



GETTING OLDER BUT WORKING WITH FOREVER YOUNG: IMPLICATIONS OF AN AGING WORKFORCE IN KINDERGARTEN AND NURSERY SCHOOL GRADE.

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INTRODUCTION: Italian educational system is facing an increasing aging trend of the teaching staff (OCSE, 2014). This phenomenon is of primary interest in the kindergarten and nursery school grade where job's relational, cognitive and physical demands, are central dimensions in the daily care of young children (Macciocu et al., 2005). As this job includes specific sources of stress — such as having to deal with parents, insufficient teacher-child ratio, time pressure, and performing more non-teaching task (even physical), as nursing young children — an increase in the frequency of illness and several psycho-physical health symptoms, could undermine the working-life quality.

AIM: Given the strictly link between teacher wellbeing and children cognitive and emotional development, this study aims at understanding how psychological and physical wellbeing change across age and within professional groups (423 nursery and 304 kindergarten teachers).

METHODS: a self-reported questionnaire including:

- a demographic section
- Maslach Burnout Inventory Education Survey (it. Version: Sirigatti, Stefanile, 1993);
- Patient Health Questionnaire (it. Version PHQ- 9, Mazzotti et al., 2003);
- Work Ability Index (it. Version Costa et al., 2005);
- Muscle-skeletal Pain (it. Version Chronic Pain Grade, Salaffi et al, 2006).

RESULTS: Descriptive analysis and two-way ANOVAs were performed for each outcome variable.

