

Psychological Stress in light of Corona Pandemic and its relationship to Professional Performance Quality of the School Social Worker

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ABSTRACT

Psychological Stress in light of Corona Pandemic and its relationship to
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of the School Social Worker

The results of many research and scientific studies conducted in the recent period indicate there are several psychological pressures facing the school social worker because of Covid 19, and these pressures may have different negative effects on the various personal and professional aspects of the school social worker, including his professional performance with students.

The current study attempts to answer the following question: What is the relationship between psychological stress in context of Corona pandemic and professional performance quality the school social worker?

So the current study attempts to Identifying psychological stress level faced by the social worker, identifying professional performance quality level in the school social worker in light of Corona Pandemic and Identifying the relationship between psychological stress level and professional performance quality of the school social worker

This study is descriptive and analytical and used the social survey approach via sample selection., It was conducted on a sample of independent schools of Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar .and it was conducted on a sample of 144 school social workers who met the study scales items .The study concluded with many important results, the most prominent of which were the presence of negative statistically significant differences between the psychological stresses caused by the Corona crisis and the professional performance quality of the school social worker.

KEYWORDS: Psychological Stress – Professional Performance - Quality - Corona Pandemic - School Social Worker

العلاقة بين الضغوط النفسية في ظل جائحة كورونا وجودة الأداء المهني لدى الاخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي

تشير نتائج العديد من البحوث والدراسات العلمية التي أجريت في الفترة الاخيرة إلى أن هناك مجموعة من الضغوط النفسية التي تواجه الأخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي والناجمة عن تفشي جائحة كورونا كوفيد 19، وهذه الضغوط قد يكون لها تأثيرات سلبية مختلفة على مختلف الجوانب الشخصية والمهنية للأخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي بما في ذلك أدائه المهني مع الطلاب. وفي ضوء ما سبق تحاول الدراسة الحالية الإجابة على التساؤل التالي: (ما العلاقة بين الضغوط النفسية في ظل جائحة كورونا وجودة الأداء المهني لدى الاخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي؟)

وعليه فقد استهدفت الدراسة التعرف على مستوى الضغوط النفسية التي تواجه الأخصائي الاجتماعي والتعرف على مستوى جودة الأداء المهني للأخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي في ظل جائحة كورونا ثم التعرف على العلاقة بين مستوى الضغوط النفسية وجودة الأداء المهني لدى الأخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي.

وبناء على ذلك تعتبر الدراسة من الدراسات الوصفية التحليلية والتي اعتمدت على منهج المسح الاجتماعي بالعينة.، وقد استخدمت الدراسة كل من مقياس الضغوط النفسية الناتجة عن جائحة كورونا -كوفيد 19 كورونا ومقياس جودة الاداء المهني للأخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي وقد طبقت عينة من المدارس المستقلة بوزارة التعليم والتعليم العالي بدولة قطر وذلك في مختلف المراحل الدراسية، كما طبقت الدراسة على عينة قوامها (144) أخصائي اجتماعي مدرسي والذين قاموا باستيفاء البنود الخاصة بمقياسي الدراسة، وانتهت الدراسة الى العديد من النتائج الهامة كان من ابرزها وجود فروق سلبية ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الضغوط النفسية الناجمة عن أزمة كورونا وجودة الأداء المهني للأخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي

الكلمات المفتاحية: الضغوط النفسية - جودة الأداء المهني -جائحة كورونا - الأخصائي الاجتماعي المدرسي

First: Study Problem:

Corona Pandemic has led to unprecedented change in a short time in life styles among people from all classes all over the world, the economies and Health Care Systems deteriorated in several countries, so society's members experienced a state of panic, anxiety and tension on a wide scale that never happened a long time ago.

In December 2019 in Wuhan City, China it was found that Corona viruses are a large group of viruses including viruses that can cause many illnesses ranging from a common cold to severe respiratory syndrome, virus infection causes fatal diseases leading to rising deaths toll and people are infected with Corona virus due to direct and indirect contacts in which the virus spreads among people through cough, sneezing, touching an infected person, touching a polluted surface and touching mouth, nose and eyes and it was described by WHO in March 2020 that it bypassed epidemic stage to pandemic stage (Velavan, Meyer, 2020, 45).

According to WHO statistics in 2020 until conducting the current study the number of deaths cases is 1776572 and the number of infection cases is 81362561 (WHO 2020). In this era, a number of precautionary measures were taken in which they brought about negative effects on society members in which several countries gave warnings of travelling to other countries, airports and train stations introduced a number of tests including temperature check, proclaiming health notices and an information leaflet on notice board to identify the virus holder in addition to staying at home, taking precautionary measures and other social distancing actions.

Accordingly, all society groups experienced negative psychological stress, collective fear, economic loads and damages. The collective fear of COVID-19 led to the so-called Corona Phobia that caused a large number of psychological symptoms across various society classes and a lot of negative psychological effects like tension, anxiety, depression, stress, boredom and distress during the pandemic.

A lot of studies found those emotions and psychological problems among various society groups like university students that led to exhaustion and fatigue and those negative effects were isolation, fear, anxiety, loneliness, social distancing (Dong, Bouey 2020) in addition to a feeling of alienation and psychological distress (Zhai, Du, 2020). A study of (Khadiga, IloI 2020) emphasized that among negative psychological effects experienced by students were feelings of sadness and depression that led to lack of concentration and panic which caused weakness in self-immunity that finally brought about body deterioration.

This was emphasized by a study by Fatma Abd Al Rahman (2020) that indicated Corona crisis caused several changes in students' behaviors especially due to

quarantine, Distance Learning implementation, and home quarantine in addition to frustration, anxiety, confusion and psychological embarrassment.

A study of Abd Al Naser Al Sayed (2021) emphasized increasing psychological stress due to Corona Pandemic as follows (fear of virus infection, future anxiety, boredom and loneliness, psychological stress and frustration and depression). A study by Wang et al (2021) identified negative effects of Corona Pandemic as follows: non-communication with relatives and friends, recreation difficulty, social isolation and continuous contention with siblings because of permanent at home.

