



STRESS AND BURNOUT AMONG LECTURERS AND PEDAGOGICAL INSTRUCTORS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATIONⁱ

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Abstract:

This research dealt with measuring and describing sources and factors of stress and burnout among lecturers and pedagogical instructors in colleges of education, the research wished to examine the connection between personal characteristics and professional variables of lecturers and pedagogical instructors with the sources of stress, the sense of burnout and the general sense of stress. For this purpose, we have sampled lecturers and pedagogical instructors teaching in colleges of education. In order to describe the sources and factors of stress and to measure the general sense of stress and the sense of burnout structured questionnaires (Zidan, 2011) were used, with extension for the present research. The original questionnaires are valid and credible and they were used in previous studies, but were adjusted to the subject and population of the current research. The importance of the research stems from that it is a pioneer and unique study both locally and globally. The importance of the study also stems from its attempt to validate a questionnaire of stress and burnout among lecturers and pedagogical instructors. The main findings indicated that the ten most stressful sources for instructors of colleges are: Crowded classrooms; Inappropriate wages; A student level that does not match my expectations; Unmotivated students; Contempt of students in times of classroom tasks; Behavioral problems of students (noise and interference of students in the teaching environment, inappropriate behavior); An uncomfortable working environment; Lack of study spaces; Multiple student delays and absences; Lack of respect for the teacher by the students. Furthermore, it was found that the level of burnout among colleges teachers is below mediocre and that there is a strong and distinct positive connection between the level of stress and the level of burnout among colleges teachers, meaning, the more that the degree of stress and the sense of stress caused by various sources among colleges teachers rises, the level of burnout arises as well.

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1. Introduction

Stress at work has become one of the most serious health issues in the modern world (Lu, Cooper, Kao & Zhou, 2003; Zedan & Bitar, 2013) and it is considered as an extensive universal phenomenon mostly among teachers (Zidan, 2011; Geving, 2007). Studies have discovered that one of three teachers reports that he or she is: "stressed" or even "highly stressed" (Zidan, 2012; Pithers & Soden, 1998). Other studies indicate that more than half of the teachers are under an extreme occupational stress condition.

Stress is a negative feeling or a mental condition due to work conditions and environment, expresses unpleasant and negative feelings stemming from different aspects in the work (Kyriacou, 2001), occupational stress was also defined as a situation in which the individual faces higher demands than the resources at his or her disposal (Lazarus & Folkman 1984).

This is an ongoing process of a mismatch between the worker and his or her ability to understand the environment and its' characteristics (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001), differently from acute stress, occurring when the individual is given an intensive demand of defined time range, relatively short, with a beginning and an end (Wheaton, 1994).

Numerous studies, engaged the factors and sources of stress in work, its' outcomes and connection with variables such as content, performances at work and organizational commitment, in the field of teaching as well as in other fields (Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Other studies, engaged the connection between professional and personal traits and characteristics (gender, age, ethnic or national origin, family status, income, level of education, etc.) and stress at work (Boes & Winkelmann, 2010; Zedan & Bitar, 2013).

Stress produces a variety of unwelcomed and exhausting results influencing both the individual and the organization. Burnout is a result of chronic work stress, that might increase the risk of physical and emotional syndromes, such as fatigue and mental distress (Friedman, 2000).

Burnout in education has been presented as a developing issue in the field of mental health for the past fifty years (Aluja, Blanch & Garcia, 2005), and it was defined as a sense of physical, emotional and positional fatigue (Pines & Kafry, 1981), and it is a kind of an emotional and cognitive experience as a response to stressful situations and it is considered as a central indicator of employee wellbeing (Andrew, Bessie, Selwyne, Stanley, 2010).

The terms "stress" and "burnout" are two different concepts, the stress in the work of teaching and the burnout among teachers are two separable phenomena, though related, and frequently used to describe a specific phenomenon (Howard & Johnson, 2004). They were mostly addressed to teachers for a reason: many researches (Bakker & Hakanen, Schaufeli, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2008; Loonstra, Brouwers & Tomic, 2009) show that the tendency to experience stress and burnout is higher among

teachers than among other workers of different social professions. This research asks to study the issues of stress and burnout among lecturers and instructors in education collages, locate and point out the resources and factors of stress and burnout.

