

Economic Crisis and Educational Reforms: How Burnout affects Teachers' Physical, Mental, and Oral Health?

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ABSTRACT--- *In July 2013, for the first time in the Greek civil sector, a legal measure suspending labour, was applied overnight on Greek Secondary Education teachers. More than 2,200 secondary school teachers were affected. This so-called “reform effort” impacted on 23,000 students, through abolishing 52 Technical Education specialties. The majority (80%) of affected secondary school teachers were placed on suspension, while 20% underwent obligatorily transfers to administrative positions through the application of a government dictated “social criteria”.*

This research that took place from 2013 till 2017, investigated the burnout experienced both by teachers who were suspended and by those who were compulsorily transferred to administration duties. The Maslach Burnout Inventory measurements recorded the highest percentages on this scale, in its history of application to Greek teachers. The factors of work stress were studied with respect to both separate categories of teacher (suspended – compulsorily transferred) and a comparative study was then conducted between them. Psychopathological symptoms (utilising the SCL-90 Psychopathology scale) were observed in both categories of teacher, due to work-related stress, with results from both the General Symptom Index and the Positive Symptom Disorder Index (PTSD) indicating pathological responses. With respect to both categories, the appearance and deterioration of physical health problems that are normally associated with chronic stress was also recorded, and a general deterioration in physical health was also evidenced. The significance of this research is that the findings are indicative of the total effects of burnout, that correlate psychological and health issues. By creating the tools for this, it can open future further investigations on the impact of educational policies on teachers.

Keywords--- Teachers work, Teachers' Burnout, Human costs of Neoliberal educational policies, Technical Vocational Education. Greek education, Quantitative research

1. INTRODUCTION

On July 22, 2013, the abolition of 52 specialties, from Technical Vocational Education in Greece, was announced. This effected 23,000 pupils and 2,220 teachers, with most of these teachers being placed under suspension. Article 82 of Law 4172/2013 provided for a suspension of their labour for a period of eight months, to be followed by dismissal on 23/3/2014. Four hundred teachers were excepted from this suspension of labour, through the application of certain social criteria (teachers who were the parent of more than three children and parents of children with disabilities, those part of a single parent family and teachers with disabilities) and underwent compulsory transfer to administration duties. For those

suspended, there was the possibility of being transferred, through future notices, to other institutions within the Ministry of Education.

This was the first time that the issue of the dismissal of permanent civil servants had been postponed, in this manner, since 1911. At the same time, the closure of the State Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) was announced and School Guardians, Municipal Police Officers, Ministry of Finance Clearing Houses and University Administration Officers.

In July 2013, Greece was in the fifth year of a deep economic crisis, with unemployment having risen to 27% and the first consequences of this crisis were becoming apparent; as reflected by a drop in the standard of living, and negative impacts on the mental and physical health of the population¹. Public education received a 17.5% cut in labor costs, which reflected similar cuts across all sectors of the economy. At the same time, we witnessed a rise in 'flexible' forms of work, with permanent appointments having been replaced by fixed-term or hourly-waged contracts².

The negative realities of such forms of precarious labor, are widely discussed in the international literature³.

2. AIM AND METHOD

The purpose of this research is to investigate burnout of teachers who were suspended from work, under the first ever suspension of labour measures introduced by the Ministry of Education, in the context of wider neoliberal reforms, themselves taking place in an environment of crisis. It aims to contribute to the study of attitudes, opinions, everyday problems and emotional/mental and physical health disorders.

The survey sample was about 19% of the total effected, that is 405 people (from a total of 2,200 teachers effected). This comprises 325 teachers that were suspended under the measures and 80 teachers who were transferred to become Administrative Officers. The survey began in March 2014 and was completed in April 2015. In June 2015 the teachers returned to their schools. The government had changed.

Research Tools: A personal and service data sheet

1. The Symptom Checklist - 90-Revised Symptom Scale (SCL-90-R, Derogatis et al., 1973)^{4,5,6}.
2. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)^{7,8,9,10}.
3. Three Questionnaires exploring stress and health factors.

For methodological reasons, the research was divided into three parts. The first part is a study of the teachers who were forcibly re-deployed. The second part is a study of those who were suspended. The final part provides a comparison between the teachers who were transferred and those who were suspended. Specific questionnaires were designed for the survey, informed by a rich bibliography and focusing on the key factors that evidence occupational stress and negative impacts on mental and physical health, as well as collecting relevant demographic data. To investigate occupational burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was utilised, adapted to reflect the Greek population^{11,12}. To investigate psychological effects, the SCL-90 Psychopathology Scale was utilised, also adapted to reflect the Greek population¹³.

3. RESULTS

In this section, the charts of the results of the research are presented. The interpretation of these charts will be discussed in the following section.

A. Teachers forcibly transferred to administrative roles.

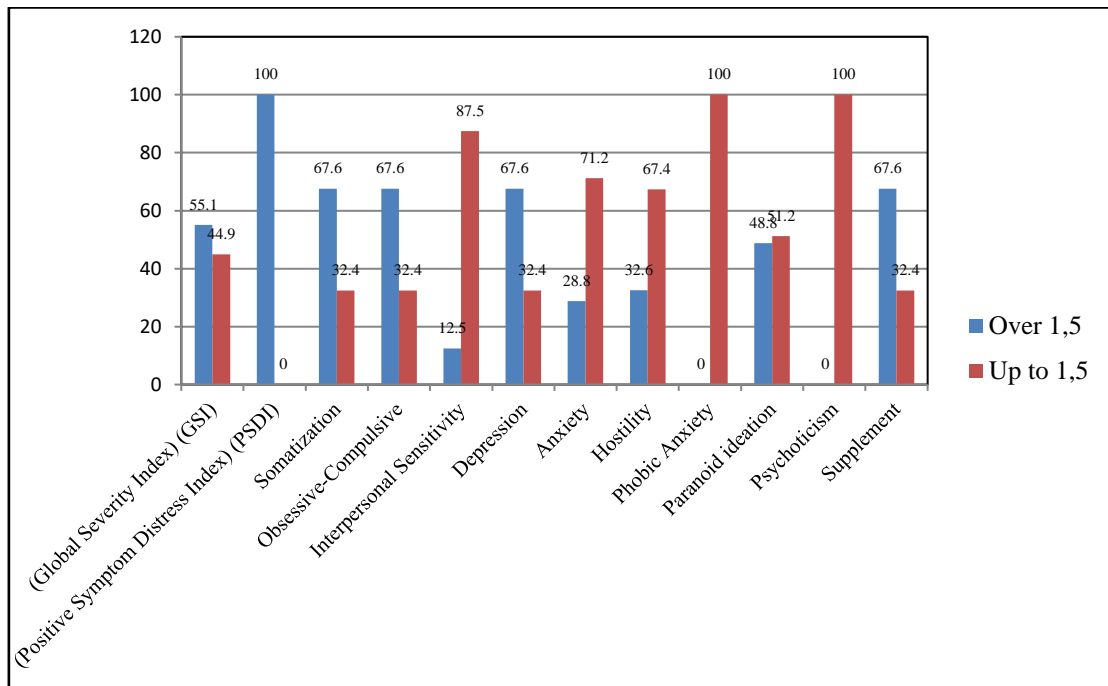


Figure 1. Classifications, with Percentages (%) affected, from Critical Index 1.5 on the SCL-90-R psychometric scale.

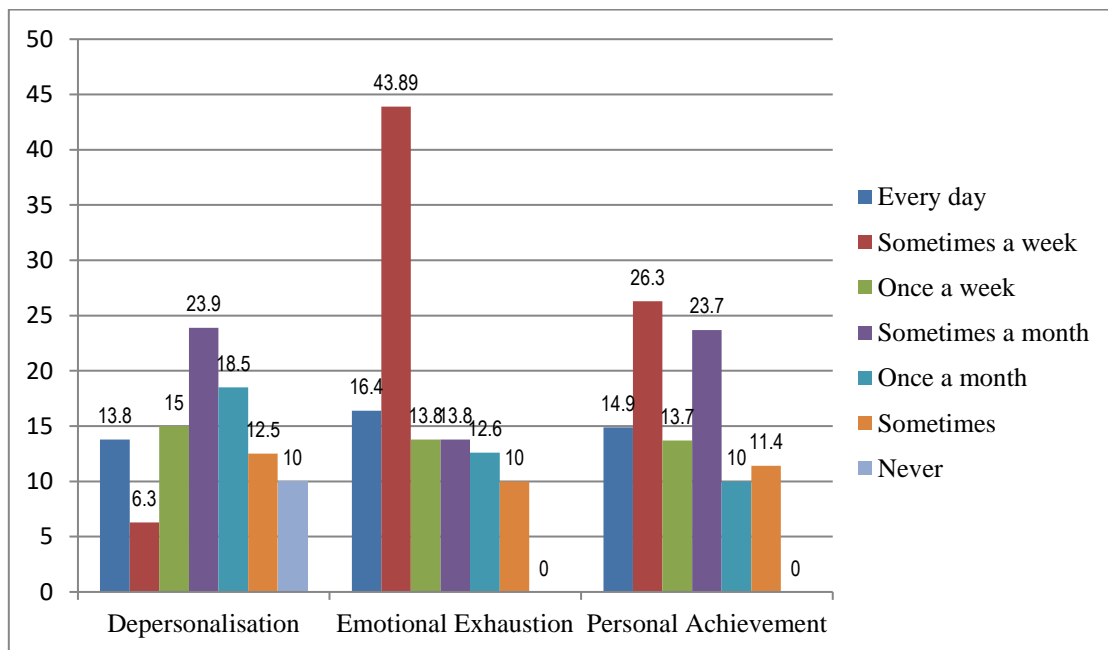


Figure 2. Classifications from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

