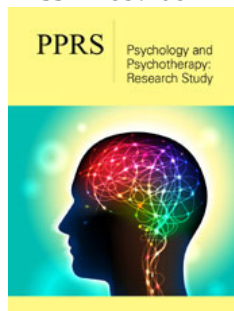


Resilience, Hope and Coping with Secondary Trauma: Societal Implications from a Study on Arab Teachers

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationships between resilience, hope, and secondary trauma among Arab teachers in Israel, an under-researched area. The research is crucial for educational leaders in developing effective coping strategies for teachers. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, 129 teachers from diverse regions in Israel's Arab community participated. They completed an online survey that included scales for Resilience, hope, and secondary traumatization. Results showed a positive correlation between resilience and hope, while both were inversely related to secondary trauma. Resilience emerged as a significant predictor of secondary trauma, but hope did not. No age-related differences in secondary trauma were observed. The findings highlight the importance of fostering resilience and hope as protective factors against secondary trauma. These insights can inform tailored intervention programs that emphasize nurturing resilience and hope in educators. Such efforts can mitigate secondary trauma, enhance teacher well-being, and contribute to a more resilient and effective educational system.

Keywords: Secondary trauma; Resilience; Hope; Teachers; Culture; Arab society

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Introduction

Secondary trauma manifests as post-traumatic symptoms, particularly relevant for Arab teachers in Israel exposed to students' accounts of violence and loss [1-4]. Such exposure risks teacher fatigue and burnout, affecting educational quality [5]. This study addresses this underexplored area to enhance teachers' resilience.

The Arab education system

Arabs, constituting 21.1% of Israel's population, face systemic challenges [6,7]. The Arab education system serves over 500,000 students but lags in resources and faces societal issues like violence [8,9], elevating teachers' risk of secondary trauma [10-12]. Previous research has mainly addressed structural disparities in Arab education [11]. Some studies discuss teacher well-being [13,14], but literature on coping with secondary trauma is limited [10,11]. This study explores the relationship between resilience, hope, and secondary trauma in this context. Resilience, as defined by the American Psychological Association (APA), is key to teachers' coping mechanisms and is linked to positive outcomes like job satisfaction and effectiveness [15,16]. It is shaped by various factors, including early experiences and social influences [17,18].

Hope

Central to belief in positive change and personal efficacy, hope enhances teachers' motivation and resilience [19,20]. However, literature lacks insight into its role among Arab teachers facing unique societal challenges [10,11].

Secondary trauma

Secondary trauma is marked by intense reactions similar to primary trauma symptoms like hopelessness, and is prevalent among professionals, particularly teachers, due to their roles and interactions with those in distress [1,2,21]. Research highlights the need for enhanced support systems [22]. The current study explores the links between resilience and hope as independent variables and secondary trauma as the dependent variable, while also comparing secondary trauma levels between older and younger teachers. The findings could inform programs that train teachers in coping with secondary trauma and enhancing resilience and hope.

Research Questions

Main research questions

Is there a connection between resilience and hope and secondary trauma among teachers in Arab society? Secondary research question: Are there differences between older and younger teachers at the level of secondary trauma?

Research hypotheses

H1: Resilience and hope among teachers will be positively correlated; specifically, as the resilience level of teachers increases, their level of hope is also expected to rise.

H2: Resilience among teachers will be negatively associated with secondary trauma; with higher resilience levels leading to lower reported levels of secondary trauma.

H3: Hope among teachers will be negatively associated with secondary trauma; specifically, as teachers report higher levels of hope, their secondary trauma levels are expected to decrease.

H4: Age will be inversely associated with reported levels of secondary trauma among teachers; older teachers will report lower levels of secondary trauma compared to younger teachers.

H5: In Arab society, resilience and hope will significantly predict secondary trauma levels among teachers.

Methodology

Employing a quantitative cross-sectional approach, the study surveyed 129 Arab teachers in Israel using an online questionnaire. The survey, disseminated via social media, assessed resilience, hope, secondary trauma, and demographics. Data were analyzed with SPSS27, adhering to ethical standards for anonymity [1,2,23].

Study Variables

Dependent variable

Secondary trauma, characterized by negative physiological and mental responses to another's trauma, was measured using the SR-PSS by Figley & Kleber [1,2,23].

Independent variables

Resilience, defined as the capacity to cope and recover from adversity, was assessed using the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

by Smith et al. [15,24]. Hope, defined as optimism in uncertain situations, was measured using Snyder et al.'s Hope Scale [19,25]. Demographic variable included age, categorized by the study's median age.

Study Participants

Utilizing convenience sampling, this study engaged 129 Arab teachers in Israel. Of these, 75.2% were women and 85.3% were married. Educational levels varied, with 36.4% holding a bachelor's degree and 60.5% a master's degree. The sample averaged 19 years of teaching experience. The mean and median ages were 43 and 44, respectively, and the sample was nearly evenly split between younger (48%) and older teachers (52%) (Table 1).

Table 1: The sample population (N=129).

		f	%
Gender	Men	32	24.8
	Women	97	75.2
Marital Status	Marries	110	85.3
	Not Married	13	10.1
	Other	6	4.7
Education	Undergraduate Degree	47	36.4
	Graduate Degree	78	60.5
	Teaching Certificate	1	0.8
	Other	3	2.3
		M	SD
Age		43.22	8.79
Teaching Seniority (years)		19.18	9.03

Findings

The study revealed several findings. First, resilience and hope were found to be closely related; teachers who reported feeling resilient also felt hopeful. Second, resilience appeared to serve as a protective factor against secondary trauma, indicating its role as a psychological shield. Third, a strong sense of hope was similarly associated with lower levels of trauma, suggesting its potential as a buffer against traumatic stress. However, when examining predictors of secondary trauma, resilience emerged as a significant factor, while hope did not exert the same influence. Interestingly, age did not appear to influence the experience of secondary trauma, defying expectations that older or younger teachers might differ in this regard (Table 2-4).

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of the study variables (N=129).

	M	SD	Range
Hope	5.15	66	1-6
Resilience	3.47	61	1-5
Secondary Trauma	2.26	66	1-5

Table 3: Correlations between the study variables (N=129).

	1	2	3
1. Hope	-		
2. Resilience	.34***	-	
3.Secondary Trauma	-.20*	-.42***	-
*p<.05, **p<.005, ***p<.001			

Table 4: Linear regression findings for predicting secondary trauma (N=129).

	B	SE	β	t	R ²	F Model
Hope	-	.11	-	-	-.18	14.03***
Resilience	-	.12	-	-		
- *p<.05 **p<.005, ***p<.001						

Conclusion and Implications

The study underscores the need to foster resilience and hope among teachers, especially in marginalized communities. Findings show a positive link between resilience and hope, and suggest these traits act as protective factors against secondary trauma. The study emphasizes the importance of resilience as a key predictor of secondary trauma, while age was not a factor. Teacher support extends beyond academics to societal roles, including fostering community resilience [24,26]. Cultural context, such as community support in Arab society, adds nuance to these findings and may be a vital resilience source [23,27]. The results could guide training programs focused on coping and resilience.

Limitations and Research Implications

The study's reliance on convenience sampling limits generalizability, suggesting future research should employ random sampling for broader applicability. The use of self-reported data introduces potential response bias, warranting the inclusion of objective measures in subsequent studies. Lastly, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, recommending that future work utilize longitudinal methods to establish directional relationships between resilience, hope, and secondary trauma [28-31].

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