

Professional stress and its correlation with psychological burnout and occupational exhaustion among higher education female professors Compared to Male Professors in the Algerian Academic Environment.

الضغط المهني و علاقته بالاحتراق النفسي و الإنهاك المهني
لدى الأستاذات مقارنة بأساتذة التعليم العالي في البيئة الجزائرية.

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Abstract:

Work, as a social activity, is considered an essential part of human life in general. It provides an individual with status and connects them to society. The social benefit that women derive from work is far more significant, as it earns them respect and admiration from others and allows them to demonstrate their ability to contribute to production and participate in building society.

The current study aims to identify professional pressure and its relation with psychological burnout and professional exhaustion among higher education female professors compared to male professors in the Algerian academic environment. The research sample included 400 female university professors and 400 male university professors in Algiers. The study employed the Workplace Stressors Scale, the Maslach Professional Exhaustion Scale and Burnout Inventory.

The results of thet at the 0.01 level. Additionally, there is a correlational relationship between professional pressure and

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professional exhaustion among female professors compared to male professors in higher education, which is also statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Further study showed a correlational relationship between professional pressure and psychological burnout among female professors compared to male professors in higher education, which is statistically significant more, there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of professional pressure, psychological burnout, and professional exhaustion among female professors compared to male professors in higher education, with significance levels at 0.05 and 0.01.

Keywords: Professional pressure, psychological burnout, professional exhaustion, female university professors, male university professors.

المخلص:

إن العمل بوصفه نشاطاً اجتماعياً يعتبر جزءاً جوهرياً في حياة الإنسان بصفة عامة، فهو الذي يعطيه المكانة ويربطه بالمجتمع، وإن المنفعة والفائدة الاجتماعية التي تحصل عليها المرأة من العمل لأهم بكثير، فهي جديرة بالاحترام والإعجاب من طرف الآخرين، كما أنها تستطيع من خلاله أن تثبت قدرتها على الإنتاج والمشاركة في بناء المجتمع.

وتهدف الدراسة الحالية التعرف على الضغط المهني وعلاقته بالاحتراق النفسي والإرهاك المهني لدى الأستاذات مقارنة بأساتذة التعليم العالي في البيئة الجزائرية. وقد شملت عينة البحث (400) أستاذة جامعية و (400) أستاذ جامعي بالجزائر

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العاصمة، ولقد تم استخدام مقياس مصادر الضغط في مكان العمل ومقياس الاحتراق النفسي وسلم الإنهاك المهني لماسلاش Maslach.

ولقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن هناك علاقة ارتباطية بين الضغط المهني والاحتراق النفسي لدى الأساتذة مقارنة بأساتذة التعليم العالي، وهي دالة إحصائياً عند مستوى 0.01. كما أن هناك علاقة ارتباطية بين الضغط المهني والإنهاك المهني لدى الأساتذة مقارنة بأساتذة التعليم العالي وهي دالة إحصائياً عند مستوى 0.01. بالإضافة إلى وجود فروق دالة إحصائياً بين المتوسطات الحسابية لدرجات الضغط المهني والاحتراق النفسي والإنهاك المهني لدى الأساتذة مقارنة بأساتذة التعليم العالي وهي دالة إحصائياً عند مستويين 0.05 و 0.01.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الضغط المهني، الاحتراق النفسي، الإنهاك المهني، الأساتذة الجامعيات، الأساتذة الجامعيين

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Introduction:

The legislative status of women has undergone developments that varied according to the political circumstances that the Algerian state went through. The National Charter emphasizes the necessity of involving Algerian women in the process of economic and social development and considers their economic inactivity a situation that does not serve the progress of society. It is stated in Chapter Six, which deals with the main directions of development policy: "The intensive mobilization of all citizens capable of working in the field of production raises the issue of women's employment, as women represent half of the population capable of working and constitute a significant reserve of the country's workforce. Not

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utilizing this reserve only weakens the economy and delays social progress" (Front de Libération Nationale, 1976: 212).

The status of working Algerian women has evolved with the development and diversification of their economic duties in various production sectors. They have taken on technologically advanced jobs, due to the spread of education, the increase in their professional qualifications, and the rise in their expertise and skills. Studies in this field indicate that two-thirds of working women in the Arab world work to support their families, meaning under the pressure of economic circumstances, while only about 12% work to prove themselves. Thus, Arab women have not entered the workforce to compete with men and weaken their social standing, but often due to economic circumstances.

