

The Impact of Digital Transformation Implementation on Mitigating Occupational Stress among Municipal Employees in Ghardaia province

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to study the impact of implementing digital transformation in reducing occupational stress among employees of the Ghardaia province by addressing the problem: To what extent does the implementation of digital transformation reduce occupational stress among employees of the municipalities of Ghardaia province? To answer the problem and test the proposed hypotheses, the descriptive-analytical method was used, by preparing a questionnaire and distributing it to 90 employees in various municipal departments.

The key findings include: a good level of digital transformation application in the municipalities of Ghardaia province. There is an impact of digital transformation application on reducing job stress among the sample members, but it is weak as only 7% of the impact on job stress is influenced by the application of digital transformation. Furthermore, the correlation between the application of digital transformation and the reduction of job stress was found to be weakly positive. There were no statistically significant differences in the sample members' responses regarding job stress attributed to the adopted personal variables. The most important recommendation is to study the various sources of job stress among employees and find solutions for them.

1. Introduction

The world is currently witnessing a drastic transformation in many fields, as a result of the information and technological revolution, which has greatly changed the approach to management and the pattern of products and services offered. Institutions have shifted from their tangible physical form to an intangible form due to digital transformation, using modern technology and advanced techniques instead of traditional and manual methods to accomplish tasks, activities, and operations of institutions and their offered products.

The importance of digital transformation is no longer limited to the private sector; it has become a priority for the public sector and governments as well. Modern technologies and electronic systems such as the Internet of Things, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and robotics are being used to enhance the status of institutions and governments. Digital transformation allows for improving and facilitating services, enhancing communication, simplifying administrative procedures, and exchanging information between departments and entities easily and quickly. This can help save effort and time, accomplish more, and reduce workplace pressures. These pressures are among the most significant current problems facing employees, resulting in issues such as fatigue, pressure, exhaustion, anxiety, and dissatisfaction. This necessitates that institutions of all kinds work to reduce and mitigate their negative effects by implementing various methods and strategies.

And from here emerges the problem of this study through the following main question:

How much does the digital transformation application impact reducing job stress among municipal employees in Ghardaia province?

That branches into the following sub-questions:

- Is there a good level of digital transformation implementation in the municipalities of Ghardaia province?
- Is there an impact of implementing digital transformation in reducing work stress for municipal employees in Ghardaia province?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the responses of sample individuals regarding occupational stress attributed to personal variables?

The following hypotheses were proposed to answer the sub-questions:

- There is a good level of digital transformation application in the municipalities of Ghardaia province.
- There is an impact of digital transformation application in reducing work stress among municipal employees in Ghardaia province.
- There are no statistically significant differences in the responses of the sample individuals regarding occupational stress attributed to personal variables.

1.1. Study Objectives:

The main objective of this study is to identify the impact of implementing digital transformation on reducing occupational pressures among municipal employees in the province of Ghardaia, in light of the trend of all public and private sectors towards implementing and adopting digital transformation systems and achieving the desired objectives on one hand, and the endeavor to focus on human resources on the other hand.

1.2. The Significance of the Study:

The importance of the study stems from the significance of the interconnected or independent variables. Digital transformation has become an inevitable requirement for all institutions as they strive to keep up with environmental changes and developments. Occupational pressures are considered obstacles that burden institutions. The latter seek to reduce them through various methods and minimize their negative effects.

1.3. Literature Review:

- (Battli&Laayadi, 2023) Study:

The aim of this research was to determine the contribution of electronic management applications in reducing work pressure among employees of sports institutions, focusing on two aspects: after using electronic devices and software, and after implementing administrative information systems. To achieve this, the researchers relied on the descriptive-analytical method using a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 30 employees. They found that electronic management application has a significant contribution in reducing work pressure among the sample individuals.

- (Ben Obeid and Ben Ghachi, 2017) Study:

This study aimed to highlight the importance of digitizing public services through the application of e-government. Therefore, it was necessary to determine the attitudes of civil registry employees towards its implementation in their municipalities. To achieve this, the researchers relied on a comprehensive survey of the study community by distributing 57 questionnaires across various municipalities in the Adrar province. One of the main findings of the study is the absence of differences in the responses of civil registry employees regarding their attitudes towards the implementation of e-government, which can be attributed to the demographic variables used in the questionnaire.

