

RESEARCH ARTICLE	<b>The Reality of Occupational Burnout in the Professional Environment among Local Administration Employees</b>
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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>The study aimed to examine the reality of occupational burnout in the professional environment among employees of the Algerian local administration. A simple random sample of 55 employees from the Bou Saâda Municipality in M'Sila Province was selected. The research team employed a descriptive-analytical approach and utilized a questionnaire specifically designed for the purpose of the study to collect data from the sample.</p> <p>The study arrived at the following findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level of occupational burnout in the professional environment among local administration employees was high in its overall degree, across the dimensions of the burnout variable: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.</li> <li>• There were no statistically significant differences in the average responses of local administration employees regarding the level of burnout attributable to gender.</li> <li>• There were no statistically significant differences in the average responses of local administration employees regarding the level of burnout attributable to years of professional experience.</li> </ul> <p><b>Citation</b></p> <p>Chalabi W., Benmebarek N., Chihane A., Salah Eddine Ch. (2025). The Reality of Occupational Burnout in the Professional Environment among Local Administration Employees. <i>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems</i>, 8(6), 651-659; doi:10.56352/sci/8.6.71. <a href="https://imcra-az.org/archive/364-science-">https://imcra-az.org/archive/364-science-</a></p>	

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## **Introduction:**

The recent administrative reform undertaken by Algerian regional communities—formerly known as local administration—aimed to revitalize municipalities as public service institutions in place of districts. This reform has brought about a new dynamism at both the organizational level and in terms of citizen engagement.

This dynamism has generated, at the level of senior leadership within these institutions, a desire to keep pace with the rapid transformation, with the overarching goal of restoring the municipality's role as a central and active nucleus within society—both a provider and recipient of services—by delivering quality services and generating revenue that could mitigate the constraints of limited resources.

Such a fundamental shift, envisioned by leaders at the top of the institutional hierarchy, requires alignment with the perceptions and readiness of employees at the base. Their willingness to accept the burdens and pressures resulting from this transformation is essential, as is always the case in organizational change processes.

Thus, it becomes crucial to focus on those workforce members tasked with implementing this ambitious vision of transforming the municipality into an institution of quality and excellence. Preparing them—psychologically, organizationally, and professionally—is necessary to enable them to fulfill this pioneering project.

Undoubtedly, any additional tasks or changes—be they modifications, removals, or enrichments—in the job descriptions of employees can create a burden, leading to temporary organizational instability until the new tasks are fully assimilated.

This change affects both the employee and the nature of the job equally and imposes a need for preparedness and adaptability to achieve harmony and alignment.

The municipality, as one of the institutions directly impacted by this administrative reform, has seen its staff exposed to professional pressures due to newly introduced administrative work mechanisms and the advent of **e-administration** concepts. These changes require training, retraining, and psychological readiness, as they establish a new mode of interaction with citizens. Moreover, the shift of numerous administrative procedures—such as the issuance of official documents—from district-level to municipal-level has placed additional demands on municipal employees, creating new and unfamiliar professional situations.

Consequently, these transformations have significantly influenced how employees perceive themselves, their work, and the overall work environment. The increased societal reliance on municipalities for various services is likely to restore a positive societal view of this institution and its employees, from the lowest to the highest rungs of the social and professional hierarchy.

Today, Algerian institutions are facing a range of organizational and administrative issues, including **bureaucratic organizational patterns**, **centralized management**, and other structural challenges such as **dual leadership** (between elected leaders and appointed administrators) and the emergence of **organizational factions**. These conditions often lead to internal conflicts, exclusionary practices toward opposing groups, over-application of rules and regulations, and micromanagement of employee-related matters.

Local administration, at all three levels, suffers from the same problems that plague other institutions: standardized management practices, organizational rigidity, and a lack of freedom and creativity for employees—factors that hinder both personal and organizational advancement. Employees are often entirely excluded from decision-making processes, even symbolically, which contributes to the emergence of various work-related psychosocial ailments.

