

Professional compatibility and its relationship to the mental health of health practitioners

التوافق المهني وعلاقته بالصحة النفسية لممارسي الصحة.

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Abstract:

The work environment in the healthcare sector differs from other work environments, as it is complex and very often dangerous and unsafe.

Therefore, it is necessary and essential that the health of workers in this vital sector receives the utmost attention, as the quality of services provided in healthcare institutions is often attributed to the compatibility between workers and the functional as well as personal requirements of the job.

This article attempts to demonstrate the importance and impact of professional compatibility on the mental health of healthcare practitioners and its influence on the quality of healthcare services. Accordingly, a study was conducted on a sample of 175 doctors and paramedics using the descriptive approach leading to the following results:

The reason for the decline in the level of professional compatibility among healthcare practitioners is attributed to personal, professional, organizational, psychological and administrative reasons; which have negatively affected their mental health.

Keywords: professional compatibility, mental health, healthcare practitioners, healthcare organization, doctors, paramedics.

ملخص:

بيئة العمل في القطاع الصحي تختلف عن بيئات العمل الأخرى، فهي بيئة معقدة وأحيانا كثيرة خطيرة وغير آمنة، ولهذا وجب الإهتمام بصحة العاملين في هذا القطاع الحيوي لأن جودة الخدمات المقدمة في المؤسسات الصحية سببها في غالب الأحيان توافق العامل مع المتطلبات الوظيفية والذاتية.

يحاول هذا المقال إثبات أهمية وتأثير التوافق المهني على صحة ممارسي الصحة النفسية وإنعكاس ذلك على جودة الخدمات الصحية، وعليه تم إجراء دراسة على عينة بلغت 175 طبيب وشبه طبي وباستخدام المنهج الوصفي تم التوصل إلى النتائج التالية:

أن سبب إنخفاض مستوى التوافق المهني لممارسي الصحة له عدة أسباب ذاتية ومهنية وتنظيمية ونفسية وإدارية وهو ما أثر سلباً على الصحة النفسية لهم.

كلمات مفتاحية: التوافق المهني، الصحة النفسية، ممارسي الصحة، المنظمة الصحية، الأطباء، شبه الطبيين.

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1. Introduction :

Healthcare institutions are considered a reflection of humanity and civilization by which, health, knowledge, and social progress in a society is measured. Within these institutions, doctors, nurses, and other healthcare practitioners or providers, who are regarded as the cornerstone of healthcare services, carry out their duties. They are the ones who contribute to maintaining the health of society and protecting it from diseases and risks. Professional compatibility and mental health among healthcare practitioners, as well as their direct impact on the quality of services provided, are among important topics studied in psychology and sociology. This is because the desired gains and quality in healthcare services cannot be attained unless compatibility, harmony, and adaptation are achieved between the healthcare worker and their job, as well as their home life and the environment in which they performs their duties.

2.The theoretical framework of the study:

2.1 Study problematic and the questions related to it:

Healthcare practitioners are exposed to numerous psychological and physical pressures and problems as a result of their direct interactions with patients, in addition to the specific nature of the work environment in hospitals (work climate, workplace, physical factors, psychological stress, etc.). These are among the reasons that expose healthcare practitioners to

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stress, fear, insecurity, a lack of safety, isolation, and social withdrawal. This study, therefore, aims to reveal the impact of professional compatibility and harmony on the health of healthcare practitioners.

The study was conducted on a sample of 175 practitioners (doctors and paramedics) at the Dorban University Hospital Center in Annaba. They were selected using a stratified sampling method.

Accordingly, the study problematic is defined by addressing the following questions:

- 1- What is the concept of professional compatibility and mental health in the context of healthcare practitioners?
- 2- What is the relationship between professional compatibility and mental health?
- 3- What are the most important methods for achieving professional compatibility?
- 4- What is the importance of professional compatibility and mental health for healthcare practitioners?
- 5- What is the impact of professional compatibility and mental health on the quality of healthcare services provided?
- 6- What are the causes of poor professional compatibility, and to what extent do they affect the mental health of healthcare practitioners?

3. Importance of the study:

The importance of this study lies in identifying the relationship between professional compatibility and its impact on the mental health of healthcare practitioners. It also highlights the effects and repercussions of work pressures, environmental, physical, and psychological factors on the performance of healthcare workers, particularly doctors and paramedics.

