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Occupational Psychological Risks Among Higher Education Professors: A Field Study In Selected Faculties At The University Of Oum El-Bouaghi

Abstract

This Study İnvestigates The Exposure Of Higher Education Professors İn Selected Faculties At The University Of Oum El-Bouaghi To Occupational Psychological Risks. A 38-İtem Questionnaire Covering Four Dimensions Was Administered To 107 Professors From The Faculties Of Humanities And Social Sciences, Economic Sciences, And Exact And Natural And Life Sciences. Using A Descriptive Design, Data Were Analyzed With Weighted Mean And Percentage Weight. Results Show A Moderate Overall Exposure To Occupational Psychological Risks (Mean = 1.82; 60.66 %), With Moderate Levels Of Occupational Stress (2.02; 67.33 %) And Work-Related Fatigue (2.00; 66.66 %). Psychological Burnout (1.66; 55.33 %) And Moral Harassment (1.44; 48 %) Remain Low. The Study Recommends İmproving Working Conditions, Scheduling Flexibility, And Preventive Support Programs To Reduce These Risks And Protect Professors' Mental And Physical Health, Thereby Enhancing Their Well-Being And Sustaining Educational Quality.

Keywords: *Occupational Psychological Risks, Occupational Stress, Work Fatigue, Moral Harassment, Psychological Burnout, Higher Education Professors*

Yükseköğretim Öğretim Elemanları Arasında Mesleki Psikolojik Riskler: Oum El-Bouaghi Üniversitesi'nin Seçilmiş Fakültelerinde Bir Saha Çalışması

Öz

Bu çalışma, Oum El-Bouaghi Üniversitesi'nin seçilmiş fakültelerinde görev yapan yükseköğretim öğretim elemanlarının mesleki psikolojik risklere maruziyetini incelemektedir. Dört boyuta yayılan 38 maddelik bir anket, Beşeri ve Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, İktisadi Bilimler Fakültesi ile Fen ve Doğa Bilimleri Fakültesi'nden 107 öğretim elemanına uygulanmıştır. Betimsel bir desen kullanılarak veriler, ağırlıklı ortalama ve yüzde ağırlığı yöntemleriyle analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, öğretim elemanlarının mesleki psikolojik risklere genel olarak orta düzeyde maruz kaldığını göstermektedir (ortalama = 1.82; %60,66). Bu kapsamda, mesleki stres (2.02; %67,33) ve işle ilişkili yorgunluk (2.00; %66,66) orta düzeyde; psikolojik tükenmişlik (1.66; %55,33) ve manevi taciz (1.44; %48) ise düşük düzeyde bulunmuştur. Çalışma, bu riskleri azaltmak ve öğretim elemanlarının ruhsal ve bedensel sağlığını korumak amacıyla çalışma koşullarının iyileştirilmesi, ders programlarında esneklik sağlanması ve önleyici destek programlarının uygulanmasını önermektedir. Bu önlemler, öğretim elemanlarının iyi oluşunu güçlendirecek ve eğitimin kalitesinin sürdürülmesine katkıda bulunacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Mesleki Psikolojik Riskler, Mesleki Stres, İşle İlişkili Yorgunluk, Manevi Taciz, Psikolojik Tükenmişlik, Yükseköğretim Öğretim Elemanları*

Introduction

The education sector is one of the key contributors to societal advancement and progress. It is also considered one of the noblest and most challenging professions. The International Labour Organization has affirmed this, classifying teaching as one of the occupations with the highest levels of pressure. This is largely due to numerous stress-inducing factors within the educational environment. Some of these stem from the teacher's own personality, which determines their ability to adapt to the rapid and significant changes in education and its institutions, along with the decisions, regulations, and laws that govern their work. Other factors relate to the external social environment in which the teacher lives and the extent to which it values their role and the importance of education (Elwahshi, 2020). This reality exposes university professors to various occupational psychological risks that affect both their mental and physical health as well as the overall quality of education. This is especially true for higher-education faculty, given the demands of their role: continuous teaching, ongoing scientific research to ensure academic advancement and promotion, competition with peers, the need to keep pace with continuous technological changes and modern teaching methods, and the challenge of balancing work and social life. All these factors increase their susceptibility to a

range of psychological risks such as occupational stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, violence, burnout, and moral harassment.

Several reports confirm that stress levels have risen across professions, including university teaching. For professors, teaching has become a growing source of stress because of increased working hours, a growing volume of exam papers requiring correction, the obligation to publish and print research, and the need to manage large and diverse student populations. Additionally, professors face dense curricula, a lack of resources that hinder their work, and strict administrative supervision—all of which compel them to struggle to meet their professional responsibilities. At the same time, attention and support for higher-education faculty have declined, despite their essential role in the university system. Their responsibilities go beyond delivering knowledge and information; they also contribute to the advancement of scientific research and the training of professional competencies through their academic experience and high qualifications.