Also, the spread of corona virus led to increasing psychological stress in working woman in which a study of Nahla Salah (2020) indicated that psychological stress and accompanied anxiety, tension, fear and panic cannot be expressed due to corona virus so this has an effect on practicing normal life.

A study by Eman Alnazly (2021) indicated the most psychological effects of corona pandemic COVID-19 were anxiety, tension and depression in which the participants had very severe depression with 40% ,very severe anxiety with 35% and 35% had severe depression and these effects were related to psychological stress and distress .Undoubtedly, social workers may experience stress and risks caused by Corona pandemic, and this was emphasized by a study by Medhat Mohamed (2020) (Its theme was " Negative Social Effects of Corona Pandemic on Social Worker) in which it indicated the danger of those negative effects on Social Worker in most fields.

A study by Gabriela Dima (2021) entitled "Exhaustion and Fatigue in Social Workers during COVID-19 Pandemic. Study sample consisted of 83 social workers from various professional intervention fields in which results indicated that 25.3% of social workers had high fatigue, 44.6% had moderate fatigue. 31.1% succeeded in dealing with fatigue factors in a healthy way. A study by Van Mol et al (2015) indicated that 70% of social workers might experience fatigue due to Corona Virus whereas 60% had tension and anxiety. Studies by Wgaman, M. A. et al (2015), Cimiotti et al (2012), Shanafelt et al (2015) indicated increasing professional, social and psychological effects caused by Covid-19 pandemic that led to multi-dimension fatigue including low sympathy that led to rising professional mistakes among social workers.

A study (Megan) entitled "The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on post-trauma fatigue, sadness, exhaustion and secondary traumas among Social Workers in (USA) aimed at identifying post-trauma fatigue, sadness, exhaustion and secondary traumas among social workers in USA. It was a survey investigating the psychological effect of Covid-19 pandemic. The study sample consisted of 181 social workers. The results indicated that social workers had the highest score for post-trauma disorder in

which quarter of social workers (26.21%) met the diagnostic standards of post-trauma disorder and 16.22% reported severe sadness symptoms.

The effects of Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 posed several challenges faced by social workers in social work profession and affected their professional performance (Yaira Hamama –Raz, 2021) . Studies by Ben-Porat and Itzhaky (2015), Diaconescu ,m (2015), Lacono, G (2017), McFadden et al (2015), Willis and Molina (2019) indicated that a lot of negative effects of corona virus can lead to increasing anxiety, panic, fear and tension among social workers. These effects were psychological, social, economic and related to health including fear, depression, low income due to the crisis, limited resources, fever or chill, cough and respiratory distress.

There were a number of studies investigating the professional performance of the social worker in direct or indirect way like a study by Iman Hefni (2021) entitled " The challenges faced by Social Workers in dealing with Corona Virus Pandemic and A Suggested Program for General Practice to Eradicate them " and a study by Sara Bankes et al (2020) entitled " Moral Challenges faced by Social Workers over the course of Corona Pandemic).

Although social workers experience a lot of professional stress, Covid-19 pandemic is a social transition causing a rise in this stress on their professional and personal life (Cohen – Serrins 2020 ,259).

This was emphasized in a study by Gabriela Dima (2021) which indicated that the most important stress faced by social workers and affected their professional performance were personal stress in particular (fear, anxiety and tension), work – related stress (work load, inconsistency, instability, administrative decisions ambiguity or their absence, unclear work procedures, limited supervisory and administrative support, limited financial resources) and client –related stress (non – direct contact with the client, infection risk).

The social worker faces shared stress with his clients in his daily life due to the spread of Covid -19 Pandemic in addition to the prevailing fear of infection with disease or infection of a family member with disease so it is probable that during COVID-19 Pandemic the social worker lacks the necessary resources needed to promote psychological and physical safety when providing the clients with decisive interventions (Cohen-Serrins, J, 2020, 261).

It is probable that stress has a negative impact causing panic and fear in the school social worker and this may affect his professional performance quality that is supposed to do the following : helping the student to achieve integrated and balanced personal development, socialization of the student and training him in how to deal with life in a positive way, providing the student with knowledge and

experiences needed to prepare him for a better social life, modifying his behavior and providing him with the ability to achieve normal social adjustment, helping the student to identify his aptitudes, abilities, tendencies and making use of them to the greatest possible extent.

As explained above, it appears that there are several psychological stress faced by the school social worker due to COVID-19 Pandemic and this stress can have different negative effects on the personal and professional aspects of the school social worker including his professional performance with the students.

Accordingly, the current study tries to answer the following question : **What is the relationship between psychological stress in light of Corona Pandemic and professional performance quality in the school social worker ?**

Secondly : Study importance :

1-The study importance is attributed to the spread of Corona Virus in the present time and psychological stress caused by it in the school social worker ?

2-The study importance arises from the investigation of the relationship between psychological stress(a negative variable) and professional performance quality (a positive variable) in the school social worker.

3-The study results help in setting up awareness programs for school social workers to cope with psychological stress caused by Corona Virus in Qatar.

Thirdly : Study Aims :

1-Identifying psychological stress level faced by the social worker in light of Corona Pandemic .

2-Identifying professional performance quality level in the school social worker in light of Corona Pandemic .

3-Identifying the relationship between psychological stress level and professional performance quality in the school social worker in light of Corona Pandemic.

Fourthly: Study Concepts and its theoretical framework:

1-The Concept of Psychological Stress.

Psychological Stress is an internal effect in the individual arising from the interaction between stressful forces and personality components. This may lead to behavioral or psychological or physical disorders or stimulate one to improve performance (Mona Abd Allah 2014, 36). It is defined (Naif Fadous 2012,) as " Reactions caused

by the interaction between the individual and the environment when trying to satisfy his physiological, cultural, psychological and social needs. After satisfying these needs, psychological tension arises and finally one feels psychological and physical fatigue ".

