

Impact of the Successive Crises in Lebanon on Teachers' Psychiatric, Cognitive and Physical Health

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الأوضاع المتدهورة الحالية حتى يتم حلها،

الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحديد أثر الأزمات المتلاحقة في لبنان على الصحة النفسية والمعرفية والجسدية للأساتذة/ المعلمين في المراحل الابتدائية والمتوسطة والثانوية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تكشف هذه الدراسة عن مصدر الأجهاد الرئيس من بين الأزمات الأربع المستمرة:جائحة COVID-19 والإغلاق المتتالي، انفجار بيروت في 4 آب 2020، الوضع السياسي المتضارب، والأوضاع الاقتصادية المتدهورة. علاوة على ذلك، يهدف هذا البحث إلى قياس قدرة الأساتذة/ المعلمين على التكيف وتحمّل صعوبات الأزمات الحالية الجارية، وإلى الكشف عن طرق الأساتذة/ المعلمين في تحفيق، حل أعراضهم النفسية والمعرفية والجسدية، إن وجدت. أيضاً، يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحديد وضع الأساتذة/ المعلمين خلال الأزمات المستمرة عبر تعاملهم مع خططهم للهجرة أو مغادرة البلاد للعمل في الخارج، أو رغبتهم في ترك وظيفتهم كأساتذة/ معلمين والانغماس في وظيفة جديدة لا علاقة لها بالتعليم على الإطلاق. إضافة إلى ذلك، يهدف هذا البحث إلى فحص تأثير الأزمات المستمرة على أداء الأساتذة/ المعلمين في التدريس، علاقاتهم مع طلابهم وزملائهم والإدارة، تحطيطهم للدروس واستراتيجياتهم، تقييمهم لطلابهم وإدارتهم لصفوفهم الدراسية. أخيراً، يكشف هذا البحث عن الاقتراحات الأكثر عملية التي يمكن أن تقدمها مجالس إدارات المدارس ووزارة التعليم والتعليم العالي (MEHE) لتحسين صحة الأساتذة/ المعلمين نفسيًا، معرفياً وجسدياً. بالنسبة للأدوات، استخدم الباحثون استبياناً معدلاً تم التحقق من صحته بواسطة أستاذ جامعي متفرغ وأستاذ ثانوي حاصل على درجة الدكتوراه، كلاهما خبيرين في

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من التعبير عن أنفسهم، والتي بدورها قد تحسن حالتهم النفسية وتنعكس إيجابياً على أدائهم الوظيفي. كما تمت توصيتهم بإنشاء مساحات للأساتذة، المعلّمين من خلال مجموعات الدعم لتمكينهم من التعبير عن احتياجاتهم ومخاوفهم، وتقليل بعض من مهامهم المجهدة والأعمال الورقية الغير الضرورية. أخيراً، تمت توصيتهم بالتعاون مع المنظمات غير الحكومية المحلية والدولية والمنظمات الأخرى لدعم المعلّمين مالياً وطبياً وجسدياً بناءً على احتياجاتهم. فيما يتعلق بالحكومة وأصحاب القرار في وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي، تمت توصيتهم إنشاء منصة تنسيق مناسبة تلبّي الاحتياجات الصحية النفسية والمعرفية والجسدية العاجلة لجميع الأساتذة، المعلّمين المتأثرين بالأزمات المتتالية المستمرة، تنفيذ خطة اجتماعية مؤرّعة بشفافية وكافية مالياً لأسر الأساتذة، المعلّمين اللبنانيين الأكثر ضعفاً، وتطوير نظام حماية اجتماعية يستجيب للصدمات لمواجهة الأزمات المستقبلية. أخيراً، تماشياً مع نتائج هذا البحث، تمت التوصية باستخدام أهداف التنمية المستدامة (SDGs) كإطار عمل قادر على تمكين الشعب اللبناني بشكل عام، والأساتذة، المعلّمين بشكل خاص، من التحرك نحو مستقبل أكثر استدامة.

مجال الدراسة. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 800 أستاذ ومعلم في المراحل الابتدائية والمتوسطة والثانوية في مختلف المناطق اللبنانيّة وقد قاموا بملء الاستبيان عبر الإنترنّت من خلال الروابط المرسلة عبر البريد الإلكتروني ومجموعات WhatsApp. اعتمد الباحثون في دراستهم على الإحصائيات الوصفية من خلال النسب المئوية والمنوال، وعلى الإحصائيات الاستدللية من خلال اختبار بيرسون كاي سكوير. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أنّ قدرة معظم الأساتذة، المعلّمين على التكيف وتحمّل صعوبات الأزمات الحاليّة منخفضة للغاية حيث يحاول العديد منهم التعامل مع المواقف المحبطة الحاليّة حتى يتم حلّها من خلال التمارين البدنيّة، وقد أظهرت أيضاً أنّ هذه الأزمات المستمرة تؤثّر علاقتهم وعملهم كأساتذة، معلّمين، وأنّ الدعم المالي هو الاقتراح الأكثر عمليّة. وجدوى القادر على تحسين صحتهم. الجدير بالذكر أنّ نتائج الإحصائيات الاستدللية كشفت أنّ الأزمات المستمرة في لبنان مرتبطة إحصائياً وبشكل كبير بالصحة النفسيّة والمعرفية والجسدية للأساتذة، المعلّمين. بموجب ذلك، أوصى الباحثون مديرى المدارس والمسؤولين في وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي في لبنان بتنظيم مؤتمرات وجلسات تدريبيّة تمكّن الأساتذة، المعلّمين

الكلمات الرئيسية: الصحة النفسية، المعرفية والجسدية للأساتذة / المعلمين، COVID-19، الأزمات السياسية والاقتصادية.

Abstract:

This research aims at determining the impact of the successive crises in Lebanon on teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels. Additionally, this study reveals the main stressful source among the four ongoing crises: the COVID-19 pandemic and the successive lockdown, the explosion of Beirut on the 4th of August 2020, the conflicting political situation, and the declining economic situations. Even more, this study aims at measuring teachers' ability in adapting and withstanding the difficulties of the current ongoing crises, and aims at unveiling teachers' ways in alleviating/solving their psychiatric, cognitive and physical symptoms, if any. Further, this study aims at determining teachers' status during the ongoing crises by coping with the current deteriorating situations until issues are solved, their plans to immigrate or leave the country to work abroad, or their desire to quit their job as teachers and plunge into a new job that has nothing to do with education at

all. Furthermore, this study aims at examining the impact of the ongoing crises on teachers' teaching performance, their relationships with their students, colleagues and management, lesson planning/strategies, evaluation processes and classroom management. Finally, this study reveals the most practical and feasible suggestions that the schools' managements boards and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) can do to improve teachers' health psychiatrically, cognitively and physically. For the instruments, the researchers have used a modified online survey validated by a full-time university professor and a teacher holding a PhD degree, both experts in this field of studies. The sample of the study consisted of 800 teachers in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels in different Lebanese regions who filled the online survey through links sent by emails and WhatsApp groups. For their study, the researchers have relied on the descriptive statistics through the frequencies, percent and mode, and on the inferential statistics through the Pearson's Chi-Square Test. Results of the study have revealed that the ability of most teachers in adapting and withstanding the difficulties of the current ongoing crises is very low, many of the

