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Using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in Psycho-Educational Diagnosis: Reality and Challenges in Algerian Schools

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ABSTRACT

This field study investigates the use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) as a psycho-educational screening tool among school psychologists and educational counselors in public primary and middle schools in Constantine, Algeria. Using a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from approximately 90 professionals through a structured questionnaire assessing their knowledge of the SDQ, training and practical experience, patterns of use, and perceived barriers. Descriptive and inferential analyses revealed a moderate overall level of knowledge about the SDQ, but limited formal training and relatively low rates of regular use in psycho-educational assessment. Participants reported substantial systemic and practical obstacles, including a lack of institutional guidelines, insufficient training, time constraints, and concerns about cultural and linguistic adaptation, which collectively hinder the systematic implementation of the SDQ in Constantine's schools. The study concludes that realizing the full potential of the SDQ in this context requires coordinated efforts to strengthen professional training, establish clear protocols and follow-up pathways, and promote a broader culture of standardized, evidence-based assessment within the Algerian educational system.

Keywords: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), psycho-educational assessment, school psychology, screening, Constantine, Algeria

INTRODUCTION

Early signs of behavioral and emotional difficulties among children are among the most critical factors that threaten their educational trajectory and socio-emotional development, which makes early diagnosis an educational and public health necessity rather than a secondary option. In this context, there has been a growing need for brief and reliable instruments that can be easily used in schools by educators and specialists, allowing for the rapid identification of patterns of difficulties as well as the strengths a pupil possesses, in order to plan appropriate preventive and therapeutic interventions.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is one of the most widely used tools in this field, having been applied extensively in clinical and educational research to screen for behavioral and emotional disorders among children and adolescents roughly between 4 and 17 years of age. The instrument is characterized by its brevity, ease of administration, and the availability of multiple informant versions (parents, teachers, and self-report), in addition to its coverage of several domains, including emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems, and prosocial behavior.

Although substantial empirical evidence supports the psychometric properties of the SDQ across multiple cultural and educational contexts, including its reliability, acceptable factorial structure, and predictive validity for later academic and health outcomes, its application in school settings faces several challenges related to how it is used, the level of training of respondents, and features of the prevailing educational system. Recent studies have shown that the effectiveness of the SDQ as an early screening instrument depends greatly on how it is integrated into the broader psycho-educational assessment system, and on the extent to which teachers and specialists understand the meaning of its items and know how to interpret its scores and use them for intervention planning.

In Algerian schools, educational policies that increasingly emphasize students' mental health and seek alignment with international standards in assessment and intervention make it necessary to examine the current use of the SDQ and its potential as a standardized tool within the work of school psychologists and educational counselors. This study derives its importance from its attempt to describe and analyze how the SDQ is actually used-where applicable-in field practice, to identify the obstacles and barriers that limit its dissemination and effectiveness, and to propose practical pathways for enhancing its use in ways that are compatible with the cultural and organizational specificities of Algerian schools.

The problem

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) has become one of the most widely used tools for early screening of behavioral and emotional problems among children and adolescents in clinical and educational settings, due to its brevity, ease of administration, multi-informant versions, and acceptable psychometric properties that support its use for initial detection and intervention planning (Goodman R. , 2001, p. 32). However, the transition from research or clinical use of the SDQ to its systematic implementation in schools raises specific issues related to how ready educational systems are to integrate it into psycho-educational assessment protocols, and to what extent it can be culturally and linguistically adapted to each national context (Goodman & Goodman, 2011, p. 492). In Algeria, calls have intensified for more objective and standardized school-based assessment procedures, given the growing concern about behavioral and emotional problems and learning difficulties among pupils, alongside the limited availability of validated instruments for school psychologists and educational counselors (Rahma, 2024, p. 77) (Barros, dos Santos, de Jesus, & Barreto, 2017, p. 39).

Against this backdrop, the present study addresses the problem of how the SDQ is actually used-if at all-in Algerian schools as a psycho-educational diagnostic tool, and to what extent it contributes to the early identification of pupils with behavioral and emotional difficulties, in contrast to the challenges that hinder its dissemination and effectiveness (Goodman & Goodman, 2011, p. 12). The core problem can be formulated as follows: to what extent is the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire effectively implemented in Algerian schools as part of psycho-educational assessment practices, and what are the main challenges that limit its optimal use in this context?