2. The Stress in the Work of the Teacher

Stress is defined as a situation in which the individual faces higher expectations the resources at his or her disposal, as the term 'demands' addresses the subjective perception of the individual regarding the stimulations directed to him or her (Lazarus, Folkman & 1984). Later on, the term was defined as a situation creating negative feelings, such as frustration, tension, concern and anxiety (Abel & Sewell, 1999).

Stress has also been defined as syndrome of response to a threat on self-esteem or the individual's wellbeing (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). Subsequently, Kyriacou (2011) added that stress is a negative feeling or a mental condition as a result of working in teaching, and expresses unpleasant and negative feelings, such as anger, anxiety, depression and sadness, stemming from various aspects in his or her work.

Indubitably, stress is a subjective experience to objective events called resources or factors of stress (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005), these factors might cause a sense entailing anger, tension, frustration or depression, and is usually perceived as threatening self-esteem or wellbeing (Abel & Sewell, (1999; Howard & Johnson, 2004).

In conclusion, stress is a mental and physical condition that affects the individual's productivity, efficiency, health and quality of the work he or she performs (Comish & Swindle, 1994). Stress can be a process rather than a condition, in which external forces threaten the wellbeing of a person, and as a response of the body to an external action demanding its' physical and mental strengths (Zedan & Bitar, 2013).

2.1 Sources and Factors of Stress in the Teaching Profession

Antoniou and his colleagues, noted that certain conditions are those that make the work stressful, they can be external factors (uncomfortable employment conditions, excessive workload, lack of cooperation) or internal factors (personality, personal traits and characteristics). Kyriacou (2001), counted ten stressful factors (1) teaching unmotivated students; (2) maintaining discipline ; (3) time pressure and work overload; (4) change in education policy and over-demanding work; (5) appreciation by others; (6) connections with coworkers; (7) self-esteem and status issues (self-respect and status interests); (8) connections with the supervisor; (9) role conflict and ambiguity; (10) poor work conditions. Vice versa, studies conducted in Arab countries, mostly in Egypt and Bahrain, found that stress factors among Egyptian teachers include: problems connected to the curriculum, school resources, work overload, time pressure, role conflict and ambiguity, work routine, lack of support by the management, under-appreciation by the school management and parents, relations with colleagues, the pressure of the profession itself, professional dissatisfaction, low status, low wages, and lastly, inappropriate behavior by students (Khaleel, 1999; Mohammed, 2000; Murad, 1997 Al-Mohannadi & Capel, 2007). The major factors that were found in the research

conducted in Bahrain – in the Persian Gulf, were: poor work conditions, low wages, poor encouragements, low and scarce grants and appropriations, low professional status, poor school resources, work overload (Al-Khalefa, 1999, in: Al-Mohannadi & Capel, 2007.). In a research conducted by Al-Mohannadi and Capel (2007) in the state of Qatar in the Persian Gulf the following stress factors have been found: (1) problems with management that does not appreciate Physical Education (lack of appreciation); (2) work overload and great responsibility; (3) the curriculum; (4) low status for physical education as a profession; (5) low salary, bonuses and rewards;(6) poor school resources; (7) student problems and student safety responsibilities.

In Meng and Liu (2008) research it was found that the main five stress factors are (1) unmotivated students; (2) students who show a poor attitude toward classroom tasks (3) bad behavior of students; (4) lack of teaching aids; (5) lack of understanding by the public regarding the hardships of the profession.

Less important factors are: integration of students with special needs, multiplicity of school subjects and tasks load, and too little leisure time, vacations and holidays. The answer to the question "what is the major stress factor in China?" consists with other studies, such as: "lack of motivation among students" is the primary cause in Taiwan in addition to failing education reforms led by the government (Kyriacou & Chien, 2004), and thus, also "lack of public understanding of the burden loaded on the teacher". "Bad behavior of students" is a very significant factor in Hong Kong (Chan, 2003) as well as in Western countries (Lewis, Romi, Qui & Katz, 2005).

