resilience and its subscales**

Variable	Mean	SD
Psychological resilience	52.50	1.81
Psychological resilience subscale	18.40	1.53
Sources subscale	15.30	0.85
Optimism subscale	19.0	1.48

SD=Standard deviation

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the psychological resilience and its subscales**

Variable	Mean	SD
Psychological stress	96.65	3.28
Job requirements	36.02	1.20
Occupational control	29.10	2.15
Occupational support	31.35	1.81

SD=Standard deviation

**Table 3: Pearson correlation between the study variables**

Variable	Psychological resilience
Psychological stress	0.23 0.048*

## Discussion

The relationship between psychological resilience and occupational stress was examined among teachers and the results supported a significant relationship. The study result showed that the study respondents had good psychological resilience level with moderate occupational stress level. Notably, literature on the relationship between the two variables found mixed and inconsistent findings.<sup>[5,34]</sup> The rationale behind the study findings may be attributed to the sample's characteristics in that majority of them had good work experiences and faced work stress situations and were able to cope with them. Moreover, good resilience level among the participants to the study may have lightened the adverse stress effects on them in the workplace. The finding confirms that an individual with high resilience level can adapt with the changes and succeed even in the face of challenges and difficulties. Furthermore, with the development of the individual's resilience, the effects of the difficult working environment on him/her will be reduced. The study results show acceptable level of resilience sub-scales level among the respondents. According to,<sup>[35]</sup> optimism has a differential effect in the individual's assessment and coping with difficulties as a result of which the social and academic world of the individual as well as his/her psychic and physical well-being remains unthreatened.

### Limitations and recommendations

This study is limited in scope in that, the examination is limited to the examined study sample and hence, future studies can increase the size of the sample and include both genders. The study is a quantitative one using survey as the main data collection instrument and as such, it could have inflated biases. In this regard, future studies can adopt a qualitative or mixed method approach to examine the study variables. Finally, there are other individual and work factors that could affect the stress level of teachers that were not examined in this study, like gender, work experiences, age and self-efficacy – these may be considered in future studies for investigation.

## Conclusion

Recently, several pandemic situations have affected people life in the whole world.<sup>[36]</sup> Several recommendations were highlighted by the specialist on psychological and physical factors.<sup>[37]</sup> Therefore, this study examined the psychological resilience of teachers and their occupational stress and based on the findings, their psychological resilience is of acceptable level, with low moderate stress level. The study findings support a significant psychological resilience-occupational stress relationship. The study contributes to theory

and practice as it responded to the call-in literature to minimize the gap of studies examining the relationship between psychological resilience and psychological stress in the context of teachers. The study findings are useful in decision-making as to how to promote teachers' motivation in the working environment and to minimize the stressful situations they encounter at work.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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