Among the most notable of these is **occupational burnout**, a phenomenon extensively addressed by scholars in administrative sciences. Burnout is recognized as a sign of unhealthy organizational practices. Thus, this study seeks

to conduct a **field investigation** to assess the extent of burnout in the local administration workplace, identify its root causes, and explore methods and strategies that could help alleviate or prevent it, ultimately aiming to enhance the performance level within these organizations.

This context has led to numerous psychological and organizational difficulties for the workforce (both managers and frontline staff). Among the most critical psychological challenges impeding improved performance is what psychologists refer to as **employee burnout in the workplace**.

This phenomenon has drawn the attention of specialists in organizational and occupational behavior, prompting research into these modern-day occupational disorders and the development of strategies and solutions to cope with changes in the organizational environment. The ultimate goal is to foster a workplace climate that enhances **organizational effectiveness**.

### 01- Research Problem:

Local administration, at its three levels, represents an organizational structure that suffers from the same issues affecting other institutions, such as **standardized management practices** and **organizational rigidity**, which restrict employees' freedom and creativity—elements that would otherwise benefit both the individual and the organization. In fact, employees are often completely excluded from the decision-making process, even in a participatory or consultative capacity.

These conditions have played a significant role in the emergence of various **occupational psychological disorders**, most notably the widespread **phenomenon of burnout in the professional environment**. This issue has been widely addressed by experts in administrative sciences, who consider it an indicator of unhealthy organizational practices.

Therefore, this study seeks to conduct a **field investigation** to assess the extent of burnout among employees within the local administration, explore the underlying causes that have contributed to its exacerbation, and identify methods and strategies that may help reduce or prevent its occurrence. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance performance levels within the organization.

Based on this, the research problem can be formulated in the following questions:

- What is the level and prevalence of burnout among employees of the local administration in the municipality of Bou Saâda?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the level of burnout among the study sample attributable to **gender**?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the level of burnout among the study sample attributable to **professional seniority**?

### 02- Research Objectives:

- To identify the level of prevalence of **occupational burnout** in professional environments.
- To investigate whether there are **statistically significant differences** in the level of burnout among the sample that can be attributed to **gender**.
- To determine whether there are **statistically significant differences** in the level of burnout among the sample attributable to **professional seniority**.

### 03- Significance of the Study:

- **Occupational burnout** is one of the most important topics in the study of organizations, as understanding this phenomenon and the professional issues faced by employees contributes to organizational stability and offers supervisors a better understanding of how to manage its consequences. Emphasizing the importance of the **human dimension** has become essential for achieving **organizational effectiveness**.
- This study seeks to address occupational burnout from a **psycho-organizational perspective**, exploring its **determinants and dimensions** within the professional environment of local administration employees in **M'Sila Province**, and examining its impact on both **organizational functioning** and **management practices**, and ultimately its reflection on overall organizational effectiveness.

- The study also aims to shed light on professional and organizational problems that hinder the smooth functioning of institutions, such as the **burnout phenomenon** among employees, and to examine its effect on their **organizational behavior** within the institution.

#### 04- Definition of Key Concepts:

##### 1. Occupational Burnout:

Spaniol and Cabuto (1979) defined occupational burnout as the **inability to cope with stress resulting from the demands of work and personal life**. Burnout not only harms the individual suffering from it but also affects the **recipients of services**, as it significantly reduces the energy available to meet both work and personal life demands. (Madouri, 2022, p. 219)

##### 2. Local Administration:

Local administration in Algeria does not differ from that in other countries in terms of its function. It serves as a **mechanism through which the state's public policy is implemented**, with the goal of achieving the **general welfare of all members of society**. (Mejdoub, 2014, p. 2)

##### 3. Civil Servant (Employee):

Public employees are individuals appointed to permanent positions and integrated into one of the **hierarchical grades** of the central state administrations, their external departments, local communities, or public institutions and bodies. Their appointment and status are defined by **specific legal decrees**.

#### 05- Previous Studies:

##### 1. Study titled: "Occupational Factors Associated with Burnout Syndrome Among Healthcare Workers" (Amiri, Mahmoud, Mostafa, Jafaid, 2024)

Healthcare workers are exposed to higher levels of burnout compared to other professional groups. This study aimed to conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis of the most prominent occupational factors contributing to burnout syndrome among healthcare workers globally.