The study of Grayson and Alvarez (2008), has found that not good relations with the management, lack of public appreciation and inappropriate behavior of students increase stress level. Frequent changes, reforms and innovations in the education system also lead to stress, in addition to poor work conditions (Yang et al., 2009) and social and family issues (loneliness, divorce...) and lack of social support lead to a high level of stress and a downsize in quality of life (Yang et al., 2009), lack of psychological counseling services or low accessibility and unavailability increases stress.

2.2 Burnout Due to Stress

Burnout is a result of chronic work stress that might increase the risk of physical and emotional syndromes such as fatigue and mental distress (Friedman, 2000). Burnout is a kind of emotional and cognitive experience, created as a response to stressful situations, and is considered as a central indicator of individual wellbeing (Andrew et al., 2010).

Maslach (1998) noted that burnout is perceived as occupational illness resulting from stress among people in service professions in general, and in professions of health in particular. Pressures that extort the coping resources of the individual to exhaustion (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Teachers burnout, stems, among others, from the lack of their ability to appropriately cope with the pressures in their work and personal lives (Huberman & Vandenberghe, 1999).

Most researchers who deal with burnout perceives the phenomenon as a dynamic process developing throughout time as a response to stressful work conditions. Burnout is a sort of "adaptation breakage", a product of stress factors that

the individual does not response to (Reilly, 1994). Therefore, the burnout develops gradually, until the person is not aware to it and sometimes even refuses to believe that there is nothing wrong in his or her activity. Anywhere, there is a consensus among researchers, that the signs of the burnout are, among others, Low productivity, low morale, anger, cynicism, and negative attitudes towards service recipients (Friedman, 1998).

Researchers of burnout claim that the burnout prevents a proper performance of roles. Burnout represents “the gap between what people are and what they need to be..”. This is a disease spreading gradually, unceasingly and over time, and brings the person to a swirl of descent from which it is hard to break free (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Preliminary signs indicating on a process of burnout are frustration, health issues, lack of appetite, and turning to alcohol and drugs (Roper, 1998).

Friedman (2000) sees the essence of the burnout experience as a sense of professional failure due to continuous gaps between the teachers’ expectations for professional achievements and the tangible reality, between their image of the perfect function of a teacher and their actual function in classes. After tireless efforts to actualize their professional ambitions, the hopes and ideals they came with to teaching, the reality slapping the teachers in the face over and over and rubbing them gradually.

In view of this literature review, the following research questions were derived:

1. What is the measure of general pressure, and what are the most stressful sources among teachers and instructors in education collages?
2. What is the measure of burnout among teachers and instructors in education collages?
3. What is the strength of the connection between stress and burnout?

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Array

The research array is of the Ex Post Facto kind – a field quantitative, descriptive, correlative research. The quantitative approach considered to be more objective, built, and ensures a high level of validity and reliability (Coolican, 1999).

In an array of the Ex Post Facto kind, the dependent variable occurred post factum, and thus the researcher cannot control the variables, and he or she is considered as an outside observer watching the process after the fact. This array, usually, restores the past by presenting retrospective questions regarding an earlier time.

The disadvantage in retrospective questions is that the memory of the responders might be selective or distorted (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1982), though the experience that the participating teachers are asked to describe, is an actual experience that exist during the school year, the teachers report a sense of stress as a result of external sources, on a sense of burnout and ways of coping, in real time, and thus the shortcoming of the retrospective questions does not fully exists.

3.2 The Sample and the Sampling Method

In the current research, seventy lecturers and instructors from Arab and Jewish education collages have participated. A substantial part of the participants in the research were selected and invited to participate by familiar lecturers and colleagues. Another part of the participants was randomly selected, after a personal appeal to them by the researchers or by the staff trained for this mission. The target sample was over 200 lecturers, but many lecturers did not respond to our request, others did not answer the questionnaire, even after repeated demands they avoided answering it. Table 1 describes the distribution of participants according to personal and professional variables.