When we talk about occupational psychological risks, we refer to all the conditions surrounding a worker in the workplace that may, over time, harm their mental and physical health (Ben Amiour, 2023). According to Skeel (Sekil, 2023), the main psychological risks faced by workers include job stress, violence, moral harassment, depression, and burnout. The emergence of these risks is attributed to several factors, including how work is organized, the working conditions, resources, duration of work, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors—as well as the personal life of the worker (AChour & Almulayhi, 2024). These risks can be categorized into three main groups:

***Individual factors**, such as a tendency toward pessimism, feelings of incompetence, and low self-confidence;

***Organizational factors**, such as poor communication, role conflict, goal discrepancies, and lack of incentives; and

***Environmental factors**, including widespread conflict, economic, technological, political, and social problems.

The nature of the work of university professors, as well as their social status, is distinct compared to other professions. This distinction stems from the considerable effort they invest to reach their position—preparing for master's and doctoral degrees, conducting scientific research, and attending academic conferences. In addition, they face challenges such as the inadequacy of their salaries to meet daily living needs and the complexity of social relationships with department heads, deans, colleagues, and students, all of which impact their professional

adjustment (Attallah Hussein, 2014). They also bear responsibilities such as lesson preparation, exam printing and grading within tight deadlines, and keeping up with the latest developments in higher education. These developments increasingly demand a shift toward more interactive teaching methods, the adoption of distance education, and the transition to digitalization, among other changes. All these factors make higher-education faculty more vulnerable to occupational psychological risks than those in many other professions. Given the sensitivity of the education sector, which is inherently linked to all other sectors, it is necessary to give due attention to its human capital, especially university professors, who are the backbone of elevating universities to the ranks of renowned global institutions. This entails providing a healthy environment free from factors that could negatively affect their mental and physical well-being, as this has direct repercussions on the university's standing and the quality of its education, and even on students' psychological health and development, since professors are in closest contact with them.

In light of the importance of this topic, and through our review of theoretical literature and previous studies, we found that while some research has addressed occupational psychological risks among university professors, such studies remain scarce. The few studies available have mostly examined psychosocial risks in general. For example, Bouzourane (2024) discussed key psychosocial risks at work, their associated elements, the reasons behind their emergence, and the contributing factors—such as poor working conditions, organizational issues, and interpersonal relationships—and highlighted strategies for preventing these risks in the workplace.

Meanwhile, Allou (2025) aimed to explore the extent to which organizational working conditions predict psychosocial risks among university professors. The findings indicated that organizational factors—such as work planning, time management, and task management—are strong indicators and predictors of occupational psychological risks in this population.

Other studies have focused on specific types of occupational psychological risks among higher-education faculty. For instance, Draâou and Meziane (2018) aimed to identify levels of professional fatigue among university professors and found moderate levels of fatigue among teaching faculty and high levels among administrative faculty, due to the additional tasks they perform. The study also noted no gender-based differences but found age-based differences in fatigue levels. Similarly, Ferroum and K'aouan (2023) assessed stress levels among university professors and found moderate levels across all dimensions (physical, psychological, and behavioral), with no statistically significant differences in stress based on demographic variables such as gender, marital status, or academic rank.

There are also studies focusing on occupational stress among higher-education faculty. For example, Al-Marsoumi (2019) investigated the level and sources of professional stress among university professors and found a low level of occupational stress, despite challenging economic, security, political, social, and professional conditions. The study also showed no significant differences in stress levels based on academic rank, marital status, gender, job type, or age, though stress levels varied by department—with the Departments of Medical Laboratory Techniques and Civil Engineering reporting the highest stress, and the Departments of Physical Education and Computer Engineering reporting the lowest.

In addition, Attallah Hussein (2014) examined the real causes contributing to increased occupational stress among university professors and found that lack of job security, student absenteeism, and administrative burdens significantly increase stress levels and hinder professors' research and creative productivity.

Studies focusing specifically on psychological burnout among higher-education professors are relatively scarce, especially when compared to the volume of research addressing burnout at other educational levels. Among the few available studies is that of Mallal and Mahrazi (2018), whose results showed that university professors experience moderate levels of burnout, with no statistically significant gender differences but significant differences based on academic discipline. Similarly, Labiadh (2021) revealed a moderate degree of burnout among professors, with emotional exhaustion being the most prominent dimension. This was attributed to the significant effort professors exert in their work environment, including interactions with students, colleagues, and administration, as well as the economic, social, and familial burdens they bear. The study also showed gender-based differences, indicating that female professors are more susceptible to burnout, while no significant differences were found based on marital status. Another study by Brakhlia, Djellab, and Bounouika confirmed a statistically significant correlation at the 0.01 level between psychological burnout and the emergence of psychosomatic symptoms among university professors. It found no gender-based differences in overall burnout or psychosomatic symptoms, but significant differences related to professional experience in terms of burnout.

Regarding moral harassment among university professors, few empirical studies are available. Most existing research is general and theoretical, addressing moral harassment among employees across various sectors (Abdalghani, Mesbah, & Bounouika, 2023). Notable among these is the work of Khenouna (2022), which highlighted the dangers of moral harassment on workers' physical and mental health while identifying the most common forms

of harassment in the Algerian professional environment. One of the very few empirical studies focusing on the university context is that of Hiouani, Merzougui, and Nekbil (2025), who evaluated the perceived level of workplace harassment among university faculty in the Department of Psychology. Their results showed a moderate level of perceived harassment, with the "damage to reputation" dimension scoring the highest. All other dimensions related to workplace harassment also scored at a moderate level.

Overall, most of these studies agree that higher-education professors experience various levels of occupational psychological risks stemming from multiple sources—primarily working conditions such as excessive workload and frequent job-related changes. These challenges lead to psychological strain that impacts their work performance and gives rise to a range of negative behaviors such as frequent absences, lack of motivation, excessive leave requests, resistance to change, and job disengagement.