A comprehensive search was carried out in scientific databases in August 2023, and the study protocol was registered in the International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO). The researchers used the **Random-Effects Model** to analyze the relationship between occupational factors and burnout risk.

The meta-analysis included **109 studies** from various regions of the world. The results indicated that key contributing factors to burnout included **workplace bullying**, **job stress**, and **poor communication**. On the other hand, **supportive work environments**, **adequate staffing**, and **individual resilience** were identified as protective factors. All risk factors analyzed showed a **positive and statistically significant relationship** with burnout rates. Workplace bullying emerged as the strongest predictor of burnout, followed by **low job satisfaction** and **high occupational stress**. The findings underscore the importance of addressing these factors by enhancing supportive work environments and implementing strategies to strengthen individual psychological resilience.

##### 2. Study titled: "The Role of Quality of Work Life in Reducing Burnout"

(Zaribi, 2022)

This study aimed to present a conceptual framework highlighting the importance of **Quality of Work Life (QWL)** and its role in mitigating burnout, given its positive impact on employees' physical and psychological health, well-being, and ability to overcome challenges.

The study emphasized the importance of QWL programs in helping workers overcome negative thoughts and feelings, transforming them into positive experiences. It concluded that such programs should be continuously implemented until they become part of the organizational culture, rather than just temporary management tools. Providing quality indicators in the workplace contributes to employee satisfaction, psychological balance, and work engagement. Moreover, it helps organizations attract professional talent and improve productivity both in terms of quantity and quality.

##### 3. Study titled: "Burnout Among Algerian Students: Causes, Symptoms, and Coping Strategies – A Field Study at the Faculty of Medicine, Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou" (Majider, 2017)

This study sought to shed light on one of the psychological and sociological issues faced by Algerian students, namely **burnout**, described as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion resulting from ongoing exposure to

stressful academic, familial, and social situations. The researcher assessed burnout through three main dimensions: **emotional exhaustion**, **emotional detachment**, and **reduced sense of personal accomplishment**. The **descriptive method** was used to explore the reality of burnout among Algerian students, its causes, symptoms, and ways to mitigate it.

Data collection relied on a **20-item questionnaire**, divided into three axes based on the burnout dimensions, and administered to a randomly selected sample of **80 medical students** at Mouloud Mammeri University. Using frequencies and percentages for statistical analysis, the study found:

- Algerian students suffer from burnout.
- Emotional exhaustion was reported by **68.57%** of participants.
- Emotional detachment was reported by **56.55%**.
- Reduced personal accomplishment was reported by **57.68%**.

#### 06- Methodology Used in the Study

The research group employed the **descriptive-analytical method**, which goes beyond merely describing the phenomenon. It also involves analyzing and interpreting its dimensions and establishing connections between its various implications. This approach aims to reach conclusions that contribute to a realistic and accurate understanding of the studied issue.

#### Study Sample

The study sample consisted of **55 employees** from the municipality of **Bou Saâda**, working across various departments and branches distributed throughout the entire municipality. The characteristics of the study sample are illustrated in **Table (01)** below:

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	34	62%
	Female	21	38%
<b>Educational Level</b>	Bachelor's Degree	09	16%
	Senior Technician	35	63%
	Baccalaureate	11	20%
<b>Work Experience</b>	Less than 5 years	36	65%
	5 to 10 years	09	16%
	More than 10 years	10	18%
<b>Total</b>		55	100%

#### Study Instrument

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of **25 items** distributed across three dimensions: **Emotional Exhaustion**, **Depersonalization**, and **Personal Accomplishment**.

#### Scope and Limits of the Study

The study focused on examining the prevalence of **occupational burnout** among local government employees, within the following boundaries:

- **Human Boundaries:** The study was limited to the category of local government employees in Bou Saâda.
- **Temporal Boundaries:** The study was conducted during the **2024-2025** season.
- **Spatial Boundaries:** The study took place in the municipality of Bou Saâda, due to the feasibility of collecting data with minimal effort, time, and cost.

#### Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

##### 1.1 Presentation of the Results for the First Question:

What is the level of occupational burnout among the members of the study sample?

**Table 02** illustrates the level of occupational burnout among the study sample members:

Variable	Mean	Standard	Hypothetical	Calculated t-	Degrees of	Significance
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		Deviation	Mean	value	Freedom	Level
Level of Occupational Burnout	38.18	4.19	26	67.57	54	0.05*

\*Significant at the 0.05 level

It is noticeable from the table that after calculating the mean score for the occupational burnout variable, which was estimated at **38.18** with a standard deviation of **4.19**, and comparing this mean with the hypothetical mean of the scale estimated at **26** at the degrees of freedom equal to **54**, it was found that the average scores of the study sample members are higher than the hypothetical mean.

After testing the difference between the two means using the **one-sample t-test**, it was found to be statistically significant at the **0.05 significance level**, with a calculated t-value of **67.57**. This indicates that the sample members suffer from a **high level of occupational burnout (above the hypothetical mean)** according to the questionnaire applied by the researchers to the local government employees of Bou Saâda municipality.

can thus be concluded that the overall level of occupational burnout was high, particularly in the burnout variable and its dimensions (**emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment**).

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of the study by **Samaher Muslim (2010)**, which aimed to identify the phenomenon of occupational burnout among administrative employees and showed that the degree of burnout was high. This is attributed to the organizational environment, which does not take into account the employees' mental health and does not implement an incentive system that could foster high morale among workers, which in turn would reflect positively on their productivity and performance efficiency.

## 1-2 Presentation of Results for the Second Question:

**Are there statistically significant differences in the level of occupational burnout among the study sample attributed to gender?**

**Table (03): Significance of Differences in the Level of Psychological Burnout According to Gender**

Dimensions	Gender	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Calculated t-value	Degrees of Freedom	p-value	Significance Level ( $\alpha=0.05$ )
Emotional Exhaustion	Male	34	22.00	3.60	0.17	53	0.853	Not Significant
	Female	21	21.08	4.23				
Depersonalization	Male	34	4.57	1.67	0.90	53	0.370	Not Significant
	Female	21	5.04	2.01				
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	Male	34	11.79	2.39	1.26	53	0.18	Not Significant
	Female	21	11.04	1.59				
Overall Score	Male	34	38.35	3.03	0.38	53	0.705	Not Significant
	Female	21	37.90	5.66				

## Interpretation:

The table shows that the calculated t-values for all burnout dimensions and the overall burnout score are associated with p-values greater than 0.05, indicating no statistically significant differences in burnout levels between male and female employees in the study sample.

The table indicates that the mean scores of the study sample members regarding occupational burnout according to the gender variable (male, female) show no statistically significant differences among local administration employees based on gender. The differences are not statistically significant in the dimension of emotional exhaustion, where the significance value (sig = 0.53) exceeds the 0.05 level of significance.



Thus, it can be concluded that there is no difference between females and males in the level of experienced occupational burnout across its dimensions – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Gender does not affect the degree of occupational burnout. According to the researchers, this lack of difference is attributed to several reasons: the absence of disparities between male and female employees regarding educational, social, and economic levels; equality in workload distribution between male and female employees; equal opportunities for men and women to obtain employment; and the active participation of women in social and professional life, which causes them to bear similar burdens as men.

### 1-3 - Presentation of the Results for the Third Question:

*Are there statistically significant differences in the level of occupational burnout among the study sample attributable to professional seniority?*

**Table (04):** Shows the arithmetic means of the dimensions of occupational burnout according to the variable of professional seniority.