Stress is defined by Sarafino as " the state caused by the interaction between the individual and the environment that leads to recognizing real or unreal contrast between situation demands and social, psychological and biological resources in the individual (Abd Allah Wanheli, Musad Ali 2010). Rasmia Said (2008) indicated that psychological stress generally arises from the way we think about ourselves, conditions and the meaning that result from our demands ". Psychological Stress is a psychological state in the individual when he experiences internal or external stressors threatening his personal and psychological balance and the physical, social and emotional negative effects that impede his good adjustment in different life situations.

It is defined as a psychological state manifesting in behavioral, psychological, physical internal reactions arising from the threat the individual recognizes when experiencing stressors (Omsia Al Sayed, Nabila Mekhail 2007, 54).

Psychological stress in this study was defined as the conditions related to tension, distress and imbalance arising from stressful events developed as a result of the Corona-Covid 19 pandemic, that the school social worker recognizes he cannot bear and there is a remarkable difference between the demands he wants to meet and his ability to react to them so this impedes him from achieving his aims continuously and to a large extent.**2- The concept of Coronavirus (Covid 19) .**

The name of Coronavirus (in Arabic Corona Virus. CoV) IS derived from the latin word (corona) and it means corona in which it refers to the distinguished appearance of virus molecules (feronats)that can be seen through electron microscope in which it has a group of shallow projections so they take the form of corona or halo.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) modern infectious disease. The most infected people with Covid-19 suffer from mild to moderate respiratory illnesses and they recover without the aid of a private medicine. The elderly and those who suffer from latent medical problems like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases and cancer are at risk from Covid-19 (WHO, 2020).

Coronaviruses belong to rectal corona class including Coronaviruses class and nest viruses rank. Coronaviruses are enfolded viruses with positive, individual chain DNA Genom and they have an **identical spiral**. Coronaviruses Genome size ranged from 26 to 32 قاعدة kilo, and this is the largest among RNA virus.

Coronavirus is defined as a virus causing diseases to mammals and birds and it affects people through infecting them with respiratory infection including mild cold and rarely it is fatal like severe respiratory syndrome and Middle East respiratory syndrome. It may cause diarrhea in cows and pigs while it can cause high respiratory diseases in hens (Cohen-Serrins, J

Coronavirus (Covid-19) is a new strain of corona viruses that cause infection to respiratory system and there is no accurate therapy for it so far. Also it is a large virus and it remains on surfaces for a long time so it is easy to catch it unless we follow ways of proper prevention (Micaaele Peinado, Kelly N Anderson 2020, 758).

3- The concept of professional performance quality :

Some researchers indicated that professional performance is doing duties and tasks of the job according to the supposed rate in the trained, competent worker (Medhat Abou Al Nasr 2008 :74). Ways of professional performance quality in the school social worker are as follows : abilities development, planning to improve performance, plan execution, problem solving, increasing morale, personal development. (Abd Al Gaber Al Sayed 2018, 447).

Also it refers to professional practices performed by the social worker during his work in various fields of social work, within the framework of social rights of people, that enable him to perform his role with the client, his family, other institutions in society and institutions staff (Khalil Abd Al Maksoud 2009, 169). Generally, it refers to everything done by the social worker including professional behaviors and deeds or efforts and activities necessary for his job duties that suit the field he works in and achieve the required professional practice aims (Mohamed Shahin 2019). Further it is defined as " The ability of the social worker to improve his professional performance and achieve the expected results " (Samira Al Gohari, Roknia Abd Al Qader 2007, 1194).

Professional performance is different between school staff to reach professional performance quality and achieve a distinguished level marked by effectiveness and mastery so professional performance quality is defined as "The individual using of his skills, abilities, information and experiences to perform specific job activities that are consistent with organizational aims ". (Loosemore, M, 2013, 104).

Also it is defined as " Performing job duties according to the supposed rate of the trained and competent worker ". (Mohamed Al Rais 2011, 57).

It is defined as "The competent and professional level of the social worker that achieves the clients desires and expectations, the social worker satisfaction with his professional performance and increasing his competitive status among social work

graduates and social workers through rising his quality level in the service of the environment and community via an effective educational system of social work that allows continuous improvement in light of the presence of an effective leadership of social work education institutions and teamwork based on effective participation ".(Mustafa Abd Al Azim 2009, 356).

It is defined by Ramadan Anwar (2015) as " the ability of the social worker to **cope with** the rapid developments and continuous changes, achieve his professional development, improve his skills and characteristics to evaluate himself and identify his strengths and weaknesses in terms of variant teamwork ".

The current study adopts the following definition : A set of specific duties and roles that the school social worker performs to achieve the institution aims, do his role efficiency inside the institution to be able to follow changes and competition with other institutions that require quality of services provided by them and quality of schools services in general and social workers in particular is achieved by adherence of the staff including the social worker to their professional performance quality." (Kalthoum Mekhaimer 2014, 87).

4-The negative effects of Corona crisis in the school social worker :

In fact the current COVID-19 pandemic all over the world has a negative effect on education in an unprecedented way. Undoubtedly, it created big challenges to educational institutions like how to confront the crisis, lower its negative effects .Also it led to a crisis in instructional plans implementation, training programs, evaluation and exams methods.

One of the remarkable effects of COVID-19 pandemic is the widespread lockdown of schools and universities all over the world. According to UNESCO statistics (2020) educational institutions were closed in 193 states to slow down the spread of COVID-19, lockdown affected 7 billion learners at all educational levels, 1.5 billion students and 63 million teacher ceased going to schools. Also the organization emphasized that half of these students cannot afford to implement distance learning because they have not a computer and access to internet (WHO 2020, 6).

The continuity of this pandemic led to postponing or stopping the academic year. Consequently it brought about disruption and chaos in families, students and teachers lives which had a negative effect on the society stability.

Also COVID-19 had severe negative effects on the social workers in general and field reality refers to various negative effects including several life aspects. The health effects that the social worker may experience in case of infection with COVID-19 are fever or chill, cough, respiratory distress or respiratory difficulty, fatigue, body or

muscles pain, headache, smell loss, throat inflammation, nasal congestion, vomiting, diarrhea and also these symptoms are related to more moderate symptoms (flu, cold and allergy etc)(Smullens, S,2020 ,21).

