

Psychological Burnout Among Working Professionals With people with disabilities

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the burnout degree among professionals who serve people with disabilities, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Participants were 140 randomly selected workers serving individuals with disabilities in Palestine. It concludes that the burnout degree of professionals working with people with disabilities, was high, and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were high in frequency and degree of intensity. Personal accomplishment was moderate in intensity and frequency. Finally, there are positive and significant relationships between burnout feeling frequency and intensity among workers with disabilities. There are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout, according to the gender, years of experience, job title, and institution specialization field of the staff member except years of experience.

People with disabilities, burnout (emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal accomplishment (PA).

Introduction:

Burnout among workers has been an interesting subject among researchers in recent years and has been the subject of many studies. This came about after observing a large number of workers leaving their professions and turning to other types of work. Psychological burnout is a significant indicator of professional pressure and an end result of accumulated pressures at work, work demands, and expectations to which that individual can't adapt successfully (Martnez-Tur et al. 2021, Sheikh, 2002).

Hock (1980), Bardo (1979), and Sarson (1972) attributed individual burnout as a result of working a long time in the same job, leading to a loss of enthusiasm and ambition, and a lack of professional interest. The longer an individual practices his job, the less influential, dynamic, and responsive he becomes to surrounding influences regarding the role he played (Kant and Shanker 2021). Researchers attributed this to the fact that increased experience may lead to a sense of boredom, which leads to decreased work motivation, increased stress levels, and

work burnout. Burnout may also come as a result of excess work burden, reward needs, inappropriate employment, isolation from friends, and a need for management support. (Abdullah, 1994:2; Yarknda, 1993:28-31)

According to Friedman (1991), burnout has two types: the first one is associated with a personal profile, which explains the individual's willingness to burn out. The second is connected to the system, school climate, and social and professional support within the school. According to Friedman, all of these variables affect the burnout process.

Many studies, such as Boyle et al. (1999), Dyer.S & Quine (1998), Hatton et. al (1995), Quine. C (1993), and Aldabaseh (1993), have shown that burnout is one of the biggest problems that affects teachers, especially special education teachers, for the following reasons: long work hours without rest, lack of school facilities, weak social relationships, low salary, additional tasks performed by teachers, lack of colleagues' cooperation, routine at school, lack of promotion opportunities, inadequate time for

professional development, behavioral problems, and increasing the number of students per class. All of these lead to a high degree of burnout.

Problems and Questions

Through field visits to special-needs institutions, it was revealed that the phenomenon of burnout and its major influence on workers who serve those with disabilities deserve study. People who work directly with students with special needs, such as teachers and professionals, are at the forefront of professions that can create feelings of frustration. Researcher found a need to study burnout degree among workers, why they suffer from psychological stress that hinders their work, and identifying the impact of independent variables (sex, years of experience, job title, and salary) as the main problems of this study. The current study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1-What is the degree of psychological burnout among professionals working with people with disabilities?

2-Are there statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among those who work with people with disabilities, according to the gender, years of experience, job title, and institution specialization field of the staff member?

3-Is there a significant relationship at the level of ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) between psychological burnout feeling frequency and intensity among workers who work with people with disabilities?

The significance of the study:

- Highlight the degree of Psychological burnout among workers and its impact on performance level of employees who serve professionals working with people with disabilities in particular.
- Explore the influence of independent variables (gender, years of experience, job title, and institutional specialization field) on burnout level among workers who serve as professionals working with people with disabilities.
- This study is considered one of the few studies in Palestine on this topic. Most

studies focused on burnout phenomenon among counselors, and didn't expose the degree of burnout among workers who work with people with disabilities in different functions.

- Also, this study serves special education centers, educational and general libraries, university libraries, and stakeholders in inclusive education fields by decreasing burnout degree among workers who serve individuals with special needs. This has a positive influence on employees' performance in the special needs field.

Study terms:

Burnout is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion because of the pressures individuals suffer due to work. It refers to negative changes in individuals' relationships and attitudes toward others because of increased emotional and psychological demands. (Al-Samadoni, 1990:733).

Procedurally: Are the obtained grades by study sample through answering the study tool.

Emotional exhaustion (EE):

It is the feeling of fatigue as a result of work burdens and increased responsibilities of individuals.

Procedurally, it is what measures the exhaustion that individuals feel as a result of the effort to help others, and it will be from 9 items. ($9 \times 6 = 54 / 3 = 18$).

Depersonalization (DP):

It is a feeling generated in the individual because of work pressure overload, which leads to a sense of lack of human worth of the individual.