- (Brahimi, 2023) Study:

The aim of this research was to identify the reality of digital transformation in the municipality of Borj Bou-Arreirij, by studying the most important steps taken by the legislature, in addition to identifying the main obstacles encountered in the practical application of digital transformation, and then extracting a set of results considered as solutions that may contribute to activating the process of digital transformation. The study concluded that there is a significant delay in the implementation of digital transformation in the municipality of Borj Bou-Arreirij due to the lack of requirements for digital transformation therein.

- (Abd, 2022) Study

aimed to determine the impact of electronic management on reducing organizational work pressures at AlmaarifUniversity College. To achieve this, the researcher conducted a field study at Almaarif College by distributing a questionnaire to 39 respondents from the college's employees and professors. The study concluded that there is a correlation between the application of electronic management and the reduction of work pressures among the sample individuals. The researcher focused on the dimensions of using devices, software, and administrative information systems and recommended the necessity of enhancing them.

- (S.K.M & others, 2023) Study

aimed to identify various occupational pressures in the context of digital transformation, such as information overload, constant communication, and social media pressures. The research concluded by proposing a set of solutions to mitigate these pressures, such as mindfulness, time management, exercise, and assisting employees in coping with them.

- (AYDINLI & ERKASAP) Study

The study aimed to assess the mediating effect of work-life balance on the relationship between digital transformation and work pressure. The study was conducted in the banking sector through various tests on aggregated data, showing a significant relationship between the study variables. It was found that work-life balance mediated between digital transformation and work pressure, and digital transformation had an impact on reducing levels of work pressure.

2. The theoretical Framework of the Study:

2.1. Digital Transformation

2.1.1. The concept of digital transformation:

The digital transformation has now become a priority for all institutions to confront various accelerating challenges, which means the presence of institutions in the digital space with all their activities, tasks, and products, using digital technologies (KUZU, 2020, p. 9), which bring together various devices, software, and means that help in carrying out various processes of recording, storing, using, and retrieving data and information more effectively (Aljanfawi, 2021, page 82).

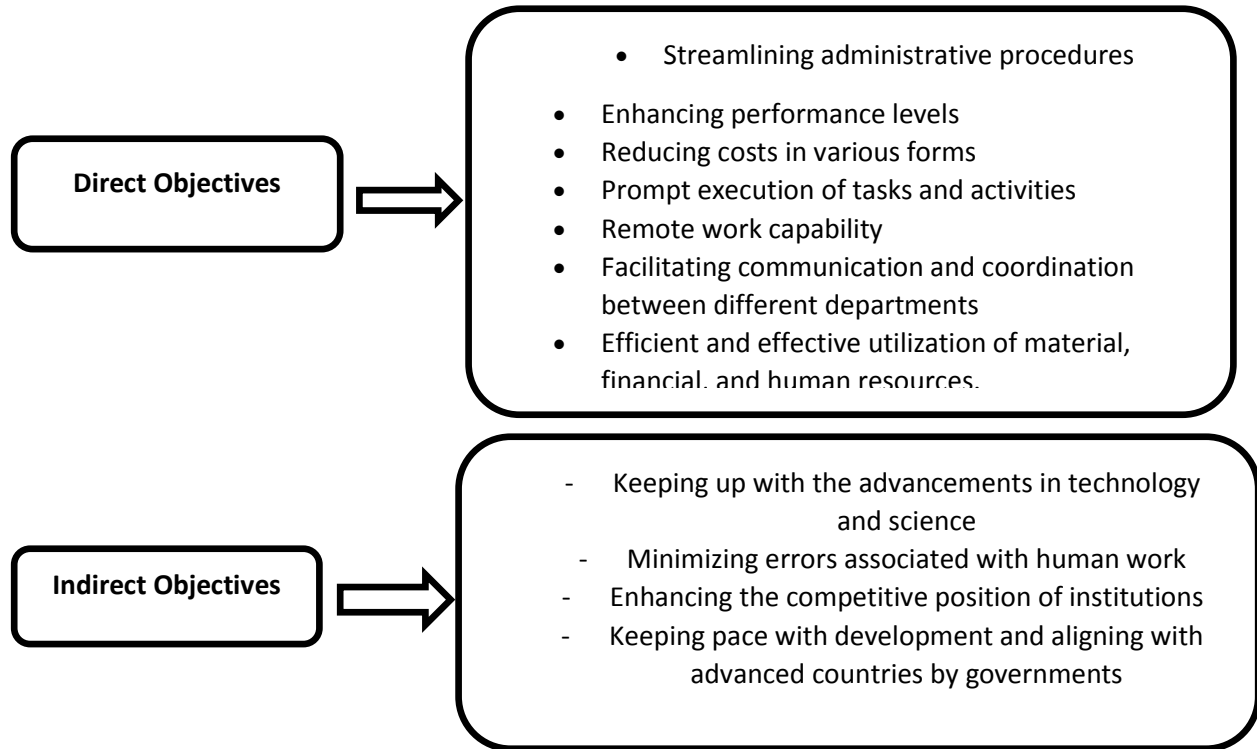
As known, digital transformation refers to a professional transformation in businesses or governments involving fundamental changes related to work methods and procedures, as well as affecting the products and services offered and innovating new business models or products that align with environmental requirements (Slaimi&Boushi, 2019, p. 947). Consequently, information, correspondences, documents, and products are exchanged electronically over networks securely, seamlessly, with minimal effortand cost, whether within the organization or between it and its external environment, ultimately leading to a paperless environment (Aljanfawi, 2021, p. 82).