respondents are trying to cope with the current frustrating situations until issues are solved mostly through physical exercises, these ongoing crises are affecting their relationships and job as teachers, and that the financial support is the most practical and feasible suggestion that can improve their health. Most notably, results of the inferential statistics have revealed that the ongoing crises in Lebanon are statistically and significantly associated with teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health. The researchers hereby have recommended schools administrators and the authorities in the MEHE in Lebanon to organize conferences and training sessions that enable the teachers to express themselves, which in turn might ameliorate their psychiatric status and reflect positively on their job performance. They were also recommended to establish spaces for the teachers through support groups to enable them expressing their needs and fears, and reduce some of the teachers' unnecessary work-loaded stressful tasks and paper work. Finally, they were recommended to collaborate with local and international NGOs and other organizations to support teachers financially, medically and physically based on their needs. Regarding the

government and the decision-makers at MEHE, they were recommended to establish an appropriate coordination platform that addresses the urgent psychiatric, cognitive and physical health needs of all teachers impacted by the ongoing successive crises, implement a transparently-distributed and financially adequate social assistance package for the most vulnerable Lebanese teachers' families, and develop a shock-responsive social protection system to address future crises. Finally, in line with the findings of this research, they were recommended to use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework capable of enabling the Lebanese people in general, and teachers in particular, to move towards a more sustainable future.

Keywords: *Teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health, political and economic crises, COVID-19.*

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since 2019, Lebanon has been facing multiple successive crises; and with the outbreak of economic and financial crises at a focal point in October 2019, the economic repercussions of these crises on the country have caused civil unrest, mass protests, and political instability.

Following the protests of October 2019 that lasted three months, the selected successive Prime Ministers and their governments were not able to solve neither the conflicting political issues internally and with the gulf states, nor the deteriorated economic situation that exacerbated after the bank deposits were smuggled abroad and the exchange rate of the US dollar was liberated against the Lebanese Lira to unprecedented rates, which in turn led to high rises in the prices of goods, transportation, medical and educational services. More importantly, it depleted the wages of the employees who were paid in the national currency, including teachers whose salaries were downsized from 2000\$ to less than 120\$ per month.

For matters to worsen for the Lebanese people, the onset global health pandemic of the coronavirus COVID-19 reached Lebanon in February 2020. This pandemic placed a further burden on the health infrastructure and its system in Lebanon which were already facing challenges; and because of the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, successive lockdowns and prevention measurements were taken by the government at those times (France24, 2020; GARDAWORLD, 2020), which is turn resulted in

additional economic burden for the Lebanese people in general and more challenges to the service provision in other sectors such as education, humanitarian, etc.

On top of the aforementioned economic, political and health crises, the city of Beirut dealt with what was considered globally as the largest non-nuclear massive explosion on August 4, 2020 at the port (McKay/Reuters, 2021). The Beirut explosion resulted in the mass destruction of large parts of the city, including the port, and an estimated 9 700 buildings within a 3km radius. It also wounded 7 000 people, of whom at least 150 acquired a physical disability, caused untold psychological harm, damaged 77 000 apartments, and resulted in almost 200 casualties, including nationals of Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Bangladesh, Philippines, Pakistan, Palestine, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, France, Australia, and the United States, many of which were children and youth (McKay/Reuters, 2021).

Sadly, the combined crises magnified the impact of each of the aforementioned crises and worsened the life of a large number of people in Lebanon. Even more, the inflation continued to rise and additional banking restrictions were placed even higher for people and businesses

alike, which in turn devalued the national currency, rose the number of unemployed people, and decreased the imports and the consumption (Barbuscia, 2021).

Currently, Lebanon has reached a stage of great economic, financial and political collapse; and in an alarming note, released official data indicated that the minimum wage for the employees in Lebanon fell to 27 dollars. Consequently, Lebanon became among the 10 countries in the world with the lowest minimum wages. It is believed that this was due to the successive jumps in inflation, the absence of governmental support, and the imposing fact that one dollar equals about 25 000 Lebanese Liras (Al Ain, 2021).

Tragically, the consumer price index issued by the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics from the beginning of 2019 to September 2021 showed an increase in food prices by 1819%, and transportation by 1034% (Al Ain, 2021). Moreover, access to health care services has been greatly affected by the ongoing economic crisis in Lebanon following COVID-19 and Beirut blast, and the Lebanese Lira has lost more than 93% of its purchasing value as of October 2021 when it began breaking away from the exchange rate of 1 500 Liras

per one dollar, to which it had been pegged since 1997 (Al Ain, 2021).

In summary, Lebanon is reeling from an economic meltdown described by the World Bank as one of the worst recessions in modern history; and in between all of that, we may ask ourselves about the impact of the mentioned successive crises on the teachers in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels on different aspects of their health.

Purpose of the Study

Through its inferential statistics, this study aims at examining the statistically significant associations, if any, between the successive crises in Lebanon such as the political and the declining economic situations, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns, and the explosion of Beirut on the 4th of August 2020 “the independent variables”, and teachers’ psychiatric, cognitive and physical health in the intermediate and secondary levels “the dependent variables”.

In addition, this study aims at measuring teachers’ ability in adapting and withstanding the difficulties of the current crises. Even more, it also aims at unveiling teachers’ ways in alleviating/solving their psychiatric, cognitive and physical

symptoms, if any. Further, this study aims at determining teachers' options regarding their status during the current crises as in if they are coping with the current frustrating situation until issues are resolved, trying to immigrate or leave the country to work abroad, or trying to quit their job as teachers and indulge in a new job that's not related to education.

Finally, this study aims at examining the impact of the ongoing crises on teachers' teaching performance, their relationship with their students and colleagues, lesson planning/strategies and classroom management. It also aims at determining the most practical and feasible suggestions that school principals and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEJE) can do to improve teachers' health.

Rationale of the Study

Lebanon is hit by a severe and prolonged economic depression. According to the latest edition of the World Bank's Lebanon Economic Monitor (LEM), the economic and financial crisis facing the country could be ranked among the 3 most severe global crises since the mid-19th century, which resulted in the Lebanese currency losing more than 90 percent of its value since fall 2019. Moreover, since 2020, Lebanon has been facing

a multitude of problems such as COVID-19 and the explosion of the Port of Beirut on the 4th of August 2020. The Lebanese authorities' responses to these challenges have been extremely inadequate. In fact, facing these colossal challenges, the persistent political inaction continues and the absence of a fully functioning executive action plan threatens to worsen an already seriously deteriorated socio-economic situation and to shatter the fragile social peace.