Table 1: The Distribution of Participants According to the Variables of Their Background

Variable	N	%	
Gender	Male	34	48.6
	Female	36	51.4
Nationality	Arab	52	74.3
	Jew	18	25.7
Age	31-40 years	11	15.7
	41-50 years	21	30.0
	Over 50 years	38	54.3
Experience in teaching	6-10 years	10	14.3
	11-20 years	18	25.7
	Over 20 years of seniority	42	60.0
Education	M.A/M.Ed.	18	25.7
	Ph.D./D.Ed.	52	74.3
Ownership of the college	Association	52	74.3
	Education Ministry	18	25.7
Employer	Association	4	64.3
	Education Ministry	25	35.7
Specialty	Science	17	24.3
	Languages	23	32.9
	Education	23	32.9
	Other	7	10.0
Degree	B.Ed.	48	68.6
	M.Ed.	5	7.1
	Teaching diploma	12	17.1
	Did not response	5	7.1
Instructor	Yes	33	47.1
	No	36	51.4
	Did not response	1	1.4
Course	Primary sciences	6	8.6
	Secondary Science	9	12.9
	Primary Languages	14	20.0
	Secondary Languages	3	4.3
	Special education	15	21.4
	Infancy	3	4.3
	Did not response	20	28.6

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Familial status	Bachelor	10	14.3
	Married	57	81.4
	Divorced	2	2.9
	Widow/widower	1	1.4
Role	Yes	20	28.6
	No	47	67.1
	Did not response	3	4.3
What is your role	Head of Department	6	8.6
	Coordinator	5	7.1
	Deputy Director	1	1.4
	Other	20	28.6
	Did not response	38	54.3
Job	Less than a part time job	3	4.3
	Less than a fulltime job	20	28.6
	Fulltime job	36	51.4
	Beyond fulltime job	10	14.3
	Did not response	1	1.4
Grade	Teacher	24	34.3
	Senior teacher	11	15.7
	Lecturer	24	34.3
	Senior lecturer	7	10.0
	Senior lecturer A	1	1.4
	Did not response	3	4.3

3.3 Research Tools

The research tools composed of two questionnaires, one for measuring sources and a sense of stress and the other for measuring the degree of burnout, additionally to the part about data and personal and professional background characteristics.

Questionnaire about sources and a sense of stress and ways to deal with it: a built questionnaire, mostly bases on Kyriacou and Chien (2004) questionnaire, the questionnaire was also used in Zedan's (2011) research after translation and adjustment to Hebrew, it was used in another research (Zedan & Jarmas ,2013), the questionnaire was broaden and developed basing on international studies, conducted regarding the issue of stress in the work of the teacher, and was used in an extensive research among Arab and Jewish teachers (Zedan, 2014).

The questionnaire was meant for measuring the general stress level in the teacher's work, stress sources and factors. The degree of the sense of stress among teachers, considered as a complex and difficult process, and this is mostly due to multiplicity and diverse of the tools were used in numerous studies (Hicks, Bahr & Fujiwara, 2009). But what they have in common is that they gather stress sources inside them that cover various areas (personal, professional, environmental, public, administrative, etc.).

The questionnaire went through a contextual translation, and passed an adjustment of content and phrasing, so it will suit to teachers working in the Israeli education system. The questionnaire was translated "back" to English, and was found

as matching to a very high extent the English version of the original questionnaire of Kyriacou and Chien (2004).

The questionnaire includes four sections, in accordance to the following detail: The first section (questions 1 to 8): includes eight items regarding the personal and professional characteristics of the teachers: gender, age, experience in teaching, teaching subject, role in school, school level, school size, residential area.

The second section (question 9): includes 35 items that describe the potential sources of stress in the teacher's work. Likert scale has been used, which is completed from six degrees 1 to six, as 1 reflects that the source causes a low degree of stress and 6 reflects a source that causes a high degree of stress to the teacher, the 2,3 4, 5 degrees are interim degrees on the scale. The internal consistency for the inclusive scale was $\alpha = 0.954$.

This part also includes one item for measuring the general sense of stress of the teacher, and each teacher was required to express the degree of stress he or she experiences on the five degrees Likert scale.

1. Burnout questionnaire (the third section): the questionnaire was destined to measure the sense of burnout among the teachers and instructors are a questionnaire built and suited to Zedan's (2011) research. The questionnaire is completed of items taken from the questionnaires of Friedman (1999), Tatar and Yahav (1999) and Segel and Azar (2009). And it mainly bases on the questionnaire of Kafri, Atzion and Pinnes (1981) which address more to teachers than workers in other professions. The questionnaires of Friedman, Tatar (2002) was used as well in a study that examined the sensed of burnout among teachers and teaching trainees, the questionnaires are based on the questionnaires of Maslach & Jackson (1981), Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) and Fraber (1982).