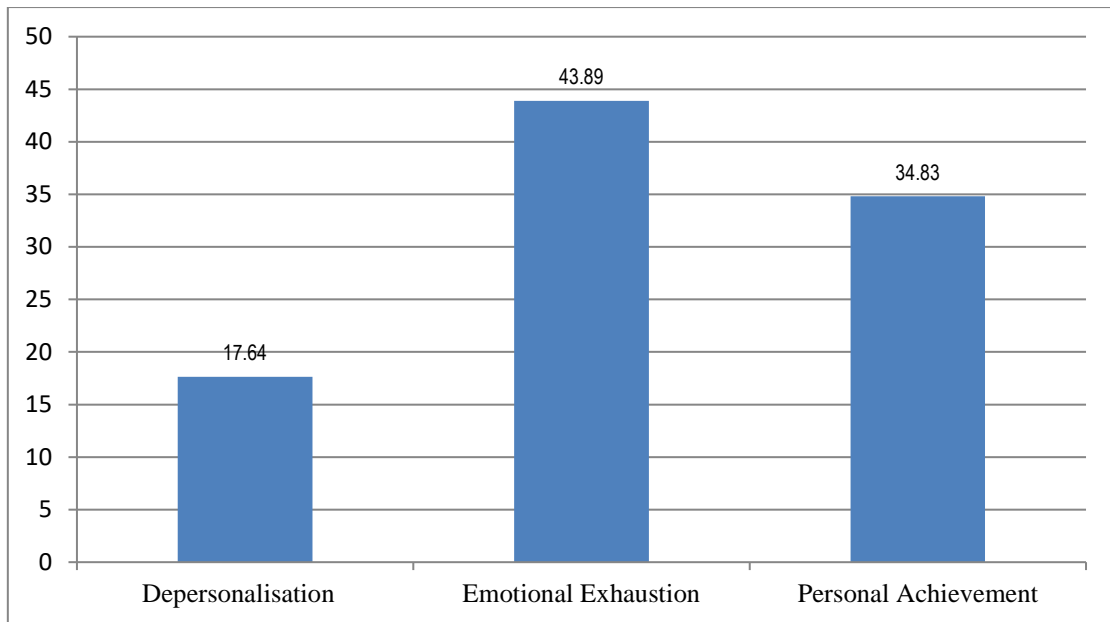


Figure 3 Averages with respect to repeating factors from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

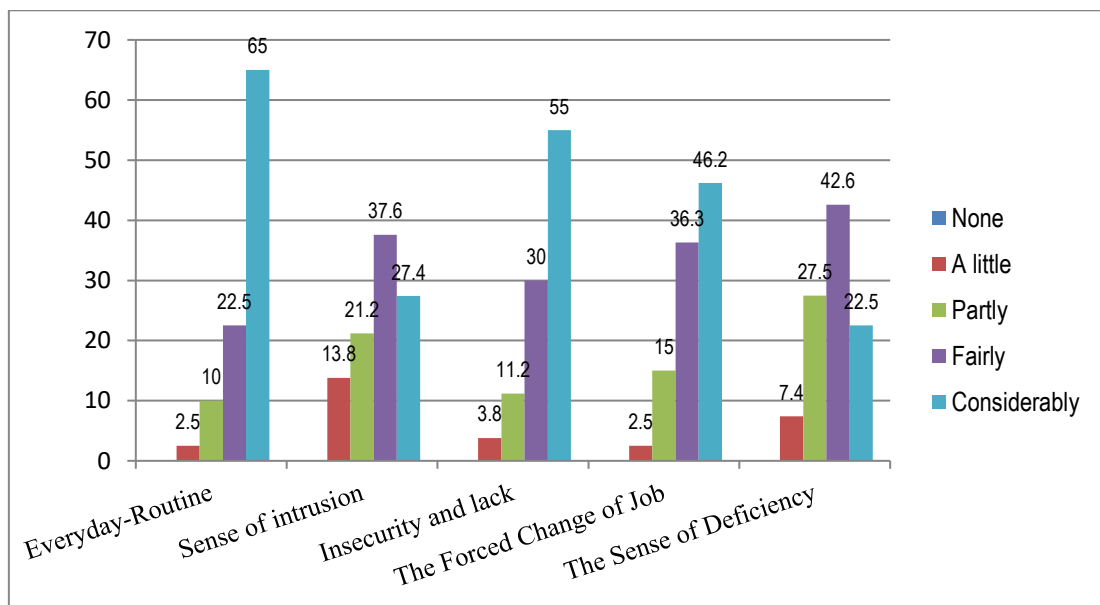


Figure 4. Classifications and impacts from responses to the Questionnaire No4 (exploring stress factors).

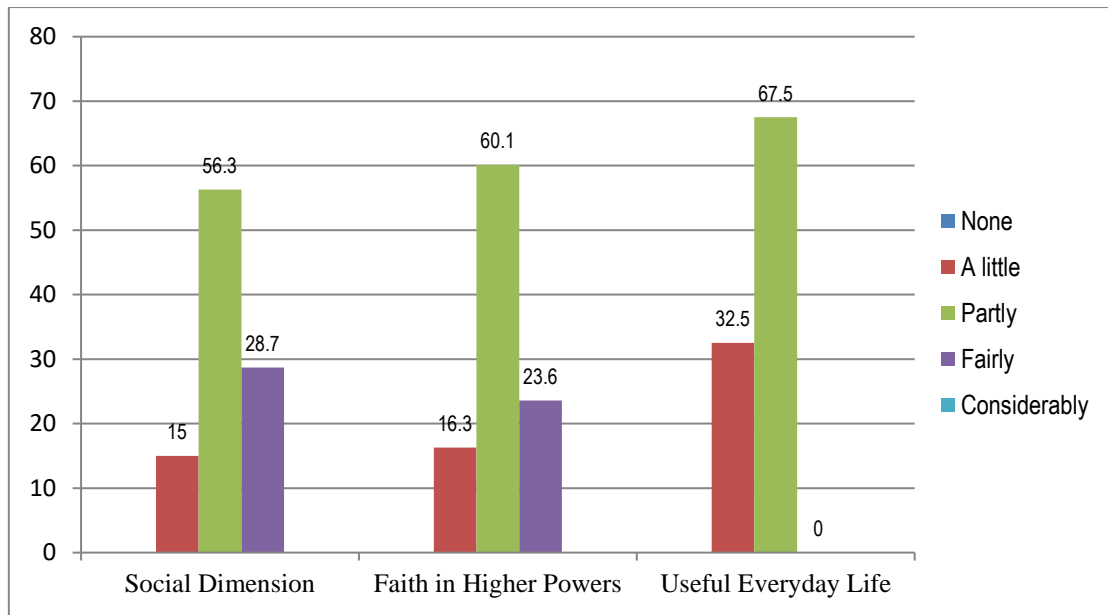


Figure 5. Classifications and impacts from responses to the Questionnaire No2 (exploring factors of encouragement).