Procedurally: measure the negative feelings among workers who serve individuals with disabilities. This consists of six items. ($6 \times 6 = 36 / 3 = 12$).

Personal accomplishment (PA):

Is individual's tendency to evaluate himself in a negative way and includes unhappy feelings.

Procedurally, it measures a sense of lack of competence among workers and the development of negative tendencies in their

performance. This consists of seven items. ($7 \times 7 = 49/3 = 16$).

The theoretical framework and previous studies:

Freudenberger (1974) is considered the first to point out the burnout phenomenon, through his study of pressure responses faced by workers in the service sector (teaching, medicine, and other social professions). Burnout is a concept that has emerged recently, and it has several definitions. The most commonly used definition refers to burnout as "a state of emotional and physical exhaustion because of individual exposure to pressures." It refers to negative changes in individual relationships and attitudes toward others, because of excess emotional and psychological requirements. Al-Samadoni (Al-Samadoni, 1990: 733)

Al-Samadoni (1995: 2-3) mentions Maslach's (1977) definition of burnout as "a psychiatric condition characterized by a range of negative characteristics such as tension, instability, and tendency toward isolation, as well as negative trends toward work and colleagues.

(Squillaci, 2021) indicated that there is an agreement among a number of researchers about their definition of burnout: symptoms caused by continuous emotional and physical pressure facing the worker, leading to a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion, resulting from excess pressure on the worker, in which there is any reaction to accumulated pressure with a negative impact on the individual. Responses to this pressure vary in terms of recurrence and the degree of exposure.

Researchers such as Lazarrs and Sholar (1966), Schwab and Iwanicki (1982), Maslach and Jackson (1989), Gherniss (1986), Tahaine (1995), Hirtawi (1991), and Al-dababseh (1993) classified burnout symptoms as follows: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, and reflected as follows:

- Physiological (physical) symptoms, cognitive symptoms, Psychological causal symptoms and behavioral symptoms

Burnout reasons are personal, organizational, or social. Although personal and social reasons have an important role, they contribute less than organizational factors (work environment) in burnout appearance with professionals (Al-Shiekh, et al. 2021; Martnez-Tur et al. 2021).

(Alenezi et al. 2022; Cunningham.1982) describe burnout consequences as a set of physiological and psychological responses that result when an individual is exposed to high levels of pressure, which highly depends on individual perception, world interpretation, and how they deal with this world.

The Ministry of Education conducted a study in collaboration with the Secretarial National Plan for Palestinian Children (2005), aimed to identify burnout degrees using the Maslach scale for counselors in public schools. The most important results are that only 27.7% of counselors don't agree that counselor work is exhausting, and 82.2% don't agree that they have no desire to work, while 6.2% of counselors agree on that.

On the other hand, it was a result of (Al-Ali et al. (2021) that the psychological burnout was low and differences according to the employee's workplace. However, no differences were found among the participants due to gender, years of experience, or the number of children they treated.

Karim's study (2019), which shows that the rate of burnout is moderate and there is no relationship between burnout among special education teachers, type of disability, and experience,

The results of (Tanasugarn, 2019) indicate that teachers with disabilities felt a moderate level of support from their administrators, colleagues, and subordinates, with the appearance of psychological burnout most of the time.

And the study (STASIO et al.2017) indicated that the happiness of teachers in school and their satisfaction with work is due to the disparity in personal and world-related fatigue.

The results of (Shyman, 2010) indicated that a significant level of emotional stress was recorded among the sample subjects and that role conflict, emotional requirements, sense of effectiveness, and supervisor support were important indicators of emotional stress. .

Al-thaher (2007) found that there were differences in burnout degree due to type of disability, teacher's gender, and for teachers of autistic children.

In a study by al-attiyah and Issawi (2004) on burnout level among a sample of workers who serve those with disabilities, they found moderate burnout level among workers, there were differences in burnout level for single women and those with less than five years of work experience, and there were no differences in burnout levels related to disability type.

Patrick (2004) showed that teachers have moderate burnout, There was difference in burnout in related to sex, and it is found that younger, single and less experienced teachers had high and more burnout.

Al-Otaibi (2003) found that the sample had a low burnout. There was no difference in burnout degree among sex, marital status, or educational qualification variables.

Salman (2003) conducted a study aimed at identifying the burnout level. The results were as follows: There was a moderate frequency of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and a high frequency of personal accomplishment. The intensity of burnout on emotional exhaustion was low, while intensity on depersonalization and personal accomplishment was moderate. There

were no differences in burnout degree among counselors in general schools due to (sex, educational qualification, monthly income, age, and experience). There were differences in the frequency and intensity of

As it appears from previous studies, burnout is an interest of many researchers. A need for more studies that focus on burnout for workers who serve individuals with disabilities in different jobs in the organization was noted.