Though its history of long war and conflict, Lebanon is classified by the World Bank as a state affected by fragility, conflict and violence has led to growing concerns regarding the social unrest and civil disturbance. The increasingly devastating socio-economic situation threatens to lead to a systemic state failure with regional and even global repercussions. Unfortunately, more than half of the population is likely to be living below the national poverty line with the majority of the working population paid in Lebanese pounds suffering from a sharp fall in purchasing power; and with unemployment rates rising, a growing number of households are struggling to access essential services, including health care.

These crises have affected four essential public services: electricity,

water supply, sanitation and education. The “Deliberate Depression” has severely undermined already weak public services in two ways: (i) it has significantly increased poverty rates, with more households unable to afford alternative private services, which has led to increasing the needs of public services; and (ii) it has jeopardized the financial viability as well as the basic functioning of the sector by increasing costs and decreasing revenues.

The provision of basic public services is essential for the well-being of the population. The abrupt deterioration of basic services would have long-lasting repercussions, such as mass migration, learning losses, poor health outcomes, lack of adequate social protection, etc.

In summary, the worsening situation in Lebanon is affecting the human capital, which is difficult to reverse. This would be the main particular aspect that distinguishes the Lebanese crisis from the other global crises.

Since many teachers in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels were and still are among the people affected by the successive crises in Lebanon, since teachers are fundamental agents of social change, and since the crises are well known for their negative consequences on humans' different health aspects, then we need to study

the impact of the aforementioned successive severe crises on teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels.

Significance of the Study

This study has contributed to both theory and practice. For theory, this study has brought to light the negative impact of the crises on humans by examining the statistically significant associations, if any, between four different crises in Lebanon and teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health in the intermediate and secondary levels.

For practice, this study has provided other researchers, schools administrators and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) with necessary feedbacks on the current situation of teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health in the intermediate and secondary levels, which in turn may be used to enhance the development of practical and feasible suggestions and/or action plan that may improve their unfortunate status.

Additionally, this study has shed light on teachers' practical ways in alleviating/solving their psychiatric, cognitive and physical symptoms, if any. It has also measured teachers' ability in adapting and withstanding the

difficulties of the current adversities, including traumatic experiences and difficult life-transitions that might have impacted their teaching performance.

Limitations of the Study

This study has faced two limitations. First, the number of teachers in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels who constituted the population of the study was extremely large for the researchers to cover entirely even with the modified and validated online survey.

Second, due to the current circumstances that impose themselves on the Lebanese people, including the teachers, many teachers were dealing with diversified issues, thus they were not enthusiastic to fill out the survey despite the short amount of time it required to be filled.

Delimitations of the Study

The cooperation of many colleagues who were either members or administrators of WhatsApp groups enabled the researchers to spread the survey online among many teachers.

Additionally, the presence of the social media networking sites enabled the researchers to post the survey online on Facebook and Telegram to accelerate and increase the process of data collection. As a result, the

researchers were able to reach 800 respondents.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

When we turn our backs on humanitarian crises, it has serious and devastating consequences. More people are forced to flee their homes, families are split, and entire communities and countries fall apart! Although COVID-19 is, in the first place, a physical health crisis, it has the essence of a major mental health crisis as well, if action is not taken. Good mental health is highly essential to the functioning of society at the best possible circumstances. The mental health and wellbeing of whole societies have been severely impacted by this crisis and are a priority to be addressed urgently. Psychological distress in populations is widespread (United Nations, 2020).

Many people are worried due to the immediate health impacts of the virus and the consequences of physical confinement. Many are afraid of infection, dying, and losing family members. Individuals have been physically distanced from loved ones and peers. Millions of people are facing economic hardship having lost or being at risk of losing their income and subsistence (United Nations, 2020).

Since late 2019, Lebanon has been struggling with its worst economic crisis in decades, an economic and financial crisis which ranks in the top three most severe crises globally since the mid-nineteenth century, according to the World Bank, in addition to social unrest and political instabilities. In addition to that, the deteriorating socio-economic situation, aggravated by COVID-19 and the Beirut explosion on 4 August 2020, is threatening the livelihoods and well-being of the people at highest risk (Reliefweb, 2021).

These overlapping crises have worsened people's vulnerability and thousands have become impoverished. It was remarked that many people are experiencing financial issues related to the country's economic situation which is leading to a greater insecurity among them. The expense on people's psychological well-being is also noticeable and is a matter of serious attention (Reliefweb, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic hitting the country in the spring of 2020, followed by the major Beirut port explosion in August 2020, have worsened the situation in Lebanon. The blast, which left thousands of people wounded and hundreds of thousands displaced, also destroyed infrastructure, including several hospitals (Reliefweb, 2021).

Lebanon's highly privatized healthcare system was already a huge obstacle for the country's most at-risk people who struggled to access affordable care. According to the UN, the annual inflation rate, which rocketed to 133 per cent in November 2020, affected both Lebanese and refugees, and has had direct repercussions on their potential to reach affordable healthcare (Reliefweb, 2021).

According to the latest World Bank Lebanon Economic Monitor (LEM) released lately, the economic and financial critical situation is likely to be ranked in the top 10, possibly top 3, most severe crises episodes globally since the mid-nineteenth century. For over a year and a half, Lebanon has been confronting complicated difficulties and conflicts: its largest peace-time economic and financial crisis, COVID-19 and the Port of Beirut explosion. The Second Special Focus of the LEM discusses the impact of the crises on four basic public services: electricity, water supply, sanitation and education (Al-Saeed & El Khalil, 2021).

The Lebanese currency has lost more than 90 percent of its value. Food prices increased shocking 222 per cent in the year to June 2021. The country is facing a breakdown in the delivery of basic services, such as water, power

and fuel. More than four million people, including one million refugees, are at immediate risk of losing access to safe water, as the Water Establishments that pump water have run out of fuel and are not being maintained. Extended electricity outages are prevalent across the country (Reliefweb, 2021).

The severe decline in basic services would have long-lasting consequences: mass migration, loss of learning, poor health outcomes, and lack of adequate support systems, among others. Permanent harm to human capital would be very hard to recover. Perhaps this dimension of the Lebanese crisis makes the Lebanese case unique compared to other global crises (Al-Saeed & El Khalil, 2021).

The country's economic collapse has been years in the making, but the last 24 months have witnessed massive capital outflow, foreign currency shortage, and the collapse of the banking sector. The ripple effects have been catastrophic: a 90 percent devaluation of the Lebanese pound; more than 280 percent inflation since late 2019; a loss of savings as hundreds of thousands were cut off from their deposits; jobs and salary cuts; and depreciated incomes. These factors have deprived large segments of the population of their livelihoods (Reliefweb, 2021).

The crisis dealt a severe setback to most sectors. In the summer of 2021, there was a shortage of most basic goods and services including fuel, power, water, medication, and many essential food items. When they are available, few could afford them. Due to power outages, the country plunged into long hours of darkness daily. Residents waited in line for up to five hours to fill a rationed amount of fuel. Misgovernance, corruption, instability, and political divisions have all aggravated the crisis (Reliefweb, 2021).