4. Objectives of the study:

- Shedding light on an important segment of society that has not received sufficient attention despite the vital and pivotal role it plays in caring for individuals and protecting society.
- Trying to identify the impact of professional compatibility on the mental health of healthcare practitioners within healthcare institutions.
- Trying to contribute to improving healthcare work, as the quality of healthcare services inevitably reflects on the health of individuals and society as a whole.
- Trying to demonstrate the relationship between mental health and professional compatibility among healthcare practitioners and their impact on the services provided.
- Trying to contribute in the elaboration of an action plan and awareness programs to show the importance of professional compatibility and its impact on mental health in the healthcare sector.

5. Study limitations: (scope of the study)

- **Human limitations:** The study is limited to a sample of 175 healthcare practitioners (doctors and paramedics).
- **Locational limitations:** The study was conducted at the doctor Dorban University Hospital Center in Annaba.
- **Time limitations:** The study took place in October 2024.

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6. Professional compatibility and mental health: conceptual definitions:

6.1 Definition of professional compatibility:

- Linguistically:

- com·pat·i·ble adj, com·pat'i·bil'i·ty, com·pat'i·ble·ness n, com·pat'i·bly adv, (heritage, 2016)
- [Middle English, from Medieval Latin compatibilis, from Late Latin compatī, to sympathize; see **compassion**.] (freedictionary)
- Compatibility, noun
 1. agreement, consistency, accordance, affinity, conformity, concord, congruity, accord: National courts can freeze any law while its compatibility with European Community legislation is tested.
 2. like-mindedness, harmony, empathy, rapport, single-mindedness, amity, sympathy, congeniality: Dating allows people to check out their compatibility before making a commitment to one another. (Thesaurus, 2002).

- Terminologically:

Compatibility refers to the existence of a harmonious relationship with the environment, including the ability to satisfy most of the needs of the individual and meet most of the biological and social demands that he is required to fulfill as well as the behavioral changes necessary to achieve satisfaction within the context of a harmonious relationship with the environment (Kafafi, 1990, p. 36) .

Thus, compatibility is a psychological and social concept and in a general way, it is a relative concept. The word “compatibility” is attributed to a person with ability to adapt to the environment’s natural and social conditions. Humans possess the capacity to change and

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adjust their behavior when facing challenges in their social environment, or to influence the behavior of group members (Atwa, 2002, p. 13)

- Procedurally:

Professional compatibility refers to achieving harmony and adaptation by healthcare practitioners with their job requirements, work conditions, and the physical, psychological, and health-related circumstances of their professions in medicine and paramedicine within healthcare institutions.

6.2 Definition of mental health:

- Linguistically:

- Mental health noun - the psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustment
- Mental condition, mental state, psychological condition, psychological state - (psychology) a mental condition in which the qualities of a state are relatively constant even though the state itself may be dynamic; "a manic state"
- Mental balance, mental soundness - the healthy psychological state of someone with good judgment.
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- Terminologically:

Mental health has many definitions that cannot be enumerated, but we will review some key ones:

In ancient China and Greece people thought health to be not only absence of negative state but also the presence of positive creation. In many cultures, a state of harmony with nature in the life course, and while accomplishing different social roles is considered integral to health (Sekash M F, 2013, p. 89)

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The World Health Organization also defines it as a state of physical, psychological, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease. It is also defined as a relatively permanent personal, emotional, and social state, where the individual achieves harmony with themselves and the environment in which they live, feels happy with themselves and others, achieves self-realization, and utilizes their abilities to the fullest. Such an individual will thus be able to face life's demands effectively, and possess a well-rounded, well-balanced personality, and exhibit normal behavior while living in peace and safety.

Mental health is also defined as a permanent psychological state in which the individual is psychologically compatible —personally, emotionally, and socially—with themselves and their environment, feels happy with themselves and others, and is able to achieve self-realization and utilize their abilities to the fullest. Again, such an individual will be able to face the demands of life effectively, and possess a well-rounded, well-balanced personality, exhibiting normal behavior and have a good character while living in peace and safety (Zahran, 2005, p. 10)

Mental health as defined by (Abou_Alomrine, 2008, p. 06) is the feeling of happiness, satisfaction, and harmony with oneself and others, such that the individual is able to achieve compatibility with their profession, the changing demands of their work, their society, family, and with themselves. Mental health seeks to enable the individual to achieve a sense of professional compatibility, harmony, and satisfaction, in order to attain higher levels of service and contribution.

Wilhelm Reich also defines mental health as the goal of treatment and healing. It is the liberation from the psychomuscular constraints and the release of vital energies which manifest in love and life and can only grow in a state of positive and constructive psychological freedom, as well as happiness and accomplishment.

