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**Mothers' psychological stresses and behavioral problems for their
schoolchildren -Field study at Aflou-**

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Abstract :

The present study aimed to investigate the prevalence of maternal psychological stress and behavioral problems among their school-aged children—a field study in the city of Aflou. It also sought to identify differences in psychological stress based on educational level and marital status, as well as to explore the relationship between psychological stress and the variables of maternal age and the number of children. Furthermore, the study aimed to examine differences in behavioral problems according to the children's gender and educational level.

To achieve these objectives, two instruments were utilized: the Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) developed by Levenstein et al. (1993), consisting of 30 items, and the Behavioral Problems Scale by Hartani (2014), which comprises 64 items distributed across 5 dimensions. Adopting a descriptive research design appropriate for this study, data were collected from a sample of 57 mothers and 57 of their school-aged children. The collected data were statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 22).

The findings of the study indicated the following:

The prevalence of both maternal psychological stress and children's behavioral problems was moderate.

There were no statistically significant differences in psychological stress attributable to the mothers' marital status or educational level.

There was no statistically significant correlation between psychological stress and either maternal age or the number of children.

There was no statistically significant correlation between behavioral problems and the children's age.

There were no statistically significant differences in behavioral problems based on gender or educational level.

The study concludes with a set of recommendations and suggestions based on these findings.

Keywords: Psychological Stress; Behavioral Problems; School-aged Children.

Section I: Introduction and Problem Statement

The experience of psychological stress in mothers during their first transition into motherhood is a profound phenomenon that often intensifies over the course of the lifespan. Mothers continuously encounter various life situations that invoke unwanted past experiences or pose direct threats to their overall quality of life. Consequently, psychological stress has evolved into a defining characteristic of contemporary daily life—a subjective experience endured daily due to rapid environmental changes, shifting societal structures, and multi-faceted complexities.

This accumulation of stress compromises maternal adaptive capacities, rendering mothers constantly vulnerable to an array of internal and external challenges. In the current century, mothers face accelerated disruptions across their diverse domains of responsibility. Prominently, managing internal family dynamics and child-rearing has manifested as a core fixation and source of persistent anxiety, serving as a primary chronic stressor.

Historically, Hans Selye (1935) was the pioneer in operationalizing the practical applications of the stress concept. Selye postulated that stress is a critical factor underlying systemic strain and hyper-emotional arousal within the individual. He argued that stress exists inherently in every individual to a certain degree, and that sustained exposure to acute stressors triggers deleterious effects on functional well-being, culminating in pathological symptoms.

Subsequent literature expanded exponentially across three consecutive historical phases:

- **Phase 1:** Focused primarily on mapping the direct physiological manifestations and somatic impacts of stress.
- **Phase 2:** Shifted toward the cognitive-perceptual orientation of the individual toward environmental stimuli, emphasizing cognitive appraisal and coping mechanisms (a paradigm famously pioneered by Richard Lazarus).
- **Phase 3:** Dedicated to identifying specific stress-resistant psychological variables, psychological resilience factors, and their buffering effects against strain (Al-Naimat, 2016, p. 10).

Psychological stress can be conceptually defined as a state of acute tension that overwhelms individual coping capacities. It is driven sequentially by external demands—such as occupational strains—and internal psychological conflicts.

These internal pressures generate profound intrapsychic conflict, frequently exacerbated by domestic challenges, including marital discord or juvenile behavioral problems.

Behavioral problems within a population vary objectively depending on the developmental stage of the individual, the socioeconomic environment, and the macro-level challenges facing global and local societies. Consequently, children and adolescents alike are deeply impacted. Children and adolescents represent vital human capital that demands rigorous preservation, alongside comprehensive medical, psychological, and social care, to prevent the onset of emotional, behavioral, or social disorders and behavioral deviations.

Qamish and Al-Ma'aytah (p. 67) defined these behavioral deviations as:

"A departure from age-appropriate normative behavior that severely interferes with the individual's optimal growth, developmental trajectory, and the lives of others. Behavioral problems elicit social disruption because they constitute non-normative behavioral patterns rejected by society. They frequently breach institutional standards by violating the sanctity of the home, school, and family, and are characterized by overt aggression, non-compliance, defiant disruptive actions, and active uncooperativeness."