It can be said that digital transformation has become an inevitable requirement for all institutions and governments, imposed by the technological revolution. It involves the transition of institutions towards offering their various products and services and conducting their operations electronically.

2.1.2.Objectives of Digital Transformation:

The shift towards digital transformation in institutions and governments has several goals that can be summarized as follows:

Figure 1: Objectives of Digital Transformation Application



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on: Talq Awadallah Asawatt, Yasser Sayer Alharbi, "The Impact of Digital Transformation on Academic Performance Efficiency," Arab Journal of Scientific Publishing, Issue 43, 2022, p. 654.

2.1.3. Digital Transformation Requirements:

Before implementing digital transformation, it was necessary to provide a set of requirements, which can be summarized as follows (Masoudine, Lakhel, & Ben Adda, 2023, p. 1108):

- **Infrastructure:** It includes various information technologies, information technology resources, and communication resources such as electronic programs, computers, supporting equipment, digital platforms, various communication means, and various internet networks.
- **Human Resources:** Various competencies, frameworks, and leadership roles are of great importance in digital transformation. They are responsible for various tasks including planning, preparation, implementation, evaluation, and development of the digital transformation system.
- **Creativity and innovation:** In digital transformation, the innovation of new business models or products is detected. Therefore, developing creativity and innovation among individuals is necessary for effective implementation of digital transformation.
- **Economic and Institutional System:** Digital transformation is a comprehensive system that is linked to many aspects. Therefore, it is necessary to provide various economic, legal, cultural, educational, and security requirements, whether for the public or private sector.