The questionnaire includes 20 items, the scale of answers consists of six degrees from 1 to six, as 1 reflects a low level of burnout and the 6 degree indicates a high level of burnout, the 2,3,4,5 degrees are interim degrees on the scale. The internal consistency for the inclusive ladder was $\alpha = 0.954$. The phrases: 5, 10, 14, 16 are phrased negatively; therefore they had a reversal of answers.

4. Results and Findings

The results and findings will be presented basing on the research questions,

A. First question: What is the level of general stress, and what are the most stressful sources among lecturers and instructors in education collages?

For the first question examination, an analysis of frequencies was performed upon the participants' answers. The findings indicate that the ten most stressful sources to collage teachers are: Crowded classrooms; Inappropriate wages; The level of students does not match my expectations; Students lacking motivation; Contempt of students for classroom tasks; Behavioral problems of students (Noise and interference from students in the teaching environment, inappropriate behavior); An uncomfortable working

environment; Lack of learning spaces; Multiplicity of student delays and absences; Lack of respect for the teacher by the students.

The following ten sources after the above in the sense of stress they cause are: Lack of support for research expenses and participation in conference, unrewarded assignments and roles in addition to teaching (performing an administrative work additionally to teaching, multiple demands by the management; duties and tasks beyond teaching; uncomfortable work conditions (school schedule, office hours, etc.); low esteem of academic activity; lack of appreciation by the management; lack of loyalty by coworkers; ambiguity of procedures; a clouded collage environment; lack of appreciation and negative views toward the teaching profession; Lack of public understanding of the burden imposed on the teacher / instructor. As the average of general stress, level equals to 3.13 with a standard deviation of 0/95, a value that indicates a mediocre stress level.

B. The second research question: What is the degree of burnout among teachers and instructors in collages of education?

For the second question examination, an analysis of frequencies was performed upon the participants' answers.

It was found that the general average of burnout equals to 2.34 with a standard deviation of 0.75, a value which indicates a level below mediocre, and this in accordance to the teachers' answers on the phrases consisting the burnout scale, so that in the first four places appeared phrases that indicate a lack of burnout, and they are: in general, I feel that the teaching work in the collage brings me satisfaction; I feel that I extract my abilities well in the teaching work in the collage; I think that I would choose teaching in collage again if I had been given the chance to restart my life; Teaching in collage is easy relatively to school.

And in last five places appeared phrases indicating burnout, and they are: I feel that the teaching in collage wears me out; I feel that the teaching in collage is physically hard on me; generally, I feel that working closely with students creates great stress for me; generally, I consider leaving the teaching work; I am troubling to stand in front of student.

C. The third research question: What is the strength of the connection between stress and burnout?

The connection between the degree of stress and the level of burnout among collage teachers, was examined via a correlation test by the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Table 2: Averages and Standard Deviations of Degree of Stress and Level of Burnout among College Teachers (N = 70)

Variable	M (1-4)	S.D.	r _p
Burnout	2.34	.75	0.537***
Stress sources	2.46	.62	

***p<0.001

The findings presented in the table above indicate a positive strong and distinct connection between the stress degree and burnout level among college teachers ($r_p=0.537, p<0.001$), that is to say, the more that the stress degree and the sense of stress caused by various sources among college teachers rises, so is the burnout level rises as well.

5. Discussion

This study dealt with measurement and description of stress and burnout sources and factors among lecturers and pedagogic instructors in colleges of education. The main findings indicated that the ten most stressful sources of colleges teachers are: Crowded classrooms; Inappropriate wages; A student level that does not match my expectations; Unmotivated students; Disrespect of students for classroom assignments; Student behavioral problems (noise and interference by students in the teaching environment, inappropriate behavior); inconvenient work environment; Lack of learning spaces; Multiplicity of student delays and absences; Lack of respect for the teacher by the students.

Moreover, it was found that the level of burnout is below mediocre, and that there is a positive strong and distinct connection between the degree of stress and the level of burnout among colleges teachers, that is to say, the more that the stress degree and the sense of stress caused by different sources among colleges teachers rises, the burnout level rises as well.