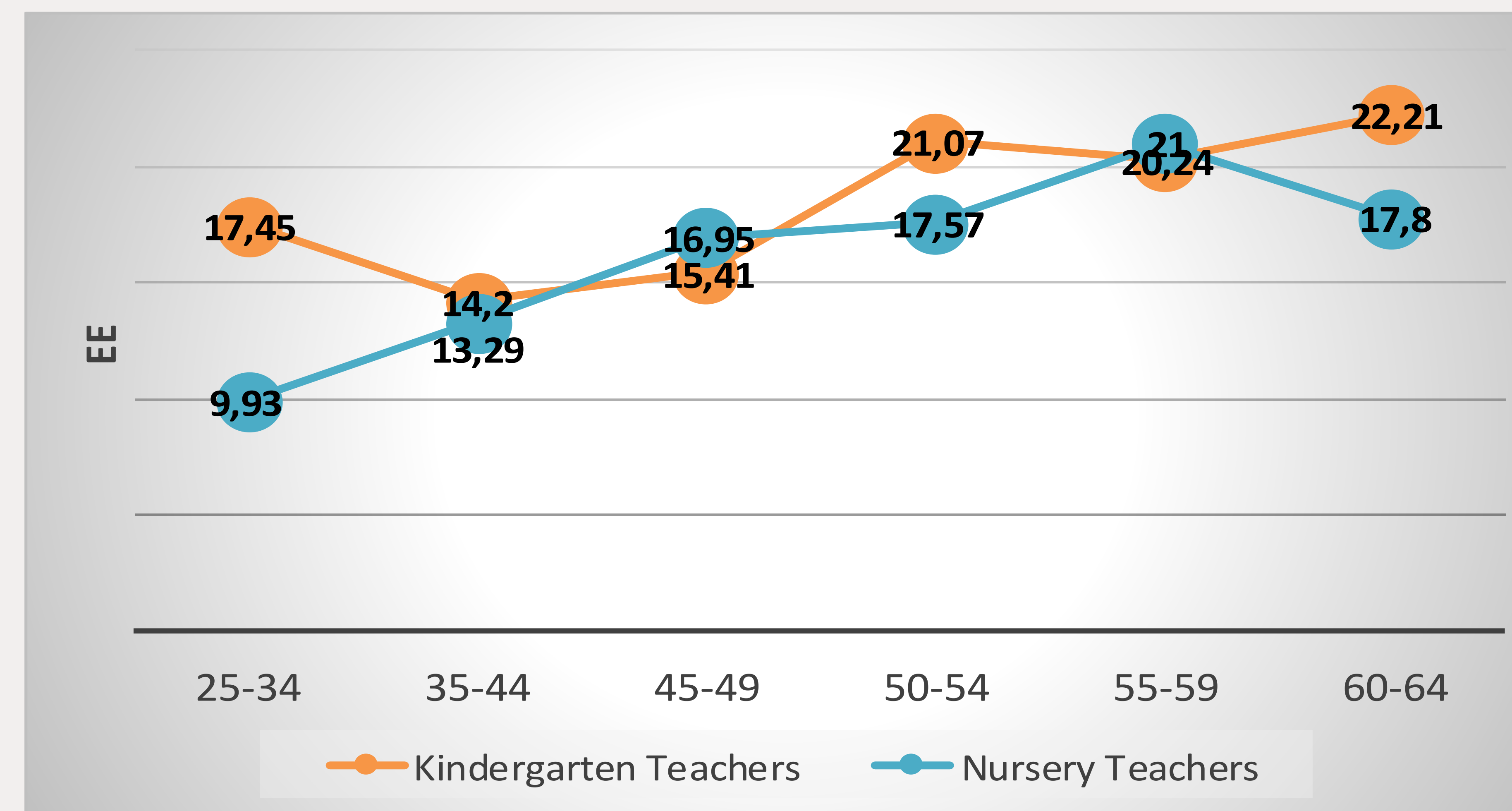


Figure 1 - Mean Emotional Exhaustion scores in different age groups according to role