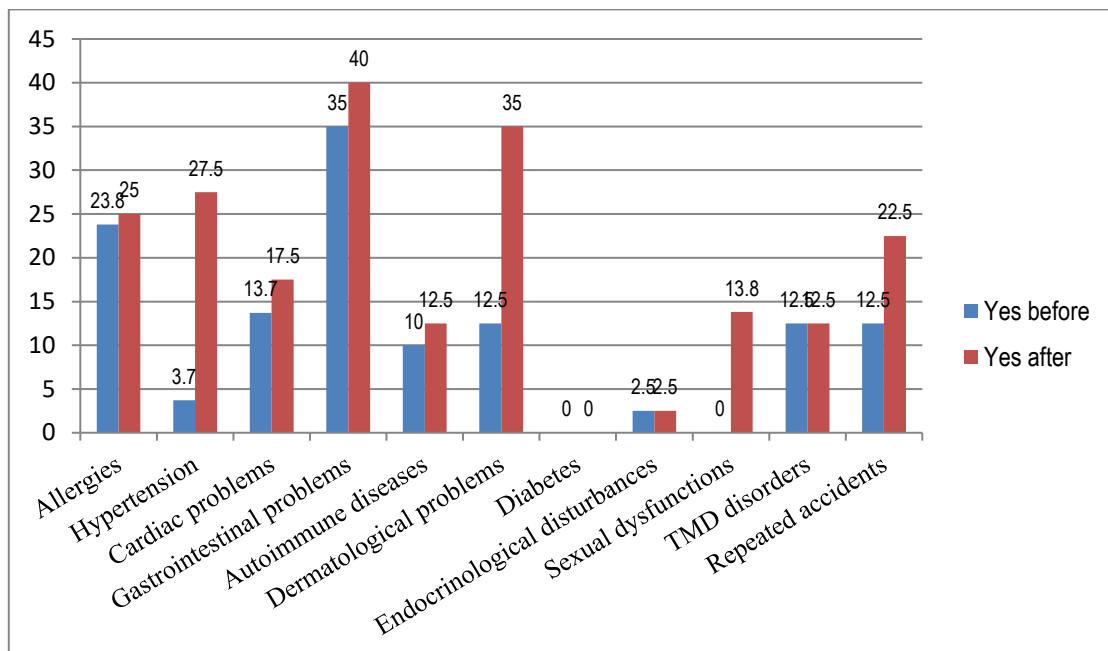


Figure 6A. Classifications, with Percentages affected, with respect to the Health Problems of Teachers (YES), from responses to Questionnaire No3 Reflecting both, before and after the compulsory transfer to administrative roles.

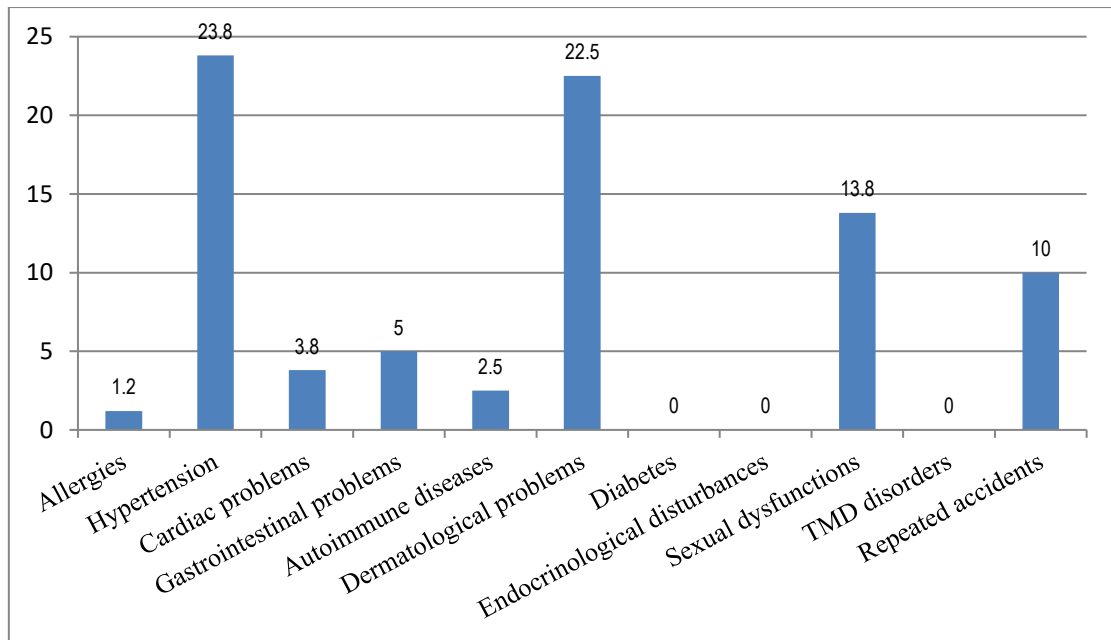


Figure 6B. Percentage increases with respect to the health problems of the Teachers (YES) from responses to Questionnaire No3 Measuring the change from before to after the compulsory transfer to administrative roles.

B. Teachers suspended from teaching roles

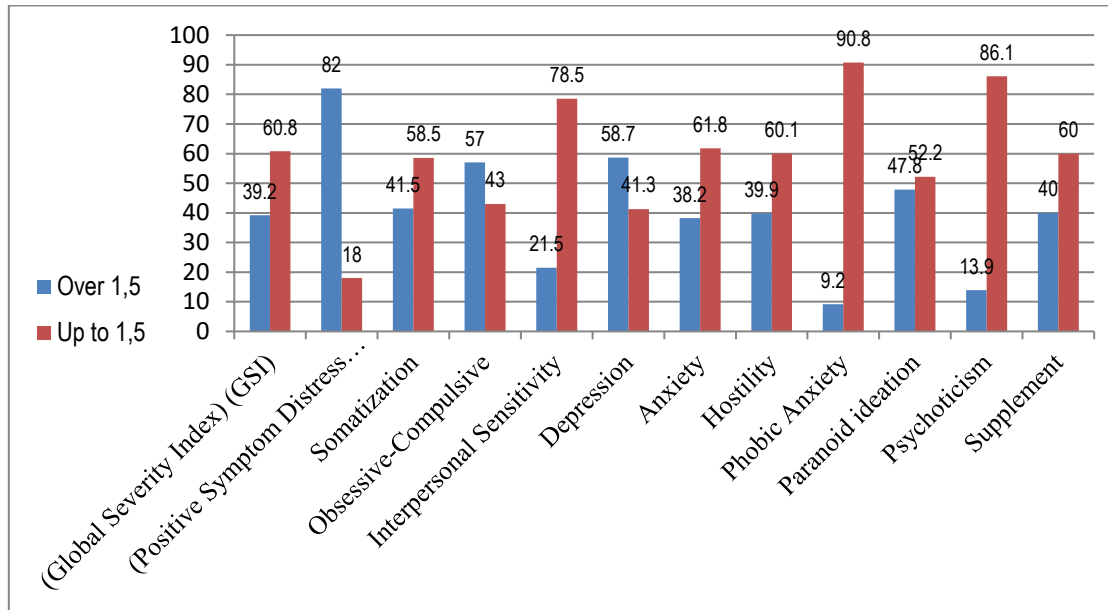


Figure 7. Classifications, with Percentages(%) affected, from Critical Index 1.5 on the SCL-90-R psychometric scale.

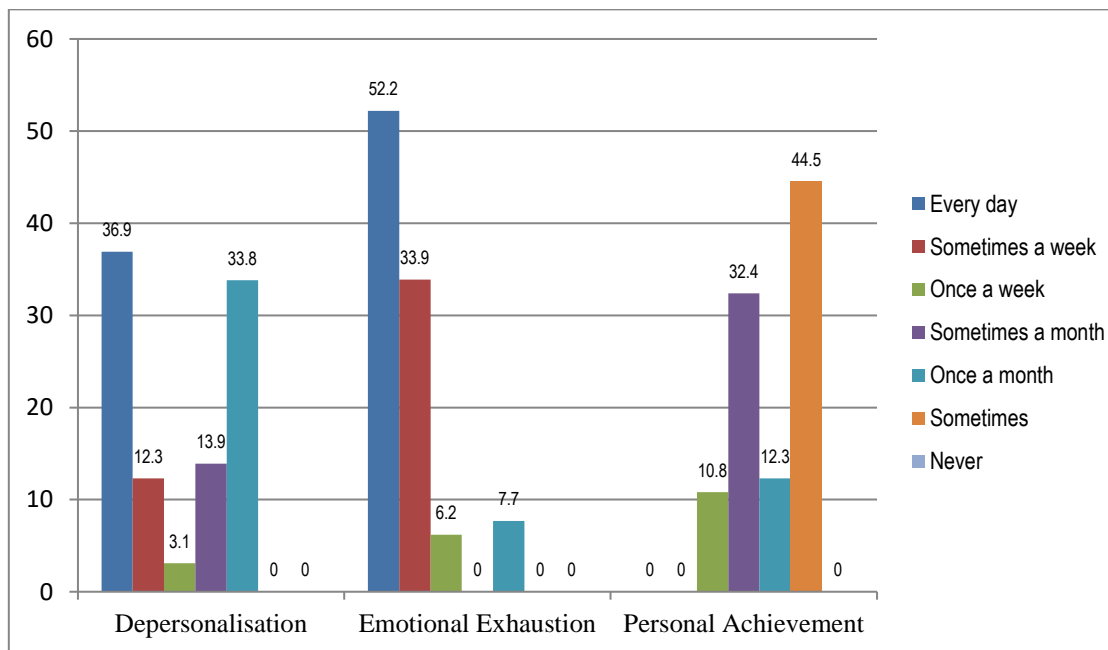


Figure 8. Classifications from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