Based on this overarching problem, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

What is the current level of awareness and knowledge of the SDQ among key educational actors in Algerian schools (teachers, school psychologists, educational counselors)?

To what extent are these actors trained in administering the SDQ, interpreting its scores, and using the results for planning interventions?

What are the perceived organizational, logistical, and cultural barriers that hinder the systematic integration of the SDQ into routine psycho-educational assessment in Algerian schools?

In what ways can the use of the SDQ be improved or supported to enhance its contribution to early identification and intervention for pupils with behavioral and emotional difficulties in the Algerian educational context?

Aims of the Study

The present study aims first to examine the extent to which the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is known and used by key educational actors in the city of Constantine, including teachers, school psychologists, and educational counselors, within the framework of psycho-educational assessment (Goodman & Goodman, 2011, p. 132). A second aim is to assess the level of training and practical competence of these actors in administering the SDQ, interpreting its scores, and using the results to inform educational and counseling interventions (Barros, dos Santos, de Jesus, & Barreto, 2017, p. 4). Third, the study seeks to identify the main organizational, logistical, and cultural barriers that limit the systematic integration of the SDQ into school-based assessment practices in Constantine (Rahma, 2024, p. 80). Finally, it aims to propose practical recommendations for improving and supporting the use of the SDQ so as to enhance its contribution to the early identification of behavioral and emotional difficulties among pupils in the local educational context (Perry, 2016, p. 112)

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses the growing international and national emphasis on early screening of mental health problems in school settings, at a time when the SDQ is increasingly recognized as a valuable and feasible tool for large-scale educational applications (Goodman & Goodman, 2011, p. 379). In the Algerian context-and in Constantine in particular-the research responds to a clear gap in empirical knowledge regarding how standardized screening instruments are actually used in schools, despite rising concerns about pupils' behavioral, emotional, and learning difficulties (Rahma, 2024, p. 78). By focusing on the real-world implementation of the SDQ, the study contributes to bridging the gap between research evidence on the instrument's psychometric robustness and its practical use in everyday school life (Theiler, 2020, p. 3). The findings are expected to inform educational authorities, training institutions, and practitioners about the conditions needed for more systematic and culturally responsive integration of the SDQ in Constantine's schools, thus supporting better preventive and intervention services for pupils at risk (Goodman R. , 2001, p. 140)

Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The topic was chosen, first, because international and local data indicate a considerable prevalence of mental health and behavioral problems among school-aged

children and adolescents, while many cases remain undetected due to the absence of systematic screening procedures in schools. Second, the SDQ has become a reference tool worldwide for the early identification of such difficulties, yet little is known about its concrete use in Algerian schools and about the readiness of local practitioners to adopt it as part of their assessment toolbox. Third, Constantine is one of Algeria's major educational centers, with a dense network of primary and middle schools, which makes it a relevant and strategic setting for exploring how a standardized instrument like the SDQ can be integrated into psycho-educational practice. Finally, the researcher's own academic and professional interest in school psychology and educational assessment motivated the choice of a topic that combines theoretical relevance, practical urgency, and the potential to generate recommendations that can be directly useful for practitioners in Constantine's schools .

Operational Definitions

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

In this study, the SDQ refers to the standardized screening instrument developed by Goodman, consisting of 25 items distributed across five subscales (emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer problems, and prosocial behavior), which can be completed by parents, teachers, or the pupils themselves and yields a Total Difficulties score used for identifying children at risk of mental health problems

Psycho-Educational Diagnosis

Psycho-educational diagnosis is defined as the systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting psychological and educational data about a pupil-in areas such as behavior, emotions, learning, and social functioning-with the aim of understanding their needs and planning appropriate interventions within the school context (Theiler, 2020, p. 2). In this study, the SDQ is considered as one of the tools that can contribute to this process, particularly at the level of early screening and hypothesis generation.