2.2. Occupational pressures

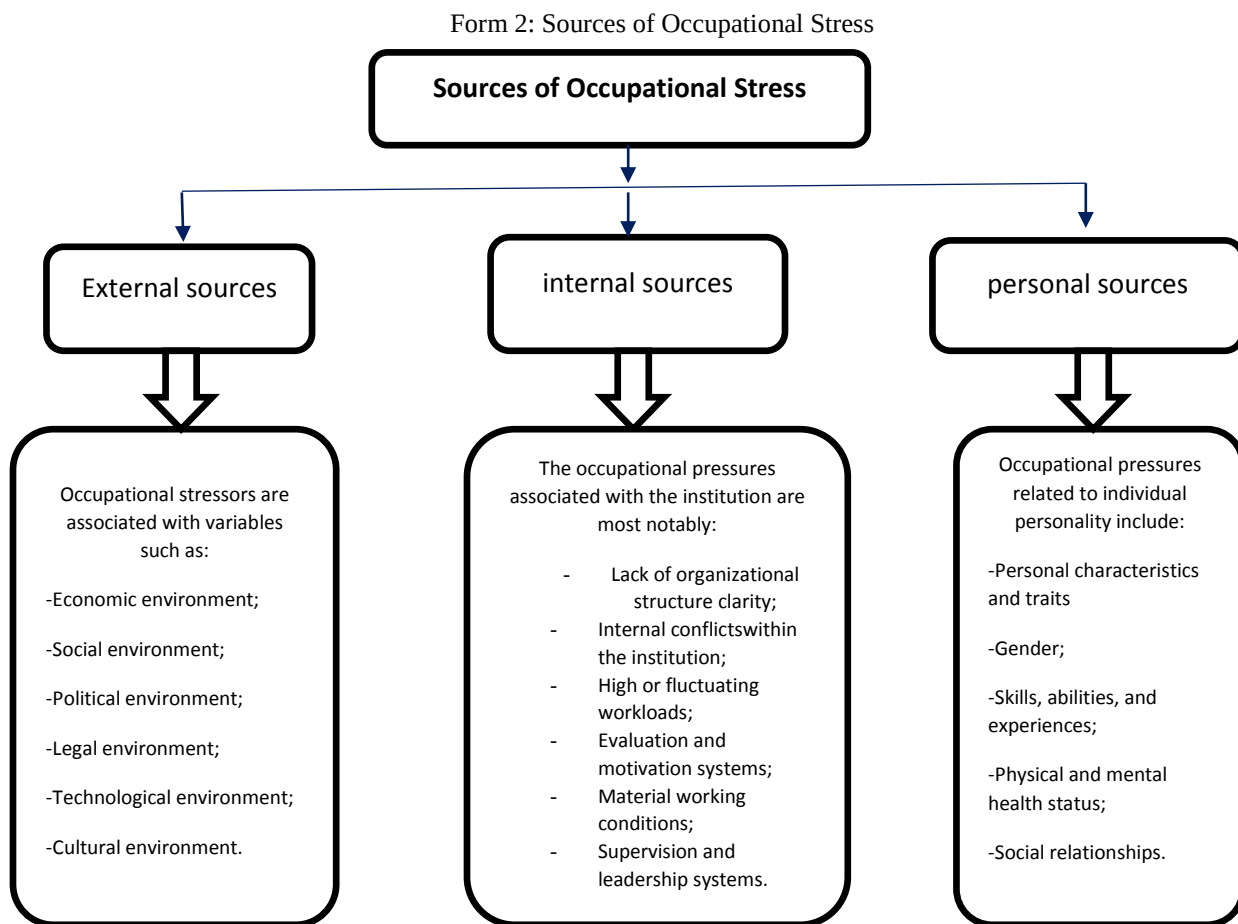
2.2.1. The Concept of Occupational Pressures:

Occupational pressures arise from the interaction between an individual and their environment; they are a response to an event or environmental action, based on individual differences. They occur when there are psychological or material demands on the individual that are excessive (SONJA, 2005, p. 46). This means that they arise from a state of imbalance resulting from the mismatch between external demands and the individual's personal capabilities (Jarmy, 2005, p. 8). This imbalance generates pressure, tension, intensity, etc., in the individual, leading to some negative psychological responses such as dissatisfaction, conflict, anxiety, fatigue, exhaustion, etc. (Taloumit& Alioua, 2020, page 31).

Therefore, occupational stress is a state of incongruence that occurs for the individual as a result of the disparity between their abilities and the requirements and circumstances of the environment, reflected in their behavioral reactions

2.2.2.Sources of Occupational Stress:

The most important sources of occupational stress can be summarized as follows:



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the reference: Adan Nabila, Work Stress and Job Performance, Academic Book Center, Jordan, 2019, pp. 30-31.

The observation from the previous figure is that there are many sources of occupational stress that individuals may be exposed to, whether from various external environmental variables or from the requirements provided by the internal organizational environment of the institution that may not align with their capabilities. Additionally, the individual's personality, psychological factors, and relationships can be the main causes of tension, stress, and pressure for them.