Add to the above-mentioned, the global COVID19 Pandemic has required a lot from educators! From the prompt redefining and recreating of classrooms into online learning environments, to altering the architecture of how we communicate, live, and parent; the struggle is real. Teaching and learning during this stressful time drastically re-centers our whole-selves, and invites us to consider the importance of cognitive load, and mental health (Johnson, 2020).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that emerged in December 2019 and became pandemic within months. Since then, it has resulted in a significant loss of human life around the world and

posed an unprecedented threat to the public health, food systems, and the economy. The fact is that the epidemic has impacted the entire food chain by exposing its vulnerability through the border closures, trade restrictions, and confinement measures which in turn interrupted domestic and international food productions and limited the access to nutritious, safe, and diverse meals. At the economic level, millions of businesses and enterprises faced an existential danger, tens of millions of people were endangered to fall into absolute poverty, and more than a hundred million persons suffered from malnutrition; and as a result of these dark facts, people's lives were put in jeopardy (ILO, FAO, IFAD, & WHO, 2020).

Moreover, it is reported that abnormal circumstances generate more depressive, anxious, and generally greater psychological distress worldwide. Through its quarantine and lockdown, the COVID-19 pandemic is one of these aberrant circumstances that certainly leads to a greater sense of loneliness (Laconi, Ramaye, & Kalaitzaki, 2021).

Additionally, the epidemic increases the demand for mental health care, and according to WHO studies, the COVID-19 global epidemic has delayed or suspended vital mental health services in 93 percent of nations

globally despite the rising demand for mental health care, which in turn has worsened severely the situation (Who, 2020).

The previous financial crises have led to short and long-term worsening of humans' health in different aspects. Poverty, as in living under \$1.5 per day, surged in all financial crises as a result of the combination of loss of wages, unemployment, lack of the essential services, increased costs, declining asset values, and the associated costly coping mechanisms that have a long-term impact on the economic and the social well-being. Financial crises are disruptive to the development of countries and can have major consequences on their economic and social well-being; and even though everyone is affected negatively, the poor are the most vulnerable (Ötker-Robe & Podpiera, 2013).

Moreover, the financial crisis has a negative impact on education. In fact, teacher salaries make up about two-thirds of spending on public education, which explains why in some countries early symptoms of downturn are directly affecting salaries. When the economy is in a depression and graduate unemployment rises, teaching used to be a safer and more interesting decision than the other professions due to the respect accorded to the

teachers and the regular payment of their salaries. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case because the significant income cuts resulted from the economic downturn disrupt the efforts to attract the competent teachers (Bamigboye, Ede, & Adeyemi, 2016).

As a result of the foregoing, many countries face difficulties in maintaining the quality of education in the near and far future. The challenges faced by the more developed countries negatively affect education significantly and are related to social, economic and political issues that are interlinked with each other (Bamigboye, Ede, & Adeyemi, 2016).

Even more, it is well known that the political unrest has a considerable impact on the GDP growth, the capital investment, the income, the government spending and investment, the debts, and the hyperinflation (Aisen & José Veigab, 2013). Likewise, corruption, political instability and expropriation risk have a negative effect on the education quality (Saengchai, Mitprasat, & Horakul, 2020).

Additionally, ineffective management of the financial risks can worsen the resilience and survival of many citizens. Moreover, crises disproportionately affect the most vulnerable members of the society such as the youth, the elders and

the sick; and if an acute financial crisis is inadequately managed, then it can transform into a social crisis of dire effects (Ötker-Robe & Podpiera, 2013).

As with bereavement, isolation, financial losses, and anxiety that cause mental health problems or exacerbate existing ones (Who, 2020), many people do not have the capacity to deal with crises such as natural disasters, infectious diseases, climate change and recover from their impacts (Ötker-Robe & Podpiera, 2013).

With that being said, since teachers are members of any society, and since the crises affect many citizens in different aspects, then there could be a statistically significant association between each of the ongoing crises in Lebanon, the COVID-19 pandemic and the successive lockdown, the explosion of Beirut on the 4th of August 2020, the political situation and the declining economic situations, and teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health.

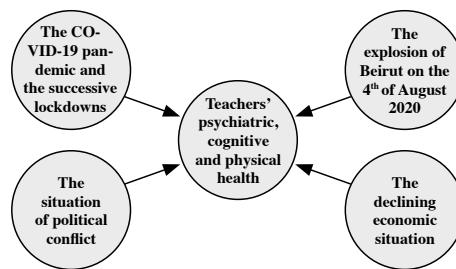


Diagram of the Theoretical Framework

Research Questions

The eight research questions presented below were constructed based on the literature review and the current circumstances that are influencing the people living in Lebanon, among whom the teachers, in different aspects of their lives in an unprecedented way that was never seen in the history of the country. The first three research questions were about the statistically significant association, if any, between each of the successive crises in Lebanon and each of teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels.

The fourth research question was about teachers' ability in adapting and withstanding the difficulties of the current crises, and the fifth was about teachers' ways in alleviating/solving the symptoms, if any, they experienced over the last 2 years. The sixth research question was about teachers' status during the current crises, the seventh was about the percent of the teachers whose performance and diversified relationships were affected by the successive crises in Lebanon, while the eighth was about the most feasible suggestion that school administrators and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) can do to improve teachers' health.

1. Is there a statistically significant association between the successive crises in Lebanon and teachers' psychiatric health?
2. Is there a statistically significant association between the successive crises in Lebanon and teachers' cognitive health?
3. Is there a statistically significant association between the successive crises in Lebanon and teachers' physical health?
4. How is teachers' capability in adapting and withstanding the difficulties of the current crises?
5. How are teachers alleviating/solving the symptoms, if any, experienced over the last two years?
6. What are teachers going to do regarding their status during the current crises?
7. What is the percent of teachers whose performance and relationships with their colleagues and students have been affected by the successive crises in Lebanon?
8. What is the most feasible suggestion that school administrators and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) can do to improve teachers' health?

Chapter 4: Methodology

Design of the Study: This study is classified as a quantitative study.

This design does not begin with hypotheses as they are developed following the data collection and analysis (CIRT;, 2015). In addition, when the targeted population of the study is too large, the simple random sampling technique is the one usually performed (Bhat, Adi;, 2019). Based on that, the researchers adopted the simple random sampling technique to select teachers in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels for their study.

The Statistical Approach of the Study: The researchers have used the descriptive statistics frequencies, percent and mode to describe the basic features of the data collected for the study because this type of statistics provides summaries about the sample of the study and describes what the data collected is formed of (Trochim, 2006). Finally, the researchers have used inferential statistics because this type of statistics describes what is going on with the data collected and enables for conclusions and judgments regarding the sample of the study (Trochim, 2006).