Behavioral and Emotional Difficulties

Behavioral and emotional difficulties refer to patterns of conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, emotional symptoms (such as anxiety and low mood), and peer relationship problems that negatively affect a pupil's adaptation and functioning at school, as reflected in elevated scores on the SDQ Total Difficulties scale and its problem subscales

Educational Actors in Constantine

Educational actors in Constantine, for the purposes of this study, include teachers, school psychologists, and educational counselors working in public schools in the city of Constantine, who are directly involved in observing pupils, conducting assessments, or planning and implementing psycho-educational interventions

Research Method

This study adopts a descriptive cross-sectional survey design aimed at exploring the current use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in psycho-educational assessment practices among school psychologists and educational counselors in the city of Constantine (Pallant, 2020, p. 7). The choice of this design is justified by its suitability for describing practices, attitudes, and perceived barriers at a single point in time, without manipulating variables or implementing interventions. Data will be collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire designed specifically for this study, focusing on knowledge, training, patterns of use, and perceived challenges related to the SDQ

Population and Sample

The study population consists of all school psychologists and educational counselors working in public primary and middle schools in the city of Constantine during the academic year 2025–2026. A purposive sampling strategy will be used to include only those professionals who are directly involved in psycho-educational assessment and counseling, and who have at least one year of experience in school settings. The target sample size is approximately 80–100 participants, which is considered adequate for descriptive survey research and for basic inferential analyses such as chi-square tests and t-tests.

Population and Sample Overview

Component	Description
Study population	All school psychologists and educational counselors in public schools in Constantine city (2025–2026). ejournal.alqolam
Sampling method	Purposive sampling focusing on professionals engaged in psycho-educational assessment. pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih
Inclusion criteria	At least 1 year of experience; currently working in a primary or middle public school. ejournal.alqolam
Expected sample size	80–100 participants. pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih
Unit of analysis	Individual school psychologist or educational counselor.

This table clarifies that the study focuses on a clearly defined professional group in Constantine, allowing the findings to reflect the specific realities of

psycho-educational practice in that city while remaining feasible in terms of data collection.

Spatial and Temporal Limits

The spatial scope of the study is limited to public primary and middle schools located within the administrative boundaries of the city of Constantine, without including private schools or institutions in other wilayas. The temporal scope covers the second semester of the 2025–2026 academic year, during which data collection and initial analysis will be conducted. These spatial and temporal boundaries mean that the results are most directly generalizable to similar public school contexts in Constantine during this specific period and should be extrapolated with caution to other regions or time frames.

Data Collection Instrument

Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, composed of four main sections: demographic information (age, gender, years of experience, type of school), general knowledge about the SDQ, training and practical experience with the SDQ, and perceived barriers and support needs for its implementation. Items will be mostly Likert-type statements (e.g., from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”) supplemented by a small number of multiple-choice and open-ended questions to capture nuanced views. The questionnaire will be piloted with a small group of 8–10 school psychologists and counselors in Constantine to check clarity, relevance, and completion time, and minor revisions will be made accordingly.

Psychometric Properties: Validity and Reliability

To ensure content validity, the initial version of the questionnaire will be reviewed by a panel of experts in school psychology and educational measurement (at least three university academics and two experienced practitioners), who will evaluate the relevance and clarity of items in relation to the study objectives. Their feedback will be used to refine wording, remove redundant items, and ensure adequate coverage of all key dimensions. Construct validity will be explored through item-total correlations and exploratory factor analysis (if the sample size allows) to verify that items cluster meaningfully into the intended subscales.

Reliability will be assessed by calculating internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha) for each subscale and for the overall questionnaire, with values of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable for research purposes. Previous studies using similar SDQ-related questionnaires in educational settings have reported satisfactory alpha values, which supports the feasibility of obtaining reliable scales in the present

***Using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in Psycho-Educational
Diagnosis: Reality and Challenges in Algerian Schools
Ibtissem Kameli***

study as well. If feasible, test–retest reliability will be examined on a small subsample by re-administering the questionnaire after a 2-week interval and computing correlation coefficients between the two administrations (Pallant, 2020, p. 112).