Fritz Perls, on the other hand, considers that mental health is achieved when an individual is able to stand on their own feet, take charge of their own fate, and fulfill their desires and emotions in a state of self-discovery, propelling their life toward development (Hijazi, 2004, p. 42)

Mental health is seen as a dynamic state that manifests in the ability of an individual to demonstrate suitable flexibility in adapting to the situations they encounter. Flexibility in adapting, in this context, involves the ability of an individual to form social connections with others characterized by mutual respect and appreciation, as well as cautious trust and tolerance (Mansi, 2001, p. 20)

- Procedurally:

Mental health refers to the ability of healthcare practitioners (doctors and paramedics) to adapt to themselves and their professional environment while attaining satisfaction and harmony with the society they live in, free from psychological disorders and workplace conflicts. This fosters their ability to adjust to their living environment, creating alignment with the physical and social changes around them.

6_3 Definition of healthcare practitioners:

A healthcare practitioner is an individual who provides health services and medical care, offering preventive, therapeutic, or rehabilitative services in an organized manner to individuals, families, or communities. This includes both medical and paramedical professionals (nurses).

Healthcare practitioners are described as men and women who assist families and communities in achieving better health, and they are often selected by the inhabitants of the neighborhood, village or local community for their competence and dedication to the people (Vikram, 2008, p. 32)

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- **6-4 Definition of a doctor:** an individual who holds a university degree from an accredited medical school, recognized by the relevant authorities.
- **6-5 Definition of a paramedic:** a nurse who has obtained their certification from various specialized institutes or schools for paramedical training.
- **6-6 Definition of a patient:**
- Who is responsible for illness? Because illness is regarded as a result of a combination of factors, the individual is no longer simply seen as a passive victim. For example, the recognition of a role for behavior in the cause of illness means that the individual may be held responsible for their health and illness (Ogden, 2018)
- A patient is also defined as any person unable to care for themselves; therefore they are anyone receiving medical services and healthcare either in a hospital, at home, or in a designated treatment facility.
- **6-7 Definition of a healthcare organization:**
- A healthcare organization is a facility designated to provide health services and medical care to individuals. It is divided into various units and departments in which diseases are diagnosed, treated, and prevented, and where patients are rehabilitated and supported during the process of reintegration into society and acceptance of their new condition.

7_Literature review of studies addressing professional compatibility and mental health:

7.1 Study by (Atta, 2021): This study aimed to identify the impact of a training program based on emotional intelligence on enhancing academic resilience and professional compatibility among a sample of special education teachers in the Red Sea and Luxor governorates. It also sought to identify the differences in academic resilience and professional compatibility, along with their different

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dimensions, based on various factors such as gender, specialization, and years of experience. The study was conducted on a sample of 180 male and female teachers. The results indicated the absence of significant differences between males and females when measuring professional compatibility.

7.2 Study by (Alrawahia, 2016_2017) : The researcher conducted a study aimed at defining professional compatibility and its relationship to perceived self-efficacy among a sample of employees in the General Directorate of Education in the Ad-Dakhiliyah Governorate. The researcher focused on identifying the relationships between the different self-related variables in a sample of 260 male and female employees. The results revealed a high level of professional compatibility among the study sample and a significantly high level of perceived self-efficacy.

7.3 Study by (Meknassi, 2006-2007): This study examined the relationship between professional compatibility and work stress, assessed through physical, psychological, and behavioral symptoms. It aimed to understand how workers in rehabilitation institutions adapt to the specific demands and variables of their work environment. The study was conducted on a sample of 138 workers in a rehabilitation institution in Constantine. The results revealed a correlation between the dimensions of professional compatibility and work stress variables, observed through physical, psychological, and behavioral symptoms, with all relationships being inversely proportional. Furthermore, the study found that professional compatibility was influenced by age and years of experience.

These studies indicate that the variable of professional compatibility is influenced by several factors, including personal, material, or psychological. This influence can be attributed to the changing work environments and various other factors.

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8_ Analytical study of the concept of professional compatibility:

Working in the healthcare sector requires a lot of focus and dedication to others. When an employee feels compatibility and harmony in their job, this fosters motivation, driving them to work harder and perform better. It also instills in them a sense of responsibility and work mastery, driving them to acquire new skills and experiences through which they will improve their performance, productivity, and efficiency.

Professional compatibility is assessed by how well a worker achieves harmony and aligns with the demands and conditions of a specific job. It includes several aspects, such as:

- Skills and abilities: represents the degree to which a worker's skills align with the job's requirements.
- Interests: represents the extent to which a worker's interests align with the nature of the job.
- Values: represents the congruence between a worker's personal values and the organization's culture.
- Personality: represents the compatibility of a worker's personality traits with the job's requirements.