Based on the above, the present study aims to uncover the level of exposure of higher-education professors in selected faculties at the University of Oum El-Bouaghi to occupational psychological risks by addressing the following research questions:

*What is the level of exposure of higher-education professors at selected faculties of the University of Oum El-Bouaghi to occupational psychological risks (occupational stress, work fatigue, moral harassment, psychological burnout) according to their own estimations?

*What are the proposed solutions for reducing the occupational psychological risks faced by higher-education professors?

1. Importance of the Study

The current study draws its significance from the importance of the subject itself. Occupational psychological risks have become some of the most pressing concerns across all sectors, especially in higher education and particularly among university professors. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on these risks and raise awareness within the academic community regarding their negative impact—not only on professors' mental and physical health, but also on university institutions as a whole. The significance of this study can be outlined as follows:

*It represents a scientific contribution to Algerian academic literature by highlighting a crucial topic that has not yet received comprehensive attention—specifically, the full range of occupational psychological risks faced by higher education professors.

*It provides university administrators with accurate statistical information about the most common psychological risks encountered by faculty, enabling them to design preventive strategies and offer holistic support to improve mental health.

*It opens the door for future researchers to explore the topic further, from multiple perspectives and across other sectors, faculties, and specializations not covered in this study.

*It offers practical recommendations to higher education authorities and university administrators to help reduce the occupational psychological risks faced by professors—mainly through improving working conditions and creating a positive work environment (AChour & Almulayhi, 2024; Ben Amiour, 2023; Bouzourane, 2024; Elwahshi, 2020).

2. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

*Identify the level of exposure of higher education professors in selected faculties at the University of Oum El Bouaghi to occupational psychological risks (occupational stress, work fatigue, moral harassment, and psychological burnout), according to their own assessments.

*Provide proposals and recommendations to help reduce these occupational psychological risks among university professors.

3. Scope of the Study

The current study is limited to determining the level of exposure to occupational psychological risks among higher education professors—based on their own assessments—in selected faculties at the University of Oum El Bouaghi (specifically, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Economic Sciences, and the Faculty of Exact Sciences) during the 2024–2025 academic year. The study also proposes recommendations for reducing exposure to such risks.

4. Definition of Study Concepts

This section presents key concepts related to the topic of the study.

4.1. Occupational Psychological Risks

Work-related threats that, over time, may negatively affect a university professor's mental and physical health and ultimately deteriorate performance. In this study, they comprise occupational stress, work fatigue, moral harassment, and psychological burnout (AChour & Almulayhi, 2024; Ben Amiour, 2023; Sekil, 2023).

4.2. Occupational Stress

A set of conditions and demands faced by university professors that psychologically and physically affect them, becoming a barrier to performing tasks efficiently (Adan, 2020; Al-Marsoumi, 2019).

4.3. Work Fatigue

A state of physical and mental exhaustion resulting from excessive pressure and effort at work, which leads to reduced concentration and fear of failure. In the literature, fatigue is frequently described as a physiological outcome of work stress; while stress may have both positive and negative facets, fatigue reflects the negative outcome. Stress may arise from the environment, organization, coworkers, and the individual, whereas fatigue is experienced within the individual (ALsayrafi, 2007).

4.4. Moral Harassment

Exposure to hostile or belittling behaviors (e.g., excessive orders, contempt, gestures, reputational damage) by superiors, colleagues, or students that undermine psychological and physical well-being and degrade the work environment (Ben Ayache, 2020; Bounah, 2017).

4.5. Psychological Burnout

A condition resulting from chronic, unmanaged workplace stress, marked by energy depletion, reduced professional efficacy, and a negative attitude toward work and oneself (Alfayez, 2022). Compared with ordinary stress, burnout denotes a more persistent and advanced state; symptoms often discussed include physiological (e.g., headaches), psychological (e.g., anger, frustration), and behavioral (e.g., decreased performance) indicators (Adan, 2020; ALsayrafi, 2007).

4.6. Higher Education Professors

For the purposes of this study, this term refers to all permanent faculty members in selected faculties at the University of Oum El Bouaghi (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; Faculty of Economic Sciences; Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences).

4.7. Level of Exposure to Occupational Psychological Risks

Determined based on faculty responses to a questionnaire prepared by the researchers, covering occupational stress, work fatigue, moral harassment, and psychological burnout (item domains aligned with Adan, 2020; ALsayrafi, 2007; Ben Ayache, 2020; Bounah, 2017; Alfayez, 2022).

5. Theoretical Framework

This section outlines the foundational concepts of the study. We first clarify each construct and then synthesize relevant literature.

5.1. Nature of Occupational Psychological Risks

The construct combines “risk” (probability of harmful outcomes) with “occupational” (work-related sources). In occupational settings, psychosocial/psychological risks typically

arise from work organization and conditions, resource constraints, work duration and intensity, and interpersonal relations—with contributions from personal circumstances. These are commonly grouped as individual factors (e.g., low self-confidence), organizational factors (e.g., poor communication, role conflict, goal misalignment, lack of incentives), and environmental factors (e.g., broader economic, technological, political, and social stressors) (AChour & Almulayhi, 2024; Ben Amiour, 2023; Bouzourane, 2024; Sekil, 2023). For legal/organizational framing of risk in the workplace, see also Balearja Mohammad and Bel'abedoun (2023).