Research Instruments: For their study, the researchers have developed an online survey of twelve items to tackle teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health during the successive crises in Lebanon,

what are they doing or planning to do during these hard times, the impact of the ongoing crises on their performance, relationships with their students and colleagues, lesson planning/strategies and classroom management, and finally the most practical and feasible suggestions that schools managements boards and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education can do to improve teachers' health.

1. You are:

- A full-timer in a public school and teach as a part timer in another school.
- A full-timer in a public school and do not teach as a part timer in another school.
- A full-timer in a private school and teach as a part timer in another school.
- A full-timer in a private school and do not teach as a part timer in another school.
- A part timer in public schools only.
- A part timer in private schools only.
- A part timer in private and public schools.

2. Regarding your teaching experience, you have:

- Less than 5 years of teaching experience in school.

- Between 5 (included) and 10 (excluded) years of teaching experience in school.
- Between 10 (included) and 15 (excluded) years of teaching experience in school.
- Between 15 (included) and 20 (excluded) years of teaching experience in school.
- 20 years and above. (Ünal & Ünal, 2012)
- The situation of political conflict.
- The declining economic situations.

3. You are paid:

- Your full salary each month.
- Part of your salary each month.
- Once, twice or thrice per year.
- You are not paid at all.

4. The following successive crises could be ranked as sources that negatively affects teachers' health psychiatrically, cognitively and physically.

Please rank each contributor from

0-4 where:

0 = No negative effect at all;

1 = Mild negative effect;

2 = Moderate negative effect;

3 = Strong negative effect;

4 = Very strong negative effect.

- The COVID-19 pandemic and the successive lockdown.
- The explosion of Beirut on the 4th of August 2020.

5. Due to the successive crises in Lebanon, you feel that:

- You are frustrated. (Healthgrades Editorial Staff, 2021)
- You are anxious about your current living situation. (Healthgrades Editorial Staff, 2021)
- You feel emptiness (a depression symptom). (The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation, 2021)
- You feel worthlessness (a depression symptom). (The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation, 2021)
- You are moody (a depression symptom). (The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation, 2021)
- You withdraw from discussions (a depression symptom). (The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation, 2021).
- None of the above.

6. Due to the successive crises in Lebanon, you feel that:

- You are forgetting.
- You have difficulties with thinking.
- You have difficulties with talking.
- You have difficulties understanding new ideas presented to you for the first time.
- You have difficulties with writing.
- You have difficulties with reading.

- You are unable to perceive and capture what is happening around you.
- None of the above. (Healthgrades Editorial Staff, 2021)

7. Due to the successive crises in Lebanon, you feel that you have:

- Abdominal pain or cramping.
- Appetite/Weight changes.
- Bowel movement changes.
- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Hearing or vision problems.
- Impaired balance and coordination.
- Muscle spasms.
- Sleep disturbances.
- Swallowing difficulties.
- None of the above. (Healthgrades Editorial Staff, 2021)

8. How are you alleviating/solving the symptoms, if any, experienced over the last past years?

- Through physical exercises.
- Through meditation.
- Through alcohol.
- Through therapy/counseling.
- Through prescribed drugs, such as the ones prescribed by a doctor to reduce for depression and anxiety.
- You didn't try to alleviate/solve them.
- You are fine and do not suffer from any symptoms.

9. How do you describe your ability to adapt and withstand the difficulties of the current crises?

- Very low;
- Fairly low;
- Moderate;
- Fairly high;
- Very high.

10. What is your plan as a result of the successive crises?

- You are trying to immigrate or leave the country to work abroad.
- You are going to stay in Lebanon but you will quit your job as a teacher and indulge in a new job that's not related to education.
- You are coping and will be patient with the current situation until all or most issues are resolved.

11. The ongoing crises are affecting:

- Your performance inside the classroom.
- Your lesson planning, methods and teaching strategies.
- Your evaluation process.
- Your classroom management such as managing students' poor behavior during the learning session.
- Your relationship with your students.
- Your relationship with your colleagues.

- Your relationship with the management.
- None of the above.

12. Practical and feasible suggestions that the school administrators and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education can do to improve your health:

- Psychological support.
- Sport activities organized.
- Financial support.
- Medical aid.
- Support groups to talk, share your concerns and support each other.
- Meditation and therapy sessions.
- Treatment sessions by specialists.
- Providing in-kind assistance.
- None of the above.

Survey's Validity

The online survey of the study was validated by a teacher in the secondary level who holds a PhD degree in the sciences of education and a university professor, both experts in the field of this study.

In studies, steps need to be followed when an instrument, like a survey, is translated to another language to preserve its validation (Sperber, 2004).

For that, in the first step, the survey was translated to the Arabic language to suit teachers in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels across Lebanon by a PhD student in the Arabic language with 25 years of experience in teaching. In the next step, the translation was validated by another expert to preserve the content of the English version.

Data Collection Procedure:

The researchers created an online survey and sent it to teachers, through WhatsApp platform, in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels in different schools, who sent it to their friends and colleagues in different regions across Lebanon. Thus, the researchers were able to collect their data from 800 teachers. At the end of the aforementioned procedure, the researchers organized the answers for their quantitative results and analysis.

Chapter 5: Results

The data was collected from the online survey in an Excel Spread Sheet. Then, it was imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

Table1:DoubleEntriesTablethatShows theFull-TimeandPart-TimeTeachersandtheirTeachingExperience

| Teachers> Job in Schools as a Full-Timer or a Part-Timer | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| | A full-timer in a public school and teach as a part timer in another school | A full-timer in a public school and do not teach as a part timer in another school | A full-timer in a private school and teach as a part timer in another school | A full-timer in a private school and do not teach as a part timer in another school | A part timer in public schools only | A part timer in private schools only | A part timer in private and public schools |
| Teaching Experience | | | | | | | |
| Less than 5 years of teaching experience in school | 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 1 |
| Between 5 (included) and 10 (excluded) years of teaching experience in school | 15 | 37 | 4 | 27 | 45 | 10 | 2 |
| Between 10 (included) and 15 (excluded) years of teaching experience in school | 23 | 47 | 2 | 25 | 32 | 6 | 6 |
| Between 15 (included) and 20 (excluded) years of teaching experience in school | 26 | 74 | 11 | 28 | 16 | 7 | 2 |
| 20 years and above | 85 | 157 | 10 | 37 | 19 | 17 | 4 |
| Total | 151 | 318 | 28 | 126 | 117 | 45 | 15 |

Results of the double entries table presented above have shown that no category was left without a respondent as full and part timer teachers in private and public schools with different years of teaching experience filled the online survey.

In sum, 469 full timers in public schools filled the online survey, 154 full timers in private schools filled it, and 177 part timers in private and public schools filled it.