It is expected that the social worker is in the front line of the crises caused by COVID-19 pandemic and led to increasing psychological stress and effects like panic, anxiety, tension, depression due to the spread of COVID-10 (LUNA ,J 2020 ,8) . Additionally the social worker had fatigue (Hansel ,T, 2020).

Undoubtedly, the negative effects are in itself psychological stress affecting the school social worker, and this stress in turn put him in imbalance situation and decrease his professional, psychological and social adjustment. This emphasizes that the school social worker is in great need of the concerned bodies support that are responsible for the educational process to do his professional performance properly.

5-The professional practice of the school social work in light of Corona Pandemic:

Social Work is one of the human services types as it helps one to improve his quality of life through providing a number of different solutions to the problems and obstacles that prevent him from getting his basic rights which lead to society development and promote its social systems and other systems.

Social Work is one of the social professions that emerges as a response to a group of urgent factors. Institutes and Faculties of Social Work prepare the social workers theoretically and practically by using the method that enables them to acquire the experiences, knowledge and skills to perform their professional roles in social work fields including the school field. The social worker helps the students to benefit from the educational process and the school to perform its function (Salwa Othman, 23, 2018).

The social worker role is different from the teacher role as his role is unlimited, not restricted to the school timetable, but his work is to find solutions to the students psychological and social problems inside and outside the school and following them continuously during the academic year and the year ahead .

The school social work is defined as providing specific services to help the students, alone or in groups, to adapt to the psychological and social problems that impede their effective efforts in life and community. Also they help them satisfy their necessary needs, making desired changes in the students behaviors and achieving the best adaption to the self and the social environment which leads to increasing living standard of the political and social aspects (Hendawi Abd Al Lahi, 2019, 23).

The school social worker is defined as " The professional and highly skilled person who practices his school social work in light of the social work concept and its

philosophy by observing its principles and moral standards to help the underachieved students and the school to achieve its instructional and educational aims to prepare its students for the future

The subtasks of the school social worker are as follows (Abd Al Khalek Mohammed, 2011, 53):

- Participating in setting up programs to develop the student abilities to help him benefit from the available capabilities in him and the environment together.
- Overcoming any obstacles faced by the student in his academic achievement.
- Referring the students who are in need of help to the concerned bodies.
- Providing moral support that help the student to benefit from his abilities by affecting his ideas, attitudes and values and improving his self concept.
- Providing the environmental support to benefit from the available environment resources and making adaptations to them to the student' s advantage.
- Preparing the plan and timetable of school social work tasks according to the available capabilities with setting up new programs.
- Preparing the records of social education :(individual cases record, social worker record, school councils meetings record, public programs record, social groups record supervised by him, underachievement follow-up record, fast individual situations record and collective guidance and counseling).

Roles and duties of the social worker towards COVID-19 are : (Sahar Qurashi 2020, 23).

1-Diagnosing and investigating state of the infected with this virus .

2-Recording social problems caused by the spread of coronavirus.

3-Conducting diagnostic research studies to record the factors and signs that led to the spread of this virus around the world for understanding and interpretation.

- Promoting social ties between individuals and their families and combatting family disintegration that may result from the spread of this virus.
- Cognitive and scientific diagnosis of this social phenomenon from inside the society.
- Reinforcing good behaviors between society members to curb the spread of this virus and restoring social ties with its positive aims.
- Respect and compliance with the values, standards and laws introduced by the government to face this crisis like curfew law
- Prompting citizens to stay at home.

At the present time the international community experiences a number of health, political, social, economic changes related to a group of local, regional and global changes, one of the most important changes is the spread of a new virus called covid-19 all over the world which transforms from a virus to a pandemic.

As the Arab community is part of the international community it is affected by this pandemic in various economic, social and cultural life types and its different systems like the school system and instructional methods that may also affect the professional practice of school social work in light of corona pandemic.

Field Work emphasized that corona pandemic has led to low quality professional performance of the school social worker and left some obstacles as follows :

- Lack of desire and spontaneous inclination in the social worker towards raising awareness among students and school staff which had negative effects on his professional performance quality.
- Lack of knowledge and professional ability to handle corona pandemic .
- Interest of some social workers in other activities after suspension of schools many times due to corona pandemic.
- Lack of some teachers cooperation with the social worker because they do not realize the importance of the role performed by the social worker in increasing awareness about the precautionary measures to face corona virus.
- The presence of some negative feelings towards the social worker due to rising numbers of infections and deaths caused by corona pandemic.
- The teacher refusal to cooperate with the social worker in solving the problems faced by students due to corona pandemic.

In light of corona pandemic, the school social worker may face problems requiring various skills in which the students experience psychological and social problems that can be handled by the school social worker.

6-Theoretical Guidelines of the Research .

This study aims at assessing the relationship between psychological stress in light of corona pandemic and professional performance quality in the school social worker. It depends on the following theories :

The social role theory :

The role is a distinguished position within a specific social context. Also it is defined as an expected behavior model that is related to specific position in certain society. Further the role is the distinguished behavioral practices of one person or more within a specific framework.

Some researchers define the role by dividing it to elements as follows :

A-Role Expectations :They are the rules that regulate political actions, in other words they are the actions that involve influence, decision-making and authority distribution of values. These expectations refer to the community demands from people who have similar positions.

B-Role Directions : They are the ideas of the role doer like the behavior he has to perform in a certain situation. These ideas reflect rules of society, characteristics of role doer and his realization of the demands and expectations around him.

C-Role Behavior :It is the actions performed by the person who takes a specific position in which the interest is on the action as happened.

Role Theory is based on five agreed basic assumptions among different social sciences :

A-Some behavior types are a distinguished characteristic of the persons who work within a certain framework.

B-Roles are often related to a specific number of individuals who share a single identity.

C-Individuals realize the role they perform. Realization affects the role to some extent .

D-Roles continue due to its results on one side and its connection to wider social systems on the other side.

E-Individuals must be qualified for the roles they perform .

Within the framework of the above-mentioned points about the Social Role Theory psychological stress caused by corona crisis can be interpreted as the inability of the school social worker to perform his roles inside the family which affects his role in the school and his professional performance quality.