5.2. Types of Occupational Psychological Risks

This subsection focuses on the most common psychological risks in the workplace, as identified in prior research. Occupational stress refers to interactions between work factors and the individual that alter psychological and professional functioning and compel changes in task performance (Al-Marsoumi, 2019; Adan, 2020). Work fatigue describes the inability to sustain coping with work pressures—i.e., depletion of physical and mental resources; a physiological consequence of stress. Distinctions from stress appear above (ALsayrafi, 2007). Psychological burnout is a syndrome linked to chronic workplace stress, with characteristic exhaustion and diminished efficacy; shaped by personal and organizational antecedents (Alfayez, 2022; Adan, 2020; ALsayrafi, 2007). Moral harassment is repeated, abusive conduct (verbal, gestural, written, or behavioral) that harms dignity and integrity or endangers employment, posing risks to health and safety. Typical forms include intimidation, contempt, threats, and reputational damage (Bounah, 2017; Ben Ayache, 2020). Failures in workplace relationships are a major source of stress; exhaustion can emerge as a maladaptive response to such stressors. Unlike exhaustion, moral harassment entails intent to harm and can represent an extreme on the continuum from poor conditions to targeted victimization (Bounah, 2017; Ben Ayache, 2020).

6.1. Research Methodology and Tools

6.1. Method Used

Given the aim of identifying the perceived level of exposure to occupational psychological risks among professors in selected faculties of the University of Oum El Bouaghi, the descriptive method is most suitable, allowing systematic depiction and analysis of the phenomenon (operationalizations consistent with Adan, 2020; Al-Marsoumi, 2019).

6.2. Study Population and Sample

The study population consists of all full-time higher education professors at the following faculties: Faculty of Economic Sciences; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; Faculty

of Exact Sciences and Natural and Life Sciences. The total number of professors is 502 (male and female).

Table 1. Distribution of the Study Population by Faculty

Faculties	**No of professors**	**%**
Faculty of Exact Sciences and Natural and Life Sciences	226	45.02. %
Faculty of Economic, Commercial, and Management Sciences	133	26,49 %
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	143	28.49%
Total	**502**	**100%**

As for the study sample, it was selected using an accidental (convenience) sampling method. To ensure better representation, the questionnaire was distributed to 150 professors, but only 120 questionnaires were retrieved. Among them, 13 were excluded due to being unsuitable for statistical analysis, resulting in a final sample of 107 professors. The sample was described according to the following demographic variables: (gender / years of experience / academic rank / faculty), as shown in the following table:

Table 2. shows the distribution of the sample according to demographic variables

Demographic variables	**Number of professors**	**Percentage**
Sample distribution by gender		
Males	51	%47,66
Females	56	%52,34
Sample distribution by years of work experience		
Less than 5 years	17	%15.89
From 5 to 10 years	21	%19,63
More than 10 years	69	%64,48
Sample distribution according to the academic rank		
Assistant professor (A-B)	14	%13,08
Lecturer professor (A-B)	52	%48,60
Full professor	41	%38.32
Sample distribution by faculty		

Faculty of Humanities and social sciences	68	%63.55
Faculty of Economic sciences	22	%20.56
Faculty of Exact sciences	17	%15,89
Total	107	%100

6.3. Study Tool

To assess the level of exposure of higher education professors at some faculties of the University of Oum El Bouaghi to psychological occupational hazards, a questionnaire was developed after reviewing theoretical literature and previous relevant studies. The questionnaire was divided into four dimensions, comprising a total of 38 items, distributed as follows:

*Dimension 1**:** Occupational stress – 12 items

*Dimension 2**:** Work-related fatigue – 10 items

*Dimension 3**:** Moral harassment – 8 items

*Dimension 4**:** Burnout – 8 items

The questionnaire was designed using a three-point Likert scale, with the following response options:High level (3) / Moderate level (2) / Low level (1)

7. Psychometric Properties of the Study Tool

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire developed by the researchers, it was administered to a pilot samplein order to calculate validity and reliability, as follows:

7.1. Validity

7.1.1. Content Validity

To ensure the appropriateness of the items within their respective dimensions, as well as their clarity and objectivity, the questionnaire was reviewed **by** 8 experts in psychology. They evaluated the items using Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR)**,** calculated using the following formula:CVR = (ne – (Ne/2)) / (Ne/2).Based on the experts' opinions, some items with a CVR of 0.50 were revised. The remaining items achieved a CVR ranging from 0.75 to 1.00**,** indicating that the questionnaire is valid for measuring what it was intended to measure.Thus, the final version of the questionnaire consists of 38 items distributed across 4 dimensions**.**

7.1.2. Internal Consistency Validity

The researchers calculated the Pearson correlation coefficients **(r)** between the score of each dimension and the total score of the questionnaire, as shown in the next table, using a pilot sample of 30 participants.

Table 3. Shows the correlation coefficient between the score of each dimension and the total score of the questionnaire **(**Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V27 output).

Axes	Number of Items	Correlation coefficient with the total score of the questionnaire
Axis 1	**12**	**0,890****
Axis 2	**10**	**0,849****
Axis 3	**08**	**0,669****
Axis 4	**08**	**0,796****

Based on the above table, it appears that the correlation coefficients of the dimensions ranged between a highest value of 0.890 and a lowest value of 0.669 at the 0.01 level of significance, indicating a high degree of internal consistency, which reflects a high level of validity for the questionnaire as a whole.