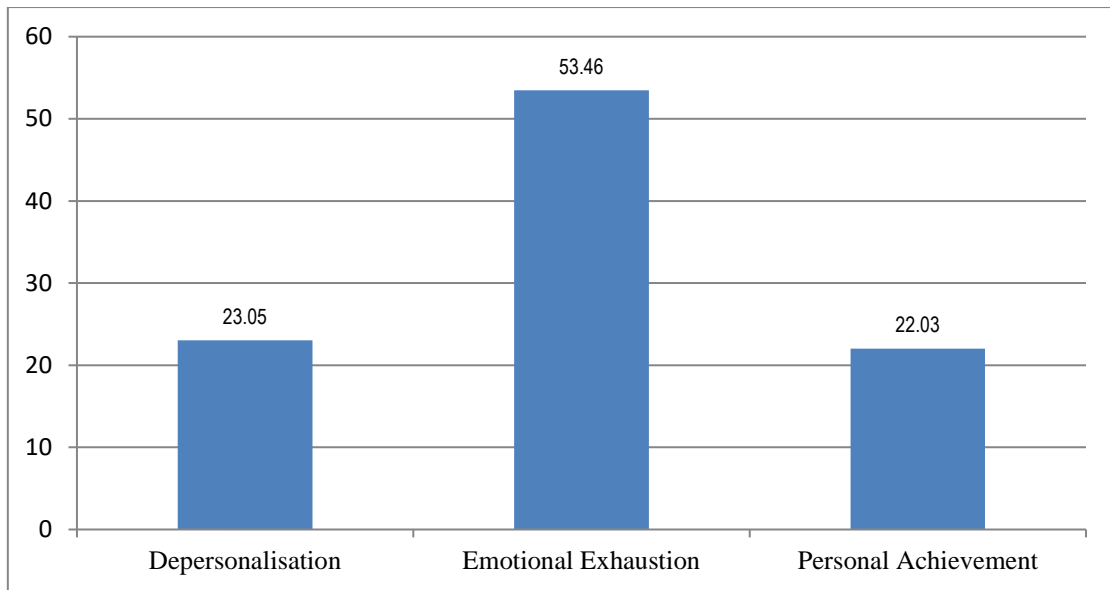


Figure 9. Averages with respect to repeating factors from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

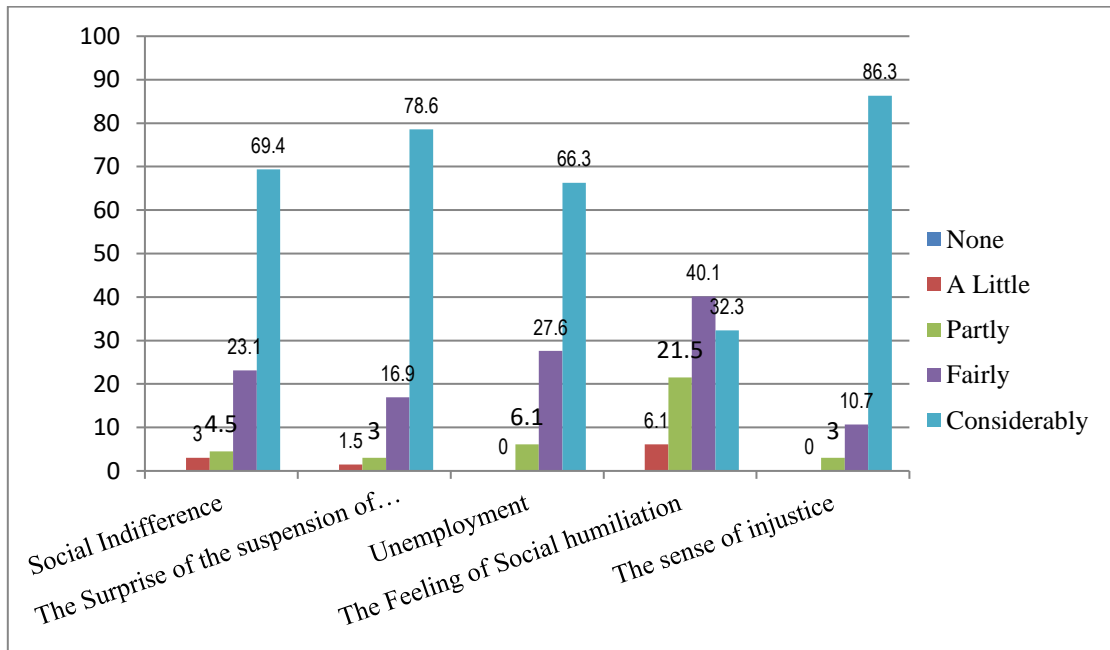


Figure 10. Classifications and impacts from responses to the Questionnaire No1 (exploring stress factors).

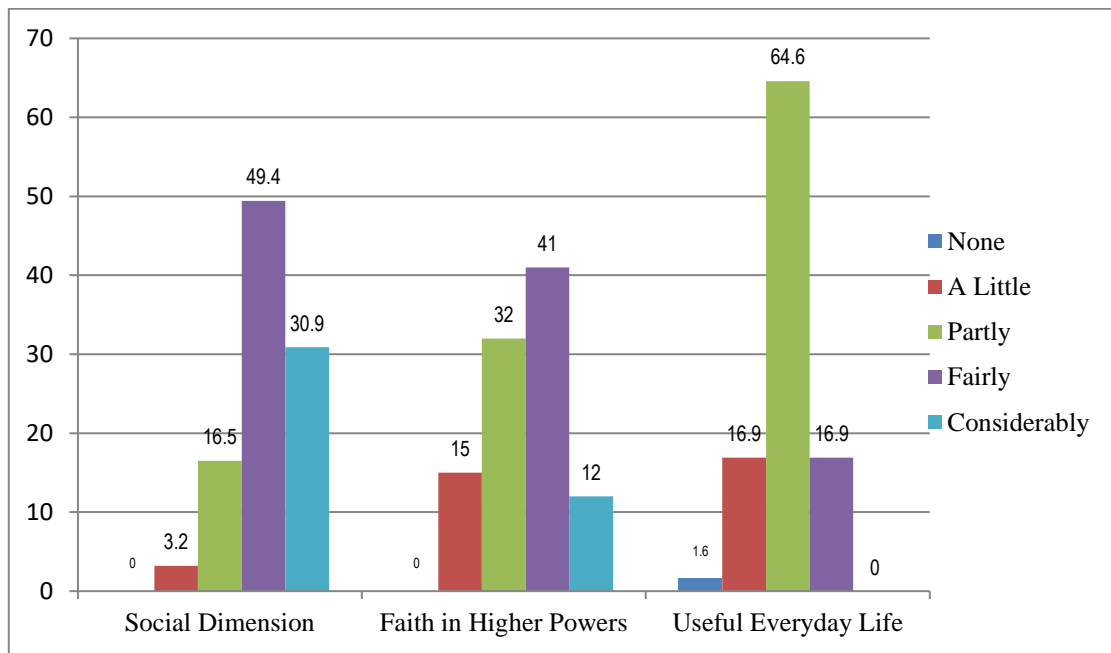


Figure 11. Classifications and impacts from responses to the Questionnaire No2(exploring factors of encouragement).

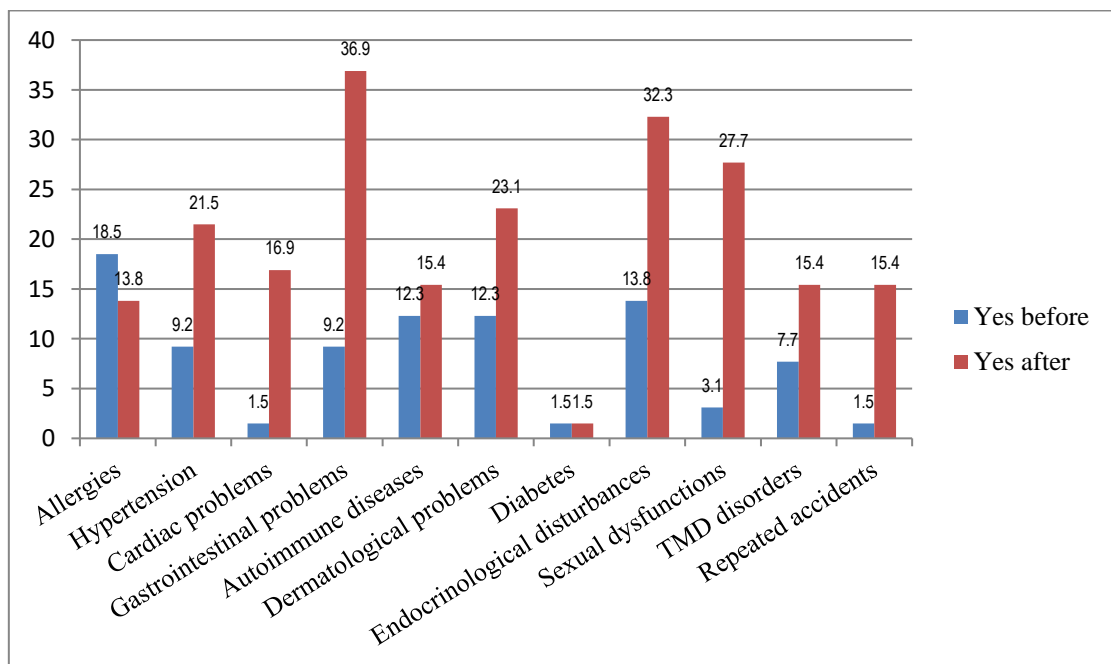


Figure 12A. Classifications, with Percentages affected, with respect to the Health Problems of Teachers (YES), from responses to Questionnaire No3 Reflecting both before and after the compulsory transfer to administrative roles