Table 2: Double Entries Table that Shows the Full Time and Part Time Teachers and their Salaries

| Teachers' Full Time and/or Part Time Job in Schools | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| | A full-timer in a public school and teach as a part timer in another school | A full-timer in a public school and do not teach as a part timer in another school | A full-timer in a private school and teach as a part timer in another school | A full-timer in a private school and do not teach as a part timer in another school | A part timer in public schools only | A part timer in private schools only | A part timer in private and public schools | |
| Salaries | | | | | | | | |
| You get paid your full salary each month | 139 | 309 | 21 | 122 | 0 | 41 | 10 | |
| You get paid part of your salary each month | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 2 | |
| You get paid once, twice or thrice per year | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 117 | 1 | 2 | |
| You are not paid at all | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| Total | 151 | 318 | 28 | 126 | 117 | 45 | 15 | |

Results of the double entries table presented above have shown that 639 teachers in private and public schools are paid their full salary each month, 26 are paid a part of their monthly salary, 128 are paid once, twice or thrice per year, while 4 are not paid at all.

More precisely, the majority of the full timers in private and public schools are paid their full salary each month, the majority of the part timers in private schools only are also paid their full salary, while the part timers in public schools only are paid once, twice or thrice per year.

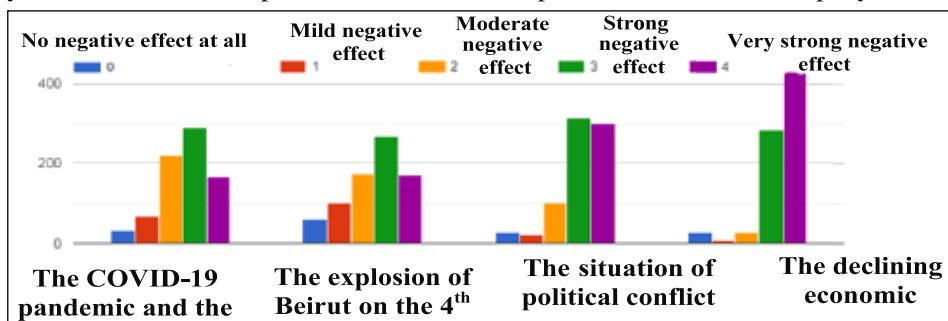


Chart 1: Bar Chart of Each of the Successive Crises in Lebanon

The bar chart presented above has showed that the most of the respondents were moderately and negatively affected by COVID-19 and the explosion of Beirut on the 4th of August 2020.

On the other hand, those who were moderately affected and those who were strongly affected by the situation of political conflict in Lebanon were almost equal.

Finally, the bar chart has revealed that those who were very strongly and negatively affected by the declining economic situation in Lebanon were the most counted ones.

More precisely:

- 291 teachers were moderately and negatively affected by COVID-19, while 166 were strongly and negatively affected by it.

Thus, in total, 457 out of 800 teachers (57.125%) were negatively affected by the COVID-19.

- 269 respondents were moderately and negatively affected by the

explosion of Beirut on the 4th of August 2020, while 171 were strongly and negatively affected by it.

Thus, in total, 440 out of 800 teachers (55%) were negatively affected by the explosion of Beirut on the 4th of August 2020.

- 316 respondents were moderately and negatively affected by the situation of political conflict in Lebanon, while 302 were strongly and negatively affected by it.

Thus, in total, 618 out of 800 teachers (77.25%) were negatively affected by the situation of political conflict in Lebanon.

- 284 respondents were moderately and negatively affected by the declining economic situation in Lebanon, while 431 were strongly and negatively affected by it.

Thus, in total, 715 out of 800 teachers (89.375%) were negatively affected by the reality of the political conflict in Lebanon.

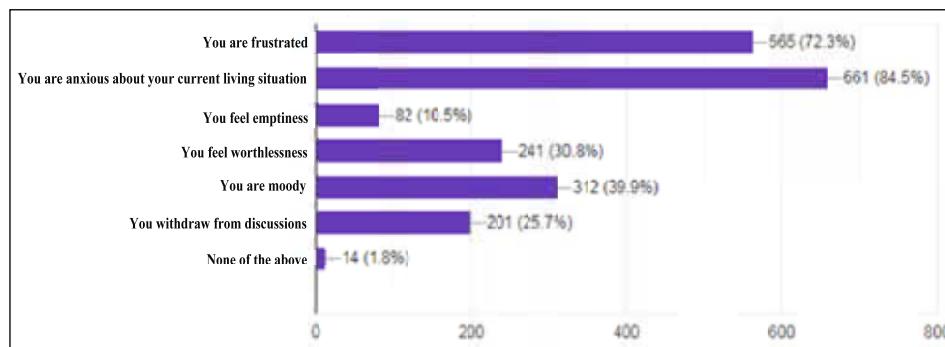


Chart 2: Bar Chart of Teachers' Psychiatric Symptoms

The bar chart presented above has revealed that most of the respondents (84.5%) were anxious about their current living situation, 72.3% were frustrated from the current crises, 39.9% became moody, 30.8% felt worthless, 25.7% withdrew from the discussions while 10.5% felt emptiness.

It is also notable to mention that only 1 teacher of the 800 respondents did not suffer from the above-mentioned psychiatric symptoms, meaning that 799 out of 800 have dealt with diversified aforementioned psychiatric symptoms.

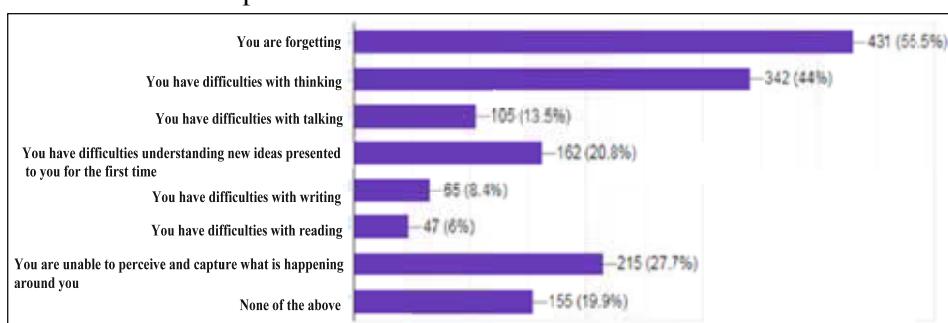


Chart 3: Bar Chart of Teachers' Cognitive Symptoms

The bar chart presented above has revealed that most of the respondents (55.5%) were forgetting, 44% were having difficulties with thinking, 27.7% were unable to perceive and capture what is happening around them, 20.8% were having difficulties understanding new ideas presented to them for the first time, 13.5% were having difficulties with talking, 8.4%

were having difficulties with writing, while 6% were having difficulties with reading.

It is also notable to state that 155 teachers (19.9%) did not deal with any of the aforesaid cognitive symptoms. However, this means that 645 teachers out of the 800 respondents have dealt with the diversified aforementioned cognitive symptoms.