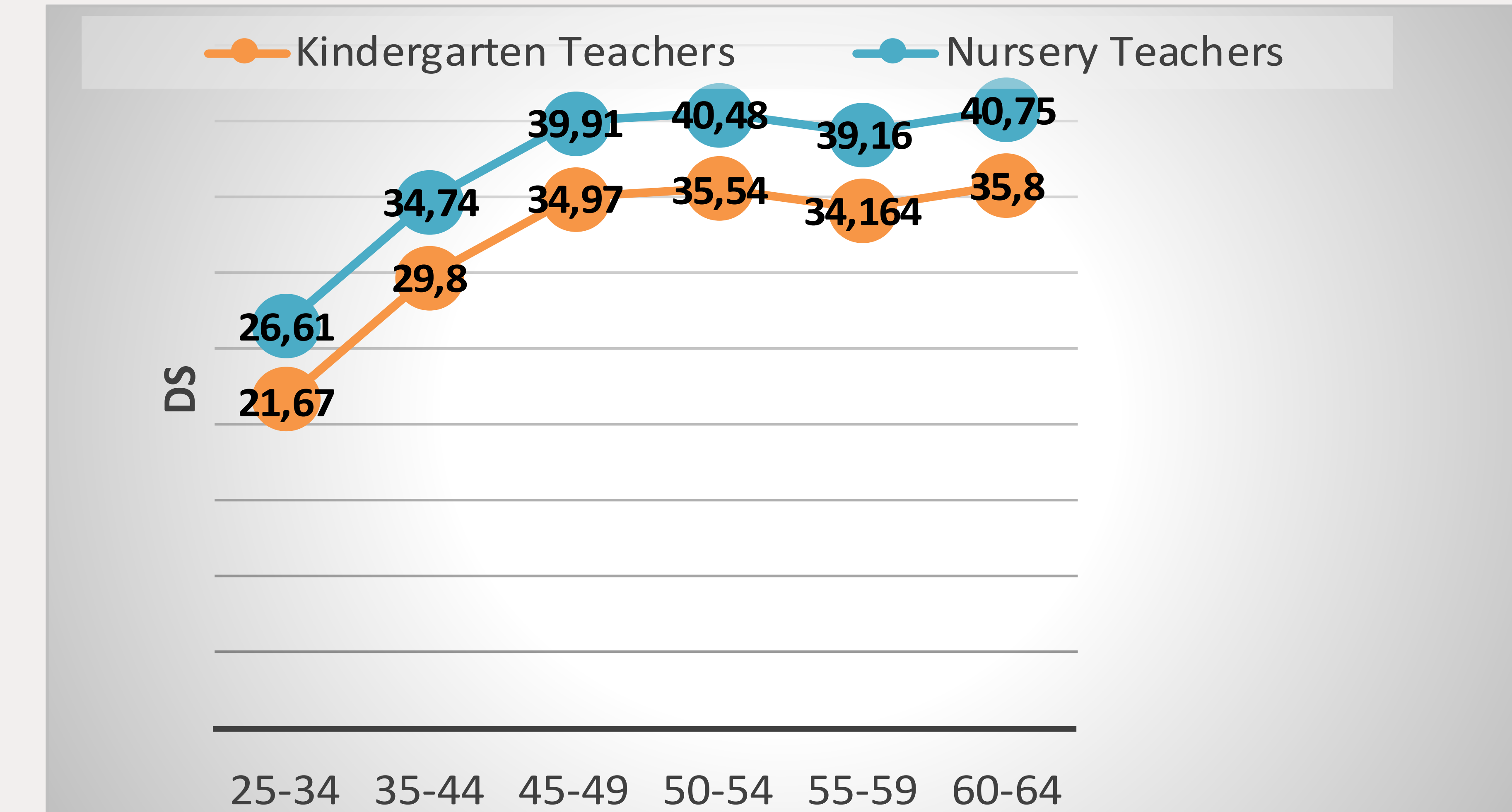


Figure 4 - Mean Disability Score in different age groups according to role