Ecological Theory :

Accordingly and through Ecological Theory it appears that the social environment related to the school social worker during corona crisis has a big effect on his behavior in light of the behaviors ,obstacles and stress caused by the environment than the personal factors. During the interaction between the individual and the environment he does not neglect completely his genetic and personal factors but his intelligence and creativity affect his interactions including its forms ,types and timing. Individual responds to stimulants according to his own vision and self

perceptions in which he is affected by his motivations, needs, interests, aims, experiences, skills, emotional state, enthusiasm or refusal of the situation. This means that individual behavior is usually meaningful and selective in which he determines what he wants and how to reach it in light of his understanding of the environment on one side and the optimal using of his social intelligence, experiences and life skills on the other side.

Fifth: Study Methodology:

Study Type and Approach.

This study is descriptive and analytical in which it seeks to describe and analyze the correlation between two variables, psychological stress caused by covid-19 pandemic and professional performance quality in the school social worker. The researcher used the social survey approach via sample selection.

Study Questions.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1-What is the level of psychological stress caused by covid-19 pandemic in the school social workers?
- 2-What is the level of professional performance quality in the school social workers in light of covid-19 pandemic?
- 3-Are there statistically significant differences at (0.05) in psychological stress in the school social workers attributed to variables of (gender – age – marital status – academic qualification – job grade – years of experience)?
- 4-Are there statistically significant differences at 0.05 in professional performance quality of the school social workers attributed to variables of (gender – age – marital status – academic qualification – job grade – years of experience)?
- 5-Are there statistically significant differences at (0.05) between psychological stress variables and professional performance quality of the school social workers in light of covid-19 ?

Study Tools .

1-Scale of Psychological Stress caused by COVID-10 Pandemic : (prepared by the researcher):

This scale aims at assessing and identifying psychological stress level in the school social workers in light of covid-19. This scale was designed according to the following steps and stages :

-The researcher reviewed a lot of literature that examined psychological stress in psychology, mental health and social work in particular and also the studies that investigated stress caused by corona pandemic. Accordingly, five dimensions of psychological stress in the school social worker were determined and in turn were the current scale dimensions :

A-Personal Stress .

B-Family Stress.

C-Social Relations Stress.

D-Health Stress.

E-Work Stress.

-The second stage involved giving a specific definition to each dimension indicating the intended meaning in the current study .Next, items that form these dimensions were worded and total number of these items is 30, 6 items for each dimension.

-The researcher determined method of estimating psychological stress on scale by graded indicators ranged from 1-5 (completely apply, apply, quite apply, does not apply, does not apply absolutely) in which these responses take the following scores respectively (5,4,3,2,1) for positive items and the contrary for negative items. Therefore, minimum and maximum score ranged from 30 – 150 .

-Validity and reliability of the scale were examined by the following methods :

A-Face Validity: The researcher submitted the scale to five raters who are professors of social work. According to raters opinions some adaptations were introduced in which the wording of only four items was adapted whereas the remaining items had the best agreement among raters.

B-Internal Consistency : The internal consistency of the scale was examined by applying it on a sample consisting of 15 social workers (outside the range of study sample. Then, correlation coefficient was calculated by Pearson Method to

determine the correlation level between each item and the variable it belongs to. The results and levels of significance of correlation were as follows :

Table (1)

Results and levels of significance between psychological stress scale items caused by COVID-19 pandemic in the school social worker and the dimension it belongs to

Item number	Correlation coefficient	Level of Significance	Item number	Correlation coefficient	Level of Significance	Item number	Correlation coefficient	Level of Significance
1	0.68	0.01	11	0.69	0.01	21	0.78	0.01
2	0.69	0.05	12	0.72	0.01	22	0.77	0.05
3	0.71	0.01	13	0.83	0.01	23	0.81	0.01
4	0.77	0.01	14	0.76	0.01	24	0.78	0.01
5	0.82	0.05	15	0.66	0.05	25	0.82	0.01
6	0.66	0.01	16	0.72	0.01	26	0.55	0.01
7	0.74	0.01	17	0.68	0.01	27	0.81	0.05
8	0.72	0.01	18	0.87	0.01	28	0.68	0.01
9	0.58	0.01	19	0.77	0.05	29	0.74	0.01
10	0.74	0.01	20	0.81	0.01	30	0.83	0.05

It appears from the above-mentioned table that correlation coefficients values between each item and the dimension it belongs to ranged from 0.55 to 0.87 and all these values are statistically significant at the usual levels of (0.05, 0.01) which refer to the consistency of the scale dimensions and items. Therefore, the scale is valid for use to assess and determine level of psychological stress among the participants.

C- Scale Reliability : To investigate the scale reliability the researcher used half- split method by calculating correlation coefficient between individual items and paired items scores of the previous sample. The following table indicates reliability coefficients results and their statistic significance.

Table (2)

Reliability coefficients results and their statistic significance on psychological stress scale dimensions caused by COVID-19 in the school social worker .

Number	Scale Dimensions	Reliability Coefficient	Level of Significance
1	Personal stress	0.86	0.01
2	Family stress	0.77	0.01
3	Social relations stress	0.81	0.01
4	Health stress	0.89	0.01
5	Work stress	0.79	0.01
	Total Scale	0.84	0.01

It appears from the above-mentioned table that reliability coefficient value of job satisfaction scale in the medical social worker is 0.84 and these values on the five dimensions of the scale ranged from 0.77 to ,86. All these values are statistically significant at 0.01 level which emphasizes this scale has a high degree of reliability and as a result it can be conducted on the study sample items.

-After setting up the final edition of the scale it includes the main five measurement dimensions in addition to the primary data of the social workers :

-Psychological Stress Dimension : It includes items (1,6 ,11, 16, 21, 62).

-Family Stress Dimension : It includes items (2, 7 ,12, 17 ,22 ,27).

-Social Relations Dimension : It includes (3 ,8, 13, 18, 23, 28).

-Health Stress Dimension : It includes items (4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29).

-Work Stress Dimension : It includes items (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30).