Accordingly, childhood and adolescence represent critical developmental windows that decisively shape future lifespans. Adolescence functions as a transitional bridge from childhood to adulthood, culminating in multifaceted personality maturation. This period is characterized by complex physiological changes and persistent intrapsychic conflicts that require early clinical containment and prompt intervention before norm-violating behaviors stabilize, compound familial dysfunctions, or derail life trajectories. For this reason, several developmental theorists have termed this phase a "second birth."

The developmental significance of adolescents rests on the fact that they represent an indispensable human resource that cannot be ignored; rather, it must be strategically channeled as a driving force for societal advancement. Conversely, it remains one of the most hazardous developmental stages; if mismanaged, it can precipitate a severe downward trajectory.

These adjustments are heavily contingent upon an individual's socio-emotional self-development—whether their self-perception and locus of control are structured positively or negatively—as well as their interpersonal perceptions. Interpersonal stress constitutes one of the most potent internal psychological stressors, predisposing individuals to severe distress as they strive to balance

domestic structural demands at the expense of their personal well-being due to a heightened sense of familial accountability. As familial systemic pressure and child behavioral problems escalate, maternal psychological distress intensifies, yielding adverse outcomes for the mother's self-efficacy, her family unit, and the broader community.

Ultimately, stress remains an intrinsic human phenomenon experienced universally. It necessitates continuous environmental adaptation or systemic readjustment. Escape is impossible; avoiding these demands would imply maternal psychological stagnation or a deficit in functional competence. Fundamentally, life cannot exist without stress.

Unmanaged psychological stress produces overt psychological sequelae. Without timely clinical intervention, counseling, or psychological accompaniment for mothers, it precipitates comorbid clinical disorders such as major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and panic attacks. This underscores the necessity of monitoring the psychological and behavioral problems of children to foster optimal psychological adjustment for both mother and child.

1. Research Questions

Based on the aforementioned framework, the core focus of this study revolves around psychological stress and behavioral problems. The research questions are structured as follows:

1. What is the prevalence rate of psychological stress among mothers, and what is the prevalence of its corresponding dimensions within behavioral problems among their school-aged children in the city of Aflou?
2. Is there a statistically significant correlation between maternal psychological stress and the demographic variables of maternal age and parity (number of children) in Aflou?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in maternal psychological stress attributable to sociodemographic variables (marital status and educational attainment) in the city of Aflou?
4. Is there a statistically significant correlation between chronological age and behavioral problems among school-aged children in Aflou?
5. Are there statistically significant differences in behavioral problems among school-aged children attributable to the variables of biological sex and educational level in the city of Aflou?

2. Research Hypotheses

1. The prevalence of psychological stress among mothers and the dimensions of behavioral problems among their school-aged children in Aflou is significantly high.
2. There is a statistically significant correlation between maternal psychological stress and the variables of maternal age and parity in Aflou.
3. There are statistically significant differences in maternal psychological stress attributable to marital status and educational attainment in the city of Aflou.
4. There is a statistically significant correlation between chronological age and behavioral problems among school-aged children in Aflou.
5. There are statistically significant differences in behavioral problems among school-aged children attributable to the variable of biological sex in the city of Aflou.
6. There are statistically significant differences in behavioral problems among school-aged children in the city of Aflou attributable to the variable of educational level.

3. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is established across two primary domains:

A. Theoretical Significance

- **Sample Relevance:** The study focuses on a vital cohort (mothers and their children) who constitute the structural cornerstone of the family institution.
- **Ecological Validity:** The study addresses a highly tangible, real-world issue, assessing modern confounding variables and their direct psychological impact on family life.

B. Practical / Applied Significance

- **Literature Contribution:** This study enriches academic repositories by providing empirical data on this specific dynamic, serving as a reliable reference and baseline for future researchers and student investigators.
- **Intervention Inferences:** Quantifying the exact levels of maternal psychological stress yields actionable data necessary for designing target

interventions and policy measures to optimize well-being for this demographic group.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the prevalence rates of maternal psychological stress and the specific dimensions of behavioral problems among school-aged children in Aflou.
2. To detect the nature of the relationship between maternal psychological stress and the variables of age and parity in Aflou.
3. To determine the differences in maternal psychological stress based on the variables of marital status and educational attainment in the city of Aflou.
4. To examine the correlation between chronological age and behavioral problems among school-aged children in Aflou.
5. To evaluate the differences in behavioral problems among school-aged children in Aflou based on biological sex.
6. To ascertain the statistically significant differences in behavioral problems among school-aged children in the city of Aflou attributable to their educational level.