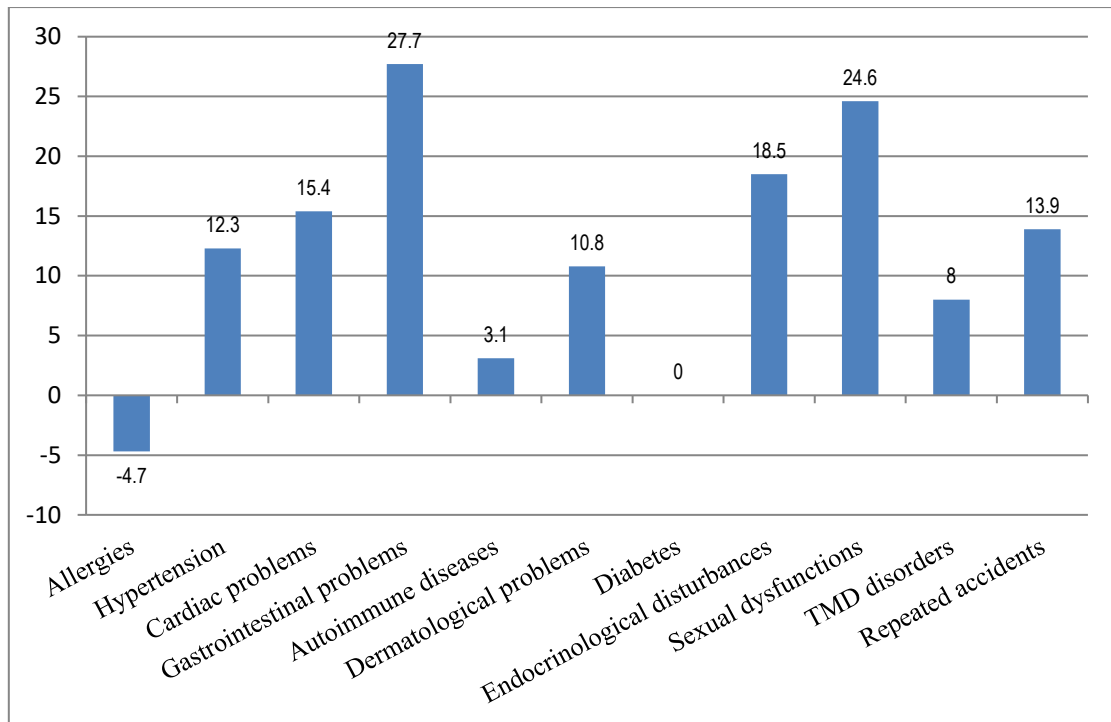


Figure 12B. Percentage increases with respect to the health problems of the Teachers (YES) from responses to Questionnaire No3 Measuring the change from before to after the compulsory transfer to administrative roles.

C. Comparisons between teachers who were in suspension of labour (I.S.O.L.) and teachers who had to be transferred to administration duties (T.T.A.D.)

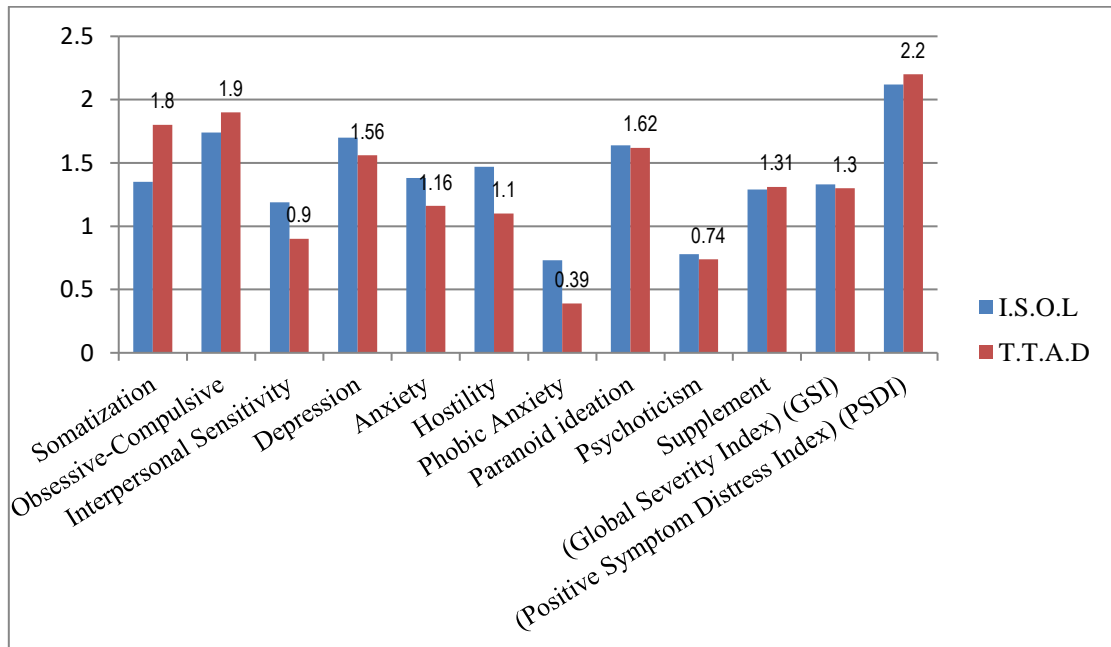


Figure 13. Comparisons of the mediums, from response to the SCL-90-R Questionnaires, between teachers in suspension of labour (I.S.O.L.), and teachers who were transferred to administration duties (T.T.A.D.).

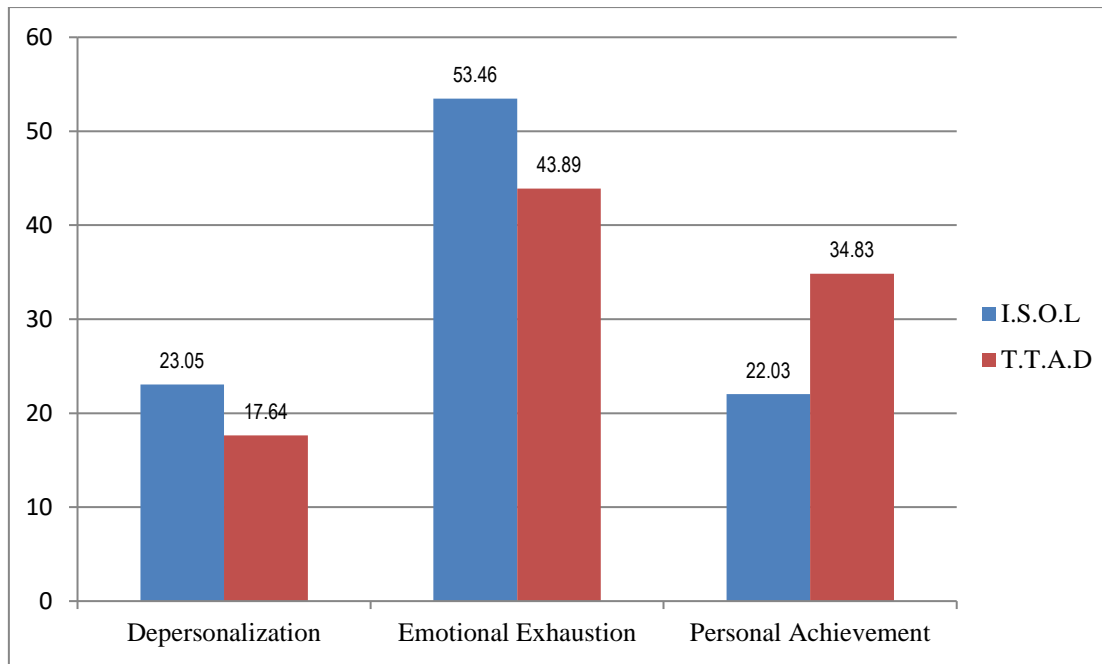


Figure 14 .Comparisons between the mediums, from responses to the Maslach Questionnaire, between teachers in suspension of labour and teachers (I.S.O.L.)who were transferred to administration duties (T.T.A.D).