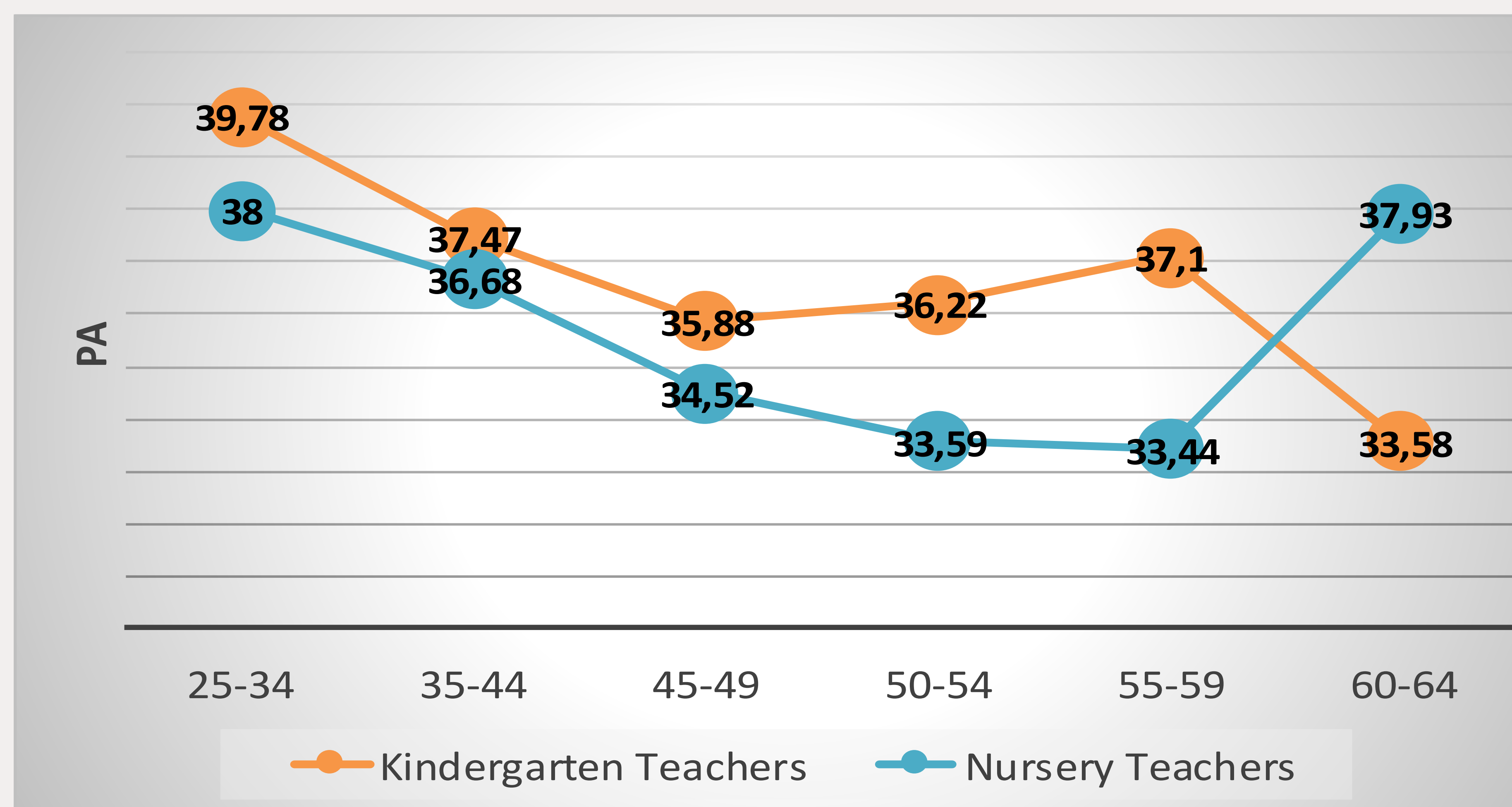


Figure 2 - Mean Personal Accomplishment scores in different age groups according to role