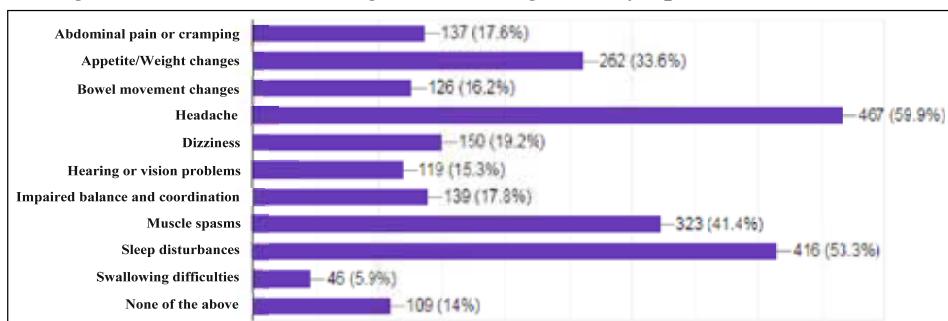


Chart 4: Bar Chart of Teachers' Physical Symptoms

The bar chart presented above has uncovered that most of the respondents (59.9%) had headache, 53.3% had sleep disturbance, 41.4% had muscles spasms, 33.6% dealt with appetite/weight changes, 19.2% felt dizziness, 17.8% dealt with impaired balance and coordination, 16.2% suffered from

bowel movement changes, 15.3% dealt with hearing or vision problems, while 5.9% had swallowing difficulties.

It is also notable to mention that while 109 respondents (14%) did not suffer from the above-named physical symptoms, 691 out of the 800 teachers (86%) did suffer from them.

Table 3: Teachers' ways in alleviating/solving the symptoms, if any, experienced over the last two years (Frequencies and Percent)

| Teachers' ways in alleviating/solving the symptoms, if any, experienced over the last two years | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----|-----------|------------|
| Through physical exercises | 299 | 37.4% | |
| Through meditation | 7 | 0.9% | |
| Through alcohol | 24 | 3% | |
| Through therapy/counseling | 62 | 7.8% | |
| Through prescribed drugs, such as the ones prescribed by a doctor for depression and anxiety | 128 | 16% | |
| You didn't try to alleviate/solve them | 276 | 34.6% | |
| You are fine and do not suffer from any symptoms | 2 | 0.3% | |
| Total | 800 | 100% | |

Results of table 3 presented above have shown that while 276 respondents out of 800 weren't trying to alleviate the symptoms they were dealing with, 299 (37.4%) were doing so through physical exercises, 128 (16%) through prescribed drugs, such as the ones prescribed by a doctor for depression and anxiety, 62 (7.8%) through therapy/

counseling, 24 (3%) through alcohol, and 7 (0.9%) through meditation.

Now, even though only 2 teachers (0.3%) were fine and did not suffer from any symptoms, 798 teachers out of 800, among those who were trying to alleviate their symptoms or not, were suffering from diversified psychiatric, cognitive and physical symptoms.

Table 4: Teachers' ability to adapt and withstand the difficulties of the current crises

| Teachers' ability to adapt and withstand the difficulties of the current crises | | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| Very low | 291 | 36.4% |
| Fairly low | 220 | 27.5% |

| | | |
|-------------|-----|------|
| Moderate | 200 | 25% |
| Fairly high | 73 | 9.1% |
| Very high | 16 | 2% |
| Total | 800 | 100 |

Results of table 4 presented above have unveiled that most of the respondents (291; 36.4%) weren't adapting and withstanding the difficulties of the current crises due to their very low ability, and 220 (27.5%) weren't also due to their low ability.

At the same time, 200 respondents (25%) had moderate ability to adapt

and withstand the difficulties of the current crises, 73 (9.1%) were handling the difficulties due to their fairly high ability while 16 (2%) were doing the same due to their very high ability.

In sum, 511 respondents (63.9%) were neither adapting nor withstanding the difficulties of the current crises as their low abilities weren't helping them doing so.

Table 5: The Percent and the Mode of Teachers' Plans as a Result of the Successive Crises

| | Teachers' plans as a result of the successive crises | Percent |
|----------------------|--|---------|
| Item 1 | You are trying to immigrate or leave the country to work abroad. | 32.1% |
| Item 2 | You are going to stay in Lebanon but you will quit your job as a teacher and indulge in a new job that's not related to education. | 7.1% |
| Item 3 | You are coping and will be patient with the current situation until all or most issues are resolved. | 60.8% |
| Mode : Item 3 | | |

Results of table 5 presented above have disclosed that item 3 is the mode, the most frequent answer for an occurring observation (shashway, 2020). As a result, it was revealed that 486 respondents (60.8%) of the respondents were coping and tolerating with the

current situation until all or most issues are resolved, 257 (32.1%) were trying to immigrate or leave the country to work abroad, while 57 (7.1%) were going to stay in Lebanon but will quit their job as a teacher and indulge in a new job that's not related to education.

Table 6: The Percent and the Mode of the Effect of the Ongoing Crises on the Teachers

| | The effect of the ongoing crises on the teachers | Percent |
|--------|--|---------|
| Item 1 | Your performance inside the classroom. | 20.6% |
| Item 2 | Your lesson planning, methods and teaching strategies. | 33.5% |
| Item 3 | The evaluation practices. | 19% |
| Item 4 | Your classroom managements such as managing students' poor behavior during the learning session. | 17.4% |
| Item 5 | Your relationship with your students. | 13.6% |
| Item 6 | Your relationship with your colleagues. | 16.5% |

| | | |
|----------------------|--|-------|
| Item 7 | Your relationship with the management. | 18.1% |
| Item 8 | None of the above. | 41.8% |
| Mode : Item 8 | | |

Results of table 6 presented above have brought to light that item 8 is the mode, the most frequent answer for an occurring observation (shashway, 2020). As a result, it has revealed that the current crises are not affecting the work performance of 334 teachers (41.8%). On the other hand, it was revealed that the current crises are affecting the lesson planning, methods and teaching strategies

of 268 teachers (33.5%) out of 800, the performance inside the classroom of 165 teachers (20.6%), the evaluation process of 152 teachers (19%), the relationship with the management of 145 teachers (18.1%), the classroom management of 139 teachers (17.4%), the colleagues relationships of 132 teachers (16.5%), and the students relationships of 109 teachers (13.6%).