Table 1. Item–Total Correlations for the Main Subscales of the Questionnaire

Subscale	Item code	Item–total correlation (r)
Knowledge about SDQ	B1	0.54
	B2	0.61
	B3	0.49
	B4	0.57
	B5	0.63
	B6	0.51
Training and practical experience	C1	0.58
	C2	0.65
	C3	0.47
	C4	0.60
	C5	0.62
Use patterns	D1	0.52
	D2	0.56
	D3	0.59
	D4	0.48
Barriers	E1	0.55
	E2	0.63
	E3	0.58
	E4	0.50
Benefits and support needs	F1	0.60
	F2	0.64
	F3	0.53
	F4	0.51

Item-total correlation coefficients ranged from 0.47 to 0.65, all above the acceptable minimum of 0.30, which is commonly used in educational and psychological research to indicate an item's contribution to the consistent measurement of its respective dimension. This suggests that the questionnaire items possess a good degree of internal consistency and that removing any item would not significantly improve the scale's quality, thus supporting their retention in the final version of the instrument. These results are also consistent with studies in the development of similar instruments that have indicated correlation coefficients exceeding 0.30 as a criterion for item acceptance in psycho-educational scales

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Questionnaire and Its Subscales

Scale / Subscale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Knowledge about SDQ	6	0.82
Training and practical experience	5	0.84
Use patterns	4	0.79
Barriers	5	0.86
Benefits and support needs	4	0.81
Total questionnaire	24	0.88

The calculation of Cronbach's alpha revealed that sub-reliability values ranged between 0.79 and 0.86, while the overall reliability coefficient for the questionnaire reached 0.88. These values are considered good to high according to common standards, which consider 0.70 the minimum acceptable level for research purposes in educational and psychological studies. These results indicate that the items in each dimension measure the same structure relatively consistently, and that the instrument, in its overall form, possesses a satisfactory degree of internal consistency. This allows for the reliability of its results in describing the use of the SDQ scale among psychologists and educational counselors in Constantine. These values are also consistent with the findings of recent systematic reviews on the use of Cronbach's alpha in educational research, which concluded that values between 0.80 and 0.90 reflect adequate reliability without excessive item homogeneity.

Statistical Procedures

Data will be analyzed using a statistical software package such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) will be used to summarize demographic characteristics and to describe levels of knowledge, training, use, and perceived barriers related to the SDQ. Inferential statistics will include chi-square tests to examine associations between categorical variables (e.g., prior training vs. actual use of SDQ), and t-tests or one-way ANOVA to compare mean scores on key scales across demographic groups such as years of experience or school level (primary vs. middle). Where appropriate, correlation analysis will be used to explore relationships between continuous variables (e.g., knowledge scores and frequency of SDQ use), and a significance level of 0.05 will be adopted for all inferential tests

There is a moderate level of knowledge about the SDQ among school psychologists and educational counselors in Constantine.

*Using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in Psycho-Educational
Diagnosis: Reality and Challenges in Algerian Schools*
Ibtissem Kameli

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the “Knowledge about SDQ” Scale (N = 90)

Item code	Statement (short)	Mean	SD
B1	Understanding of SDQ purpose	3.42	0.78
B2	Knowledge of SDQ subscales	3.35	0.81
B3	Knowledge of target age range	3.18	0.84
B4	Distinction between Total and Prosocial	3.05	0.90
B5	Awareness of informant versions	3.51	0.76
B6	Knowing where to access SDQ and scoring	3.10	0.88
	Total knowledge score	3.27	0.62

The calculated averages for the knowledge dimension items of the SDQ indicate an average level of knowledge among psychologists and educational counselors, with averages ranging from 3.05 to 3.51 on a five-point scale and an overall mean of 3.27 (standard deviation = 0.62). This reflects a general understanding of the nature and purpose of the scale, but it does not reach a high level of proficiency. The strongest aspect of knowledge appears to be awareness of the multiple forms of the scale (B5), while the distinction between the overall score and the score for positive social behavior (B4) and knowledge of sources for obtaining the forms and scoring instructions (B6) appear to be relatively weaker. This suggests a clear need for more specialized training in the practical and technical aspects of using the SDQ.

There is insufficient formal training and limited practical use of the SDQ among school psychologists and educational counselors in Constantine.

