Burnout and its Relationship with Emotional Among Nurses in Algeria

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Abstract:

The current study aimed to determine the nature of the relationship between burnout and emotional maturity and whether levels of burnout differ based on gender and years of experience. The sample included 45 nurses from various hospital departments in the Skikda province. To answer the study's questions, we used two scales: the first was Maslach's Burnout Inventory, and the second was the Emotional Maturity Scale. The results revealed a negative correlation between burnout and emotional maturity, as well as differences in burnout levels attributed to gender and years of professional experience.

Keywords: Burnout - Emotional Maturity - Social Adaptation - Independence -

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1 - Introduction

Emotional maturity holds a special importance in shaping an individual's personality in general. Emotions are one of the distinguishing characteristics of human beings, setting them apart from other creatures. Emotional strength is also one of the most powerful psychological forces that humans possess, and its significance lies in its contribution to the preservation of life. Furthermore, emotions play a vital role in motivating and driving behavior. Given the crucial nature of this dimension, there is an urgent need for continuous research and study to address the various emotional problems that individuals may face and to attempt to provide innovative and diverse solutions. The current researcher aims to explore the topic of emotional maturity through research and analysis, striving to identify the best foundations and methods for regulating emotions while uncovering and discussing the contributing factors to emotional maturity.

As indicated by Cohen.&Wills, (1995), difficult psychosocial experiences and burnout are strongly related to an individual's emotional stability and are the primary causes of mental health disorders. A study by Rosonzweig (1999) demonstrated that an individual's ability to handle external stressors depends on their mental capabilities, which are indicative of emotional balance. Emotionally mature individuals possess the capacity to tolerate significant frustration, and emotional maturity serves as an indicator of stability and emotional equilibrium. Without emotional maturity, individuals are susceptible to various psychological pressures and problems, including internal psychological stress and difficulties in forming important social relationships.

The concept of emotional maturity refers to the balanced expression of emotions in accordance with various life situations faced by an individual and the equilibrium between the situation and the appropriate emotional response. It steers clear of childish expressions and unbalanced emotional outbursts. According to Mohammed El-Sayed Abdel Rahman (1998), emotional maturity is a genuine indicator of mental well-being. The trait of emotional maturity empowers individuals to achieve relative independence, and self-reliance, form good and balanced social relationships, and cope with various life pressures.

Cheung. F.,& Tang. C. (2007)also pointed out that a lack of emotional maturity has a negative impact on an individual's mental health, leading to various mental disorders and behavioral disturbances. This deficiency constitutes a failed emotional behavior that disrupts both the psychological and physical functions of the individual. Additionally, one of the prominent psychological problems among workers is the issue of emotional maturity. To our knowledge, there are no studies that have explored the relationship between emotional maturity and burnout. Hence, we raise the following questions:

- What are the levels of emotional maturity among nurses?
- What are the levels of burnout among nurses?
- What is the nature of the relationship between emotional maturity and burnout among nurses?

1.1 Hypothesis:

There is a negative correlation between emotional maturity scores and levels of burnout among nurses.

Note: The first and second questions are exploratory, and we will leave their answers to the field study, while a hypothesis has been proposed to answer the third question.

1.2 Study importance

The importance of the study can be summarized as it focuses on the emotional dimension of individuals, through the variable of emotional maturity and the contributing factors to its development, which is considered an important factor in determining individual behavior and personality development. The higher the level of emotional maturity in a person, the more it indicates their psychological stability and rationality in dealing with and analyzing various life matters and situations, as indicated by numerous psychological literature. Consequently, this stability has an impact on their social relationships. Additionally, the study lies in determining the level of the relationship between burnout and emotional maturity, which helps identify one of the influencing factors on burnout. This, in turn, has a negative impact on employees in general and nurses in particular.

1.3 Study Objectives:

This study aims to uncover the level of burnout among nurses working in public hospitals and its relationship with emotional stability. Furthermore, the study aims to enlighten those interested in public health and anyone connected to factors that can contribute to the occurrence of burnout among nurses, with the goal of mitigating and avoiding it.

1.4 Study concepts:

1.4.1 Burnout: The concept of burnout has become widely used since the beginning of the last decade of the previous century to describe the psychological state of professionals working in the fields of social or humanitarian services who spend long, continuous hours in stressful work with their clients. Their work nature requires them to have direct and close contact with individuals in need of their help. Such professionals could be nurses, doctors, counselors, lawyers, police officers, or those in professions where the interaction between the professional and the client involves addressing the client's current issues, such as psychological, social, emotional, and physical problems. This may sometimes be accompanied by feelings of anger, confusion, fear, despair, or anxiety. Sometimes, the client's problems are unclear, making the professional's situation even more confusing and frustrating. A person who constantly works with individuals under such conditions can experience tension, which can evolve into emotional exhaustion, leading to burnout (Duane, Kellani, & Alian, 1989).