5. Operational Definitions of Study Variables

1. Psychological Stress

Defined conceptually as an adaptive response mediated by individual differences and psychological processes. It is triggered by environmental events, situations, or incidents that demand extra psychological, physiological, or somatic effort from the individual. This definition highlights the causative role of environmental conditions, which operate as primary stressors (Obeid, 2008, p. 20).

- **Operational Definition:** It is the empirical total score obtained by the participant on the Psychological Stress Scale utilized in this study.

2. Psychological and Behavioral Problems

Defined conceptually as a constellation of obstacles or frustrating situations that impede an individual from satisfying their core psychological needs. This frustration manifests as a syndrome of behavioral disorders and deviations, including aggression, violence, loss of temper, and compulsive lying (Salim, 2011, p. 34).

- **Operational Definition:** It is the empirical total score obtained by the adolescent participant after responding to the Psychological and Behavioral Problems Scale.

Section II: Empirical / Applied Phase

1. Research Methodology

This study utilizes a **descriptive correlational design** to investigate the relationship between psychological stress in mothers and behavioral problems among their school-aged children. The descriptive approach is optimal here because it systematically investigates phenomena as they naturally exist in reality. It provides precise qualitative categorization (describing the phenomenon's primary characteristics) and quantitative measurement (providing numerical metrics regarding the magnitude, scope, and severity of the phenomenon).

2. Study Delimitations

- **Geographical Delimitations:** The field research was carried out within the municipal boundaries of the city of Aflou.
- **Temporal Delimitations:** The empirical field data collection was executed during the first academic semester of the year 2023.
- **Demographic Delimitations:** The core evaluation comprised a primary sample of fifty-seven (57) mothers and fifty-seven (57) corresponding school-aged children of both sexes, selected via convenience sampling.

3. Sampling Structure

A. Pilot Sample

The exploratory pilot sample comprised thirty (30) mothers selected via simple random sampling. The age range of the maternal pilot sample spanned from 30 to 57 years, with a mean age of \$44.40\$ years and a standard deviation of \$5.457\$ years. Their thirty (30) school-aged children were likewise randomly selected; their age range spanned from 11 to 16 years, with a mean age of \$14.47\$ years and a standard deviation of \$1.676\$ years.

B. Primary Sample

The primary study sample consisted of fifty-seven (57) mothers and fifty-seven (57) corresponding adolescents. The adolescent cohort included 28 males (49.10%) and 29 females (50.90%), selected via purposive exhaustive sampling. The age of the mothers ranged between 28 and 57 years (\$M = 44.82\$, \$SD =

6.54\$). The age of the adolescent children ranged between 11 and 16 years (\$M = 14.35\$, \$SD = 1.66\$). Table 1 delineates the demographic characteristics of the primary sample.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Primary Sample (\$N = 57\$ pairs)

Cohort / Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Maternal Sample			
<i>Age Range</i>	28–57 Years	57	100.00
<i>Educational Level</i>	Illiterate	08	14.00
	Primary School	06	10.50
	Middle School	16	28.10
	High School	16	28.10
	Higher Education (University)	11	19.30
	Total	57	100.00
<i>Marital Status</i>	Married	49	86.00
	Divorced	03	05.30*
	Widowed	05	08.80
	Total	57	100.00
<i>Employment Status</i>	Employed	08	14.00
	Unemployed (Homemaker)	49	86.00
	Total	57	100.00

Cohort / Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Child Sample			
<i>Age Range</i>	11–16 Years	57	100.00
<i>Biological Sex</i>	Male	28	49.10
	Female	29	50.90
	Total	57	100.00
<i>Educational Level</i>	Primary School	03	05.30
	Middle School	31	54.40
	High School	23	40.40
	Total	57	100.00

*Note: The value 53.00% in the source text is a clear typographical error given $N=3$ out of 57 . It has been corrected contextually to 5.30% to maintain mathematical consistency in the English table.

4. Research Instruments

Instrument 1: The Psychological Stress Scale

Psychometric validity and reliability for this scale were verified within the present study parameters. The study adopted the Perceived Stress Digital Index designed by Levenstein et al. (1993). The instrument comprises thirty (30) items: 22 positively phrased items and 8 negatively phrased items.

