

KUWAITI TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF VOICE HANDICAP

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Summary: Objectives. To investigate the effects of factors of age, gender, level of education, experience, and class level taught on Kuwaiti teachers' perception of voice handicap using the Arabic version of the Voice handicap Index (VHI-Arab); and to compare Kuwaiti teachers' mean VHI scores with those of Jordanian and Emirati teachers.

Methods. A cross sectional survey design study. A total of 460 participants (100 controls and 360 teachers) participated in this study completed the paper copy of the VHI-Arab. 360 teachers, 180 males and 180 females, Age range (20-50 yrs) from sixty schools in six Kuwaiti districts were recruited. Teachers' VHI scores were compared to 100 non-occupational voice users, (50 males and 50 females with age range 18-42 yrs).

Results. Female teachers scored significantly higher than males in all subscales (i.e. Physical $p=.02$, Emotional $P=.007$, Total $p=.017$), except of functional subscale ($p=.147$). Elementary school teachers scored significantly higher than teachers of other levels (mid and high school) in all VHI subscales (Physical $p=.047$, Emotional $P=.01$, Total $p=.039$), except of functional subscale ($p=.47$). Jordanian teachers mean score was higher than Kuwaiti and Emirati teachers in all VHI subscales.

Conclusions. Teachers with better teaching environment scored better on voice handicap index. Gender differences were found in all the studied Arabic nationalities. Teachers of priority of attention were female teachers of the elementary level in particular.

Key Words: Occupational voice users-Occupational health- Perception of handicap- Teachers-Voice Handicap Index (VHI-Arab).