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Huda Hadi Jawad¹
Dr. Shorouq Kazem Salman²

Stressful Life Events for State Employees

Abstract

There is no doubt that the stressful events and situations that the individual is exposed to affect his psychological structure in the context of his relationship with the social environment in which he lives, so that it has become the cornerstone of psychosomatic disorders, which leads him to feel distress, frustration, depression, anxiety and other negative emotions, in addition to It leads to inappropriate behavioral responses such as introversion and self-restriction, avoiding social interaction with others, and feeling alienated so that life becomes meaningless for him.

stressful life events have negative effects on human mental health, especially on state employees, the researcher resorted to carrying out the current study, which aimed to:

1- The stressful life events of state employees.

2- The significance of the differences in stressful life events for state employees according to the gender variable (males - females).

In order to achieve this, the researcher built a measure of stressful life events consisting of (36) items, distributed over three areas based on the theory of cognitive appreciation of the world (Lazarus), and a sample of (400) employees from the Ministry of Education was drawn, and after it extracted The validity and reliability coefficients of the stressful life events scale items, and then analyzing the sample answers, the research results showed the following:

A - The research sample does not have a level of stressful life events.

B - There is no effect of gender on the high level of stressful life events for the research sample.

Keywords: Stressful Life Events, State Employees.

Research Problem

The individual faces many events in his life, which include undesirable experiences, situations involving many sources of anxiety, and risk and threat factors in all areas of life. Contemporary life has led to an increase and diversity of the requirements of life. In fact, the aspirations of the individual differed and increased from before, and this imposed on him more effort and continuous work to live a happy life, which made him feel in a state of tension and psychological pressure (Al-Nayal & Abdullah, 1997). Therefore, psychological stress, its sources, and its effects on workers in various institutions and organizations are among the topics that have attracted the attention of many

researchers, especially in recent times, despite the existence of this phenomenon in the presence of humans as a result of the negative results caused by these pressures on the psyche of workers and the decrease in their performance, and the increase in days of absence, Perhaps the increase in work accidents, and then the institution incurring large losses represented in workers' compensation, and a decrease in production (Abdul Aziz, 1997).

Lazarus (1988) believes that individuals vary in their dealings and ways of facing stress in their lives through the methods they follow, the strategies they use, and how they perceive these pressures. The two sources of their abilities to deal with these incidents determine the quality of the stressor and the nature of the stress that the

Huda Hadi Jawad¹, Department of Psychology, College of Literature, University of Baghdad, Iraq.
Email: Hudaalsaati@yahoo.com

Dr. Shorouq Kazem Salman², Professor, Department of Psychology, College of Literature, University of Baghdad, Iraq.

individual will suffer. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988). Therefore, the current research comes to identify the availability of traumatic life events for state employees, and then the current research problem is to answer the following question:

What is the degree of stressful life events for state employees?

Research Importance

The current era is characterized by the increasing work pressures imposed on employees, and then they seek to confront stressful life events in a way that guarantees them survival and continuity, and what helps them in this is their ability to manage the pressures they are exposed to in a way that leads to improving performance, increasing effectiveness and enhancing belonging to the institution to which they belong, which leads to improve the quality of the work or service provided, and then raise their efficiency (Taher, 2005).

The presence of the individual in his institution requires him to live in an environment that dictates his conditions, which make him in a state of anxiety and fear of failure to adapt to the work environment and the nature of the work that he bears, and the intensity of the rhythm with which he must work in order to complete his work and other requirements of working conditions, which create in him multiple feelings of frustration, psychological conflict, hesitation and doubt in his ability to complete the work (Al-Najjar, 1995). Stresses are related to daily life events. People without exception are exposed daily to a variety of external pressures, including work pressures, family pressures, raising children, addressing health problems, financial matters, and various crises. They are also exposed daily to pressures from internal sources such as organic, psychological and negative effects. that result from our behavioral errors (Ibrahim, 1998).

Lazarus and Folkman (1986) believe that although all people are exposed to life events in one way or another, they are not all exposed to their risks to the same degree, as a result of the difference of each individual in his awareness of the stressful life events directed at him, as well as the different characteristics of their personalities, previous experiences and expectations about life. events, their response or the way they deal with it varies according to their personality type. Either this response is active so that it leads to changing or modifying these events, whether it is a cognitive or behavioral response, or avoidance to reach the proper adaptation and then the individual feels comfortable. Or this response may be passive, making him feel threatened and permanent (Lazarus & Folkman, 1986).