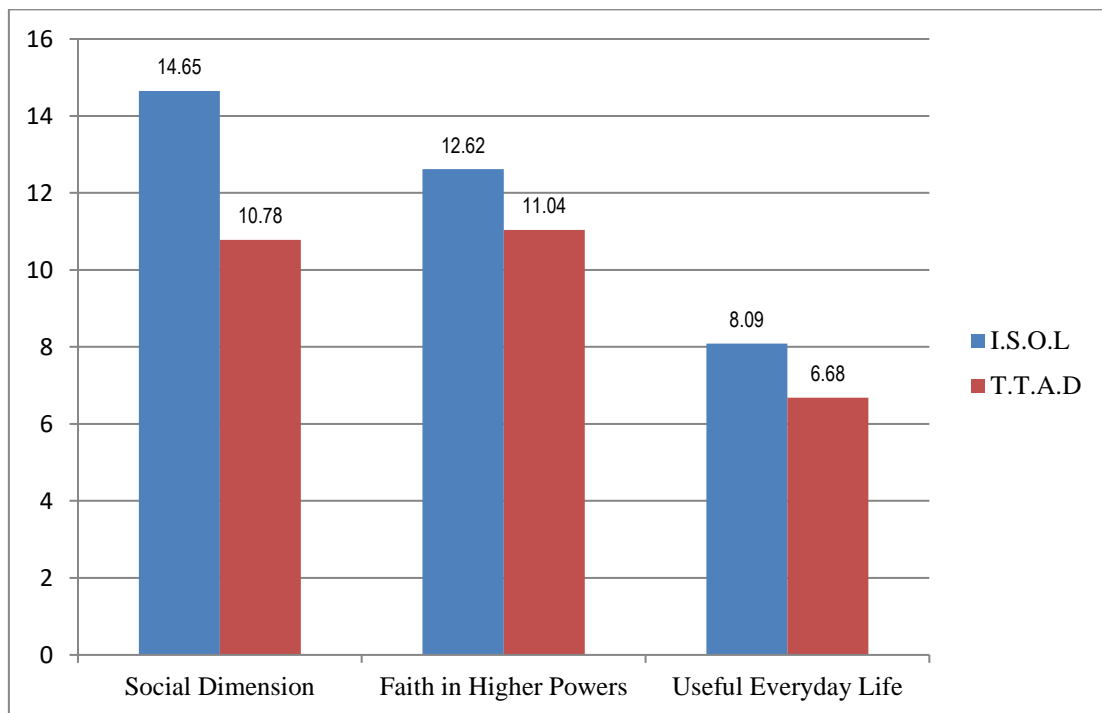
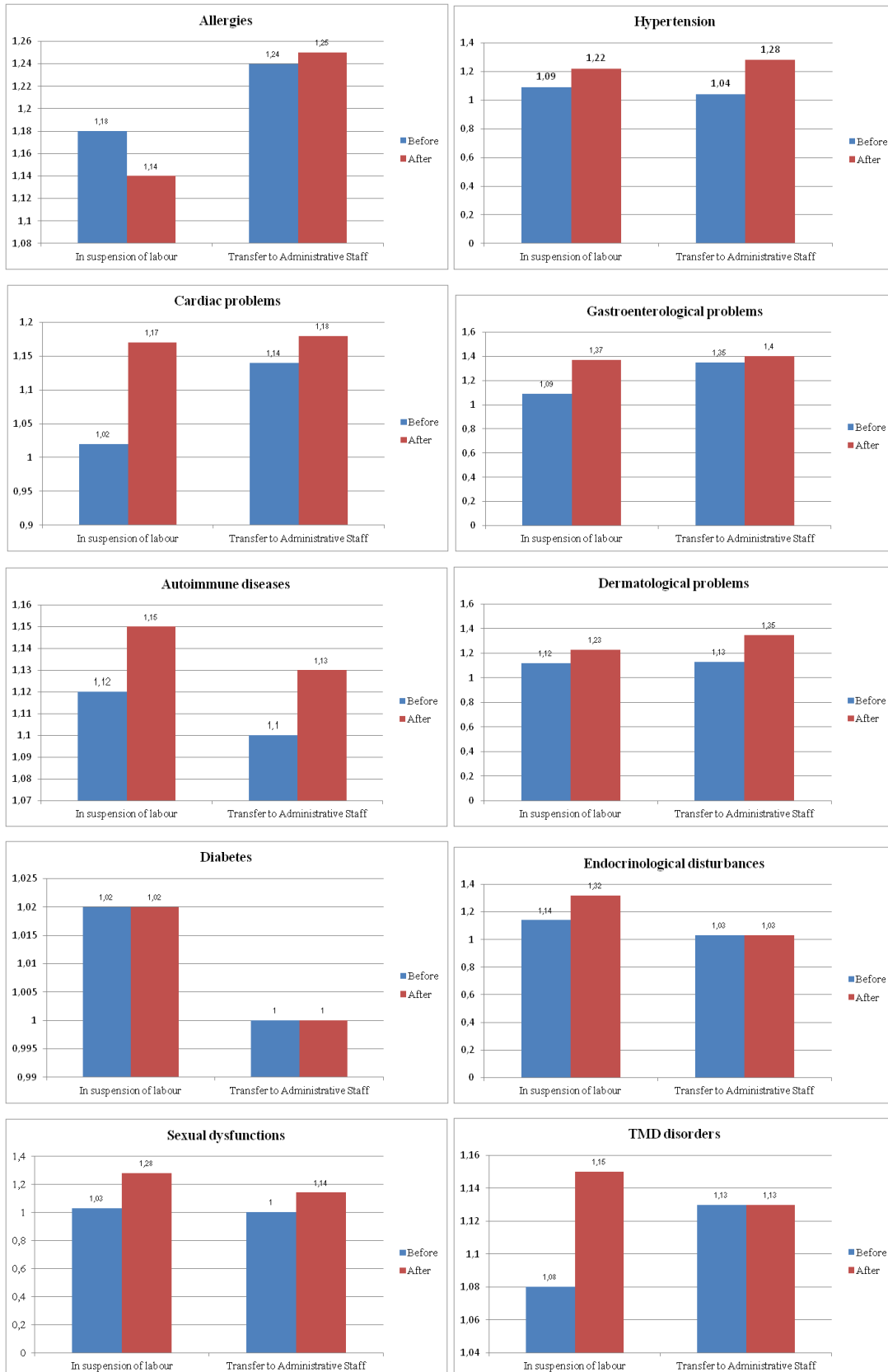


Figure 15. Comparisons of the mediums, from responses to the Questionnaire No2, between teachers in suspension of labour (I.S.O.L.) and teachers who were transferred to administration duties (T.T.A.D.).



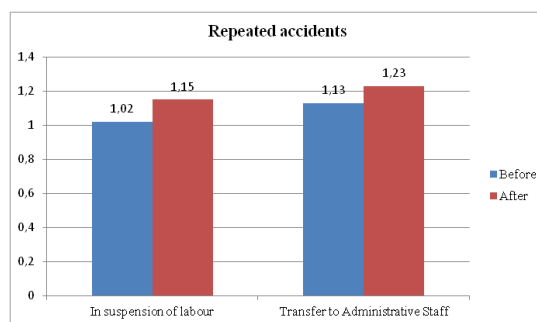


Figure 16. Deteriorating Health Problems of teachers in suspension of labour(I.S.O.L.) and teachers who were transferred to administration duties (T.T.A.D.)

4. DISCUSSION

There are many elements of this research which are original, as this kind of suspension of labour was something unprecedented in Greece. We identified similarities between the responses from suspended teachers and the responses from the teachers who were retained, with the effects and consequences of being compulsorily reassigned to an administrative role, including elements of moral harassment (mobbing) in the workplace^{14,15}. We have confirmed the negative impact of increased professional stress on the mental and physical health of the teacher population and we have shown that the level of negative effect increases with time and intensity. **We have illustrated a capacity to predict professional burnout, through exploring the extent and severity of symptoms that align with the development of psychopathology. (figure 1,2,3,7,8,9,13,14).** An important finding was **the positive role that Social Media Networks played, in coordinating and encouraging the engagements and responses of the two groups of teachers as a factor in encouraging and coordinating employee action (figure 5,11,15).** With respect to those teachers compulsorily transferred to administrative roles, the stressful situations created by this working environment were experienced as threatening and workers felt that they did not have the resources available to cope with the demands being made of them¹⁶. The results from applying the SCL-90 Symptom Checklist, suggest that employees who underwent compulsory transfer have been placed under a significant psychological burden. **(figure 1,2,3,**

Both the timing of the transfers, and the manner in which they were instituted, served to increase the negative impacts of this process of enforced mobility. There was no procedure designed to ensure consensus agreement or familiarity with and preparation for their new roles and the tasks these involved. The development came as a sudden and serious surprise and created feelings of panic and other emotions associated with sudden and unexpected loss¹⁷. The teachers only found out through television announcements and educational websites that they were losing their jobs, the work and lifestyle they had chosen. They experienced a sudden and violent dispossession, including a loss of and unexpected and unwelcome change to their professional identities, as part of a wider assault on and devaluing of their profession^{18,19,20,21}.

