

# ***ABSTRACT***

## **SOURCES OF STRESS IN ACADEME - THE SITUATION IN THE PALESTINIAN UNIVERSITIES**

**by**

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The Purpose of this research is to examine occupational stress as a phenomenon taking place in the Palestinian universities. The study used the conceptual framework of Gmelch (Gmelch, 1982) to identify the sources of occupational stress experienced by faculty members in seven institutions of higher education. In addition the research sought to identify the relationship between the sources of stress and some key personal (age and gender), professional (rank, discipline, teaching experience), and work place (university and geographical area) characteristics.

The study consisted of a random sample of 380 faculty members representing 7 universities (5 in the West Bank and 2 in Gaza) who filled the multidimensional Faculty Stress Index (FSI) developed by Gmelch (1982).

To achieve the purpose of the study 7 null hypotheses have been stated. To attest the validity of the instrument, the FSI has been translated, reviewed, and modified to fit local circumstances.

To determine the sources of stress factor analysis was performed, and through this analysis 12 factors have been extracted. These factors are as follows: reward and recognition (27.3% explained variance), time constraints (6.3% explained variance), relation with students (4.5% explained variance), facilities (3.4% explained variance), relation with department (2.9% explained variance), ; development in the specialization (2.9% explained variance), reward for services (2.6% explained variance), professional identity (2.4% explained variance), non conformity (2.3% explained variance), role ambiguity (2.2% explained variance), non academic obligations (2.1% explained variance), teaching load (1.9% explained variance). To determine the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach alpha for each factor has been computed, and this has ranged from 0.60 to 0.91 .

One-way Anova has been used to test the hypotheses of the study. With respect to the sources of stress combined, the results were as follows:

1. There are no statistically significant mean differences at the 0.5 level between the sources of occupational stress attributed to age, gender, rank , and ; development in the specialization.
2. There are statistically significant mean differences at the 0.5 level between the sources of occupational stress attributed to the place of work (university).
3. There are no statistically significant mean differences at the 0.5 level between the sources of occupational stress attributed to the geographical areas.

However, with respect to each source of occupational stress, the findings were as follows:

1. Sources attributed to age : The null hypotheses were rejected for the following sources : relation with students; relation with department; development in the specialization ; and teaching load. They were not rejected for the following sources : reward and recognition, time constraints, facilities , reward for services, professional identity, non conformity, role ambiguity, and non academic obligations.
2. Sources attributed to gender: The null hypotheses were rejected for the two sources of occupational stress reward and recognition , and professional identity. The null hypotheses were not rejected for the following sources of occupational



stress : time constraints, facilities, discipline, reward for services, non conformity, role ambiguity, non academic obligations, teaching load, relation with department, and relation with students.

3. Sources attributed to academic rank : The null hypotheses were rejected for three sources of occupational stress: relation with students; relation with the department; and teaching load. The null hypotheses were not rejected for the following sources: reward and recognition, time constraints, facilities, ; development in the specialization, reward for services, professional identity, non conformity, role ambiguity, and non academic obligations.
4. Sources attributed to academic discipline: All the null hypotheses were not rejected.
5. Sources attributed to teaching experience: The null hypothesis were rejected for the two sources of stres: non academic obligations, and relation with students. The null hypotheses were not rejected for the following sources of occupational stress: reward and recognition, time constraints, facilities, ; development in the specialization, reward for services, professional identity, non conformity, role ambiguity, relation with the department, and teaching load.
6. Sources of stress attributed to place of work (university) : The null hypotheses were rejected for the following sources of occupational stress: reward and recognition, relation with students, facilities, relation with the department, ; development in the specialization, non conformity , non academic obligations, teaching load. The null hypotheses were not rejected for the following sources of stress: reward for services, professional identity, role ambiguity, and time constraints.
7. Sources attributed to geographical area : The null hypotheses were rejected for the following sources of occupational stress: relation with students, relation with department, non conformity, role ambiguity, non academic obligations, and teaching load. The null hypotheses were not rejected for the following sources of stress : reward and recognition, time constraints, facilities, ; development in the specialization, reward for services, and professional identity.