After reviewing the literature on burnout, we have concluded that burnout represents the depletion of an individual's stored psychological energy, leading to a state of psychological imbalance (disturbance) resulting from the severe psychological pressures caused by the burdens and demands of work. These effects are reflected negatively and directly on clients (students, patients, advisees) and on the organization they work for. These effects can only be alleviated by dealing directly with the environmental factors that caused them, rather than focusing on the individual's role in coping with these situations (adaptation). Burnout has been defined by Maslach, C. (2001) as a presentation of emotional stress, emotional numbing, and a lack of accomplishment that occurs in individuals working in professions that involve formal and continuous interaction with individuals.

Greens (1986) sees the phenomenon of burnout occurring in three stages:

The first stage: The individual's feeling of work pressure due to their inability to meet work requirements compared to their self-capabilities.
The second stage: The individual's suffering from stress and tension as a natural and direct emotional response to work pressures.
The third stage: A change in the individual's behavior and attitudes, such as resorting to treating clients mechanically, not caring about work, and becoming preoccupied with personal needs.
1.4.2 Emotional maturity: Emotional maturity refers to the transition from immature, childish emotional expression characterized by impulsiveness, recklessness, exaggeration, and lack of self-control to balanced and effective emotional expression. It involves shifting from interpreting situations based on one's personal emotions to interpreting situations objectively and realistically. It also involves moving from avoiding problems and responsibilities or ignoring them to accepting and dealing with them.

The concept of emotional maturity signifies a balanced expression of emotions in line with life situations and maintaining a proper balance between one's reaction and the appropriate emotional response. This is far from childish expressions and unbalanced emotional outbursts. It has been pointed out by Mohamed El Sayed Abdel Rahman (1987) that emotional maturity is a genuine indicator of mental well-being. The trait of emotional maturity empowers individuals to achieve relative independence and self-reliance, fostering good and balanced social relationships.

Additionally, Dawood and Al-Obaidi defined emotional maturity as an individual's ability to handle matters calmly, and patiently, without being stirred or agitated by trivial events. It is characterized by calmness, composure, trustworthiness, rationality in facing challenges, and controlling emotions, especially anger, and fear. Cheung. F.,& Tang. C. (2007): suggested that emotional maturity represents a personal capability that enables an individual to perform their duties easily, adapting to varying roles while comprehending the relationship between gains, efforts, and enduring hardships based on conviction and belief in the value of their actions.

Ali houcine Mohamed (2006) defined emotional maturity as the transition from childish emotional expressions to mature and realistic adult mental expressions. In the current study, emotional maturity can be defined as the ability to manage emotions in a healthy way, expressing them harmoniously with life situations. Emotions should not be excessive or deficient compared to the situation's demands. It also encompasses the alignment of the emotional nature with the individual's age, meaning that as a person grows older, they should exhibit greater balance and clarity in expressing their emotions, both negative and positive.

The term emotional maturity points to an individual's capacity to manage and control their emotions, ensuring that they are in charge of their emotions rather than their emotions controlling them. This is especially relevant for negative emotions, as an individual's inability to restrain and tame them can make them an undesirable and unhappy person. This maturity is evident in a person's behavior and their ways of dealing with numerous life situations they encounter daily, demonstrating a harmony and agreement between their emotional responses and the situations that gave rise to these responses.

2- Method and Tools

The current study aimed to explore the relationship between burnout and emotional maturity among nurses. To achieve this goal, a descriptive methodology was employed by administering two scales: the Maslach Burnout Inventory and the Emotional Maturity Scale."