Research Goal

The research aims to know the stressful life events of state employees, as well as the significance of the differences in stressful life events among state employees according to the gender variable (male - female).

Research Limits

The research is determined by the following limits:

1. Objective limits: traumatic life events.
2. Human borders: state employees, of both types (males - females).
3. Spatial boundaries: The Ministry of Education in all its departments.
4. Time limits: the academic year (2020-2021).

Defining Terms

Stressful Life Events was defined by:

A- (Moos, 1973) "They are the problems resulting from situations that are outside the scope of normal life, and they are situations that obstruct the usual methods of activity and require new forms of dealing ". (Moos, 1973).

B- Lazarus (Lazarus, 1986) "They are events outside the individual and make him in an unusual situation, and they are exceptional requirements that threaten him in some way". (Lazarus, 1986).

C- Theoretical definition of stressful life events: The researcher adopts a definition (Lazarus, 1986) after that, a theoretical definition of stressful life events in the current research.

D- Procedural definition of stressful life events: It is the total score that the employee will obtain when answering the stressful life events scale prepared by the researcher.

1- The Concept of Stressful Life Events

The concept is the natural entry point for dealing with any topic. Despite the importance of defining the concept, it is not always easy. Scientists and researchers have many views on the concept of stressful life events, like other concepts. Some of them considered it a stimulus that is seen as any event that the individual perceives as a threat to him, and that these stimuli may be internal arising from within the individual such as conflicts, and may arise from external events in the environment surrounding the individual and among the most prominent advocates of this direction (Holmes & Rahi). While some of them dealt with it as a response that represents the reactions that the individual produces towards the event, and this trend represents ((Hans Selye), and a third group

looked at it as a process of interaction between the person and the environment and represents this direction (Lazarus) (Hussain & Hussein, 2006). Stressful life events are broad gateways to psychological diseases and personality deviations, as they are one of the diseases of the civilized era resulting from frequent movement, preoccupation with work, accumulation of many responsibilities, anxiety, tension, and the many requirements of modern life (Al-Ani, 1998).

Some researchers have classified stressful events in different forms, as (Baldeck, 1982) classified them into cataclysmic events such as destruction due to wars, acts of violence, military combat, and natural pressures, while the other type was classified by personal pressures such as the death of a loved one, and material loss in Work, divorce, and lack of social relationships (Baldeck, 1982). As for Chen (Chen, 1982) considered the most severe pressures to be unemployment, poverty, and death, which are considered to affect all age groups (Chen, 1982).

2- Cognitive Estimation Theory

This theory was presented by (Richard Lazarus) in 1966, who specializes in the study of stress and its relationship to mental health, and it reflected his extensive interest in the process of perception and sensory-cognitive therapy (Al-Nuaimi, p. 44, 2007). Since the mid-sixties of the last century (Lazarus) has been concerned with the way the individual perceives the environmental event as stressful, and pointed out in his early writings that the individual's belief about his ability to control environmental situations is a key factor determining the level of the individual's appreciation of the event as stressful (Rita, 2001).

Lazarus believes that stressful events are the consequences of the individual's assessment process, and assess whether the individual's resources are sufficient to meet the requirements imposed on him by the environment or not, and then the pressures are determined by the extent of compatibility between the person and the environment, when the individual's resources are sufficient and appropriate to deal with the situation It's hard and you'll feel a little pressure. When the individual realizes that his resources may not be sufficient to deal with the event or situation except with hard work and great effort, he will feel an average amount of pressure, but when the individual realizes that his resources will not be sufficient to meet the requirements of the environment, he will feel exposed to a huge amount of pressure (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Lazarus asserts in his theory, which is also called (Person Environment Fit Theory) or Stresses Coping Theory, that stresses arise through events in which personal or environmental requirements or both exceed

adaptive sources. The individual has what he finds himself to respond to these requirements and thus falls under pressure (Al-Nuaimi, 2007). as it arises when the individual cannot deal or adapt to the requirements of life properly, so that he realizes that there is a situation that threatens him, based in his assessment on the assessment of the situation and its mechanisms in Dealing (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Lazarus gave an interactive interpretation of stressful events, as he sees the existence of two types of stressful events, external related to the environment surrounding the individual, and internal related to the personal aspect and individual differences, and that the stressful event includes elements of loss or harm, threat, and challenge (Lazarus & Folkman, p.138, 1981). (Lazarus) stresses that the stresses are the reactions of the members of the society to the painful and stressful stimuli of the environment, which exceed their ability to adapt to these pressures, and pose a danger and threat to them (Lazarus, Folkman, 1981).