Methodology:

The descriptive approach was used because of its relevance to the nature of this study.

population:

The study population consisted of all professionals who work with people with disabilities in Palestine.

sample

The study sample consisted of (140) professionals who work with people with **disabilities**, who had been selected randomly. See table (1) for distribution of the study sample by sex, years of experience, job title, and institutional specialization field.

Table (1): distribution of the study sample by sex, years of experience, job title, and institution specialization field

variable		number	percentage	Total
Sex	male	70	50.0	140
	female	70	50.0	
Years of experience	Less than 5years	40	28.6	140
	Between5-10 years	72	51.4	
	More than 11 year	28	20.0	
Job title	administrative	20	14.3	140
	Special education teacher	38	27.1	
	psychologist	32	22.9	
	Social worker	28	20.0	
	Occupational therapist	22	15.7	
	Visual disability	30	21.4	140

Institution specialization field	Hearing disability	30	21.4
	Physical disability	30	21.4
	Multiple disability	50	35.7

Study tool:

The Arabic version of the Maslach scale, which was developed by Maslach and Jackson, was used to measure burnout among workers in humanitarian and social field services. It was adapted for use in Arabic environments, as in the studies by Downey et al. (1989), Moqableh and Salameh (1990), and Al-wabli (1995).

The Maslach scale, in its original form, consists of 22 items relating to an individual's feelings toward his profession. Those who complete the survey are asked to respond twice to each item, once indicating feeling frequency and responses gradually of 1–6; (1: slightly happens in the year), and (6: occurs daily), and once indicating feeling intensity and responses gradually of 1–7; (1: weak degree), and (7: high degree).

To find out the response degree feeling frequency items, researchers examined responses on the scale in light of their approval or disapproval degree to scale items. The degree is determined mainly by giving different weights to responses. Responses on the six- or seven-degree scale are given higher weight. To determine the scale length of cells (minimum and higher), category length was calculated for each dimension (item number \times key correction = degree), then divided from (3) to get the right cell length. This value was added to the lowest value in the scale (or scale beginning = 1) in order to determine the top limit of this cell, and thus the cell's length became scale sub-dimensions as follows:

Table 2: Item distribution scale on three dimensions: cell length, or scale sub-dimensions.

dimension	dimensions	Dimens ion items	Items number	Burnout mean	frequency	Burnout mean	intensity
First	emotional exhaustion	1-9	9	$(9 \times 6 = 54 / 3 = 18)$ * between 1-17 (low). * between 18-35 (moderate). *between 36-54 (high).		$(9 \times 7 = 63 / 3 = 21)$. * between 1-20 (low). *between 21-41 (moderate). * between 42-63 (high)	
Second	Depersonalization	10-15	6	$(6 \times 6 = 36 / 3 = 12)$ * between 1-11 (low). * between 12-23 (moderate). *between 24-36 (high).		$(9 \times 7 = 42 / 3 = 14)$ * between 1-13 (low). * between 14-27 (moderate). *between 28-42 (high).	
Third	personal accomplishment	16-22	7	$(9 \times 6 = 42 / 3 = 14)$ * between 1-13 (low). * between 14-27 (moderate).		$(9 \times 7 = 49 / 3 = 16)$ * between 1-15 (low). * between 16-31 (moderate).	

				*between (high).	28-42	*between (high).	32-49
total	Burnout	1-22	22	$(6 \times 22 = 132 / 44 = 1)$		$(23 \times 7 = 154 / 51)$	
				* between 1-44 (high).		* between 1-50 (low).	
				* between (moderate).	14-27	* between (moderate).	51-100
				*between (low).	28-42	*between (high).	101-151

Scale Validity:

The validity of the scale was achieved by using the content validity where the arbitrator's agreement ratio of using the dimensions and items' linguistic formulation and the items correlation with the scale's dimensions was over 90%. This indicates that the scale has high validity.

Scale reliability:

In addition to the scale reliability achieved by the scale developer, there were indications related to the reliability of the scale represented by the Cronbach Alpha method. The data indicates that the study tool with its various dimensions had a good degree of reliability, stability, and correlation coefficients ranging between 69% and 80% on the feeling frequency dimension. Correlation coefficients ranging between (65%) and (81%) were found on the feeling intensity dimension.

Study variables:

independent variables, including sex, years of experience, job title, and work institution specialization.

dependent variables: burnout degree (intensity and frequency).

Results:

1- What is the degree of psychological burnout among professionals working with people with disabilities (intensity and frequency)?