2.1 Sample: The study was conducted in three public hospitals: Franz Fanon Hospital in Blida, Al-Ikhwa Saad Qarmash Hospital in Skikda, and Abdelkader Nator Hospital in Colo Skikda. The sample size consisted of 46 nurses, distributed by gender as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Individuals by Healthcare Institution

Hospital	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Al-Ikhwa Saad Qarmash Hospital in Skikda	08	07	15
Franz Fanon Hospital in Blida	09	10	19
and Abdelkader Nator Hospital in Colo -Skikda	04	08	12
Total	21	25	46

2.2-Study tools:

2.2.1 The Maslach Burnout Inventory: The scale consists of 22 items in the form of statements asking about a person's feelings towards behaviors that can occur in their daily life. The respondent is asked to rate the intensity of their feelings towards the specified behavior, which is assumed to represent burnout. The response options range from (1 to 7), where 1 indicates very weak feelings about the paragraph's content, and 7 means very strong feelings about the paragraph's content. The numbers between 1 and 7 indicate varying degrees of feeling about the situation, from very strong to very weak. The scale comprises three dimensions of burnout, which are:

Emotional Exhaustion: This dimension measures the level of emotional stress and tension experienced by the individual (nurse in our study) as a result of working with a specific group of individuals or in a specific field. This dimension is measured by 9 items, which are: (1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20). The interpretations of the scores on this dimension are as follows:

- High emotional exhaustion: 40 points and above
- Moderate emotional exhaustion: 26-36 points
- Low emotional exhaustion: 9-25 points

Depersonalization: This dimension measures the level of indifference or apathy resulting from working with a specific group of individuals or in a specific field. This dimension is measured by five items (5, 10, 11, 15, 22). The interpretations of the scores on this dimension are as follows:

- High depersonalization: 15 points and above
- Moderate depersonalization: 9-14 points
- Low depersonalization: 5-8 points

Lack of Personal Accomplishment: This dimension reflects the individual's self-assessment and satisfaction with their work. This dimension is measured through 8 items (4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21). The interpretations of the scores on this dimension are as follows:

- Low lack of personal accomplishment: 8-36 points
- Moderate lack of personal accomplishment: 37-42 points
- High lack of personal accomplishment: 43 points and above

Scale Correction: Each individual is awarded a score ranging from 0 to 6 on the scale, and the scoring is reversed for negative items.

The Validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory: The validity of the scale has been verified through the following methods:

Internal Consistency: To verify the internal consistency of the scale, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between the item scores and the total score of the dimension to which they belong. Additionally, correlation coefficients between the total score of the dimension and the total score of the scale were calculated. This analysis was conducted on a sample of 44 nurses. The results showed that all correlation coefficients between item scores and the total score of their respective dimensions were significant at a level of (α=0.01). This indicates that the items measure what the dimension is intended to measure. Furthermore, there is an acceptable level of internal consistency between the items and their dimensions. This serves as an indicator to accept the validity of the dimensions.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficients between Dimension Score and Total Score of the Maslach Burnout Inventory

Dimension	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Emotional Exhaustion	0.78	0.01
Depersonalization	0.74	0.01
Lack of Personal Accomplishment	0.69	0.01

Table 2 shows that all correlation coefficients between the dimension score and the total score of the scale are high and significant at a level of (α = 0.01). This indicates a strong relationship between the total score of the scale and the scores of its three dimensions. It suggests a high level of internal consistency between the total score of the scale and the scores of its dimensions, which is an indicator of the scale's validity.

Reliability:

In order to assess the reliability of the scale, we used two methods: the split-half reliability and Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient.

Table 3: Reliability Coefficients for the Dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory and Total Reliability

Dimension	Value of Reliability coefficient	
	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Split-Half Reliability -
Emotional Exhaustion	0.75	0.62

Depersonalization	0.62	0.71
Lack of Personal Accomplishment	0.66	0.63
Total Reliability (Overall Scale)	0.69	0.78

From Table 3, which illustrates the reliability coefficients calculated by two methods, it becomes evident that these values vary. Regarding Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α), it ranges from 0.62 as the lowest value for the Depersonalization dimension to 0.69 for the overall scale reliability. On the other hand, the reliability values calculated using the Spearman-Brown formula for split-half reliability range from 0.62 for the Emotional Exhaustion dimension to 0.71 for the Depersonalization dimension and 0.78 for the overall scale reliability. These are high reliability values, which can be considered as evidence of the high level of consistency in the scores of the Maslach Burnout Inventory applied to a sample of professors in Algerian universities.

After verifying the levels of validity and reliability of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, which were found to be high, we can conclude that it is acceptable to use this scale in the current study. The scale now comprises 32 items, branching into three dimensions.