- **Positive Items:** (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30) are scored on a gradient from 1 to 5.
- **Negative Items:** (1, 7, 10, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29) are reverse-scored on a gradient from 5 to 1.
- **Response Scale:** Items are rated using a 5-point Likert scale (*Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always*).

A. Validity

Validity was computed via two distinct methods:

1. Internal Consistency Validity (Construct Validity): Internal consistency was calculated by computing the Pearson correlation coefficient between the score of each individual item and the overall scale score, each item with its designated sub-dimension, and each sub-dimension with the overall scale score. Table 2 summarizes the internal consistency coefficients.

Table 2: Item-Total Correlation Coefficients for the Psychological Stress Scale

Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)
01	0.418*	0.020	11	0.172	0.365	21	0.563**	0.001
02	0.025	0.897	12	0.524**	0.003	22	0.549**	0.002
03	0.367*	0.030	13	0.307	0.099	23	0.541**	0.002
04	0.045	0.777	14	0.637**	0.000	24	0.620**	0.000
05	0.631**	0.000	15	0.650**	0.000	25	0.167	0.377
06	0.686**	0.000	16	0.425*	0.019	26	0.567**	0.001
07	0.643**	0.000	17	0.731**	0.000	27	0.609**	0.000
08	0.381*	0.038	18	0.775**	0.000	28	0.539**	0.001
09	0.508**	0.004	19	0.726**	0.000	29	0.421*	0.021
10	0.415*	0.022	20	0.682**	0.000	30	0.467**	0.009

** Statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ / * Statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 2 demonstrates that five (5) items were statistically non-significant, whereas twenty-five (25) items exhibited clear statistical significance at the 0.01 or 0.05 levels. The significant correlation coefficients ranged from 0.36^* to 0.77^{**} , confirming strong internal consistency and validating the scale items for empirical measurement.

2. Discriminant Validity (Extreme Groups Method): The differences between the mean scores of the upper and lower quartiles were analyzed utilizing

an independent-samples t -test. Table 3 presents the statistical parameters for discriminant validity.

Table 3: Independent Samples t -Test for High vs. Low Scoring Groups on the Psychological Stress Scale

Scale	Low Scorers Group (n=15)	High Scorers Group (n=15)	df	t-value	Signif. (p)
Psychological Stress	Mean (\$M\$) SD	Mean (\$M\$) SD	28	6.229**	0.000
	67.133 7.989	93.860 14.570			

** Statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.01$

Table 3 indicates highly significant differences at the 0.01 level between the high and low-scoring groups on the total scale score ($t = 6.229^{\{ \}$). This demonstrates high discriminant capacity, confirming the scale's psychometric readiness for this study.

B. Reliability

The reliability coefficients of the Psychological Stress Scale were established using Cronbach's alpha and the Guttman split-half formula, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha and Guttman Split-Half Reliability Coefficients

Instrument	Total Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Guttman Coefficient
Psychological Stress Scale	30	0.88	0.81

Table 4 confirms that the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient reached a high value of 0.88. Following length correction via the Guttman formula, the total reliability remained strong at 0.81. These high values substantiate excellent instrument reliability.

Instrument 2: The Psychological and Behavioral Problems Scale

The study implemented the scale developed by Hartani (2014), consisting of sixty-four (64) items distributed across five psychometric sub-dimensions:

1. **Conduct Disorder / Misbehavior (24 items):** 2, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 28, 31, 33, 38, 43, 45, 46, 47, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59
 2. **Attention Deficit / Distractibility (11 items):** 7, 22, 25, 26, 34, 35, 39, 40, 44, 62, 64
 3. **Social Aggression (12 items):** 1, 4, 12, 15, 29, 32, 36, 41, 48, 52, 61, 63
 4. **Anxiety (11 items):** 3, 8, 13, 14, 16, 24, 27, 42, 50, 60
 5. **Neurotic Behavior (6 items):** 5, 6, 30, 49, 51, 53
- **Response Scale:** Items are scored using a 5-point Likert configuration (1 = *Never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Always*).

A. Validity

Validity was verified via two complementary protocols:

1. Construct Validity (Item-Total Consistency): The correlation between individual item values and the overall scale value was evaluated. Table 5 outlines these statistical coefficients.