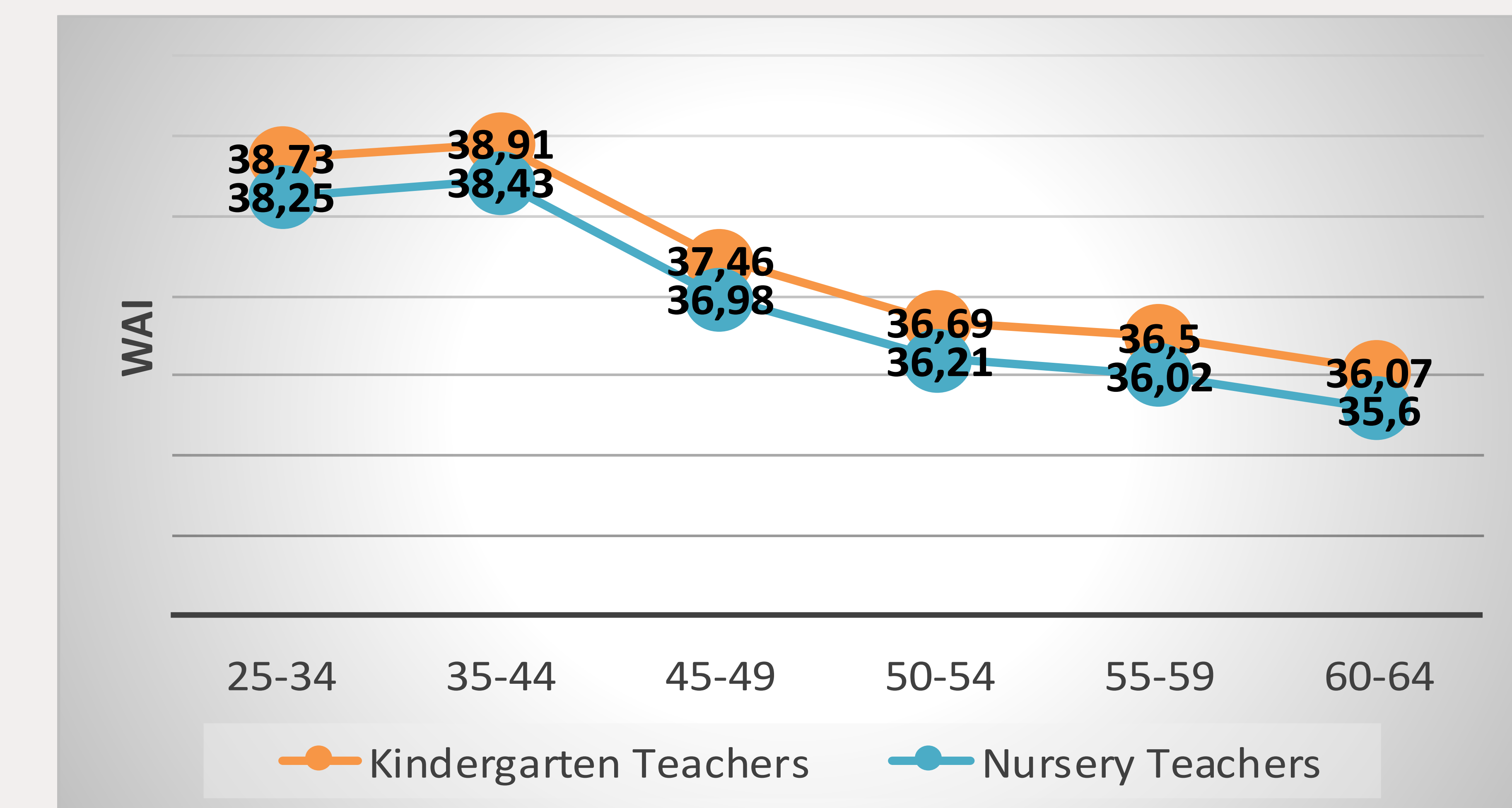


Figure 5- Mean Work Ability Index scores in different age groups according to role