2.2.2 Emotional Maturity Scale: In order to measure the level of emotional maturity among a sample of nurses working in public institutions, we used a scale developed by Yara Rabi Saad (2022). The scale consists of 30 items, and its validity was verified as follows:

Scale Validity: The scale's developers relied on two methods to ensure its validity: content validity through experts and construct validity. The results of the construct validity are as follows:

Construct Validity: This type of validity relies on a statistical approach aimed at determining the minimum number of hypothetical factors or components necessary to explain the interrelationships between a set of tests, items, or variables. It aims to identify the degree to which the scale's statements are saturated with each factor. These saturations represent the correlation coefficients between the items of the scale and the factors. These coefficients are referred to as construct validity. The correlations between the items and the total score of the scale were calculated to determine the homogeneity of the scale's items and whether it measures a single trait or multiple traits. Table Number (03) illustrates the correlation coefficients between the items and the total score of the Emotional Maturity Scale.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficients between Items and Total Score of the Emotional Maturity Scale.

Item	value	Item	value	Item	value	Item	value
1	00.51	9	00.56	17	00.51	25	00.45
2	00.48	10	00.50	18	00.55	26	00.39
3	00.50	11	00.62	19	00.56	27	00.47
4	00.59	12	00.58	20	00.64	28	00.39
5	00.47	13	00.59	21	00.54	29	00.45

6	00.52	14	00.61	22	00.67	30	00.61
7	00.58	15	00.63	23	00.60		
8	00.49	16	00.51	24	00.63		

3- Results and Discussion

3.1. Answering the first question: What is the level of emotional maturity among the nurses participating in the study?

Table 5: The levels of individuals in Emotional Maturity

Level	Frequencies	Percentage
High	08	17.40%
Medium	14	30.43%
Low	24	52.17%
Total	46	100%

According to Table 5, it is evident that the most frequently occurring level of emotional maturity among the participating nurses in the study is the low level, with a frequency of 24, representing 52.17% of the total. The second most frequent level is the medium level, with a frequency of 14, accounting for 30.43%, while the high level had the lowest frequency of 08, making up 17.40%.

Despite the majority of nurses having a low level of emotional maturity, we are assessing the significance of differences among the frequencies in the three levels by calculating the Chi-square ($\chi 2$) statistic, which yielded a value of 13.56 at a significance level of 0.01 and 2 degrees of freedom. The critical value was 09.21. Since the calculated Chi-square ($\chi 2$) value is greater, the differences among the three frequencies in emotional maturity levels are statistically significant. Given that the highest frequency is in the low level, this indicates that the majority of the sampled nurses exhibit a low level of emotional maturity.

3.1. Answering the second question: What is the level of burnout among the nurses participating in the study?

Table 6: Levels of Burnout Among Participating Nurses in the Study

	Levels of Burnout					
	High		**Medium**		**Low**	
Dimensions of Burnout	**Frequencies**	**%**	**Frequencies**	**%**	**Frequencies**	**%**
Emotional Exhaustion	23	50.00	12	26.08	11	23.91
Emotional Numbness	24	52.17	14	30.43	08	17.39
Reduced Sense of Achievement	30	65.21	10	21.73	06	13.04
Total Score	**28**	**60.86**	**10**	**21.73**	**08**	**17.39**

The table above illustrates the levels of burnout through its three dimensions among the participating nurses in the study. It is evident that the highest frequencies were for the high level in all three dimensions, ranging from 30 occurrences for the Reduced Sense of Achievement dimension at 65.21%, to 24 occurrences for the Emotional Numbness dimension at 52.17%, and 23 occurrences for the Emotional Exhaustion dimension at 50.00%.

On the other hand, the lowest frequencies were for the low level of burnout, and in all three dimensions. The lowest occurrence was 06 for the Reduced Sense of Achievement dimension at 13.04%, followed by 08 occurrences for the Emotional Numbness dimension at 17.39%, and 11 occurrences for the Emotional Exhaustion dimension at 23.91%. At first glance, these frequencies suggest that a significant proportion of the participating nurses in the study exhibit high levels of burnout. To assess the significance of these differences in burnout levels among the nurses, we applied the Chi-square ($\chi 2$) test for goodness of fit. The result showed that the calculated value is greater than the critical value at a significance level of 0.01, indicating that these differences are statistically significant and in favor of the higher frequencies, as evident in the table, for the high level of burnout. This means that the majority of the participating nurses in the study have a high level of burnout.

These results demonstrate that the levels of burnout among the participating nurses in the study are high in all three dimensions Emotional Exhaustion, Emotional Numbness, and Reduced Sense of Achievement.

3.3. Test of hypothesis: The hypothesis suggests that "there is a negative correlation between emotional intelligence scores and burnout levels among the nurses."

To test this hypothesis, we applied the Pearson correlation coefficient between the scores of the participating nurses in the study on both the burnout scale and the emotional intelligence scale, using the total scores for each scale.