In conclusion, professional compatibility refers to an individual's ability to adapt to their profession, colleagues, supervisors, and managers, as well as to their own personal characteristics, inclinations, and the demands and changing conditions of their job. It also includes a sense of satisfaction with their income, a feeling of security and stability in their work, and the ability to enhance their skills as well as completing tasks in a satisfactory manner (Alrawahia, Professional compatibility and its relationship with perceived self-efficacy among a sample of employees in the general directorate of education in Al Dakhiliyah governorate, 2016_2017)

9_ The importance of mental health for society:

Mental health is crucial for individuals, societies, and nations due to its connection to several key areas, including:

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- **Workplace:** The workplace is considered as a major source of psychological pressure and an environment prone to organizational stress.
- **Family:** Healthy relationships among family members promote the healthy development of children. The psychological well-being of parents plays a vital role in family cohesion and happiness, fostering an environment conducive to the growth of children's personalities (Abou_Alomrin, 2008, p. 39)
- **School:** Schools are fertile grounds for various pressures, stresses, and disorders, which can contribute to the emergence of several disorders. Therefore, it is essential to pay close attention to the psychological and physical well-being of students and teachers, as schools are among the most important institutions responsible for social and intellectual development.
- **10 _The importance of mental health for workers:**

Mental health, without a doubt, has a direct impact on workers' productivity and performance, influencing their feelings of satisfaction and harmony or, conversely, alienation and dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is essential to provide a suitable and healthy environment for the workers, both physically and psychologically, to enable them to perform their duties to the fullest.

- **11 _Reasons to prioritize the mental health of healthcare practitioners:**

Healthcare practitioners lead challenging lives. Divided between work and personal circumstances, their careers often involve conciliations or compromises, especially within the workplace and the surrounding environment.

In the workplace, human performance is influenced by numerous factors from various components in the work system. The work system can be classified into the following components: physical and mental task

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demands, physical environment, non-physical environment (Wallace, Shoat, M, & Genaidy, 2015, p. 28)

Consequently, several reasons necessitate prioritizing the mental health of this group within the Algerian healthcare system.

- The constant pressure, fatigue, and monotony felt by healthcare practitioners due to their regular interaction with illness, pain, and suffering.
- The harassments and challenges to which healthcare practitioners are exposed, whether from patients, those accompanying them, or even colleagues and staff within their department or unit.
- Elevated levels of anxiety among healthcare practitioners, both at work and outside of it.
- The complexity of modern life demands and the widespread prevalence of psychological stress.
- The deterioration of the social conditions for healthcare practitioners, leading to continuous psychological tension and stress, highlighting the need for guidance to help them achieve professional compatibility in their workplaces.
- The absence of clear policies regulating work in the healthcare system and the absence of specific laws outlining the roles of the different categories of healthcare workers.
- The avoidance of open discussions regarding the mental health issues of healthcare practitioners, particularly within management or unions.

12_Professional compatibility and the mental health of healthcare practitioners:

Professional compatibility does not mean conforming to undesirable behaviors, compromising one's principles, morals, or value system, nor does

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it mean accepting obstacles that hinder personal, professional, and societal progress. Instead, it must involve contributing to changing one's lifestyle and professional path. Mental health aims at helping healthcare practitioners feel a sense of satisfaction, compatibility, and professional harmony, thus achieving higher levels of service and contribution.

The healthcare practitioner, whether doctor or paramedic, belongs to a humanitarian profession often exposed to numerous obstacles that prevent the worker from performing their role. This sometimes leaves them feeling hopeless, helpless, and unable to attain the required performance standards.

The nature of work in the healthcare sector includes a network of complex relationships that influence professional compatibility and harmony. Greater compatibility and harmony with the profession means a higher work performance and a better quality of the work. However, healthcare workers face several challenges and problems, including society's view of them as opportunistic or dismissive, particularly regarding paramedics.

Additionally, this group of healthcare workers also suffers from the condescending attitude of doctors toward them, treating them as less knowledgeable or skilled, thus creating a sense of inferiority among nurses, and further deteriorating their mental health.

13 _Types of professional compatibility:

Type of compatibility	Level of compatibility	Definition
Individual/Profession	Professional	Compatibility between individual characteristics and professional traits.
Individual/Organization	Organizational	Compatibility between the individual and the organization.
Individual/Job	Job-related	Compatibility between the individual and a specific job.
Individual/Group	Group-based	Compatibility between the individual and the work group.

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Individual/Individual	Interpersonal	Compatibility between the individual and other individuals in the workplace.
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14_The causes and indicators of the decline in professional compatibility: The level of professional compatibility among healthcare practitioners is in decline due to several factors, the most significant of which include:

- Low or insufficient financial incentives and wages, which negatively impacts job satisfaction and professional compatibility.
- Unsuitable and unsafe working conditions.
- Weak organizational structure and poor management.
- Difficulty adapting to the work environment or work groups.