7.1.3. Extreme Group Validity (Discriminative Validity)

By calculating the differences between means and their statistical significance using the t-test, the researchers compared the responses of the highest and lowest quartiles. The responses of the participants were ranked in descending order according to the total scores obtained. Then, 10 participants representing the highest scores (high-level group) and 10 participants representing the lowest scores (low-level group) were selected. This analysis was performed using SPSS version 27, and the statistical significance of the t-value is shown in the following table:

Table 4. Results of the "t-test" examining the significance of differences between the high-level group and the low-level group in the study sample.

Level	N	Mathematic L	Standard deviation	"T" Value	SS	Sig	Significance level
Low-level	10	83,7000	9,92248	8,270	18	0,000	0,05

High-level	10	54,100	5,44569				

From the above table, it is clear that the value of "t" indicating the significance of the differences between the means is statistically significant. This suggests that the questionnaire is capable of distinguishing between the highest and lowest levels among members of the research sample, indicating its effectiveness in differentiating between high and low levels of occupational psychological hazards among university professors.

7.1.4. Reliability

The reliability coefficient was calculated using the internal consistency method through Cronbach's Alpha formula, employing the SPSS software (version 27).

Table 5. Reliability Coefficient Using Cronbach's Alpha Method (Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V27 output).

Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha)	**Number of items**
0,905	**38**

It is notable from the table above that the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is high, which indicates that the questionnaire has a strong degree of reliability.Accordingly, after examining the psychometric properties of the questionnaire directed at higher education professors, the final version of the questionnaire was developed. It consists of 38 items divided into four dimensions.

8. Statistical Methods

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27, was used to perform the following analyses:

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient to measure the relationship between each dimension and the overall questionnaire score.

*Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) to assess internal consistency.

*Weighted Mean and Percentage Weight to describe professors' evaluations of the psychological occupational risks they face. These evaluations were categorized as follows:(1.00–1.66): Low Level- (1.67–2.33): Medium Level- (2.34–3.00): High Level

9. Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of the Study Result

9.1 Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the First Research Question

"What is the level of exposure to psychological occupational risks among higher education professors in some faculties at the University of Oum El Bouaghi, according to their own assessments?"

Table 6. The Weighted Mean and Percentage Weight of the Psychological and Occupational Hazards Questionnaire for Higher Education Professors Based on the Subscale Scores and the Total Score (Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V27 output).

Axes	Weight Mean	Percentage Mean	Order	Verbal estimation
Occupational stress	**2,02**	**67,33**	**1**	**Medium**
Work fatigue	**2,00**	**66,66**	**2**	**Medium**
Moral harassment	**1,44**	**48**	**4**	**Low**
Psychological burnout	**1,66**	**55,33**	**3**	**Low**
Total score	**1,82**	**60,66**		**Medium**

From the table above, it is clear that the responses of the study sample regarding the overall level of exposure of higher education faculty members at the University of Oum El Bouaghi to occupational psychological hazards were at a moderate level, according to their estimations. The overall weighted mean of the questionnaire was 1.82, with a percentage weight of 60.66%, which places it within the second verbal category (1.67–2.33). The weighted means for the individual dimensions ranged between a high of 2.02 (with a percentage weight of 67.33%) represented by Dimension 1: Occupational Stress, which was at a moderate level, and a low of 1.44 (with a percentage weight of 48%) represented by Dimension 3: Moral Harassment, which indicates a low level.Overall, none of the dimensions reached a high level. The dimensions ranked as follows: Occupational Stress came first with a weighted mean of 2.02 (67.33%) at a moderate level.Work Fatigue ranked second with a weighted mean of 2.00 (66.66%) also at a moderate level. came third with a weighted mean of 1.66 (55.33%) at a low level.Moral Harassment ranked fourth with a weighted mean of 1.44 (48%) at a low level.

These results indicate that the professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi perceive themselves to be exposed to occupational psychological risks at a moderate level tending toward high, particularly in Dimensions 1 and 2. This may be attributed to the sensitive nature of their profession, the heavy workload, and the variety of tasks they are responsible for—such

as lecture preparation, teaching, supervision, participation in pedagogical committees, among others.Additionally, most professors are engaged in preparing for promotions, which require participation in national and international conferences, preparing teaching materials and scientific publications, and submitting articles to classified journals.Our findings are consistent with the study by Mellal & Ben Ahmed (2018), which confirmed that teaching is one of the most stress-inducing professions due to the constant responsibilities it entails. It also requires high levels of personal, social, and educational competencies from professors in order to adapt to the continuous changes in the higher education sector—such as the adoption of distance learning, uploading lessons to Moodle, exam organization, and grade entry via the PROGRES platform, among others.A closer look at the reality of the university also reveals several working conditions that cause pressure for professors: lack of suitable physical working conditions, overcrowded classrooms, supervision of large numbers of students (due to faculty shortages), and employment constraints. Additionally, transportation and housing issues, especially for professors commuting from outside the province, pose further challenges, as they represent a significant proportion of the university's faculty.Thus, while the study results show a moderate level of exposure to psychological hazards, this does not negate the presence of real risks. Rather, it reflects the professors' ability to adapt to the various stressors they face, thanks to their personal and professional experience.

9.2. Dimension

The question addressed is:"*What is the level of exposure to occupational stress among higher education professors in some faculties at the University of Oum El Bouaghi, according to their own assessments?*"

Table 7. The Weighted Mean and Percentage Weight for the Occupational Stress Dimension (Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V27 output).