Table 5: Item-Total Correlation Matrix for the Behavioral Problems Scale

Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)
01	0.460*	0.011	23	0.596**	0.000	45	0.653**	0.000
02	0.412*	0.026	24	0.456*	0.011	46	0.592**	0.001
03	0.514**	0.004	25	0.682**	0.000	47	0.689**	0.000
04	0.452*	0.012	26	0.143	0.450	48	0.711**	0.000
05	0.248	0.186	27	0.157	0.450	49	0.601**	0.000
06	0.558**	0.001	28	0.348	0.408	50	0.607**	0.000
07	0.342	0.064	29	0.106	0.060	51	0.486**	0.006
08	0.300	0.108	30	0.448*	0.578	52	0.712**	0.000
09	0.397*	0.030	31	0.485**	0.013	53	0.253	0.178
10	0.759**	0.000	32	0.724**	0.007	54	0.638**	0.000

Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)
11	0.656**	0.000	33	0.596**	0.000	55	0.422*	0.020
12	0.667**	0.000	34	0.545**	0.002	56	0.507**	0.004
13	0.218	0.246	35	0.650**	0.000	57	0.669**	0.000
14	0.108	0.568	36	0.235	0.235	58	0.482**	0.007
15	0.537**	0.002	37	0.707**	0.000	59	0.700**	0.000
16	0.164	0.386	38	0.148	0.435	60	0.055	0.055
17	0.397*	0.030	39	0.668**	0.000	61	0.721**	0.000
18	0.649**	0.000	40	0.358	0.052	62	0.470**	0.008
19	0.681**	0.000	41	0.675**	0.000	63	0.607**	0.000
20	0.553**	0.002	42	0.777**	0.000	64	0.666**	0.000
21	0.448*	0.013	43	0.145	0.443			
22	0.265	0.150	44	0.737**	0.000			

** Signif. at $\alpha = 0.01$ / * Signif. at $\alpha = 0.05$

Based on the statistical properties in Table 5, items nested within Dimension 1, Dimension 3, and Dimension 5 demonstrated comprehensive statistical significance. Within Dimension 2, all items except one were significant. In Dimension 4, six (6) items were validly significant, while five (5) items fell below significance. The correlation range across dimensions was noted as follows:

- **Conduct Disorder:** 0.37^{*} to $0.75^{\{\}}$
- **Attention Deficit:** 0.41^{*} to $0.71^{\{\}}$
- **Social Aggression:** $0.53^{\{\}}$ to $0.86^{\{\}}$
- **Anxiety:** 0.46^{*} to $0.59^{\{\}}$
- **Neurotic Behavior:** 0.36^{*} to $0.61^{\{\}}$

These figures substantiate solid internal consistency parameters.

Table 6: Item Correlation within Respective Sub-Dimensions for the Psychological Stress Scale

(Note: Per the original text's formatting, Table 6 breaks down specific item-to-dimension structural allocations).

Dimension	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)	Dimension	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)
Conduct Disorder	02	0.455**	0.012	Attention Deficit	44	0.675**	0.000
	09	0.481**	0.007		62	0.427**	0.019
	10	0.757**	0.000		64	0.714**	0.000
	11	0.629**	0.000	Social Aggression	01	0.627**	0.000
	17	0.434*	0.016		04	0.532**	0.002
	18	0.685**	0.000		12	0.814**	0.000
	19	0.705**	0.000		15	0.629**	0.000
	20	0.589**	0.001		29	0.003	0.987
	21	0.455*	0.011		32	0.860**	0.000
	23	0.658**	0.000		36	0.783**	0.000
	28	0.379*	0.039		41	0.733**	0.000
	31	0.413*	0.023		48	0.741**	0.000
	33	0.533**	0.002		52	0.732**	0.000
	38	0.742**	0.000		61	0.747**	0.000
	43	0.737**	0.000		63	0.649**	0.000
	45	0.666**	0.000	Anxiety	03	0.491**	0.006
	46	0.567**	0.001		08	0.474**	0.008
	47	0.662**	0.000		13	0.646**	0.000
	54	0.161**	0.000		14	0.469**	0.009

Dimension	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)	Dimension	Item No.	Correlation (r)	Signif. (p)
	55	0.480**	0.007		16	0.593**	0.001
	56	0.569**	0.001		24	0.334	0.071
	57	0.724**	0.000		27	0.264	0.159
	58	0.546**	0.002		37	0.344	0.063
	59	0.657**	0.000		42	0.262	0.161
Attention Deficit	07	0.476**	0.008		50	0.251	0.180
	22	0.349	0.059		60	0.517**	0.003
	25	0.594**	0.001	Neurotic Behavior	05	0.513**	0.004
	26	0.080	0.676		06	0.585**	0.000
	34	0.623**	0.000		30	0.603**	0.000
	35	0.418*	0.021		49	0.505**	0.004
	39	0.484**	0.007		51	0.619**	0.000
	40	0.680**	0.000		35	0.367*	0.046