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Values Between Emotional Maturity Scores and Burnout Levels

Variables	df	value	p-value
Emotional maturity	44	-0.680	0.001
Burnout			

Through Table 7, it is evident that the Pearson correlation coefficient between individuals' scores on the emotional maturity scale and their scores on the burnout scale was -0.680, a statistically significant negative correlation at p-value 0.001 level. This leads us to conclude that there is a strong negative and statistically significant relationship between nurses' emotional maturity and burnout, supporting the research hypothesis of an existing relationship between the two variables.

The study, through hypothesis testing, found a strong negative relationship between nurses' burnout and emotional maturity, whether in terms of individual scale dimensions or overall scores on both scales. This can be explained by the theoretical literature suggesting that levels of burnout can be predicted based on levels of emotional maturity.

The results showed that a decrease in individuals' emotional maturity was associated with an increase in burnout. In other words, a lower level of emotional maturity among nurses was accompanied by a higher level of burnout. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies, such as those by zidan ahmed (1997), Najete zaki moussa,madiha othmane, (1998), Corrigan, P. W., Holmes, E. P., Luchins, D. (1997) which all demonstrated a negative association between burnout and emotional maturity, as well as with positive emotional performance indicators like optimism, quality of life, hope, and career satisfaction.

4- Conclusion

Despite the results indicating a decrease in nurses' emotional maturity, accompanied by an increase in burnout indicators, including emotional exhaustion, emotional detachment, and reduced sense of accomplishment, these dimensions were positively and significantly correlated. Drawing from theoretical frameworks and previous studies on burnout and emotional maturity, it appears that there is still limited knowledge about the necessary conditions for enhancing self or behavioral components of emotional maturity, with a focus on the contribution of various factors in promoting emotional maturity in employees in general. Many studies suggest that workplace burnout primarily results from the rewards associated with specific job tasks. So far, unexplored self or behavioral factors, such as employees' perception of supervisor appreciation, performance of tasks not subject to routine procedures allowing for innovation, continuous work environments, a sense of organizational support, the perception of having a significant and meaningful job that meets daily material and psychological needs, and the possibility of a job that allows for skill development and personal and professional growth conditions, can increase or decrease the severity of burnout among nurses in our study sample.

One can rely on the theory of "sideways thinking," which posits that individuals work towards imagination and consider various possibilities for solving a problem without reacting emotionally. This theory highlights the importance of overcoming obstacles that limit thinking within a specific framework and instead focusing on problem-solving.

Through the theory of emotion and how emotions affect behavior and the onset of burnout in individuals, it can be said that emotional thinking occurs through emotions, which are an essential part of an individual's thinking process because they facilitate a better understanding of matters. Emotions also guide individuals toward the correct thinking path with various thoughts, information, behaviors, and different emotions. These emotions affect the individual's cognitive aspect, making their thinking less independent. However, all of this is a result of work-related pressures that individuals experience during their workday or throughout their careers. If these emotions are not expressed, they can be stored and accumulated, and in such cases, various body parts may express them.

This is supported by the study Farber. B (2007) on burnout and its relationship with emotional maturity among nurses, which showed a functional correlation between burnout and emotional maturity. Similarly, the study by Kalimo, R. & Mejman, (2087), which addressed emotional maturity and its relationship with burnout among nurses,

found that the relationship between the two variables was negative but not significant. Thus, it can be said that burnout cannot be predicted based on our knowledge of emotional maturity levels.

In summary, this study yielded two important and fundamental results. The first result indicates that burnout among nurses was at a high level. This result is significant for healthcare administrators because job performance and the quality of work life are negatively affected by burnout. The higher the levels of burnout, the more it negatively impacts various aspects of a nurse's professional life. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the factors that have led nurses in the sample to this state, especially since the research sample includes nurses from different hospitals.

The second important result is that emotional maturity levels were low among the nurses. This result, logically speaking, is not directly related to the nature of their work or its conditions. Emotional maturity is a relatively stable trait that develops with an individual's psychosocial growth in the early stages of life and continues to develop. However, the study's results indicated that the nurses in the sample exhibited low levels of emotional maturity, which is considered one of the most important personality traits that influence an individual's behavior in various life situations, including their professional lives.

Additionally, the study found a negative relationship between nurses' emotional maturity and their level of burnout, meaning that it is possible to predict nurses' susceptibility to burnout through their emotional maturity. This result is logical because, in the same conditions experienced by nurses, certain individuals can adapt and perform their roles better without suffering from some occupational diseases, including burnout. Burnout makes nurses resent their profession, reduce their self-efficacy, and experience boredom, weakening their job performance and making their profession a psychological and physical burden.

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