-Psychological Stress levels among social workers participating in the study were determined through the following table :

Table (3)

Psychological Stress levels caused by COVID-19 pandemic among school social workers.

Number	Dimension score	Total Score	Satisfaction level
1	5 -13	25 - 65	Low
2	14 - 22	66 - 110	Moderate
3	23 - 30	111 - 150	High

2-Scale of professional performance in the school social worker :

This scale aims at assessing and determining professional performance degree in the school social worker. It was prepared by Kalthoum Mekheimer (2013). It consists of three main dimensions :

A-The personal dimension of professional performance.

B- The technical dimension of professional performance .

C- The administrative dimension of professional performance.

- All items were positive. They are responded through 3-range graded indicators (Yes – Quite – No) and these responses take the following scores respectively(3 – 2 – 1).
- The researcher examined validity and reliability of the scale through the following methods :

A-Face Validity: The scale was submitted to the same raters of the first scale. The results showed the rewording of only five items, one item was deleted and replaced with another item .

B-Internal Consistency : Internal Consistency of the scale was examined through using it on a sample of 18 social workers outside the primary sample of the study. Then, correlation level between each item and the dimension it belongs to and the results are in the following table :

Table (4)

Results and levels of significance of correlation coefficients between professional performance quality scale items in the school social worker and the dimensions they belong to .

Item number	Correlation coefficient	Level of Significance	Item number	Correlation coefficient	Level of Significance	Item number	Correlation coefficient	Level of Significance
1	0.79	0.01	16	0.68	0.01	31	0.72	0.01
2	0.72	0.01	17	0.72	0.01	32	0.79	0.01
3	0.83	0.05	18	0.59	0.05	33	0.81	0.01
4	0.78	0.01	19	0.74	0.01	34	0.54	0.05
5	0.73	0.01	20	0.75	0.05	35	0.66	0.01
6	0.71	0.01	21	0.81	0.01	36	0.78	0.01
7	0.57	0.05	22	0.64	0.01	37	0.65	0.01
8	0.72	0.01	23	0.69	0.01	38	0.71	0.05
9	0.82	0.05	24	0.77	0.01	39	0.75	0.01

The above-mentioned table data indicate that correlation coefficients values between items of professional performance quality scale in the school social worker and the dimension each item belongs to ranged from 0.54 to 0.87 and all these values are statistically significant at the known levels (0.05 ,0.01). This emphasizes there is an internal consistency between all primary items and sub-items of the scale.

C-Scale Reliability : Scale Reliability was investigated by using half –split method and the results are as follows :

Table(5)

Reliability Coefficients Results and their Statistical Significance on Professional Performance Quality Scale Dimensions in the School Social Worker.

Number	Scale Dimensions	Reliability Coefficient	Level of Significance
1	The personal dimension of professional performance	0.69	0.01
2	The technical dimension of professional performance	0.72	0.01
3	The administrative dimension of professional performance	0.78	0.01
4	Total Scale	0.74	0.01

It appears from the above-mentioned table that reliability coefficients values of dimensions of professional performance quality scale in the school social worker are (,69 - ,72 - ,87)respectively and reliability coefficient value of total scale is ,74. All these values are statistically significant at ,01 level which emphasize that the scale has a reasonable degree of reliability.

-Whereas this scale didn't determine professional performance quality score among social workers, the researcher calculated this score as follows : **Table (6)**

Professional performance quality score among the school social workers

Number	Dimension score	Total Score	Satisfaction level
1	15 - 24	45 - 74	Low
2	25 - 34	75 - 104	Moderate
3	35 - 45	105 - 135	High

Study Limits :

1-Place Limit : This study was conducted on a sample of independent schools of Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar .

2-Human Limit : This study was conducted on a sample of 144 school social workers who met the study scales items. The characteristics of the study sample are indicated in table (7)

Sub-data	Primary data	Assement	
		Number	Percent
Gender	<i>Male</i>	86	59.72 %
	<i>Female</i>	58	40.28 %
Age	<i>Under 30 years</i>	24	16.66 %
	<i>From 30 to under 40 years</i>	67	46.52 %
	<i>From 40 to under 50 years</i>	35	24.30 %
	<i>From 50 to under 60 years</i>	18	12.50 %
Marital Status	<i>Bachelor</i>	26	67.15 %
	<i>Married</i>	84	67.15 %
	<i>Divorcee</i>	29	67.15 %
	<i>Widower</i>	5	67.15 %
Academic qualification	<i>-Bachelor of Social Wo</i>	104	67.15 %
	<i>Licentiate of Sociology</i>	26	67.15 %
	<i>Post-Graduate Studies Diploma</i>	4	67.15 %
	<i>Master Degree</i>	6	67.15 %
Job grade	<i>First Social Worker</i>	15	10.41 %
	<i>Second Social Worker</i>	77	53.47 %
	<i>Third Social Worker</i>	52	36.11 %
Years of Experience	<i>Under 5 years</i>	25	67.15 %
	<i>From 5 to under 10 years</i>	52	67.15 %
	<i>From 10 to under 15 years</i>	34	67.15 %
	<i>From 15 to under 20 years</i>	19	67.15 %
	<i>From 20 to above 20 years</i>	14	67.15 %

It appears from the above-mentioned table that most medical social workers are male with 67.19% whereas the percentage of the female social workers is 32.81%. Concerning age the highest percentage is 40.26% for those aged 40 to under 50 years, and the lowest percentage is 6.25% for those aged under 30 years. Concerning marital status most social workers are married with 81.25% whereas the percentages of all other groups are low. In relation to academic qualification the highest percentage (40.26%) is for holders of bachelor of social work whereas the lowest percentage (6.25%) is for holders of Master Degree. In relation to job grade it appears that most participants (53.47%) are second social workers. Finally, the participants whose experience is over than 20 years have the percentage of 37.50% whereas the lowest percentage (3.21%) is for those who have lower than 5 years of experience.

3-Time Limit:

This study with its theoretical and field aspects took ten months and half. Data was collected, analyzed and interpreted from the beginning of February to the middle of April in 2021.