However, it has been observed that the last decades of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century have witnessed many modern scientific and technological developments that have played a significant role in achieving prosperity. The 20th century has been called various names: it was the era of discontinuity according to Peter Drucker, the era of uncertainty according to Alvin Toffler, and the global village era according to Marshall McLuhan, among others, such as the space age and the computer age. Amid these names and the inevitability of this progress, the health of working women, particularly university professors, has become threatened by psychological burnout and professional exhaustion. Female professors face numerous challenges and difficulties, which generate pressures due to their teaching duties, which require

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preparation, pedagogical readiness, adherence to class schedules, and the effort involved in academic work.

At the same time, they are engaged in research, preparing a full bibliography, organizing the theoretical framework, conducting fieldwork, and all that accompanies it, such as communication, investigations, and analyzing research results.

Additionally, they supervise academic theses, participate in conferences and study days, and work on completing scientific studies and publishing them in academic journals. All of this results in continuous intellectual effort and can generate psychological pressure, causing anxiety about balancing teaching and research in the given material, social, and family circumstances. Psychological and professional pressures, in particular, have become an integral part of individuals' and societies' lives due to the many challenges and increasing demands of this era. It has become difficult to avoid or ignore these pressures, leading most people to work on confronting them or attempting to adapt to or cope with them (Browser, 2000).

Therefore, teaching is one of the most stressful professions, due to the stressful stimuli arising from the interaction between professors and their academic environment, and the numerous demands and challenges resulting from this interaction. This has led to the emergence of professional and psychological pressures, seen as states of anxiety, anger, and depression stemming from the negative feelings that female professors experience towards themselves and their surroundings, thus threatening their sense of self (Adas, 1998).

Various studies have shown that the level of work-related pressure among female professors is high. This can be explained by the nature of the work performed by female professors in

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higher education, which requires them to spend most of their time with their students and to maintain continuous and direct contact with them to provide assistance, regardless of the pressures they face in achieving this goal. Teaching, as a social profession, naturally generates a high level of work-related pressure, due to increasing responsibilities or the responsibility for individuals, as the responsibility for individuals is a greater source of pressure than the responsibility for things. The main cause of work-related pressure among female professors may be the job load, which in turn leads to insufficient time to focus on their primary work. Thus, through this study, we will attempt to uncover the relationship between professional pressure, psychological burnout, and professional exhaustion among female professors compared to male professors in higher education.

2- Problematic:

It is well known that human resources within organizations receive significant attention from researchers in the field of occupational and organizational psychology, as they are considered vital and effective in handling economic challenges. However, despite this, research addressing women's issues in the workplace has not yet reached the level of importance that matches the role women play in society. Among 1,233 studies related to cancer and its connection to work, published between 1971 and 1990, only 14 of them focused on women's work. This minority of studies, according to the Canadian Women's Health Center, is due to the belief that

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women's exposure to health issues is attributed to their physiological or biological nature, rather than work itself.

It is also an accepted fact that Algerian women represent half of society, and despite difficulties, traditions, and perceptions, they have managed to rise to high professional and political positions, including ministerial, parliamentary, and judicial roles. This makes them a vital force in society. However, traditional perceptions and attitudes, shaped by societal norms about the unequal capacities of men and women in the workplace, reinforced by incorrect social practices, and despite the many roles they play in these societies, have placed women under pressure inciting events that are considered as a psychological and social variable that contributes to the deterioration of their mental health and professional exhaustion. As a result of the increasing responsibilities associated with work on one hand, and their essential role in social upbringing on the other, women, according to the Canadian Women's Health Center, are exposed to psychological and professional pressures.

It is worth noting that work holds a significant place in an individual's life due to its importance and role. Work is not merely a means of earning a livelihood, but also a way to fulfill many important psychological needs and motives. Therefore, the work environment has become one of the most important areas where an individual must achieve the highest level of adjustment.

Thus, it seems clear that despite the enjoyment of modern individuals in the luxury of living and the abundance of life, and what modern technology has provided in terms of means of work and facilitative techniques, and the achievements in science and progress, it has led, in turn, to the complexity of tasks and their

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difficulties, imposing many new problems on workers that cause them much annoyance and discomfort, dissipating their sense of comfort and stability, and subjecting them to many physical, psychological, and mental disorders. These pressures have become a characteristic of the modern age, with some considering it the "Disease of the Century," while others refer to it as the "Silent Killer" (Al-Otaibi, 1997), due to the fact that individuals are not always aware that they are under pressure until its severe consequences become evident. Professional pressure consists of a large number of variables, which can be classified as follows:

- 1. Causal Variables:** These include personal and environmental factors that directly or indirectly cause professional pressure.
- 2. Process Variables:** These are psychological and physiological responses within the working individual.
- 3. Outcome Variables:** These represent psychological, physiological, and behavioral outcomes.
- 4. Adaptive Response Variables:** These include individual responses, organizational responses, and external environmental responses.
- 5. Temporal Variables:** The time period over which professional pressure develops (Savoire & Forget, 1996).