Occupational stressaxis	Weighted Mean	Percentage Weight	Verbal estimation
	2,02	67,33	Medium

From the above table, it is evident that the responses of the sample members regarding the occupational stress axis showed a moderate level according to the estimates of higher education professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi. The weighted mean value for the axis was 2.02, and the percentage weight was 67.33%, placing it within the second verbal range (1.67–2.33). The weighted mean values ranged from a high of 2.54 with a percentage weight of 84.66% for item No. 09: "Students' failure to attend lectures causes me frustration," to a low

of 1.33 with a percentage weight of 44.33% for item No. 07: “My relationships with fellow professors are characterized by constant conflict.” Accordingly, 8 out of 12 items fell within the moderate level, 3 items reached the high level, and 1 item was in the low level. By analyzing the results, it can be said that professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi are moderately exposed to occupational stress, according to their estimates. However, their responses to some items confirmed high levels of stress and exhaustion, particularly due to the rapid pace of reforms in recent years, which causes them fatigue. This is evident from item No. 03: “The accelerating reforms in the education sector cause me exhaustion,” which received a weighted mean of 2.39 and a percentage weight of 79.66%. Professors consider the frequent reforms a source of pressure as they are forced to adapt quickly, especially in changes affecting course offerings, notably in the Bachelor's cycle. Professors often find themselves having to prepare new and modified courses for every level and semester, requiring considerable effort that hinders their ability to produce quality research or participate in international conferences. Professors also noted in item 09 that students’ absence and their reluctance to attend lectures and practical sessions—especially after the removal of the exclusion policy in recent years—cause them frustration. They feel their efforts are wasted and not appreciated, particularly as they are also required to upload prepared lessons to the Moodle platform, which adds to their workload. These findings align with the study by Attallah Hussein (2014), which confirmed that a major source of pressure for university professors is the lack of student discipline and the absence of strict administrative action. This causes disorder, especially in public universities, which are more lenient compared to private universities that enforce stricter penalties such as permanent dismissal. Professors also stated that inadequate physical conditions in classrooms make it difficult to perform their duties effectively. Many classrooms lack electrical outlets, proper lighting, and ventilation, all of which contribute to fatigue. This is reflected in their response to item 10, which received a weighted mean of 2.40 and percentage weight of 80%. Furthermore, professors expressed that being assigned to teach courses outside their area of specialization causes them stress. This is seen in item 05, which scored a mean of 2.30 and 76.66% weight. They also noted that the requirements for academic promotion are beyond their capacity, especially in scientific disciplines where they must publish in Class A or B journals, be affiliated with research laboratories, and balance lab work with university teaching responsibilities. This is illustrated in item 02, which had a mean of 1.82 and 60.66% weight. Professors also face pressure due to inappropriate teaching schedules, as shown in item 01 with a mean of 1.95 and 65% weight. This often stems from challenges like teaching in the afternoon,

particularly for professors who live outside the province of Oum El Bouaghi and suffer from poor transportation options. Afternoon sessions also affect student concentration, leading to disengagement, absenteeism, and sometimes complaints against professors. These findings support Attallah Hussein's (2014) conclusion that there is a significant difference in student commitment and concentration between morning and evening sessions, which places additional psychological pressure on professors. Professors also reported moderate to high levels of tension due to receiving instructions from multiple sources without coordination, leading to overlapping tasks and fatigue. This supports the view of Anna Marguiles, as cited in Adan (2020, p. 27), who stated that one of the main sources of occupational stress is organizational, particularly poor communication between superiors and subordinates. Thus, professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi suffer from moderate levels of occupational stress based on their responses to this axis. Our study differs from Al-Marsoumi (2019), who found a low level of stress among professors. He attributed this to professors' positive self-image, high self-esteem, adaptability, patience, and ability to form healthy relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators. He also emphasized the role of college administration and department heads in reducing professional pressures by fostering a respectful and cooperative work environment. In conclusion, despite experiencing various pressures, even at moderate levels, professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi seek to overcome them by building balanced relationships with colleagues and students, and by benefiting from administrative support in resolving issues like adjusting teaching loads, scheduling exam duties, and assigning courses based on professor preferences. These efforts have helped reduce stress levels among the teaching staff.

9.3. Work-Related Fatigue

This section addresses the following research question: "What is the level of exposure to work-related fatigue among higher education professors in some faculties at the University of Oum El Bouaghi, according to their own estimates?"

Table 8. Weighted Mean and Percentage Weight for the Work-Related Fatigue Axis (Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V27 output).

Work fatigue axis	Weighted Mean	Percentage Weight	Verbal estimation
	2,00	**66,66**	**Medium**

Based on the above table, it is evident that the responses of the sample group regarding the axis of work-related fatigue fell within a moderate level, according to the evaluations of higher education professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi. The weighted mean for this

axis was 2.00, with a percentage weight of 66.66%, placing it within the second verbal scale (1.67–2.33). The weighted mean values ranged from a high of 2.53 (84.33%), represented by item (06): "I feel tired while teaching due to the students' low motivation," to a low of 1.51 (50.33%), represented by item (02): "I feel uncomfortable when I'm at the university." As such, 8 out of 12 items fell into the moderate level, 2 items reached the high level, and 1 item was in the low level.