Dimensions	Professional Seniority	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation
Emotional Exhaustion	Less than 5 years	36	20.77	3.81
	5 to 10 years	9	23.55	1.74
	More than 10 years	10	24.60	3.50
Depersonalization	Less than 5 years	36	5.50	1.55
	5 to 10 years	9	3.44	1.66
	More than 10 years	10	3.42	1.03
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	Less than 5 years	36	12.05	2.02
	5 to 10 years	9	11.88	2.02
	More than 10 years	10	9.20	0.78
Overall Score	Less than 5 years	36	38.33	4.81
	5 to 10 years	9	38.88	3.05
	More than 10 years	10	37.00	2.21

It is evident from the table that the arithmetic means for the dimensions of occupational burnout – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment – according to the professional seniority variable, indicate the following:

- The highest mean score for the emotional exhaustion dimension was 24.60 (SD = 3.50), recorded for the group with more than 10 years of seniority.
- The highest mean score for the depersonalization dimension was 5.50 (SD = 1.55), favoring the group with less than 5 years of seniority.
- The highest mean score for reduced personal accomplishment was 12.05 (SD = 2.02), also favoring employees with less than 5 years of professional experience.
- **Table (03): Analysis of Variance in the Level of Occupational Burnout According to Professional Seniority**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value	Significance Probability (p-value)	Significance Level
Between Groups	19.29	2	9.64	0.54	0.58	0.05
Within Groups	928.88	52	17.86			
Total	948.18	54				

- From the table, it is noted that the ANOVA test value (F) is 0.58, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. The mean square between groups is 9.64, while the mean square within groups is 17.86.

- This indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the degree of occupational burnout among local administration employees based on their professional seniority categories – less than 5 years, between 5 and 10 years, and more than 10 years.
- This lack of difference can be attributed to the fact that all employees, whether veterans or newcomers, experience occupational burnout. This is likely due to a unified organizational environment that neither motivates employees nor establishes clear standards for incentive systems, coupled with inconsistent management practices and the uneven application of organizational procedures.

### Results

The level of occupational burnout among local administration employees in the Wilaya of M'sila was found to be high overall across the dimensions of the burnout variable: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (emotional numbness), and reduced personal accomplishment.

No statistically significant differences were found at the 0.05 significance level in the average burnout scores of local administration employees attributed to gender.

No statistically significant differences were found at the 0.05 significance level in the average burnout scores of local administration employees attributed to professional seniority.

### Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned results, this study recommends the following:

- Decision-makers in local administration should reduce the workload burden on employees by implementing measures that help renew employees' psychological engagement with their work, thereby preventing burnout and loss of motivation. Such measures may include job enrichment and job rotation.
- Attention should be given to occupational health and regular medical check-ups conducted by specialized physicians to anticipate advanced signs of burnout. High blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, back pain, gastric ulcers, and unhealthy habits such as excessive smoking or alcohol consumption are clear indicators and symptoms of burnout.
- Guidance programs should be implemented in the workplace to help alleviate psychological stress caused by over-immersion in work.
- The role of the workplace psychologist should be prioritized, as this specialist serves as the primary diagnostician of negative phenomena arising within organizations.
- Training courses (scientific and psychological) should be organized for both supervisors and employees, focusing primarily on building effective interpersonal strategies within the organization and fostering a work culture based on human relations theories and modern organizational theories.
- Human and social aspects of employees should be addressed, and efforts should be made to improve social services targeting this group. Emphasis should be placed on psychological relaxation methods such as recreational trips, sports activities, and volunteer work to create dynamic interaction among members of the organization.
- Material and moral incentives and encouragement should be provided to employees to achieve high levels of job satisfaction.
- Scientific principles should be considered in designing workstations ergonomically to suit employees and achieve administrative creativity.

### Conclusion

Organizations today no longer aim merely to survive in the face of fierce competition; their ambition is to achieve a competitive advantage. The most valuable investment is human capital, as it is the key to organizational profitability and the only element capable of attaining the desired competitiveness. Accordingly, organizations have placed great importance on providing a healthy work environment and avoiding problems that may hinder organizational success. Occupational burnout is a critical issue in the workplace due to its serious implications for employees' physical and psychological health. Burnout leads to decreased performance levels, which negatively impacts organizational effectiveness and obstructs the achievement of organizational goals. Therefore, organizations must prioritize such issues by allocating part of their annual budgets for academic studies and research in this field and by paying careful attention to their most valuable asset – the employee.



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