Sixthly :Study Results:

(1) The Answer to first question:

The Answer to first question "What is the level of psychological stress caused by COVID-19 in school social workers "? Appears from the following table:

Table (8): Level of psychological stress caused by COVID-19 in school social workers.

N	Scale dimensions	M	S D	Level	Ranking
1	Personal stress	3.42	2.007	High	3
2	Family stress	2.68	2.143	Average	5
3	Social relations stress	2.96	1.884	Average	4
4	Health stress	3.87	1.976	High	1
5	Work stress	3.55	2.163	High	2
	psychological stress	3.29	1.402	High	

It appears from the above-mentioned table that the level of psychological stress caused by COVID-19 as perceived by the participants is as follows:

Arithmetic Mean of school social workers on total scale is (3,29) with standard deviation of (1,402) and this emphasizes that there is psychological stress caused by COVID-19 in the participants. Health Stress Dimension is in the first rank with arithmetic mean of (3,87) and standard deviation of (1, 876) . Work Stress is in the second rank with arithmetic mean of (3,55) and standard deviation of (2,163) . Personal Stress Dimension is in the third rank

With arithmetic mean of (3, 42) and standard deviation of (2,007) . Social Relations stress Dimension is in the fourth rank with arithmetic mean of (2,96) and standard deviation of (1,884) . Family Stress Dimension is in the fifth rank with arithmetic mean of (2,68) and standard deviation of (2,143).

(2) The answer to second question:

The answer to second question "What is the level of professional performance quality in light of COVID-19 in school social workers?" appears from the following table:

Table (9): Professional Performance Quality Level in School Social Workers in light of COVID-19.

N	Scale dimensions	M	S D	Level	Ranking
1	The personal dimension of professional performance	1.52	2.408	low	2
2	The technical dimension of professional performance	1.47	2.066	low	3
3	The administrative dimension of professional performance	2.08	1.758	average	1
Professional Performance Quality		1.69	1.946	low	

The results of the above-mentioned table are as follows:

Arithmetic Mean of the participants responses on professional performance quality is (1, 69) and standard deviation of (1,946) and this refers that the level of professional performance quality in school social workers is low . Administrative dimension of professional performance is the first rank with arithmetic mean of (2, 08) and standard deviation of (1,758) . Personal dimension of professional performance is in the second rank with arithmetic mean of (1, 52) and standard

deviation of (2,408) . Technical dimension of professional performance is in the third and final rank with arithmetic mean of (1, 47) and standard deviation of (2,066).

(3) The answer to third question:

The answer to the third question " Are there statistically significant differences at 0,05 level in psychological stress attributed to variables of (gender – age – marital status – academic qualification – job grade – years of experience)? Appears from the following table results:

Table (10): Correlation coefficients and statistical significance between psychological stress and some demographic characteristics in school social workers.

N	Demographic Variables	psychological stress		
		Coefficient Applied	Value and Significance	Degrees of Freedom
1	<i>Gender</i>	Pearson Chi-Square	92.014**	df = 52
2	<i>Age</i>	Spearman	0.074	
3	<i>Marital Status</i>	Pearson Chi-Square	0.066	
4	<i>Academic qualification</i>	Pearson Chi-Square	54.236	df = 52
5	<i>Job grade</i>	Gamma	0.165	
6	<i>Years of Experience</i>	Spearman	0.092	

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The above-mentioned table data indicates that there is a positive correlation between psychological stress and age in school social workers in which correlation coefficient value is (0,074) and this value is statistically significant at 0,01 level . Also it appears that there are no statistical differences between psychological stress and (gender – marital status – academic qualification – job grade - **years** of experience) and this means that psychological stress level differs according to social worker age but no other demographic characteristics.

(4) The answer to fourth question:

The answer to the fourth question " Are there statistically significant differences at 0,05 level in professional performance quality among school social workers attributed to variables of (gender – age – marital status – academic qualification – job grade – years of experience ?" appears from the following table :

Table (11): Correlation coefficients and statistical significance between professional performance quality and some demographic characteristics in the school social workers.

Demographic Variables	professional performance quality		
	Coefficient Applied	Value and Significance	Degrees of Freedom
<i>Gender</i>	Pearson Chi-Square	86.268**	df = 54
<i>Age</i>	Spearman	0.076	
<i>Marital Status</i>	Pearson Chi-Square	0.088	
<i>Academic qualification</i>	Pearson Chi-Square	34.168	df = 54
<i>Job grade</i>	Gamma	0.077	
<i>Years of Experience</i>	Spearman	0.992	

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

It appears from the above-mentioned table that there are statistically significant differences between professional performance quality and gender in the school social workers in which correlation coefficient value is 86,268 and this value is statistically significant at 0,05 level . On the contrary , table data emphasizes that there is no correlation between professional performance quality and the following demographic characteristics (age – marital status – academic qualification – job grade – years of experience) , and this means that professional performance quality in the school social workers differs according to gender only .

(5) The answer to fifth question:

The answer to fifth question "Are there statistically significant differences at 0, 05 level between psychological stress variables and professional performance quality among the school social workers in light of COVID-19 pandemic?" appears through the following table:

Table (12): The correlation between psychological stress caused by COVID-19 pandemic and professional performance quality in the school social worker.

N	Source of contrast	Professional Performance Quality	Professional Performance Quality	Professional Performance Quality	professional performance quality
1	Personal stress	- 0.366*	-0.438**	- 0.298*	- 0.257*
2	Family stress	- 0.267*	0.076	- 0.354*	- 0.276*
3	Social relations stress	- 0.404**	- 0.303	- 0.287*	0.064
4	Health stress	- 0.186*	- 0.606*	- 0.394*	- 0.276*
5	Work stress	- 0.333**	- 0.475*	- 0.367	- 0.633*
	psychological stress	- 0.204*	- 0.354*	- 0.166*	- 0.228*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The above-mentioned table reveals that there is a statistically significant correlation at 0,05 level between psychological stress caused by COVID-19 pandemic and professional performance quality in the school social workers in which correlation coefficient value is 0,228- and this value is negative , so it means that the correlation between the two variables is **inverse** . The higher the psychological stress level is in the school social worker , the less the professional performance quality is in his work . The table data indicates that there is statistically significant positive correlation between all psychological stress variables and professional performance quality in which correlation coefficient value between social relations stress and professional performance quality is 0,064 and this value is statistically significant at 0,01 level, so this correlation is the highest one . The correlation coefficient value between personal stress and professional performance quality is 0,257- and this value is statistically significant at 0, 05 level. So this correlation is the least one.

