

The Association between Sense of Mastery, Social Support, and Anxiety: A Comparison between Jewish and Arab Teachers during the Third COVID-19 Lockdown

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Abstract

The novel coronavirus outbreak in Israel has forced teachers to confront unprecedented challenges. Yet very little attention has been devoted to the impact of these challenges on the emotional well-being of Arab teachers. In the current study, we sought to examine the association between personal resources (sense of mastery and social support) and psychological distress (anxiety and stress) among Jewish and Arab teachers during the third COVID-19 lockdown in Israel. In this cross-sectional study, 161 Israeli teachers (76 Jewish and 85 Arab) aged 20–47 were recruited through social media. The participants completed a set of structured self-report questionnaires in March and April 2020. The findings revealed that Jewish teachers reported significantly higher levels of social support than did Arab teachers, whereas no significant differences were found in levels of anxiety, stress, or sense of mastery. Levels of anxiety were negatively associated with sense of mastery and seniority in teaching. A multivariate regression analysis revealed that 20.4% of the variance in psychological distress was explained by the study variables.

Social support and sense of mastery were significant predictors.

The current study highlights the importance of personal resources and psychological outcomes in challenging times, regardless of ethnicity. We recommend developing interventions that would help teachers, particularly novice teachers, become acquainted with the relevant channels of help and support, so as to widen the use of these resources, especially during times of crisis. It is important to train Arab teachers in particular to seek support from formal and informal resources

Keywords: coronavirus; educators; resources; stress; well-being