Very few researches were conducted in Israel and in the world regarding the subject of stress and burnout among lecturers in colleges and universities in general or among teachers and instructors in colleges of education in particular. Nonetheless, these studies, mostly mention similar descriptions, and bases on a rational similar to researches in the subject of stress and burnout among teachers in schools of various education levels.

As been said, studies indicated similar findings resembling those found among school teachers, this is how the study of Kinicki and his colleagues (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim & Carson, 2002), or of Miller and his colleagues (Miller, Rutherford & Kolodinsky, 2008) who mention that the high level of stress in the teaching work in high education depends on organizational obligation, in role ambiguity, role conflict (contradictive and conflictive demands) and organizational policy, as well as concern for employment security.

The study of Meyer and Co. (Meyer, Stanley, Herscivitch & Topolnytsky, 2002) and the study of Podsakoff and Co. (Podsakoff, LePine & LePine, 2007) note that working with time pressure, and a high degree of responsibility are significant factors of a sense of stress among teachers in higher education.

The research of Lihel and Singh (2005), which was conducted among collage teachers, pointed out that the stress degree among teachers teaching in governmental colleges and universities is lower than that among teachers of private colleges and universities. Lehal's (2007) research emphasized these findings.

In the meta-analysis held by Rajareegam and Doss (2012) of sixteen researches findings, they emphasized the following stress factors: the unpleasant physical environment at work, organizational climate, relationship with the coworkers, experience in teaching, physical and mental health, teacher-students relations, expectations and performances at work, moral, relations with the community, occupational security, organizational security. These factors linked to content with work, such as the factors: Level of involvement and participation in the decision making process, administrative efficiency and effectivity. With that being said, the findings pointed out that collage teachers are more satisfied from their than schools teachers.

Findings were found in a research held among hundreds of Pakistani collage teachers (Bhatti, Hashmi, Raza, Shaikh, & Kamran, 2011) that consist with findings of other studies (Chan, Lai, Ko & Boey, 2000) which indicated that work load constitutes the principal factor of sense of stress and burnout in the academic work of collage teachers. Additionally, it was found that demand regarding the family, and an finance-economic status constitutes a source for stress for collage teachers. This study (Bhatti, Hashmi, Raza, Shaikh, & Kamran, 2011) highlighted that ambiguity of the role definition is an important source for a sense of stress among collage teachers, in addition, frequent changes and roles complexity constitutes a stress source as well. Moreover, work load and over-demands for execution are a main source for a sense of stress among collage teachers.

Meng and Gu (2012) conducted a research among 159 lecturers in the Faculty of Science and Technology at Changchen University in China, they found that the higher the lecturer's degree and educational background is, the more he or she reports a higher sense of stress, mainly in terms of competitiveness and job requirements as well as in the realm of promotion and professional development. Thus, lecturers with an advanced degree participate in academic activities and take more academic responsibility, therefore, advancing academically causes over-requirements, that perhaps even mount the lecturers' capability. Regarding gender, the findings indicate a lack of a distinct difference between men and women. But in relation to age, it was found that teachers between 31-40 years of age report the highest degree of stress due to the career change and familial status as well as work load imparted on them from so many obligations. Teachers in between ages 41-50 also report a high stress degree and this is because they already achieved their high academic degree, and take the responsibility and they are imparted with obligation in their work and thus they suffer

work overload in their job. But the stress in the work of lecturers between ages 21-30 is relatively low than teachers in ages 41-50, since they only began and some of them are even still students and this is also true among lecturers over 51 years old. The research findings indicate a similar connection with seniority. Furthermore, the findings point out that the high stress level experienced among teachers in areas of economics, management, literature, and law much greater than among teachers in the field of sciences and technology. The high stress level expressed mostly in the dimension of interpersonal relationship, as well as external and competitive requirements and the dimension of promotion and professional development (Meng & Gu, 2012).

The findings of these studies and the findings of the studies in the field (Ololube, 2007) substantiate a high closeness between the feelings and views toward the schools teachers work and their feelings and views toward the work of collages teachers, mainly in collages of education.

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