The methods used to address and confront these sources in order to alleviate occupational stress vary according to their methods: they may be individual, such as focus, exercise, changing the work environment... They

may also be organizational, such as providing a suitable physical work environment, providing a fair and effective evaluation and incentive system, training and development of individuals, and using advanced work methods, etc." (Al-Alamiyan, 2013, p. 129)

3. The applied framework of the study

3.1. Study methodology:

It is attempted through this applied study to identify the impact of implementing digital transformation in reducing occupational stress among a sample of municipal employees in the province of Ghardaia, using the descriptive-analytical method by preparing and distributing a questionnaire to the study sample, which consisted of 90 employees. After retrieval and examination, the number of approved questionnaires reached 63, with a percentage of 70%.

The survey included three main axes:

- **The first axis:** Personal data (gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, job title, professional seniority).
- **The second axis:** Application of digital transformation encompassing 12 paragraphs.
- **The third axis:** Occupational pressures, consisting of 9 paragraphs.

To measure the reliability of the study instrument, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used as shown in the following table:

Table(01): Coefficient of Stability

The axis title	The number of paragraphs	The value of Cronbach's alpha
digital transformation application	12	0.715
workplace pressures	09	0.603
all paragraphs	21	0.728

The source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results from SPSS

The table above indicates that the Cronbach's alpha stability coefficient for both axes and the total coefficient is greater than 0.6, demonstrating the stability of the study instrument and its reliability.

As the construct validity of the questionnaire was verified by calculating the correlation coefficient, as shown in the following table:

Table (02): Correlation coefficients between each axis and the overall axis mean (all questionnaire items)

	Axis title	Correlation coefficient	Level of significance
All paragraphs	Digital transformation implementation	0.878**	0.001
	Occupational pressures	0.694**	0.001

source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS

The table shows statistically significant correlation coefficients. The level of significance was less than 0.05. The correlation coefficient for the digital transformation axis was 0.878, while it was 0.694 for the occupational pressure axis. This indicates the validity of the study's items for measurement.

3.2.Sample Answer Results Analysis

3.2.1.Analysis of the samples' answers regarding the axis of digital transformation application:

The arithmetic means and standard deviations for this axis have been calculated after obtaining the data, and the following table summarizes the obtained results.

table (03): Results of the Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation for the Digital Transformation Axis

Number	The Phrase	the Mean	Deviation	Degree	Order
01	In the era of digital transformation, public services are provided electronically.	4.54	0.50	High	1
02	The digital transformation contributes to facilitating the provision of public services.	4.41	0.73	High	2
03	The digital transformation leads to increased accuracy of work in various municipal departments.	4.40	0.77	High	3
04	The digital transformation leads to facilitating procedures and methods of work.	3.89	0.74	High	9
05	The digital transformation application contributes to reducing the time of operations.	3.92	0.76	High	8
06	The various municipal departments have access to computer hardware and software programs.	3.54	0.89	Medium	10
07	We receive training courses in the field of digital transformation application.	3.50	0.99	Medium	11
08	The digital transformation contributes to the development and enhancement of public services.	4.17	0.77	High	6
09	Digital transformation facilitates communication between various municipal departments.	4.17	0.68	High	6
10	Digital transformation supports the process of monitoring and evaluation in the municipality effectively.	4.35	0.76	High	4
11	Digital transformation helps in storing and retrieving information efficiently.	3.94	0.89	Medium	7
12	The digital transformation application reduces errors when documenting information.	4.22	0.72	High	5
General Average		4.15	0.38	High	/

The source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS.

It is noticed from the above table, which includes phrases related to the axis of digital transformation application, that the overall mean is 4.14, reflecting a high level of agreement. This high agreement reflects the

respondents' inclination towards implementing digital transformation in the municipalities of Ghardaia. This also reinforces governmental efforts in this field and the implementation of various programs and laws related to digital transformation in local communities.

3.2.2. Analysis of the results of the sample individuals regarding the axis of occupational stress

The arithmetic means and standard deviations for this axis have been calculated after obtaining the data, and the following table summarizes the results obtained.