From these results, it can be concluded that professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi are exposed to a moderate level of work-related fatigue due to the professional burdens they face. This moderate classification indicates varying degrees of fatigue, ranging from moderate to high. Professors confirmed that they feel exhausted by the end of the workday, as seen in their responses to item (01): "I feel tired and exhausted at the end of the workday," which received a weighted mean of 2.51 and a percentage weight of 83.66%. This finding aligns with the results of Ferroum and K'aouan (2023), which attributed such exhaustion to the demanding nature of academic duties.

Additionally, professors indicated increased emotional sensitivity in ordinary situations, as reflected in responses to item (05): "I feel angry and easily irritated in many ordinary situations," which scored a weighted mean of 1.79 and a percentage weight of 59.66%. This reaction is attributed to work pressure, leading professors to become reactive even in minor situations, whether with colleagues, administration, or students. This is especially relevant for academic administrators, who are burdened with heavy responsibilities alongside their teaching and research duties. These findings are consistent with those of Draâou and Meziane (2018). Moreover, the study highlights the challenges faced by field, department, and specialization heads, who bear additional burdens without receiving compensatory benefits—such as a reduced weekly teaching load or fewer teaching days. This lack of incentive discourages many professors from accepting such positions because of the stress and fatigue they cause.

Further, results showed that responses to items (07) and (10) also fell into the moderate range, with weighted means of 2.03 and 2.00 and percentage weights of 67.66% and 66.66%, respectively. These responses suggest that professors feel they are falling short in their family responsibilities, as work occupies a significant portion of their lives. Their duties often extend beyond the university into their homes—correcting exams, supervising theses, preparing lectures, and more. This can lead to feelings of guilt or inadequacy, especially among female professors, who experience role conflict (as professors, wives, mothers, and caregivers), contributing to heightened stress and exhaustion.

In item (06), which received the highest weighted mean (2.53) and percentage weight (84.33%), professors clearly expressed that low student motivation is a significant source of fatigue. They reported a sharp decline in lecture attendance in recent times, emphasizing that student disengagement is among the most frustrating challenges faced by university professors.

Overall, professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi suffer from a moderate level of work-related fatigue, reflecting their continuous efforts to adapt to demanding situations and cope with surrounding conditions. These results align with the findings of Draâou and Meziane (2018), who emphasized that limiting teaching hours to no more than nine per week and distributing them over two days for teaching-only professors allows for greater recovery and reduced fatigue. Their interpretation is supported by studies from the American Psychosomatic Society, which found that reducing teaching hours and avoiding additional administrative duties significantly lowers occupational fatigue among higher education faculty. Furthermore, the adoption of distance learning for horizontal course delivery has clearly contributed to fatigue reduction, a result that also aligns with the findings of Ferroum and K'aouan (2023). In addition, our results are consistent with those of Khouildi (2015), who noted that university professors continually strive to adapt to stressful situations by adopting effective coping strategies. This conclusion is supported by the study of Ben Zeroual (2008), which showed that the type of coping strategy—whether problem-focused or emotion-focused—largely depends on personality type. These strategies reflect the overall psychological resilience and well-being enjoyed by most university professors.

9.4. Third Axis

« *To what extent are university professors in selected faculties at the University of Oum El Bouaghi exposed to moral harassment, according to their perceptions?* »

Table 9. Weighted Mean and Percentage Weight for the Moral Harassment Axis (Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V27 output).

Moral Harassmentaxis	Weighted Mean	Percentage Weight	Verbal estimation
	1,44	48	Low

Based on the above table, it is clear that the responses of the sample on the axis of moral harassment indicate a low level of exposure, as perceived by university professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi. The weighted mean for the axis was 1.44, with a percentage weight of 48%, placing it within the first verbal category (1.00–1.66). The weighted mean

values ranged from a maximum of 1.62 and a percentage weight of 54%, represented by item (06): "I am harassed by some students, especially during exam periods," to a minimum of 1.30 and a percentage weight of 43.33%, represented by item (03): "I am subjected to criticism and mockery by some colleagues during meetings." Accordingly, all eight items in this axis fell within the low-level category.

The low level of reported moral harassment may be attributed to the positive and flexible social relationships among professors, characterized by trust, mutual respect, cooperation, and a collaborative work environment. Moreover, ethical behavior and mutual respect between professors and their students likely play a role in preventing such harassment. Even if instances of inappropriate behavior occur, they remain limited and do not affect the overall collegial atmosphere, particularly in certain faculties and departments at the University of Oum El Bouaghi.

However, it is important to highlight a crucial point brought forward by Ben Ayache (2020), who emphasized that the lack of visibility of moral harassment does not imply its absence. This may stem from factors such as victims' fear of reporting harassment due to concerns over job security, personal reputation, and dignity. Moral harassment is often described as a "hidden illness," given its subtle nature and the lack of overt conflict. The most common forms of moral harassment in Algerian workplaces, as identified by Ben Ayache, include isolation, harsh language, rumor-spreading, cyber harassment, as well as behaviors such as withholding communication, excessive surveillance, and reputational damage, especially during work meetings.

These findings differ from those of Hiouani, Merzougui, and Nekbil (2025), who reported a moderate level of moral harassment across all dimensions, except for the reputation-damage dimension, which recorded a high level. This included defamation, offensive remarks, ridicule, and demeaning criticism. Their study indicated that some professors experience career obstruction, exclusion from promotions and research projects, and institutional favoritism, which hinder professional development and foster a sense of marginalization. Additionally, many reported psychological impacts such as anxiety, stress, and depression. According to their findings, the primary sources of harassment are often high-ranking staff, whose narcissistic and aggressive behavior contributes to a toxic academic environment.