Discussing and interpreting study results

Study results indicate that psychological stress level caused by COVID-19 pandemic among the school social workers are high. Health stress is in the first rank, work stress is in the second rank, personal stress is in the third rank, social relations stress is in the fourth rank and family stress is in the fifth rank.

The probable interpretation is that infection with COVID-19 causes a number of diseases ranging from a common cold to severe respiratory syndrome and infection with the virus brings about severe illnesses leading to rising death toll. People are infected with the virus because direct or indirect contact in which the virus usually spreads through cough , sneezing or touching an infected person or touching a polluted surface then touching the mouth , nose or eyes considering the work of the school social worker requires dealing with various people like students , parents or work colleagues .

This is indicated in studies by (Dong, Bouey 2020) , (Zhai , Du 2020) and (Khadiga Ailol 2020) . These studies emphasized that infection with corona virus leads to self - immunity deterioration in which immunity system thinks different body parts are enemies and starts to attack them which in turn weaken the body. Also the study results reveal that professional performance quality level among the school social workers is low because of psychological stress caused by COVID-19 pandemic in which professional performance quality was affected by its different dimensions (administrative , personal and technical ones) in the school social worker because of the risks and stress he experienced during the spread of corona pandemic .

This was indicated in studies by (Medhat Muhammed 2020) , (Gabriela Dima 2021) , (Van Moll et al . 2015) , (Wag man , M. A et al, 2015) , (Candiotti et al , 2012) , (Shana felt , et al 2015) , (Megan R . Holmes 1 , 2020) , (Yaira Hamama –Raz , 2012) , (Ben – Porte and Itzhaky , 2015) , (Lacono , G , 2017) , (Diaconescu , m 2015) , (Willis and Molina , 2019) , (McFadden et al , 2015) in which these previous studies emphasized that there are a lot of negative effects of corona virus that may lead to high anxiety , panic , fear and tension among the school social workers and these effects are various (psychological , social , economic and health ones) and affect their professional performance quality .

The study results indicated that there are statistically significant differences between professional performance quality and gender among the school social workers. These results agree with study results by Iman Hefni (2021) which emphasized that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between satisfaction, professional performance quality and age among the school social workers. Also these results agree with study results by Cohen – Serrins , J 2020)

which revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between professional performance quality and academic qualification among the school social workers whereas these study results differ with study results by Gabriela Dima 2021) which indicated that there are statistically significant differences between professional performance quality and some demographic variables (years of experience and academic qualification).

The study results indicated that professional performance quality in the school social workers differs according to gender only. The cause of this may be that male school social workers are more affected than female ones. These results agreed with studies results by (Van Mol et al. 2015), (Wgaman , M. A et al , 2015) , (Cimiotti et al , 2012) and (Shanafelt , et al, 2015) which revealed that 70% of the school social workers suffered from fatigue due to the spread of corona virus .

The results refer to high psychological stress caused by COVID-19 pandemic in the school social workers and it includes health stress, work stress, personal stress, social relations stress and family stress . This is due to negative psychological stress faced by the school social workers like feelings of sadness and depression that result from low concentration and individual panic which cause self-immunity deterioration.

The study results indicate that the level of professional performance quality in the school social workers is low due to various stress caused by corona pandemic. It appears from the results the following:

Professional performance quality in the school social worker was affected by personal stress (rising anxiety, panic, tension and low concentration in work) caused by corona pandemic. Professional performance quality in the school social worker (continuous family conflicts due to the permanent presence of the two spouses at home because of quarantine). Professional performance quality in the school social worker was affected by health stress (cough , sneezing , touching an infected person or touching a polluted surface then touching the mouth , nose or eyes and infection with corona virus) caused by corona pandemic . Professional performance quality in the school social worker was affected by work stress (inconsistency, instability, ambiguous administrative decisions or even their absence, unclear work procedures. limited supervisory and administrative support, limited financial resources and absence of direct contact with the client.

Also professional performance quality in the school social worker was affected by social relations stress (very limited participation and interaction with other people, absence of communication with relatives and low psychological and social adjustment) caused by corona pandemic . This was indicated in studies by Shana

felt , et al (2015) , Candiotti et al (2012) , Amal Mokdem (2021) and Mustafa Ali (2021) in which they emphasized that psychological stress caused by corona pandemic led to a lot of social , physical , behavioral and emotional problems which brought about a negative change in people lives . Also the studies emphasized that work stress caused by corona pandemic led to absence of job satisfaction and the presence of abnormal environment in work which had a negative impact on work performance in schools .

Accordingly, the current study found that psychological stress caused by COVID-19 pandemic had a negative effect on the school social worker in which it leads to unbalance and low psychological and social adjustment and then low professional performance in the school social worker . It led to some obstacles like the following : lack of desire in the school social worker towards raising students and school staff awareness which has a negative impact on his professional performance quality , lack of knowledge and professional ability to cope with corona pandemic , interest of some social workers in other businesses after lockdown many times due to corona pandemic , lack of some teachers cooperation with the social worker due to their low awareness about the important role played by the social worker in clarifying precautionary measures to curb corona virus which emphasizes that the school social worker is in dire need of the concerned bodies support responsible for educational process to promote his professional performance .

Recommendations and suggestions for future studies

- Providing awareness and counseling programs to help the school social workers eliminate psychological stress caused by COVID-19 , and those who are in charge of the educational process have to reinforce positive feelings among all school personnel which help to reduce the prevailing fears and psychological stress among the school social workers .
- Improving work conditions in schools to decrease profession burdens and increase the school social worker knowledge on all innovative ways to cope with crises.
- Maintaining a network of normal social relations through telephone and social media and develop positive thought in social workers to help them cope with psychological stress during crises.

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