Given the nature of the teaching profession at the university level, female professors operate within an academic environment that requires a reformation of educational concepts

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in light of the psychological and professional crises they face. They have come to realize that daily confrontations with psychological and professional conflicts generally hinder their work. In cases of psychological and professional stress, each professor responds and attempts to cope using the natural language that characterizes her. She perceives the world in her own way and responds accordingly. There is no universal remedy to the problems faced by female professors, nor to alleviate the pressures they experience and provide them with suitable mental and psychological well-being. Instead, they tend to use more than one coping strategy, as there is no single coping method that suits everyone. The coping process largely depends on an individual's perception of the situation. If the individual perceives the situation as a challenge rather than a threat, she searches for a behavioral response to solve the problem and eliminate the accompanying emotions. If the chosen coping strategy is appropriate and successfully implemented, she achieves balance. If not, she searches for another approach or reassesses the situation. If she exhausts all available responses without success, the resistance phase ends with negative outcomes (Badran, 1997, cited in Laies, 2012: 15-16).

Therefore, the continued exposure of female university professors to professional pressure may lead to what is known as psychological burnout, a serious issue in such professions. As Bezy (1999) confirms, psychological burnout is closely linked to the problem of pressure, describing it as a series of consecutive responses to work-related stress, particularly in professions focused on providing assistance.

Work stress has been linked to a range of psychological complications, manifesting in symptoms such as depression, loss of interest in others, irritability, impatience, anger, boredom, lethargy, and negativity (Abdullah, 2001). According to Pines

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and Aronson (1981-1988) and Arces (1991), burnout in social service professions is a pathological condition that negatively affects the efficiency of professional practice, clients benefiting from services, and social care institutions. This stems from the negative attitudes of professionals caused by burnout, which is linked to the stress arising from the nature of their work (Fahd Al-Seif, 2000). Moussaoui's study (2001) revealed a significant relationship between certain occupational variables and work stress. Additionally, the study by Murray and Collings (1996) indicated that regular stressors related to planning work objectives, unresolved client problems, increased workload, and dissatisfaction with supervision are indicators of burnout (Fahd Al-Seif, 2000). Turnipseed's research (1988) found that burnout is associated with decreased organizational efficiency and professional issues such as job turnover, lethargy, poor services, absenteeism, and relational problems.

Burnout is reflected in a negative self-concept, manifesting as various forms of energy depletion related to work, such as unfinished tasks, self-doubt, feelings of failure, self-reproach, procrastination, avoidance of confrontation, tension, impatience with oneself and others, discouragement, and failure, along with a negative view of oneself. Burnout also appears in hostility, which may include aggression, sarcasm, contempt, mockery, bitterness, anger, and resentment. This may lead to a negative attitude and emotional detachment from others, accompanied by rigid thinking, reprimanding others, resisting going to work, boredom, and feeling unable to act. Individuals experiencing energy depletion often engage in unproductive activities that benefit neither themselves nor the organization they belong to.

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This exhaustion may include depression, avoidance of work competition, sleep disturbances, job loss, absenteeism, digestive and psychosomatic disorders, surrender, and indifference.

Work stress often leads to professional burnout among female university professors. Turcotte's study (1998) found that the nature of the job, its environment, professional relationships, the technology used, and the organizational setting are major sources of stress. This finding is consistent with that of Fares Helmi (1999), who viewed stress as a reaction to external stimuli perceived as threatening in the work environment (Helmi, 1999: 290).

Professional burnout, in turn, results from situations of depression and frustration caused by disturbed work conditions, either due to inappropriate work environments or relational problems. C. Cherniss (1983) described burnout as a dynamic process that begins with intense and continuous professional stress, which cannot be alleviated by ordinary problem-solving methods. This results in a mismatch between an individual's personal capacities and the external demands imposed by their job. Consequently, individuals become angry or anxious during their work and express their feelings violently. They manage stress impulsively, adopting withdrawal or quitting as coping strategies. Researchers such as Sekiou et al., N. Cote, L. Belanger, and J. Jackes (1994) share this view. Ultimately, Maslach (1998) defines burnout as a state of physical and emotional exhaustion, resulting in emotional detachment, a feeling of ineffectiveness, and a loss of empathy for others. This leads to cold interactions, self-doubt about one's ability to perform a job, negative evaluations of one's achievements, reduced activity, and negative impacts on future expectations.