Table(04): Results of the Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation for the Occupational Stress Axis.

Number	The Phrase	The Mean	Deviation	Degree	Order
01	I feel comfortable in my workplace.	4.22	0.60	High	2
02	Electronic means help me accomplish my work without pressure.	4.24	0.71	High	1
03	The digital transformation contributes to alleviating the burdens of work.	4.19	0.61	High	3
04	Electronic programs contribute to reducing work fatigue.	3.57	0.78	Medium	7
05	The digital transformation leads to reducing physical and mental effort.	4.17	0.66	High	4
06	The digital transformation contributes to reducing friction with citizens.	4.05	0.65	High	6
07	The assigned tasks are clear.	4.06	0.66	High	5
08	The digital transformation leads to reducing workload accumulation.	4.24	0.64	High	1
09	I feel pressured during periods of high demand for documents.	3.43	0.87	Medium	8
The Overall Mean		4.10	0.34	High	/

The source: Compiled by the researcher based on the results from SPSS

It is noticed from the above table, which includes phrases related to occupational stress axis, that the overall mean reached 4.10 with a high level of agreement. This indicates a decrease in occupational stress among the sample through the features of digital transformation application. Paragraph 02 "Electronic tools help me complete my work without pressure" came in the first rank, and the paragraph "I feel comfortable in my workplace" came in the second rank. The overall standard deviation was 0.34, indicating the concentration of respondents' answers.

3.3. Study Hypotheses Selection:

3.3.1. The primary hypothesis:

Stating: **There is a good level of digital transformation implementation in the municipalities of Ghardaia province.**

To test this hypothesis, a one-sample T-test was used, and the following table illustrates the test results:

Table(05): One-sample T-test

Digital Transformation Application	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Freedom Index	Value (T)	Level of Significance
Overall Grade	4.15	0.38	62	23.876	0.001

The source: "Prepared by the researcher relying on SPSS results

From the table above the calculated value of T is **23.87**, which is greater than the tabulated value of **2.000**. Additionally, the significance level is **0.001**, which is less than the significance level of **0.05**. Moreover, the overall mean of respondents' answers regarding the implementation of digital transformation was high with a low standard deviation of **0.38**, indicating a lack of dispersion in the sample responses. All of the above confirms the **acceptance of the hypothesis**, meaning there is a good level of digital transformation implementation in the municipalities of Ghardaia province.

3.3.2. Testing theSecond Hypothesis:

Stating: **There is an impact of implementing digital transformation in reducing occupational stress among employees of municipalities in Ghardaia province.**

To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was used as shown in the following table:

Table (06):Illustrates the Results of Simple Regression Analysis for the Impact of Digital Transformation Implementation on Reducing Occupational Stress

Statement	B1	B ₀ (Constant)	R ²	R	F Value	Significance Level
Digital Transformation Implementation	0.23	3.13	0.07	0.26	4.6	0.03

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

From the table, it is noticed that the correlation coefficient (**R**) reached **0.26**, indicating a **positive** correlation between digital transformation adoption and reducing workplace stress, although it's a **weak** correlation. The coefficient of determination (**R²**) is **0.07**, indicating that **7%** of the variance in reducing occupational stress comes from adopting digital transformation, while the rest is attributed to factors outside the study's model.

The coefficient of regression reached **0.23**, indicating that an increase in digital transformation implementation by one unit leads to a reduction in occupational stress by **0.23** units, as illustrated in the linear regression equation: **Y=0.23x+3.13**.

The significance level was **0.03**, which is lower than the significance threshold of **0.05**, indicating **acceptance of the hypothesis**, meaning there is an effect of digital transformation implementation on reducing occupational stress among municipal employees in Ghardaia province.

3.3.3.The third hypothesis:

The hypothesis statement reads: **There are no statistically significant differences in the responses of the sample individuals regarding occupational stress attributed to personal variables (gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, job title, seniority, profession).**

To test this hypothesis, a two independent samples t-test was used for the gender variable, while a One-Way Analysis of Variance test (one-way ANOVA) was used for the remaining personal variables.