Research Methodology: The researcher relied on the descriptive approach, as the descriptive approach is one of the scientific research methods, which depends on studying the phenomenon as it is in reality (Obaidat & others, 1998).

Research community: The research community consisted of all employees of the Ministry of Education in the city of Baghdad, which numbered (612,864) male and female employees, (288,200) male employees, and (324,664) female employees.

Research sample: When choosing the research sample, the researcher relied on the stratified random method with an appropriate distribution, and according to the random distribution, a sample of employees affiliated with the Ministry of Education was chosen from (9) departments, their number reached (400) male and female employees, by (200) male employees, and (200) female employee.

Research Tool

1- Planning and Formulation the Items of the Research Tool

Preparing the initial version of the scale required several procedures that started with the process of preparing the scale's items, defining the method and foundations of its formulation, and proceeding to formulate the items, then preparing the instructions, studying their validity, and finally verifying the clarity of the instructions and the understanding of the phrases of the respondents.

After reviewing the theoretical framework and the available literature on the concept of stressful life events and based on the previous

foundations, the items were distributed equally to the main areas, that is, 36 items were formulated, distributed into three areas representing the following aspects:

A- Stressful events resulting from personal variables (Pearson Variables).

They are those psychological and family obligations, beliefs, thoughts, needs, feelings and characteristics related to the personality traits of the individual, and it included (12) items.

B- Stressful events resulting from environmental variables.

They are those environmental requirements and circumstantial (temporal and spatial) restrictions that affect the mental health of the individual, and it consisted of (12) items.

C- Stressful events resulting from mediating processes:

It refers to the difficulties of achieving adaptation between personal and environmental requirements and controlling their impact and the possibility of getting rid of those effects, and it included (12) items.

In order to adopt the scale for the application, the following was done:-

First - The way of constructing the stressful life events scale: The research adopted the Likert method, which is one of the methods used in building scales in the field of psychology, as it was put in the construction of the stressful life events scale. Five alternatives (**applies to always, applies to often, applies to sometimes, applies to rarely, never applies to**), and corresponding to the five weights (5, 4, 3, 2, 1).

Second- The validity of the items of the stressful life events scale: For the purpose of calculating this type of honesty, the items that formed the fields of the scale were presented in their initial form to a group of specialists in education and psychology to express their opinions about the validity of the items in their representation and distribution on the field in which they were placed. The number of arbitrators reached (12) experts, and in light of the arbitrators' responses and observations, all items were pre-empted, as all of them obtained an agreement percentage of (83.33%) or more, and a value of chi-square (5.33) or more. The researcher has made some modifications according to the opinions of experts, and thus all the items of the scale amounting to (36) items were preserved.

Third- Extracting the discriminatory power of stressful life events scale items: The researcher applied the stressful life events scale to the sample of (400) male and female employees and then corrected their answers to the items of the scale in order to investigate the discriminatory power of the items and their correlation with the total score, as the discriminatory power of the items is intended to

keep the valid items in the scale and exclude the invalid items or modify and try them again. (Guilford, 1954).

The researcher verified the ability of the item to distinguish using the two extreme groups in the total score through the statistical analysis sample of (400) male and female employees. Among the sample members, their number reached (216) employees in the higher and lower groups.

The researcher used the t-test for two independent samples to find out the significance of the difference between the two extreme groups between the scores of each item of the scale, as the calculated t-value represents the discriminatory power of the items (Edwards, 1957). The t-value was considered an indicator to distinguish each item by comparing it with the tabular t-value of (1.960) at the level (0.05) and with a degree of freedom (214), and through this procedure, all the items of the scale were kept.