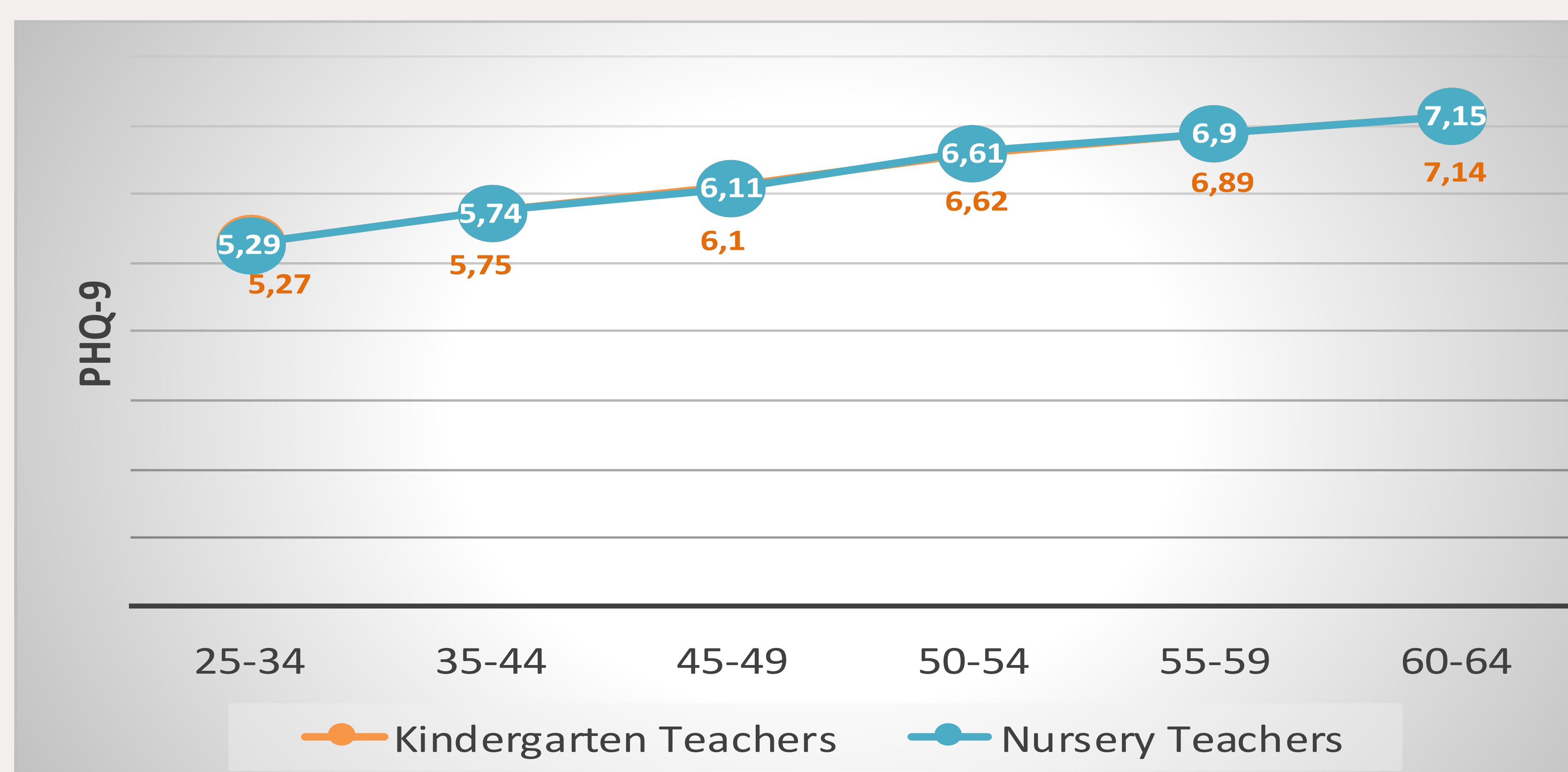


Figure 3- Mean Depressive symptoms (PHQ-9) scores in different age groups according to role

	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	NURSERY TEACHERS
GENDER	Women: n. 304 (4.9%) Men: n. 4 (0.3%)	Women: n. 423 (99.3%) Men: n. 13 (13.1%)
AGE	25-34: 4.9% 35-44: 26.6% 45-49: 15.3% 50-54: 12.0% 55-59: 14.9% 60-64: 7.1%	25-34: 3.1% 35-44: 11.7% 45-49: 16.0% 50-54: 21.6% 55-59: 30.8% 60-64: 16.9%
LENGHT OF SERVICE IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR (YEARS)	< 10: 8.1% 10-20: 36% 21-30: 26% 31-42: 29.9%	< 10: 7.3% 10-20:16% 21-30:24.9% 31-42: 51.9%
JOB CONTRACT	Full time: 90.9% Part Time: 9.1%	Full Time: 98.1% Part Time: 1.9%

CONCLUSION: Results indicate a specific trend in the levels of psycho-physical wellbeing in relation to age and professional task: burnout and depression worsen as age increases, there's a deterioration of the physical health and the ability to cope with the physical demanding work feature, confirming other studies (Kinnuen, Parkatti, Rasku, 1994;McGrath, Huntington 2007). Emotional Exhaustion is higher among Nursery younger (25-34) and the oldest teachers, however, Personal Accomplishment is higher among Kindergarten teachers but it significantly declines in the older subgroup. At the same time, muscle-skeletal pain affects more Nursery teachers than the Kindergarten ones, due to specific physical demands that cannot be reduced in the educational context.

These findings highlight the specific vulnerability of the aging workers in the educational sector, giving insights for future preventive intervention in OHP aiming at reduce the physical discomfort that, as recent studies underly, could mediate the impact of age on stress-related symptoms (Sottimano, Guidetti, 2014).