The following table summarizes the independent samples t-test **for two samples**:

Table (07): Test-tfor Two IndependentSamples

Gender	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Levens Test		Test-t		
			F	Significance Level	Degrees of Freedom	T	Significance Level
Male	29	4.15	0.93	0.338	1	1.067	0.290
Female	34	4.06			61	1.082	0.284

The source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS results.

Through the previous table, it can be observed that the number of males reached **29** while the number of females reached **34**. The Arithmetic Meanfor occupational stress among males was **4.15**, while it was **4.06** for females, meaning that the male average is slightly higher than that of females. The calculated T value is **1.067**, which is lower than the tabulated T value of **2.045** for males, while it is **1.082** for females, also lower than the tabulated T value of **2.042**. The significance level for males and females respectively was **0.290** and **0.284**, which are both greater than the significance level of **0.05**, indicating **acceptance of the null hypothesis**, meaning that there are no statistically significant differences in the responses of the sample individuals regarding occupational stressors attributable to the gender variable.

The following table summarizes the results of the **one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test** for the remaining personal variables:

Table (8): Illustrates the One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test for the Remaining Personal Variables.

Variable Name	Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	Computed F Value	Statistical Significance
Age	Between Groups	11.77	14	0.841	1.050	0.424
	Between Groups	38.44	48	0.801		
Marital Status	Between Groups	5.30	14	0.379	1.466	0.161
	Between Groups	12.40	48	0.259		
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	8.89	14	0.636	0.801	0.664
	Between Groups	38.08	48	0.793		
Job Title	Between Groups	22.11	14	1.580	0.978	0.489
	Between Groups	77.53	48	1.615		
Occupational Seniority	Between Groups	14.45	14	1.032	0.972	0.495
	Between Groups	50.97	48	1.062		

The source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS

It is observed from the above table that the F values for the variables (age, marital status, educational qualification, job title, occupational seniority) were, respectively, **(1.050, 1.466, 0.801, 0.978, 0.972)**, which are less than the tabulated F value of **2.09**. Additionally, the significance level for each variable is greater than **0.05**. Therefore, **the null hypothesis is accepted**, meaning there are no statistically significant differences in the responses of the sample individuals regarding occupational stress attributable to the personal variables (age, marital status, educational qualification, job title, occupational seniority).

Conclusion: Study Results and Recommendations

The scientific and technological advancements have led to a change in the pattern of products and work systems, shifting from traditional manual systems to electronic systems. This transformation, commonly referred to as digital transformation, has had various impacts across multiple fields, including its effects on human resources, particularly the occupational stress individuals face. This is what was being studied through the problem of assessing the extent to which digital transformation affects reducing occupational stress on employees. The study was conducted in the municipalities of Ghardaia province, considering it a sensitive sector where the government is working towards its digitization. Moreover, employees there work in an environment filled with sources of stress.

After the applied study, the most important findings can be summarized as follows:

- There is a good level of digital transformation application in the municipalities of Ghardaia, as previously mentioned, considering it as a reinforcement of government efforts and implementation of the laws issued in this regard.
- The digital transformation has a slight impact on reducing workplace stress among employees in the municipalities of Ghardaia. However, this impact is weak, as the coefficient of determination is **0.07**, indicating that only **7%** of the reduction in workplace stress is attributed to the implementation of digital transformation. Additionally, the correlation between digital transformation implementation and the reduction of occupational stress was found to be positive but very weak.
- There are no statistically significant differences in the responses of the sample individuals regarding occupational stress attributed to personal variables (gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, job title, occupational seniority).

Recommendations:

After obtaining the results, it is possible to suggest the following recommendations:

- Providing various necessary resources to ensure the effectiveness of digital transformation and achieve the desired goals from it.
- Increasing training courses for employees, whether inside municipalities or outside, with content focused on digital transformation or how to deal with occupational stress.
- Attempt to further research the sources of pressure on employees, whether by consulting researchers in this field or by attracting more studies. Then, find and apply solutions.
- Attempting to provide a suitable and good work environment for employees that contributes to achieving their satisfaction and reducing the pressure they face.

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