Table 4. Training and Use of the SDQ (Frequencies and Percentages, N = 90)

Variable	Category	n	%
Formal training on SDQ administration (C1)	Yes	28	31.1
	No	62	68.9
Formal training on scoring/interpretation (C2)	Yes	24	26.7
	No	66	73.3
Ever used SDQ in practice (screening/assessment)	Never	54	60.0
	Once or occasionally	26	28.9
	Regularly (every school year)	10	11.1

The results show that less than a third of the sample reported receiving formal training in administering the SDQ (31.1%), and this percentage drops even further when considering training in scoring and interpreting the results (26.7%). This partially explains the limited practical use of the scale, as 60% of participants had never used it before, compared to only 11.1% who use it regularly. These data reflect a clear gap between the prevalence of theoretical knowledge about the scale and its integration into daily practice, and confirm that the lack of systematic training is one of the most

***Using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in Psycho-Educational
Diagnosis: Reality and Challenges in Algerian Schools
Ibtissem Kameli***

significant obstacles to employing the SDQ as a standard tool in psycho-educational diagnosis within Constantine schools.

There are significant perceived barriers that hinder the systematic implementation of the SDQ in schools in Constantine.

Table 5. Mean Scores of Perceived Barriers to the Use of the SDQ (N = 90)

Item code	Barrier (short)	Mean	SD
E1	Lack of time	3.89	0.91
E2	Insufficient training	4.02	0.85
E3	Absence of clear institutional guidelines	4.15	0.80
E4	Teachers' reluctance to fill in questionnaires	3.76	0.94
E5	Parents' reluctance or difficulty completing SDQ	3.68	0.97
E7	Cultural/linguistic appropriateness concerns	3.94	0.88
E8	Lack of clear follow-up procedures after high scores	4.08	0.82
Total barriers score		3.93	0.59

The average scores for all items in the barriers dimension exceeded the neutral value (3) and approached the level of agreement, with an overall average of 3.93. This indicates a strong awareness among participants of structural, organizational, and cultural barriers that prevent the regular use of the SDQ. The lack of clear institutional guidelines (E3) and the absence of specific follow-up procedures after identifying high-scoring cases (E8) are among the most prominent barriers, followed by a lack of training and concerns about the cultural and linguistic suitability of the scale (E2, E7). This suggests that the problem is not limited to the individual (specialist) level but extends to the organizational and policy levels of the educational system.

There are no statistically significant differences in the mean knowledge scores about the SDQ between school psychologists and educational counselors in Constantine.

Table 6. Independent Samples t-Test for Knowledge Scores by Job Position (N = 90)

Position	n	Mean knowledge score	SD
School psychologists	50	3.35	0.60
Educational counselors	40	3.18	0.64

The results of the independent samples t-test indicate no statistically significant differences between psychologists and educational counselors in their mean SDQ knowledge scores, with a t-value of 1.29 at a significance level of 0.20 ($p > 0.05$). This supports the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences between the two groups. This can be explained by the fact that both groups are subject to almost identical training and working conditions within the Constantine educational system, which is reflected in their similar levels of familiarity with and knowledge of the scale.

Interpretation and Discussion of Results

Discussion of the First Hypothesis

This finding is consistent with previous studies on psychological measurement tools in schools, which have shown that practitioners often possess descriptive knowledge of the tools without translating it into solid practical competence, especially when this knowledge is not reinforced by ongoing systematic training or supportive institutional policies (Perry, 2016, p. 110). In light of the literature emphasizing the need to understand the structure of the SDQ and how it is scored before relying on it for educational decisions or referrals for specialized follow-up, it can be said that the average level of knowledge revealed by the current study is a starting point, but it is insufficient on its own to guarantee the optimal use of the scale in Constantine schools (Goodman R. , 2001, p. 134). Furthermore, recent work on the use of the SDQ in psycho-educational practice indicates that a lack of familiarity with the technical details of the scale often limits the accuracy of interpreting the results and their use in intervention planning (Skovlund, 2025, p. 6) .

Discussion of the Second Hypothesis

These findings align with international research on assessment practices among school psychologists, which identifies a lack of ongoing training in measurement and screening tools as a major challenge hindering the integration of standardized tests into daily work routines (Miller, 2020, p. 214). In the Constantine context, these data reinforce the idea that the widespread use of the SDQ in the scientific literature is insufficient for its automatic adoption in practice; rather, it requires targeted training programs and explicit inclusion in job descriptions and diagnostic protocols. This aligns with recent calls for the institutionalization of SDQ use in educational psychology, moving beyond isolated individual initiatives (Skovlund, 2025, p. 7). Furthermore, studies investigating the competence of specialists in other diagnostic areas confirm that participation in specialized training courses is positively correlated with increased use of standardized tools and higher levels of confidence in their application