The consequences have been increased mental and physical stress, that has negatively impacted on their health (figure 4). The results show marginal increases with respect to most of the diseases being recorded (figure 6A,6B).

There are two central strands of findings that emerge from our interpretation of the data. Firstly, the clear association of chronic stress with physical manifestations. This reflects the findings of a range of medical research surveys^{22,23,24,25}. Secondly, a clear association between compulsory reassignment and a range of trauma and injury. The majority of the teachers who were transferred to administrative roles, who were forced into an unfamiliar occupational environment which they had to accept for their financial and professional survival, without their consent, experienced similar negative psychological symptoms to those of victims of mobbing. In a similar manner to such victims, they were driven to deregulate long-established internal balances and habits, which served to reduce their ability to respond effectively to the demands of both work and their everyday lives²⁶.

As such, they experienced a dysfunctional working environment, leading to toxic feelings of rage and mistrust, anxiety and insecurity about abilities to achieve goals, reduced motivation and negative moods, psychosomatic and mental fatigue, which manifested in long absences, the increased use of sick leave and early retirement.

The emergence of psychopathology among the majority of teachers who suffered from the first suspension of labour civil servants since 1911 needs to be understood as fundamentally shaped by the specific terms and conditions under which this was enforced. Prior to July 2013, a permanently appointed civil servant could only be threatened with the loss of their stable and permanent employment for reasons that related to criminal behaviour or disciplinary misconduct. Announcing the suspension of labour of 2,200 teachers was broadly viewed as a massive redundancy announcement.

The results of the research with respect to the Positive Symptom Disorder Index (PTSD) on the SCL-90 psychopathology scale, which measures the intensity of symptoms, exceeds the critical limit of 1.5, reaching 2.12. This demonstrates that the suspended teachers were more likely to be suffering from such psychopathological symptoms, than the general population (figure 7). More than 50% of respondents exceeded the critical threshold of 1.5 for the dimensions of 'Obscuration', 'Depression' and 'Paranoid Ideas'. Two further aspects were instrumental in contributing to conditions that led to such consequences - as to negative symptoms amongst the majority of suspended teachers. (figure 10). Firstly, the choice of timing as to the announcement of the suspension of labour. This was deliberately done at the end of July 2013, when schools were closed and while the majority of the country's teachers were on summer leave and taking vacations. This prevented any possibility of immediate reaction, communication and coordination between them, even the full sharing of vital information. Secondly, the manner in which the Ministry of Education made the announcement. They did so by naming teachers on their website, alongside teachers' personal information. This served to create feelings of rage, anger, shame and indignation, that had no appropriate outlet for expression²⁷. The levels of uncertainty and anxiety were only heightened by the fact that while the employee's rights and obligations under the suspension of labour regime were not clearly determined from the outset, it was clear that at the end of the 8 month period of suspension of labour permanent dismissal would occur, on the 22nd of March, 2014.

It is widely recognised that unemployment can lead to the cumulative rupture of people's social relations, both with respect to the world of work and with regard to personal and private relations with family, friends and others, beyond the work sphere.^{28,29}. Such environments easily and commonly lead to social exclusion³⁰. People lose their previous connections and social networks, and find it difficult or impossible to create or join others³¹. Such conditions of life are often experienced as forms of "social humiliation"³². Our research shows that such feelings were present in the majority of teachers who experienced the suspension of their labour as a "prolonged dismissal process". One which involved an initial reduction in pay (of 25%), to be followed 8 months later by dismissal and loss of all earnings - amounting to a process of being made unemployed. Previous conceptions and valuing of both work and leisure time can be destroyed for people through a process of 'breaking the time frame' that occurs when they are made unemployed, as this involves significant changes to their procedures, routines and allocations of time²⁷. What was once a routine focused on work and leisure valued in comparison with work, is significantly altered, to the point of potentially viewing a daily routine as dominated by a feeling of existing in a vacuum³³. It seems necessary to consider that the people who were under suspension of their labour were educators, and that teachers are likely to possess particular psychological characteristics. In Greece, teachers have a very strong and powerfully emotional and ideologically charged professional identity. Few professions continue to be so respected and valued by the general population, after their retirement, as teachers do. Few professions keep their references for many years in retirement, as long as the profession of teacher. Given such contexts, the suspension of labour, was viewed as an extreme act of material and moral devaluation of the profession. The country has experienced an ongoing process of steadily reducing labor costs in the education sector within wider contexts of fiscal adjustment. This has involved the creation of increasingly precarious labor relations through the expansion of flexible forms of employment and, above all, through the cultivation in public opinion of the belief that without further measures for the control and evaluation of teachers, they will be unable to achieve what is desired for their students in terms of teaching and learning (thus leading to the frustration of such expectations among the Greek population). Our research illustrates that, while the majority of suspended have won interim injunction measures in court that have permitted them to return to their schools to allow students to complete their courses, they nonetheless have suffered the highest rates of professional burnout in the Greek education system (figure 8,9). **This illustrates a very high burn out record, across all measured dimensions.** The incidence of emotional fatigue reaches 52% on a daily basis, while its weekly frequency exceeds 85%. That of depersonalization exceeds 36% on a daily basis, and exceeds 50% over a weekly period. On a weekly basis, personal fulfilment is recorded as occurring amongst 44.5% of the sample, though only one third say the same with regard to a monthly basis. Our research establishes that the very *process* involved in the suspension of labour, the way it was actually implemented, was a painful experience for the majority of teachers. (figure 12A,B). Its features as configured resemblance of work retention.

For both teachers who were suspended and those retained, this has created a transitional situation; from a position of relative security they face a horizon of insecurity and it is unclear as to likely future directions and orientations³⁴. For both categories of teacher, this enforced regime has involved violent changes to their work identities, changes that have not come about through employee choice but through imposition, externally, by others. Another common consequence involves impacts on daily routine - and this is true for those suspended, and those in legal dispute, organising protests and responses, making visits to relevant institutions, ministries and undertaking other engagements that relate to the changes enforced on them. Unlike many cases of redundancy, which tend to be individualised, the situations of mass suspension of labour and compulsory transfer that occurred here, were broadly collective in nature. Teachers experiences and the resultant consequences on their mental health, have been shaped by the sudden surprise of the measure, its violent application. These experiences of sudden loss were accompanied by feelings of mourning. As such, the damage suffered by the teachers was an accumulation of different factors, that far exceeded any financial loss and impact, with respect to salary (figure). These included, coming to terms with: different structures and demands on time, from the daily to the annual; the loss of social contacts, beyond those of the immediate household; the loss of a sense of collective purpose and achievement; the loss of

self-esteem, status and identity; the loss of long-established work and associated relations. Given such contexts of frustration and imposed change in their life plans, it is unsurprising to find a general pessimistic attitude to the future, formed among many of the teachers^{35,36}. This has occurred within the wider contexts and suffering of the economic crisis, which inevitably also negatively impacts on how the teachers have perceived both their present situation and likely futures. Additional financial burdens (e.g. of debt and loans), combined with this disruption of relational networks, in which the previous support offered by institutions that are no longer able to play their traditional role ceases to exist, only serves to exacerbate the stress and emotional exhaustion of the majority of these teachers. The devaluation of their accumulated knowledge and professional identity, the "humiliation" they have experienced as redundancy from the education sector, the sudden disappearance from their schools, and the associated loss of their "pride and dignity", negatively impacted on and destabilised their sense of self-esteem. Our research shows that such feelings of injustice are experienced with a high intensity that leads to deep psychological and physical pathology (under the dimension of Depersonalisation, on the Maslach Burnout Inventory – as per figure 14). While their suspension of labour is experienced as a collective condition, it is also a situation that isolates and marginalizes these teachers from the rest of the educational community. The Ministry of Education considers them unnecessary, the Ministry of Administrative Reform opposes their attempts to seek legal remedy, and the media focus is on "lazy" teachers. According to the media, they teach subjects and give out qualifications that are not needed and will only lead those studying and gaining them into unemployment. It seems that the trade unions are not capable of organising appropriate solidarity and/or strikes to support the teachers affected. Other staff still employed in education are silent and busy having to prepare evaluations of their colleagues.

There were interesting findings from our research that suggested positive developments. In this climate of isolation and disappointment, social networking tools and coordinating instruments were utilised in ways that served to bring workers, that were experiencing similar situations, together. These forms of educational and trade union type activism, using a variety of online social networking tools and usually targeting a younger generation of workers, unfolded outside of traditional unionism³⁷(figure 15). Our research showed that, in such mobilisation women played an important role, especially those who were married and had children and were the most educationally qualified. As such, the research confirms that beyond the obvious rupture of the bond that connects the individual with the world of his job and the social relations this involves, relationships within other environments are also broken, those with family, relatives and friends, in some cases even leading to social isolation,³¹because the loss of work is understood as a "social fall"^{30,35}.