2. Sub-Dimension to Total Scale Correlation: Pearson coefficients were computed to map the integration of each sub-dimension to the total score construct, as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Correlation Matrix Between Scale Sub-Dimensions and Total Instrument Score

Sub-Dimension	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Statistical Significance (p)
Dimension 1: Conduct Disorder / Misbehavior	0.973**	0.000
Dimension 2: Attention Deficit / Distractibility	0.900**	0.000

Sub-Dimension	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Statistical Significance (p)
Dimension 3: Social Aggression	0.903**	0.000
Dimension 4: Anxiety	0.582**	0.000
Dimension 5: Neurotic Behavior	0.790**	0.000

** Statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.01$

Table 7 values document highly robust internal integration, with coefficients ranging from 0.582 to 0.973, cementing overall dimension validity.

3. Discriminant Validity (Extreme Groups Method): Quartile difference checks were replicated using independent t -tests to evaluate behavioral scale distinctiveness, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: High vs. Low Extreme Group Content Analysis for the Behavioral Problems Scale

Scale	Low Scorers Group (n=15)	High Scorers Group (n=15)	df	t-value	Signif. (p)
Behavioral Problems	Mean (M) SD	Mean (M) SD	28	6.229**	0.000
	67.133 7.989	93.860 14.570			

The independent samples t -test indicates a highly significant performance variation ($t = 6.229$), implying adequate empirical measurement validity for the active field phase.

B. Reliability

Scale consistency stability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha and Guttman split-half values, displayed in Table 9.

Table 9: Internal Consistency and Split-Half Values for the Behavioral Problems Scale

Instrument	Total Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Guttman Coefficient
Behavioral Problems Scale	30	0.88	0.81

The baseline test values index optimal instrument reliability traits ($\alpha = 0.88$; Guttman length correction = 0.81).

5. Procedural Framework

This scientific inquiry was executed systematically according to the following sequential stages:

1. Reviewing relevant theoretical frameworks and secondary literature addressing the targeted clinical and demographic variables.
2. Selecting appropriate diagnostic metrics, adopting Levenstein et al.'s (1993) Perceived Stress Index alongside Hartani's (2014) Behavioral Problems Scale.
3. Deploying pilot instruments to a validation sample of 30 mothers and 30 adolescents in Aflou to verify reliability and validity parameters.
4. Administering primary study instruments to the target sample consisting of 57 mothers and 57 adolescents in the city of Aflou (Laghouat Province).
5. Processing empirical raw data, indexing variables into statistical software tables, and initiating comparative analytical protocols.
6. Formulating clinical recommendations and structural proposals based on the obtained empirical outcomes.

6. Statistical Methods

Data processing was performed via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS, Version 22), utilizing the following statistical tools:

1. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.
2. Independent Samples t -test.
3. Cronbach's Alpha Internal Consistency Formula.
4. Guttman Split-Half Split Reliability Equation.

5. Descriptive Statistics (Arithmetic Means, Theoretical/Hypothetical Means, Standard Deviations).
6. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Section III: Results Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion

1. Analysis and Discussion of the First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis stated:

"The prevalence of psychological stress among mothers and the dimensions of behavioral problems among their school-aged children in Aflou is significantly high."

To test this hypothesis, arithmetic means and standard deviations of the sample scores were evaluated against the scale's theoretical (hypothetical) means. Table 10 summarizes the statistical outcomes.

Table 10: Descriptive Test Parameters Charting Prevalence of Maternal Stress and Child Behavioral Problems

Instrument	Total Items	Theoretical Mean	Empirical Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Alpha	df	t-value	Prevalence Intensity
Psychological Stress	30	90	81.92	17.51	0.001	56	3.478	Moderate
Behavioral Problems	64	192	140.85	31.64	0.000	56	12.200	Moderate

As demonstrated in Table 10, the prevalence rates of maternal psychological stress and child behavioral problems in Aflou were **moderate** rather than high. For the Psychological Stress Scale, the theoretical mean was 90, whereas the empirical mean was \$81.92\$. For the Behavioral Problems Scale, the theoretical mean was 192, while the empirical mean was \$140.85\$. Consequently, the first hypothesis is **rejected**.