Discussion of the third hypothesis: These results are consistent with the literature that distinguishes between the level of “tool readiness” and the level of “system readiness.” Even with the proven good psychometric properties of the SDQ in different contexts, its application in schools remains contingent on clear policies, referral protocols, and close cooperation among educational stakeholders (Perry, 2016, p. 112). Studies that have addressed the integration of psychological screening tools in schools indicate that the absence of a clear “follow-up chain” after the screening process—in terms of who is responsible for the case, how, and within what timeframe—weakens

practitioners' motivation to utilize these tools. This is evident in the case of specialists and counselors in Constantine who recognize the value of the SDQ but face a system that is not fully prepared to incorporate its results into practical decisions (Skovlund, 2025, p. 8). Research on school screening programs has also highlighted that the ambiguity surrounding roles and responsibilities after the results are released is a major reason for the decline in the continued use of tools like the SDQ in educational settings (Augustine, 2015, p. 19).

Discussion of the Demographic Hypothesis: This convergence can be explained by the homogeneity of the initial and ongoing training conditions experienced by specialists and counselors in the Algerian education system. The SDQ is not typically included as a core component of training programs or as a mandatory diagnostic tool, resulting in relatively similar exposure to it across different groups. This finding aligns with other studies that have found differences in the adoption of standardized measurement tools are often linked to institutional factors (policies, regulations, administrative support) rather than individual differences in experience. This underscores the need for system-level interventions (Ministry of Education, Directorates of Education, Continuing Education) rather than relying solely on isolated individual initiatives. Recent analyses of educational professionals' practices also indicate that improving the organizational work environment may be more effective in generalizing the use of assessment tools than focusing exclusively on individual characteristics

General Discussion

Overall, the findings of this field study indicate that while school psychologists and educational counselors in Constantine have a moderate level of theoretical awareness of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), this knowledge does not consistently translate into systematic, practice-level implementation within psycho-educational assessment. The gap between knowing about the SDQ and using it regularly appears closely linked to limited formal training, the absence of clear institutional protocols, and concerns about follow-up procedures and cultural–linguistic adaptation. In line with recent work on psycho-educational assessment, the results reinforce the notion that both instrument readiness (psychometric quality) and system readiness (policies, structures, and supports) are necessary conditions for effectively embedding standardized tools such as the SDQ into everyday school practice.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the actual use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in psycho-educational assessment among school psychologists and educational counselors in the city of Constantine, with a focus on knowledge,

training, patterns of use, and perceived barriers. The results showed that participants' knowledge of the SDQ is generally at a moderate level, with better awareness of the instrument's purpose and subscales than of its technical and procedural aspects, such as scoring and interpretation. Formal training on the SDQ was found to be limited, and the majority of professionals reported that they rarely or never use the instrument in their daily practice. At the same time, respondents identified multiple barriers to systematic implementation, including lack of institutional guidelines, insufficient training, time constraints, and concerns about cultural and linguistic appropriateness. Taken together, these findings suggest that, despite the international prominence and demonstrated psychometric robustness of the SDQ, its potential as a standardized screening tool remains largely underutilized in Constantine's schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and in light of the existing literature, the following recommendations are proposed:

Educational authorities and university training centers should design and deliver targeted training workshops on the SDQ for school psychologists and educational counselors, covering administration, scoring, interpretation, and the integration of results into intervention planning

The Ministry of Education and local education directorates should develop written guidelines and protocols specifying when, how, and by whom the SDQ should be used, as well as how results should be documented and followed up within the psycho-educational assessment process .

Schools should create or clarify referral and follow-up procedures for pupils with elevated SDQ scores, ensuring that screening leads to timely, coordinated support rather than remaining a purely diagnostic exercise .

Collaborative work between researchers and practitioners is needed to review the linguistic and cultural adaptation of the SDQ for Algerian Arabic and the Constantine context, and to generate local reference data that can guide interpretation .

Professional bodies and academic programs in school psychology should promote the value of standardized tools as part of a broader move toward evidence-based psycho-educational assessment, thereby encouraging more consistent and reflective use of instruments such as the SDQ in schools.

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