Our research indicates that, with extremely high rates of occupational burnout being recorded, the teachers have experienced symptoms of burn-out at both psychological and behavioral levels (figure 13). Such negative impacts and resultant effects on emotional energy and commitment, negatively affect the full range of social relationships, both with respect to those connected to work and those with family, friends and other contacts. The negative impact of toxic emotions, the stress that accumulates daily on the individual, is transferred to their family, creating burdens for them also. Due to the teacher's experiences of psychological violence and the undermining of their professional status, the entire family suffers a deterioration in their quality of life, as its members suffer from the impacts on their health, social life and economic circumstances^{38,39}. The consequences of such a post-traumatic state is frequent, or indeed constant, stress, which then results in the development of intense biological responses, that themselves can then lead to chronic asthenia at both the psychological and physical level.

Our results show that the highest percentage increases, with respect to reported health problems (figure 16) .The most significant negative impacts on physical health, were experienced by women over forty-five years of age who had been married for more than ten years, and graduates of Technological Educational Institutes.⁴⁰The influence of gender is understandable, given that unemployment amongst women tends to be particularly high in an economic crisis^{41,42}. Further, particularly given such contexts of wide unemployment, women are among the most vulnerable sections of the population. It would also seem that they suffered the most, in emotional terms, from the loss of their professional identity in education. Many of the suspended teachers, had their working conditions substantially change, being violently forced to enter the 'precariat', thus being exposed to the risks associated with being a precarious worker, being at risk of losing their insecure employment at any time, and ending up in positions of social exclusion and poverty⁴³. Their psychological and physical health was adversely affected and such professional burnout was identified as, in part, caused by State harassment, with the actions of the State experienced by the teachers as 'mobbing'. Yet, at the same time, processes of positive transformation took place, that involved the creation and evolution of new individual and collective subjectivities and relations.

In our research we investigated whether correlations and predictors were present when exploring the results from our applications of the SCL-90 Psychopathology scale and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Our research suggests that the onset of psychopathology can be predicted by the existence and worsening of the symptoms of professional burnout. There is a clear correlation The SCL-90 Psychopathology scale, when the General Symptom Index and the Positive Symptom Disorder Index (PTSD) which is the measure of the intensity of the manifestation of symptomatology, appeared pathological, correlates with the dimensions of depersonalization of emotional exhaustion and the personal achievement of the Maslach Questionnaire. (figure 7,8). When an employee feels that his workplace has failed to meet their responsibilities and obligations, this serves to create feelings of anger, dissatisfaction and mistrust. When that employer is

the state itself, such feelings may be directed against the institutional pillars. They have invested in what they were led to believe would be a lifelong relationship with the state, felt themselves to be part of the state and expected reciprocity in terms of steady, permanent and appropriately rewarding employment. With the violation of this implied contract, by those who they feel should be protecting them as valued servants and supporters of the state's institutions (such as the ministries of education and justice), they feel betrayed - "as if they were a child who was abused by his family". Given their subsequent reactions of anger, cynicism and hostility, there is a risk that they adopt extreme ideological and political positions and as such, become vulnerable to the influence of demagogues. Psychologically, anger and cynicism are key components of professional burnout. In a similar manner, they were also questioning their role as an educator, with the emotional bond and trust, built up through their pedagogical work - from the time of their own studies through their teaching employment, now having been destroyed.

The nature and course of the instituted reforms was primarily determined by the need for rapid fiscal adjustment and the state did not apply educational criteria to the supposedly strategic goal. The suspension of the teachers' labour, affecting public education, raised ideological and political questions with respect to the role of public and social services and the wider roles of the state in society. The contexts and demands of the capitalist crisis, meant that the institutions of the state were increasingly focused on the need for economic growth and the accumulation of profit, leading to cuts and terminations of social functions and policies designed to protect the population.

To be creative, human relationships are dependent on reciprocity and as such, teachers are not capable of engaging in creative teaching and learning, unless they believe they are valued both by their pupils and by their employer – the state. Such reciprocity-based relationships were destroyed by the introduction and implementation of the suspension of labour measures. The resultant feelings of emotional disengagement and stigmatization, inevitably led to a loss of motivation. The levels of cynicism and hostility that developed in these contexts reflected the severity of the job cuts and insecurity experienced, as well as the degradation of working conditions and the anticipated effects of the restructuring being attempted. These "angry" people, who had not only lost their jobs, but also their sense of self-worth and value, began to turn against the government, believing it had destroyed their lives and careers. Based on their personal experiences, reinforced by their understandings of media coverage, they began to view the very political life and institutions of the country (political parties, trade unions, governments) as the problem, as their enemies.

The interestingly positive finding of our research involves the moves towards self-determination and collective organising, as the affected teachers self-organised through the use of social media, allying themselves with supportive trade unionists and political actors, to demand political change. As such, many of the teachers affected by the suspension of labour measures, have found themselves forced into taking actions and organising in ways that actually speak to their emancipation. For them, the notions that politics has no place in schools and that education is or should be neutral have been seriously called into question. Being forced into negative situations ended up providing many of the teachers with the impetus to "take their lives back", with the result being that they began to make decisions about their lives for themselves. As such, many have now experienced process of reflection and action that are aimed at transforming existing structures, relationships and ways of communication. They have become activists, trade unionists and engaged political subjects, engaged in contributing to the contemporary political life of the country in ways that can shape its future.

Being put in a position of having nothing to lose, has led them to develop a level of freedom of thought and action that speaks to the responsibilities associated with a genuinely, critical or radical, democratic ethos⁴⁴. They fought for solidarity with both other workers and students and set up networks of mutual support. We would suggest that there would be considerable benefit in further research being undertaken that would explore if these collectives have been successful in developing processes of critical awareness that can contribute to the sustained effort necessary for engaging in struggles to create a fairer and more just society and world.

Our comparative study, which sampled and compared the majority of the teachers who were suspended and the minority (selected through the application of social criteria) who were compulsorily transferred to administrative roles, has illustrated that both groups showed a marked appearance of, and deterioration in, both physical and mental health problems, that are strongly associated with the many incidences of chronic stress that our research also uncovered. Our research provides evidence that the sudden and enforced changes to working environment involved, particularly when allied to – for many - the likelihood of eventual dismissal, led to the emergence of psychopathology. Both the significant number of symptoms reported and the intensity with which they occurred, with respect to both groups of teachers, would appear to be a useful predictor of occupational burnout syndrome, which had a high incidence among both categories. (figure 2,3, 8,9, 13). The extent of the deterioration reported, with respect to both mental and physical health, from the period before the measures were introduced, to that afterwards, confirms the deeply negative impacts of work-related stress on human health. (figure 16).

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this research 405 teachers, out of the total 2200 effected (19% of the sample), were investigated. We have confirmed the negative impact of increased professional stress on the mental and physical health of the teacher population and we have

shown that the level of negative effect increases with time and intensity. The significance of this research is that the findings are indicative of the total effects of burnout, that correlate psychological and health issues. By creating the tools for this, it can open future further investigations on the impact of educational policies on teachers.

In conclusion, we would strongly suggest that any future educational reforms take place after consultation and agreement with employees that will be affected, rather than by way of sudden and surprising announcement, with all the negative consequences that we have illustrated follow from adopting such an approach.

The process for transferring employees is in danger of being perceived as harassment, to the point of it being viewed as mobbing in the workplace, with all the negative impacts that follow from that, including a deterioration in the public services being provided. It would be more effective to shift to a process of voluntary transfer, with clarity as to relevant conditions and selection procedure provided in advance, and options provided to employees, who would only move role and conditions where this was their choice. At the same time, the area of service provision to which employees are to be moved, needs to be organizationally prepared for a period of adaptation, in which employees whose previous experience is with respect to another service, come to terms with the requirements of their new roles. There is a need, at the national level, for properly planned, monitored and evaluated training programs to be provided as part of the transfer process^{45,46}.

Through our research, exploring the impacts on teachers affected by the announcement and implementation of the historically important measures suspending their labour in 2013, we have found a disproportionately negative set of consequences, than needed have been the case, given the solutions that were finally reached. In 2015 the government was changed and the teachers were back to their schools. Considerable negative impacts on both physical and mental health were suffered by the majority of teachers, compounded by what they viewed as an attack on their deeply rooted professional identities and commitment to their work in education. Many of the teachers have engaged in a journey that has taken them from initial despair, through their development of collective responses and action, to vindication, in what became a historic victory for the Greek education movement. Given an ongoing environment of profound economic crisis, with attendant precarious labor relations becoming increasingly dominant in the field of education, these teacher's historical victory will become a reference point for future educational struggles.

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