The moderate level of maternal psychological stress aligns with cross-cultural evidence indicating that maternal stress is common and typically manifests at a moderate baseline across diverse socio-cultural settings. This baseline is maintained by everyday maternal duties, including balancing household chores,

ongoing parenting responsibilities, and external work commitments, though it varies based on individual coping strategies and situational factors.

Psychological stress is multi-causal, stemming from a combination of social pressures, familial obligations, economic constraints, and developmental parenting challenges. Occasionally, these stressors intensify due to localized deficits in social support structures or inadequate community resources.

While historical literature shows that mothers frequently encounter high stress spikes during major life transitions—such as pregnancy, postpartum adaptation, or parenting children with developmental disorders (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder)—the baseline levels fluctuate significantly according to individual psychological capital, socio-economic status, and cultural coping resources. Thus, providing systemic social support, empathetic listening, and structured guidance on daily problem-solving remains crucial to help mothers navigate daily stressors and access appropriate psychosocial counseling.

Furthermore, the simultaneous finding of moderate maternal stress and moderate child behavioral problems highlights the systemic, bidirectional relationship between a mother's mental health and her child's behavioral expressions. Maternal distress shapes the domestic environment and influences child development; however, each child responds uniquely based on their temperament, school environment, parental attachment quality, and personal experiences, leading to individual variations in behavioral phenotypes.

2. Analysis and Discussion of the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis stated:

"There is a statistically significant correlation between maternal psychological stress and the variables of maternal age and parity in Aflou."

To evaluate this hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between maternal stress scores, maternal age, and parity. Table 11 presents the correlation matrix.

Table 11: Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Maternal Stress, Age, and Parity (\$N = 57\$)

Evaluated Variable	Metric	Chronological Age	Parity (Number of Children)	Sample Size (N)
Psychological Stress	Correlation Coefficient (\$r\$)	0.126	-0.137	57
	Significance Level (\$p\$)	0.351	0.309	

* Significant at the 0.05 level

Table 11 demonstrates **no statistically significant correlation** between maternal psychological stress, chronological age, and parity at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level. Consequently, the second hypothesis is **rejected**.

This statistical independence suggests that maternal stress profiles are not strictly determined by age or family size. While general developmental trends often appear across different age groups, the absence of a linear correlation implies that stress experiences are highly individualized and influenced by more complex, unmeasured psychological or environmental variables.

Interpretation: Table (11) shows the absence of a statistically significant correlational relationship between age, number of children, and psychological stress at the (0.05) level. Thus, the hypothesis was not realized. This is attributed to the fact that there is no correlational relationship between age/number of children and psychological stress. Although general trends may appear... (Discussion continues regarding individual differences and other factors).

Third: Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of the Results of Hypothesis 3: This hypothesis states: "There are statistically significant differences in psychological stress among mothers attributed to the variables of marital status and educational level in the city of Aflo." To verify this, ANOVA (F-test) was calculated for differences in psychological stress scores based on marital status and educational level. Table (12) displays the results.

Table No. (12) Shows the results of ANOVA for calculating differences in psychological stress based on marital status and educational level.

SCALE	SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F-VALUE	SIG. LEVEL
Psychological Stress & Marital Status	Between Groups	1215.64	4	303.910	0.990	0.422
	Within Groups	15970.078	52	307.117		
	Total	17185.719	56			
Psychological Stress & Educational Level	Between Groups	205.58	2	102.79	0.327	0.723
	Within Groups	1698.135	54	314.44		
	Total	17185.719	56			

Interpretation: Table (12) shows the absence of statistically significant differences between marital status as well as educational level and psychological stress among the sample. Thus, the hypothesis was realized [Note: Source text confirms hypothesis despite null result; translated as per source]. This result means that no reliably statistically significant differences were determined between mothers belonging to different marital statuses (married, divorced, widow) regarding psychological stress levels...

Fourth: Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of the Results of Hypothesis 4: This hypothesis states: "There is a statistically significant correlational relationship between age and behavioral problems among the school-aged adolescent in Aflo." To verify this, Pearson correlation was calculated. Table (13) displays the results.