These pressures expose healthcare practitioners to become both physically and psychologically vulnerable, negatively impacting them and stimulating the emergence of disorders and negative symptoms in the workplace. Among the most notable indicators of poor professional compatibility are:

- Experiencing physical and psychological exhaustion and fatigue.
- Feelings of helplessness and emptiness, which may lead to depression and a lack of motivation to work.

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A diagram prepared by the researcher illustrating the main causes of the decline in the level of professional compatibility among healthcare practitioners.

Table 1 : Distribution of the study sample by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	72	41.14
Female	103	58.86
Total	175	100

From the preliminary results shown in Table (1), we observe the existence of a gender disparity within the Algerian healthcare system, where female health workers, at 58.86%, outnumber that of male health workers, at 41.14%. Both genders are distributed across various departments and units. This notable predominance of females is attributed to the specific characteristics of the healthcare system, which heavily relies on the female workforce, particularly in the paramedical sector where they occupy various positions within healthcare institutions.

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Table 2: Compatibility of the work with the needs of healthcare practitioners

Compatibility of the work with the needs of healthcare practitioners	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Compatible	7	04
Sometimes compatible	23	13.14
Not compatible	145	82.86
Total	175	100

From the results shown in Table (2), we conclude that the majority of respondents, at 82.86%, acknowledge a lack of compatibility with their job, indicating that their current occupation does not enable them to meet their financial needs —wages and bonuses. Furthermore, it does not fulfill their personal, psychological, and social needs, as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

This has resulted in feelings of disappointment among workers, as many of them had expected the healthcare system to be a place for providing welfare and care, rather than a source of increased anxiety and psychological pressure, as it is supposed to be structured differently in terms of its management and professional approach. This frustration stems from dissatisfaction with the work environment and its various conditions, which negatively affect the health of those working in the healthcare sector, ultimately affecting patients due to the declining quality of services provided.

Table 3 : Compatibility of the effort with the wages

Compatibility of the effort with the wages	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Compatible	0	0
Sometimes compatible	5	2.86
Not compatible	170	94.14
Total	175	100

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The concept of wages has two dimensions to it: a human aspect, and an economic, financial one. From Table (3), we observe that the majority of respondents, at 97.14%, deny that the effort they put into their work is compatible with the financial incentives they receive, indicating that the wages and bonuses received by healthcare practitioners fail to meet their needs.

This percentage reflects a significant dissatisfaction with the financial incentives offered by the state, despite wages being a fundamental right of workers and playing a crucial and significant role in improving and enhancing the quality of healthcare services. This dissatisfaction has negatively impacted the mental and physical health of healthcare practitioners.

Table 4: Compatibility of effort with academic qualifications and experience

Compatibility of effort with academic qualifications and experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Compatible	11	6.28
Sometimes compatible	21	12.00
Not compatible	143	81.72
Total	175	100

The feeling of happiness with oneself, psychological comfort, harmony with both oneself and the surrounding environment, as well as feeling a sense of safety, security and self-respect, are key factors that contribute to healthcare practitioners' overall well-being. Additionally, feeling happiness with others, a sense of closeness and harmony with others, mutual trust, and respect for others' opinions all play a key role in making healthcare practitioners feel content and fulfilled in their profession. Despite the challenges they face, human relationships developed within the work

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environment positively impact the quality of services provided and contribute to feelings of comfort and happiness.

Accordingly, compatibility is closely tied to an individual's ability to harmonize with themselves and with the society they live in, leading to a life free from tension and conflict, filled with enthusiasm. This means that the individual is satisfied with themselves and accepts others, not displaying any signs of antisocial or abnormal behaviors. Instead, they maintain emotional, mental, and psychological balance across different areas of life and under various circumstances, exhibiting reasonable and socially acceptable behaviors (Fahmy, 1995, p. 16).

Conclusion

It is relatively easy to identify the factors leading to a healthcare worker's sense of incompatibility with their work environment, team dynamics, or general working and financial conditions. However, the real challenge lies in addressing and preventing the professional alienation that healthcare workers experience in their workplace—a factor that fundamentally undermines their mental health and negatively impacts their productivity.

To elevate the Algerian healthcare system, a thorough analytical study of its current structure is essential. Such a study would assist policymakers in reevaluating strategies and action plans aimed at driving the institution toward better leadership and excellence. Achieving these goals, however, is only possible by prioritizing the mental and physical well being of healthcare workers.

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