2- Indicators of Honesty and Constancy

1- Validity: The researcher extracted indicators of construction validity for the stressful life events scale, and in the stressful life events scale, three types of constructive validity were extracted: The relationship between the degree of the domain and the total degrees of the scale. In order to extract the relationships, so the researcher used the Pearson correlation coefficient to extract the correlation between the degree of each item and the total degree of the scale, the degree of each item and the degree of the field, and the degree of each field in the total degree of the scale, and it was found after this procedure that all items were significant at the level (0,05), degree of freedom (398), and the value of the tabular correlation coefficient (0.098).

Stability: It was extracted by the retest method, as it requires calculating the stability in this way as a result of applying the test in question to a group of individuals. Then the same test is re-applied to the same group after an interval. Then the correlation coefficient is calculated between the degrees of the two applications, and the result of the correlation is the value of the stability coefficient, which is called the coefficient of stability over time (Al Nabhan, 2004). Therefore, the scale was applied to a sample of (50) male and female employees, and then it was re-applied after two weeks. After the completion of the application, according to the stability of the scale, by calculating the degrees of this sample with their degrees in the first and second applications, and using the Pearson correlation coefficient between the degrees of the two applications, the correlation coefficient was (0.886), which represents the

stability coefficient of the stressful life events scale by retest method.

The Presentation of the Results

The First Goal: (Identifying the Stressful Life Events of State Employees)

After the researcher applied the stressful life events scale for the research sample of (400) male and female employees, this goal was achieved by statistically processing the data for

the sample members. When balancing this average with the hypothetical mean of the scale of (108) degrees, and using the t-test for one sample, it was found that the difference was not statistically significant, as the calculated t-value was less than the tabular t-value of (1.96) with a degree of freedom (399). The level of significance is (0.05), and Table (1) shows this.

Table 1.

T-test for the difference between the Sample Mean and the Hypothetical Average of the Stressful life Events Scale

Sample size	SMA	Standard deviation	Hypothetical mean	Calculated T-value	Table T-value	Degree of freedom	identification level
400	110.30	27.63	108	1.67	1,96	399	Not function

The second goal: Identifying the Differences in Stressful Life Events for State Employees According to the Gender Variable (Male - Female)

The results indicated that the average score of (male) employees on the stressful events scale was (109.4650), with a standard deviation of (13.21431) degrees. In comparison with the average score of (female) employees on the same scale, it was (82.0450), with a standard

deviation of (12.43811). After using the T-test for two independent samples to identify the significance of the differences between the two types, we found that there were no statistically significant differences between the two types, as the calculated value reached (0.604) degrees and is smaller than the tabular T value of (1.96) when Significance level (0.05) and degree of freedom (398). As shown in Table (2).

Table 2.

The Results of the t-test for the Significance of the Differences between the Arithmetic Averages of the Sample Members According to the Type Variable

Type	Sample size	SMA	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	T-value		No Significance (0,05)
					Calculated	Tabulation	
Male	200	109.4650	13.21431	398	0.604	1,960	Not function
Female	200	82.0450	12.43811				

Discussion

A- Interpretation of the result of the first goal: The results showed that the sample did not possess stressful life events, and what Lazarus came with in his theory (cognitive estimation) can be explained that stressful events are the consequences of the assessment process for the individual, and assess whether the individual's resources are sufficient to meet the requirements imposed on him from The environment or not, and then the pressures are determined by the extent of compatibility between the person and the environment.

B- Interpreting the results of the second objective: What Lazarus brought in his theory (cognitive estimation) can be explained that individuals face stressful life events in one way or another, but they are not all exposed to their risks with the same intensity or degree, because the level of those events and their threats varies

from one individual to another according to the individual's awareness, abilities, experiences, and personality traits. His cultural level, and his assessment of his capabilities.

Recommendations

1. The researcher recommends that state institutions hold conferences and symposia aimed at helping Ministry of Education employees to raise their positive experimental avoidance.
2. Encouraging researchers who are on the writing stage to pay attention to the subject of experimental avoidance and stressful life events in their scientific research.
3. Educating all employees through the various media about the need to change

their psychological and social conditions in order to rebuild their personalities.

Suggestions

1. Conducting a study aimed at knowing the relationship of experimental avoidance to critical thinking among employees of the Ministry of Education
2. Conducting a study aimed at knowing the relationship of stressful life events to the e-learning crisis for middle and secondary school teachers.
3. Conducting a study aimed at knowing the relationship of state employees' personality traits to academic failure among middle school students.

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