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Research Hypotheses:

1. There is a statistically significant correlation between work stress and burnout among female university professors compared to male professors in the Algerian context.
2. There is a statistically significant correlation between work stress and professional exhaustion among female university professors compared to male professors in the Algerian context.
3. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of work stress, burnout, and professional exhaustion among female university professors compared to male professors in the Algerian context.

4. Current Study Procedures:

1.4. Research Methodology:

In the current study, we adopted the descriptive method, as it aims to describe the phenomenon or reality accurately and objectively, relying on data that is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. This is done using various statistical methods to study the relationship between phenomena (Ano, 2008:74).

Sample:

The research sample consists of 400 female university professors and 400 male university professors selected randomly from different universities, including the University of Algiers 2, the University of Houari Boumediene in Bab Ezzouar, the University of Mentouri in Constantine, and the University of Bouira. Their ages range from 26 to 63, with an average age of

30.66 years. The sample includes both married and single individuals from various academic ranks.

3.4. Measurement Tools:

1.3.4. Occupational Stress Indicator (OSI):

This is a tool developed by researchers Stora and Williams Cooper (1988) to measure professional stress. It was translated into French by Stora and Cooper (1990). The scale aims to assess the level of occupational stress across various sources among professionals. It consists of 61 items, distributed across six sub-scales, each measuring a different source of stress, including work itself, administrative roles, interpersonal relationships, professional achievement, and the organizational climate as perceived by the individual. The responses are rated on a scale as follows: "extremely clear source," "clear source," "generally clear source," "not generally clear source," "not clear source," and "not a source at all." The scale is scored from 1 to 6.

To verify the scale's validity, we used concurrent validity by applying the scale to 100 university professors along with the stress perception scale, yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.75. As for reliability, it was administered and then re-administered 15 days later to the same sample, resulting in a correlation coefficient of 0.92.

2.3.4. Burnout Assessment Inventory (BAI):

The Burnout Assessment Inventory was developed by Jones and Bearly, and it is a modified version of the burnout assessment questionnaire published in 1984 by the Design and Development Organization under the title "Managing Your Energy." The inventory consists of four sub-scales, each containing 10 items, and responses are rated on a scale from 1 to 10. The overall score for each sub-scale is the sum of its items, and the total burnout

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score is the sum of the scores of the sub-scales. Burnout scores range from 10 (low), 55 (medium), to 100 (high).

To ensure the scale's validity, it was applied to a sample of 100 university professors, with correlation coefficients ranging between 0.90 and 0.98. For reliability, items and sub-scales were split, and Cronbach's alpha was used, yielding reliability coefficients between 0.81 and 0.96.

3.3.4. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI):

This scale was proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) for professions in the healthcare and educational sectors. It measures burnout symptoms through 22 items that assess the three levels of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Responses are rated on a scale from 0 to 6. Burnout is determined based on the following dimensions: emotional exhaustion (a score higher than 27), depersonalization (a score higher than 13), and personal accomplishment (a score lower than 31).

Face validity and intrinsic validity were calculated after administering the scale to a sample of 150 university professors, yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.92. As for reliability, the split-half method was used along with Cronbach's alpha, and the reliability coefficient was 0.74.

Discussion and Analysis of the Third Hypothesis Results:

To study and examine the results of the third hypothesis, which states: "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion

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between female and male university professors," we used the "T-test" to analyze the data statistically. The results can be

Occupational Stress Burnout	Profession		Career		Administrative Role		Interpersonal Relationship		Organizational Climate	
	Female Profs	Male Profs	Female Profs	Male Profs	Female Profs	Male Profs	Female Profs	Male Profs	Female Profs	Male Profs
Negative Self Concept	**0.52	0.10	**0.44	0.20	0.19	**0.24	**0.31	0.20	**0.47	0.17
Hostility	**0.60	0.23	**0.49	0.21	0.18	**0.59	**0.49	0.22	**0.55	0.21
Disconnection	**0.44	0.19	**0.53	0.18	0.10	**0.42	**0.65	0.11	**0.59	0.24
Helplessness	**0.45	0.20	**0.59	0.20	0.22	0.19	**0.50	0.21	**0.49	0.16
Total Burnout Score	**0.56	0.22	**0.60	0.23	0.24	0.14	**0.60	0.20	**0.58	0.19

summarized in the following table:

** $r = 25$, statistically significant at the 0.01 level. $r = 24$, not statistically significant.

The table above presents the comparison of the mean scores of occupational stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion between female and male university professors. The values demonstrate that:

- The mean score of occupational stress among female university professors is significantly higher ($M_1 = 140$, $SD_1 = 15.84$) compared to male university professors ($M_2 = 60$, $SD_2 = 5.65$). The T-value is 3.05, with a significance level of 0.01, indicating a statistically significant difference in occupational stress between the two groups.
- The mean score of burnout also shows a significant difference, where female university professors have a higher mean score ($M_1 = 305$, $SD_1 = 35.05$) compared to male university

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professors ($M_2 = 40$, $SD_2 = 20.10$). The T-value is 4.16, with a significance level of 0.05.

- Similarly, the emotional exhaustion scores are higher among female professors ($M_1 = 56$, $SD_1 = 0.20$) compared to male professors ($M_2 = 25$, $SD_2 = 0.13$). The T-value is 2.16, with a significance level of 0.01.

These results indicate that female university professors experience higher levels of occupational stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion compared to their male counterparts. The differences are statistically significant, suggesting that gender may play a role in how these stressors affect individuals in academic professions.

The analysis of ****Table (03)**** shows clear differences between the mean scores of occupational stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion in female university professors, which are estimated at 140, 305, and 56, respectively, compared to male university professors, whose scores are 60, 40, and 25. These differences are statistically significant at the levels of 0.05 and 0.01.

These results indicate that occupational stress is considerably higher among female professors, leading to burnout and emotional exhaustion. This has negatively impacted their professional psychological adjustment and caused them to suffer from psychological and psychosomatic disorders. This is likely because they perceive that the demands of their stressful work situations exceed their resources and capabilities.

It is essential to highlight the role of family in boosting the self-esteem of working women and enhancing their sense of the value

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of their work. This can increase their resilience and patience in dealing with challenging work conditions, as emphasized by Kamelia Abdel Fattah (1984). She noted that women often evaluate their work based on the nature of their relationships with colleagues within their professional activities. This social value, provided by professional work, cannot be fully understood without considering the other side of work, which is household work. For women, external work offers an escape from isolation, opportunities for social interactions outside the family, and recognition and social appreciation, which household work does not provide. Work, as a social activity, is essential for human life in general, as it gives individuals a sense of status and connects them to society.

Mokadam Abdel Hafidh (1997) explained that work fulfills several social needs, the first being that it provides opportunities to meet people and build friendships. Work also creates an environment where individuals can express their values of cooperation and helping others. It gives a sense of belonging to a community.

In conclusion, this study found that female university professors suffer from professional stress, which leads to psychological burnout, emotional exhaustion, and various psychological and psychosomatic conflicts. Therefore, female professors need urgent social support to help them enhance and improve their personal and social adjustment. This would enable them to cope with professional pressures, achieve professional adjustment, and attain psychological well-being, allowing them to fulfill their roles under the best conditions and contribute fully to scientific progress.

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Recommendations:

1. Creating a Suitable Organizational Climate: It is necessary to provide an appropriate organizational climate for female university professors, enabling them to deliver pedagogical and scientific activities with more perseverance and motivation to achieve good supervision and mentoring for all students.

2. Encouragement and Recognition: Female university professors should be continuously encouraged and recognized, which would help create a positive impression and foster good ideas, visions, and individual and collective initiatives that benefit students and the university.

3. Reducing Work Pressure: Efforts should be made to alleviate work pressures on female university professors by assigning them specific responsibilities, providing them with the necessary information and resources, and giving them appropriate opportunities for professional growth and advancement.

4. Organizing Women's Support Groups: It is essential to establish women's groups that use therapeutic psychological strategies and techniques to help female university professors cope with professional stress and develop emotional expression skills, preventing burnout and emotional exhaustion.

5. Providing Social and Family Support: Social and family support should be offered to female professors to reduce occupational stress and avoid psychological and psychosomatic disorders. This will help them achieve social and professional balance.

6. Establishing Specialized Psychological Centers: Creating specialized psychological centers for working women would contribute to their psychological and professional treatment by applying therapeutic techniques that help them cope with work stress and achieve social and professional interaction.

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