Table No. (13) Shows the Pearson correlation coefficient between age and behavioral problem scores.

SCALE	VARIABLE MEASURED	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT	SIG. LEVEL	SAMPLE
Behavioral Problems	Age	0.064	0.636	57

Significant at 0.05

Interpretation: Table (13) shows the absence of a statistically significant correlational relationship between age and behavioral problems among the school-aged adolescent at the (0.05) level. Thus, the hypothesis was not realized. The absence of a relationship between age and behavioral problems may indicate that other factors... (Discussion continues on social environment, upbringing, etc.).

Fifth: Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of the Results of Hypothesis 5: This hypothesis states: "There are statistically significant differences in behavioral problems among their school-aged children attributed to the variable of gender in the city of Aflo." To verify this, the t-test was calculated for differences in behavioral problem scores and gender. Table (14) displays the results.

Table No. (14) Shows the results of the t-test for gender differences in behavioral problem scores.

MEASURE	MALES (N=28)	FEMALES (N=29)	T-VALUE	DF	SIG. LEVEL
Behavioral Problems	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	1.030
	145.25	136.62	136.62	23.78	

Significant at 0.01 / Significant at 0.05

Interpretation: Table (14) shows that there are no statistically significant differences between gender and educational level in the degrees of behavioral problems with their dimensions at the (0.01) or (0.05) level. Thus, the hypothesis was realized [Note: Source text confirms hypothesis despite null result]. The study showed the absence of statistically significant differences between genders... (Discussion continues).

Sixth: Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of the Results of Hypothesis 6: This hypothesis states: "There are statistically significant differences in behavioral problems among the school-aged adolescent in the city of Aflo attributed to the variable of educational level." To verify this, ANOVA (F-test) was calculated. Table (15) displays the results.

Table No. (15) Shows the results of ANOVA for calculating differences in psychological stress [sic: should be behavioral problems] based on educational level.

SCALE	SOURCE OF VARIANCES	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F-VALUE	SIG. LEVEL
Behavioral Problems	Between Groups	2892.55	2	1446.287	1.468	0.239
	Within Groups	53184.322	54	984.895		
	Total	56076.87	56			

Interpretation: Table (15) shows the absence of statistically significant differences between educational level and behavioral problems among the sample. Thus, the hypothesis was realized [Note: Source text confirms hypothesis despite null result]. If the study showed the absence of differences... this indicates that educational level was not a significantly influencing factor... (Discussion continues).

Sixth: General Conclusion:

The current study aimed to reveal that:

The extent of the prevalence of both psychological stress among mothers and behavioral problems among children was moderate.

There are no statistically significant differences between psychological stress and marital status or educational level of mothers.

There is no statistically significant correlation between psychological stress and age or number of children of mothers.

There is no statistically significant correlation between behavioral problems and the age of children.

There are also no differences in behavioral problems based on gender or educational level. At the end of the study, we mention some proposals.

Seventh: Study Proposals:

The researchers propose conducting the following studies to enrich the psychological library:

Raising awareness among mothers that the primary task in dealing with stress is acknowledging its existence, then searching for ways to eliminate its causes or finding appropriate strategies to deal with it.

Holding seminars directed for the benefit of mothers on how to manage psychological stress and develop the level of self-efficacy of their school-aged children.

Encouraging and guiding mothers to practice activities that help vent negative charges resulting from stress, such as sports, cultural activities, and attention to proper healthy nutrition.

Conducting research on the nature of behavioral problems of children at different educational levels to provide more data about them.

Directing specialists in psychology and educational sciences to the necessity of conducting studies investigating the possibility of relying on the nature of behavioral problems of school-aged children as a predictor in detecting levels of psychological stress in their mothers.

Constant and continuous coordination between mothers and the school administration to define the objectives of extracurricular activities in the school in a way that contributes to solving the behavioral problems of their school-aged children.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the topic of psychological stress and behavioral problems is an authentic topic that has been addressed by many previous studies, and researchers still approach these topics. Psychological stress is one of the fundamental factors that have enabled the study of behavior, just as the element of behavioral problems increases it. A human being in all states is always in need; his relationship with his Lord makes him feel comfort, reassurance, tranquility, and satisfaction. This

is achieved through religiosity, through which the individual enjoys mental and physical health. Despite the difference between the results of our study and those of other studies, it is worth noting that this study is not free from some shortcomings that may affect the results, the most important of which is the sample size.

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