Means and standard deviations were calculated for the **psychological** burnout degree with its various dimensions among **professionals working** in terms of frequency and intensity. See table (3).

Table 3: Means and standard deviations for psychological burnout degree dimensions in terms of frequency and intensity.

number	dimension	Frequency			intensity		
		means	Standard deviation	degree	means	Standard deviation	degree
1	emotional exhaustion	44.80	4.65	high	50.71	3.94	high
2	depersonalization	27.92	2.76	high	35.05	2.52	high
3	personal accomplishment	23.50	2.98	moderate	28.64	2.33	moderate

Total degree **96.2286** **7.0488** **high** **114.41** **7.56** **high**

As seen in table (3), the burnout degree among professionals working is high. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization intensity and frequency are also high. A personal accomplishment showing a moderate degree in frequency and intensity is shown.

2-Are there statistically significant differences in the level of psychological burnout among those who work with people with disabilities, according to the gender ,

Table 4: t-test results for burnout means differences.

		sex	means	S.d	df	T	P
Total degree	frequency	Male	97.45	8.35	138	0.268	0.788
		female	97.00	7.72			
	intensity	male	115.45	10.17	138	-1.062	0.293
		female	117.37	3.26			

Table (4) reveals that due to the gender variable on burnout degree total score, there are no significant differences in burnout means at the level (0.05) among workers with disabled people. Burnout is defined as a total degree of frequency among: (M=97.45, F=97.00.. t: 0=268. P=0.788). (M= 115.45, F=117.37. t= -1.062. P=0.293) Burnout intensity total degree means This indicates that both male and female staff working with disabilities experienced similar degrees of psychological exhaustion.

Table 5: Means and Standard deviations degree & a one-way ANOVA in terms of experience years.

	Years of experience			Means	Standard deviation	df	F	P
Total degree	Frequency	Less than 5 years	5	98.52	6.07	2	1.194	0.309

years of experience, job title, monthly income, and institution specialization field of the staff member?

□ **result due to the gender variable:**

To find out whether the level of psychological burnout differs among those working with people with disabilities according to the gender they treat, means and standard deviations and (t-test) were computed for the total scale scores, as presented in Table 4.

□ **Variable years of experience:**

To find out whether the level of psychological burnout differs among staff working with people with disabilities according to their years of experience, the mean and standard deviation and a one-way ANOVA were computed for the total scale scores, as presented in Table 5.

	Between 5-10 years	97.48	8.21			
	More than 11 years	94.79	5.35	67		
Intensity	Less than 5 years	117.00	4.14		0.758	0.472
	Between 5-10 years	113.45	10.06	2		
	More than 11 years	115.76	4.40	67		

Table (5) shows that there are no significant differences at the level ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) of psychological burnout means among workers with people with disabilities due to the years of experience variable. The calculated value of the burnout frequency total score was ($F = 1.194$, $P = 0.309$) and the calculated value of the burnout intensity total score was ($F = 0.758$, $P = 0.472$). This indicates that the level of psychological burnout did not differ according to the staff members' years of experience.

To find out whether the level of psychological burnout differs among staff working with people with disabilities according to their job title variable, the mean and standard deviation and a one-way ANOVA were computed for the total scale scores, as presented in Table 6.

□ Variable job title

Table 6: means and standard deviations degree & a one-way ANOVA in terms of job title.

	Job title		means	Standard deviation	df	F	P
Total degree	Frequency	administrative	94.50	6.07	4	2.869	0.030*
		Special education teacher	99.21	5.44			
		psychologist	94.37	8.62	135		
		Social worker	95.85	5.82			
		Occupational therapist	99.45	7.00			
	Intensity	administrative	117.10	3.07	4	.875	0.484
		Special education teacher	116.47	2.63			

psychologist	114.00	14.89	
Social worker	116.71	2.12	135
Occupational therapist	112.45	3.88	

Table (6) shows that there are no significant differences at the level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$) of psychological burnout means among workers with people with disabilities due to years of experience variable. Value of calculated on burnout frequency total score were ($F=1.194$, $P=0.309$) and value of calculated on burnout intensity total score were ($F=0.758$, $P=0.472$). This indicates that the level of psychological burnout, did not differ according to the staff members' years of experience

whereas there are no significant differences at the level ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) of burnout total score among workers due to the job title variable on burnout intensity total score. To find differences in sources, Tukey's post hoc test was used. Burnout frequency and total degree were

higher among administrative or special education teachers and occupational specialists, for the benefit of special education teachers and occupational specialists. workers as psychologists and occupational specialists, for the benefit of workers as occupational specialists.