9.5. Fourth Axis

« *What is the Level of Psychological Burnout Experienced by Higher Education Professors at Some Faculties of the University of Oum El Bouaghi, According to Their Perceptions?* »

Table 10. Weighted Mean and Percentage Weight for the Psychological Burnout Axis (Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V27 output).

Psychological Burnoutaxis	Weighted Mean	Percentage Weight	Verbal estimation
	1,66	**55,33**	**Low**

From the above table, it is evident that the responses of the sample members regarding the psychological burnout axis indicate a low level of burnout, as perceived by higher education professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi. The weighted mean value for this axis was 1.66, with a percentage weight of 55.33%, placing it within the first verbal range (1.00–1.66). The weighted mean values across the axis ranged between a maximum of 2.39 (79.66%)—represented by item (02): "I feel drained at the end of the day at the university"—and a minimum of 1.34 (44.66%)—represented by item (07): "I feel that my interactions with my colleagues are artificial." Consequently, 5 out of 8 items scored at a low level, 2 at a moderate level, and 1 item at a high level.

The findings suggest that professors at the University of Oum El Bouaghi experience low to moderate levels of psychological burnout. This may be attributed to their ability to adapt to demanding situations, supported by experience accumulated over years of service. However, despite this adaptability, they remain susceptible to burnout due to several contributing factors, including the multiplicity of professional tasks (lecturing, supervision, and administrative responsibilities), managing large student numbers, and meeting the increasing demands of academic work. This is further evidenced by their responses to item (02) ("I feel drained at the end of the day at the university"), which scored within the high range. Additionally, two other items scored in the moderate range: item (01), "I feel emotionally exhausted by my work due to the multiplicity of tasks," with a weighted mean of 1.85 and a percentage weight of 61.66%; and item (03), "The demands of work cause me frustration," with a weighted mean of 1.67 and a percentage weight of 55.66%.

From this analysis, it can be concluded that levels of psychological burnout among faculty at the University of Oum El Bouaghi are relatively low. These findings are partially consistent with previous research, such as the study by Mallal and Mahrazi (2018), which indicated that

university professors experience moderate levels of burnout—an outcome explained by the relatively limited working hours, which reduce professional strain. Similarly, Labiadh (2021) found that burnout levels were moderate, attributing this to professors' accumulated experience, adaptability, and problem-solving strategies in the face of professional demands and pressures.

Overall, the result of this study may be explained by the positive interpersonal relationships among faculty members at the university, as well as administrative cooperation in organizing and distributing working hours in consideration of professors' personal circumstances, especially those commuting from outside the province. Additionally, the university's provision of group housing for female faculty members has contributed significantly to alleviating work-related challenges, ultimately reducing psychological burnout levels among staff.

Conclusion

The exposure of higher education professors to psychosocial occupational risks—such as occupational stress, work fatigue, moral harassment, and psychological burnout—even at a moderate level negatively affects their mental and physical health as well as the quality of the educational process. It is therefore essential for higher education stakeholders to give sustained attention to professors by ensuring suitable working conditions that enable them to perform at their best. Based on the results obtained, the following key findings and recommendations can be highlighted:

*The most prominent psychosocial occupational risks faced by higher education professors are occupational stress, work fatigue, moral harassment, and psychological burnout.
*According to their self-assessments, professors reported a moderate overall level of exposure to psychosocial occupational risks. Specifically, their responses indicated moderate levels of occupational stress and work fatigue, and low levels of moral harassment and psychological burnout. To help professors reduce and manage these professional psychological risks, the following recommendations are proposed:

*Provide optimal physical conditions in lecture halls and classrooms—such as appropriate lighting, ventilation, and heating—and carry out regular maintenance to ensure a healthy and comfortable work environment.

*Allocate faculty-only relaxation spaces with air conditioning, internet access, and green areas to enhance psychological well-being.

*Take professors' preferences into account when scheduling teaching hours across the week to reduce time pressure and fatigue.

*Hold monthly virtual meetings (e.g., via Zoom) for experience sharing and collaborative problem-solving related to teaching challenges.

*Expand the online delivery of transversal and exploratory modules to reduce administrative and teaching pressure.

*Conduct regular surveys to detect early signs of psychosocial risks (stress, fatigue, burnout, violence, harassment) and use the findings to design targeted counseling and support programs.

*Enforce strict measures against students with frequent absences or dropouts to reduce classroom disorder and related stress on professors, especially during exams.

*Implement a faculty reward system to recognize and incentivize professors who maintain high levels of commitment and performance throughout the academic year.

*Encourage academic research focused on psychosocial occupational risks to deepen understanding of their impact on the quality of higher education.

*Organize national and international seminars and conferences to discuss prevalent psychosocial risks in academia and their psychological and physical consequences.

*Develop preventive training programs to equip faculty with stress-management, time-management, and workload-distribution skills that help reduce fatigue and burnout.

*Establish a secure digital platform where professors can confidentially voice concerns and receive AI-based or professional psychological counseling tailored to their needs.

These measures aim to safeguard professors' mental and physical health, improve their working conditions, and strengthen the overall quality of higher education.

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