Table 7: The Percent and the Mode of the Practical and Feasible Suggestions that the School Management and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Can Do to Improve Teachers' Health

| Practical and feasible suggestions that the school management and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education can do to improve Teachers' health | | |
|--|---|-------|
| Item 1 | Psychological support at school. | 43.2% |
| Item 2 | Sport activities organized at school. | 20.9% |
| Item 3 | Financial support. | 90.8% |
| Item 4 | Medical aid. | 54.7% |
| Item 5 | Support groups to talk, share your concerns and support each other. | 15.7% |
| Item 6 | Meditation and therapy sessions. | 11.5% |
| Item 7 | Treatment sessions by specialists. | 15.7% |
| Item 8 | Providing food. | 33.6% |
| Item 9 | None of the above. | 3.8% |
| Mode : Item 3 | | |

Results of table 7 presented above have noted that item 3 is the mode, the most frequent answer for an occurring observation (shashway, 2020). As a result, it was revealed that 727 teachers (90.8%) are in need for financial support. Even more, 438 teachers (54.7%) indicated that they need medical aid, 346 (43.2%) suggested the psychological support at school as a practical and feasible

suggestion, 269 (33.6%) asked to be provided with food, 167 (20.9%) demanded for sport activities organized at school, 126 (15.7%) proposed groups to talk, share your concerns and support each other, 126 (15.7%) recommended treatment sessions by specialists, while 92 (11.5%) enlightened on the need for meditation and therapy sessions. In sum, while only 30 teachers out of the

800 respondents did not propose any feasible suggestions, 770 approved of the above-mentioned practical and these aforementioned suggestions.

Table 8: Pearson's Chi-Square Test Results Regarding the Statistically Significant Association between the Total Factors of Teachers' Psychiatric Symptoms and the Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon

| Pearson Chi-Square Alfa Values for the Total Factors of Teachers' Psychiatric Symptoms and the Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Teachers' Psychiatric Symptoms Total Factors | |
| The Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon Total Factors | 1.7684×10^{-6} |

According to the results of the Pearson Chi-Square test displayed in table 8, at a significant Alfa value less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant association between the total factors of teachers' psychiatric symptoms and the total factors of the ongoing successive crises in Lebanon.

Table 9: Pearson's Chi-Square Test Results Regarding the Statistically Significant Association between the Total Factors of Teachers' Cognitive Symptoms and the Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon

| Pearson Chi-Square Alfa Values for the Total Factors of Teachers' Cognitive Symptoms and the Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Teachers' Cognitive Symptoms Total Factors | |
| The Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon Total Factors | 0.9842×10^{-5} |

According to the results of the Pearson Chi-Square test displayed in table 8, at a significant Alfa value less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant association between the total factors of teachers' cognitive symptoms and the total factors of the ongoing successive crises in Lebanon.

Table 10: Pearson's Chi-Square Test Results Regarding the Statistically Significant Association between the Total Factors of Teachers' Physical Symptoms and the Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon

| Pearson Chi-Square Alfa Values for the Total Factors of Teachers' Physical Symptoms and the Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Teachers' Physical Symptoms Total Factors | |
| The Ongoing Successive Crises in Lebanon Total Factors | 1.8432×10^{-10} |

According to the results of the Pearson Chi-Square test displayed in table 8, at a significant Alfa value less than 0.05, there was a statistically significant association between the total factors of teachers' physical symptoms and the total factors of the ongoing successive crises in Lebanon.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis

Results of the study conform with the statements of the United Nations

(2020), Johnson, (2020), Al-Saeed and El Khalil (2021) regarding the impacts of the economic, political and health crises on people. Results of the study's quantitative data have indicated that among the 800 respondents, many teachers seem to be unable to handle the ongoing issues in the absence of the necessary support to keep them going in these challenging times. It is worth noting that teachers' resilience to survive these crises, mainly through physical exercise, is what's driving them to stay on track.

Even more, the results have revealed that the ongoing crises in Lebanon are, to a certain extent, affecting negatively teachers' performance inside the classrooms and their relationships with their students, colleagues and school management. Finally, they have unveiled that many of the respondents are in need of financial support during these current hard times.

According to the literature of this study, when a crisis occurs, the health of those who are impacted by it can be jeopardized in various aspects. So, if one crisis can compromise humans' health, then what can be expected if a combination of four crises is being imposed on the citizens in a given society?

Table 7 has disclosed that 90.8% of the respondents are in need of

financial support. Thus, it has become clear that during such ongoing crises, the respondents may not be capable of surviving for too long, and on the long run, they might not be able to reach their schools to teach.

Thus, the consequences on teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health could worsen even more with time.

At this point, one may question the contribution that school administrators/ directors and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education can offer to alleviate teachers' feelings of anxiety about their current living situation, their frustration, forgetfulness, sleep disturbances, to name a few.

That is why teachers cannot be expected to practice high performance teaching in such unprecedented circumstances!

Chapter 7: Hypotheses and Recommendations

Hypotheses

Based on the results of the study's inferential statistics related to the first, second and third research questions, the researchers have hypothesized that the current ongoing crises in Lebanon are statistically and significantly associated with teachers' psychiatric, cognitive and physical health.

Recommendations

Schools should not be only concerned about the professional development of the teachers. However, they should also take into consideration their psychiatric, cognitive and physical health, especially in the context of a pandemic, economic and political crises when societal benchmarks are being challenged.

It is worth mentioning that the school is the ideal, natural and safe place to accompany and support the teachers in these difficult days of their lives as these cascading crises constitute a global situation that is collectively experienced and that affects all systems in which a person develops. For that, the response to the results of this study must be both collective and systematic.

Based on the quantitative results of the study that unveiled the catastrophic psychiatric, cognitive and physical health of the respondents in the primary, intermediate and secondary levels, school's administrations are recommended to:

- Organize conferences and training sessions for the teachers that focus on understanding emotions, expressing them, self-regulating them and promoting individual and collective resilience strategies. As a result, teachers' psychiatric status might be ameliorated, which in turn might reflect positively on their job performance.
- Establish spaces for the teachers to express themselves and share their concerns in "supports groups" to raise their voices about their needs and fears. In turn, the schools managements and the ministry's authorities will be aware of teachers' needs and fears and they will have time to come up with adequate decisions that can reduce some of the fears and fulfill a number of their needs.
- Take into consideration the different contexts imposed on the society and evaluate their influences on the school reality, promote individual and group resilience strategies, and adopt support strategies and practices that favor empathy and kindness based on the needs of their teachers.
- Consider teachers' workload with open eyes and reduce some of their unnecessary stressful tasks and paper work, if not all, save teachers' time, efforts, work on their potentials, and adopt the smarter but not harder teaching strategies.
- Collaborate with local and international NGOs and other organizations to support teachers financially, medically and physically based on their needs.

The government and the authorities at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education are recommended to:

- Establish an appropriate coordination platform that addresses the urgent psychiatric, cognitive and physical health needs of all teachers impacted by the ongoing successive crises.
- Implement a transparently-distributed and financially adequate social assistance package for the most vulnerable Lebanese teachers' families, which is evidence-based to cover minimum basic needs and help offset the loss of income due to the current economic crisis and the COVID-19 emergency response.

- Develop a shock-responsive social protection system to address future crises.

Finally, in light of the fact that crises know no borders, and that the challenges teachers in Lebanon are facing—from poverty in all its forms to social justice—are large-scale global challenges, there would be valuable importance in using the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) as a framework to align the findings of this research with. The SDGs address some of the world's toughest challenges and most pertinent problems. They provide a framework to understand how the Lebanese people in general, and teachers in particular, can move towards a more sustainable future.

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