□ Variable institution specialization field:

To find out whether the level of psychological burnout differs among staff working with people with disabilities according to their Institution specialization field **variable**, the mean and standard deviation and a one-way ANOVA were computed for the total scale scores, as presented in Table 7.

Table 7: means and standard deviations degree& a one-way ANOVA in terms of institution specialization field variable.

	Institution field	specialization	means	Standard deviation	df	F	P
Total degree	frequency	visual	92.46	9.47	3	2.217	0.094
		hearing	98.00	6.78			
		physical	98.13	4.38	136		
		Multiple disability	96.28	6.27			
	intensity	visual	113.46	15.48		0.187	0.905
		hearing	114.86	2.87	3		
		physical	113.80	3.56			
		Multiple disability	115.08	3.30	136		

Table (7) shows that there are no significant differences at the level ($0.05 \geq \alpha$) of total burnout degree frequency and intensity.

This indicates that the level of

psychological burnout, did not differ according to the institution's specialization field.

The third question's outcome:

Is there a significant relationship at the level of ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) between psychological burnout feeling frequency and intensity means among

workers who work with people with disabilities?

To find out the psychological burnout significant relationship at the level ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) between burnout feeling frequency and intensity means among workers who with people with disabilities, Pearson Correlation was computed for Pearson Correlation, as presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Pearson Correlation Results for Frequency and Intensity Relationships Among Workers with Disabilities

variables	Burnout frequency	Burnout intensity
Burnout frequency	1.000	0.323
Burnout intensity		0.031 *

Table 8 demonstrates that there are significant positive relationships between burnout feeling frequency and intensity among workers with disabilities. Studies agree with these findings, such as the Salman (2003) study.

Discussion

Through quantitative analysis, there is a high degree of burnout among professionals. This is due to the fact that people with disabilities lack access to tools and equipment, an inappropriate environment, a lack of skills and competencies, and training courses for workers with special needs that may limit burnout.

These findings are supported by studies by Al-attiyah and Issawi (2004), Ministry of Education Study in Collaboration with Secretarial National Plan for Palestinian Children (2005), Al-otaibi (2003), Salman (2003), and Hamid (1999). Study findings by Mernz (2003), Lingard (2003), Gold (2003), and Patrick (2004) are consistent with these finding.

There are no differences due to gender, institutional specialization field, years of experience, and the job title, especially (intensity) variables, but there are significant differences in burnout frequency and total score,

especially among workers, in favor of special education teachers and occupational therapists.

This indicates that there is no gender effect on burnout level. Attribute that to an equal number of male and female worker numbers, the same work nature, conditions, and tasks, the same work target group, and the same monthly income and incentives.

Findings from the studies of Al-Ali et al. (2021); Martnez-Tur et al. (2021); Al-otaibi (2003), Salman (2003) are consistent with these findings. The results differed from Hamid (1999) and were consistent with Patrick (2004) and with this finding.

These results can be attributed to the fact that administrative workers are in less contact with students with special needs, so they have a lower burnout degree compared with special education teachers who are in contact and deal directly with students with special needs. According to the data, 94% of administrative workers are burnt out. The researcher attributes that to the fact that their duties are more than their abilities, in addition to their contact with families of students with special needs and having to coordinate workshops and seminars. The results of the study by Al-attiyah and Issawi (2004) are consistent with these findings.

Finally, among workers with disabilities, there are positive and significant relationships between burnout feeling frequency and intensity. Studies agree with these findings, such as the Salman (2003) study.

Study Recommendations:

1. Conducting additional research to identify burnout causes among workers who serve people with disabilities, particularly those who work with people who have multiple disabilities.
2. Using better planning to improve the lives of people with disabilities
3. They provide services, utilities, and facilities to workers who serve individuals with disabilities to enable them to do their jobs.
4. Implementing counseling, occupational, and psychological programs to assist in the selection of employees based on specific characteristics and variables in order to achieve adaptation and improve the quality of services provided to people with disabilities.
5. Improving living conditions for workers who work with people who have special needs, such as by improving pay scales, incentive systems, and advancement opportunities.
6. Ensuring appropriate and suitable workloads for workers with individuals with disabilities to avoid feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization is important.
7. Developing specialized professional frameworks to provide needed counseling for burnout and work pressures.

Limitation:

This study was limited to workers who serve people with disabilities in private institutions in Palestine for the year 2021. Also, it's limited by the tool that was used in the study, which is the Maslach Burnout tool developed by Friedman r. H (1974).

Ethics Statement

Participants in the current study were recruited in an ethical manner, and all participants gave informed consent before taking part in the study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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