

Task Requirements in the Context of Implementing the LMD System and Their Impact on Psychological Stress among Psychology Professors

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the diverse task requirements associated with the role of university professors within the field of psychology, and to investigate their psychological implications, particularly focusing on indicators of psychological stress, within the context of the LMD (Licence, Master, Doctorate) educational framework. To achieve these objectives, the researchers employed a job analysis approach, concentrating on the specific task requirements for psychology professors. Data were collected through observational interviews, as well as through the direct observation of task execution.

The findings of the study revealed that the task demands placed on psychology professors are significant contributors to the manifestation of several indicators of psychological stress. These stress indicators provide valuable insight into the challenges faced by educators within this academic discipline under the current educational system.

Keywords: Task Requirements, Psychological Stress, Job Analysis, LMD System.

Research Problem:

Over the past decade, Algerian universities have adopted a new educational model known as the LMD system, a structure that has gained international recognition and been adopted by numerous countries. Since its introduction, there has been an ongoing debate surrounding the efficacy of this system, particularly in terms of its alignment with the cultural, social, technological, and economic contexts of different sectors of Algerian society.

Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding the adequacy of the material and human resources available within Algerian universities to support the full implementation of this system.

The LMD system introduces a variety of new concepts and frameworks, which both professors and students, who are the central stakeholders in the educational process, must understand and adapt to. These concepts include terminologies such as credit hours, teaching units, training teams, pedagogical support, and academic tracks, all of which require clear comprehension and effective application to ensure the system's success.

However, the introduction of these new concepts and frameworks can often lead to psychological stress, as it represents a natural response for both professors and students in the educational process. This is particularly evident within the field of psychology, although similar challenges are observed across other disciplines in Algerian universities.

The psychology professor plays a critical role in shaping and nurturing the next generation of professionals, equipped with the scientific knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to the advancement of various societal organizations and institutions. In fulfilling this role under the LMD system, professors are tasked with performing a wide range of complex duties. These responsibilities are not only centered around the delivery of high-quality education but also involve the development of students' personal values and skills, which are essential for their future professional lives.

To effectively tackle the various challenges that impede the educational process within Algerian universities under the LMD system, it is crucial to explore strategies that address the pressures faced by professors in their roles. This requires an in-depth understanding of their task requirements and the potential psychological stress that may arise from these duties.

The results of the qualitative analysis conducted in this study reveal that psychology professors are expected to perform a series of intricate tasks within the new educational system. These tasks include imparting fundamental knowledge to psychology students, ensuring they are equipped to integrate effectively into the workforce or service sectors. Furthermore, professors are required to engage with and adapt to the diverse personal and educational needs of their students, a dynamic that adds to the complexity of their responsibilities.

Given the multifaceted nature of these duties, it is not uncommon for professors to experience heightened stress levels, which, if not managed properly, can adversely affect

both their psychological well-being and the quality of their performance. As demonstrated by prior research, prolonged stress, when not properly addressed, can significantly reduce the quality of task execution, ultimately impacting the overall output of the university (Baker & Hope, 1998, p. 89).

Based on the previous discussion, the main research question can be formulated as follows:

What are the specific task requirements associated with the role of a psychology professor in Algerian universities, and what are the key determinants of psychological stress within this context under the LMD system?

The following sub-questions are derived from the main research question:

What are the specific tasks that psychology professors in Algerian universities are .1
required to perform, given the demands of the LMD system?

What are the primary determinants of psychological stress experienced by .2
psychology professors as a result of fulfilling these tasks within the framework of
the LMD system in Algerian universities?

Study Objectives:

To identify the tasks that psychology professors must carry out in Algerian –
universities and to determine the conditions necessary to ensure the effective
execution of these tasks.

To investigate the determinants of psychological stress that result from the –
implementation of the LMD system among psychology professors in Algerian
universities.

Operational Definition of Key Terms:

Task Requirements:

This term refers to the diverse set of organizational, social, cultural, environmental, technical, and psychological conditions that must be met within the university training process under the LMD system. These conditions are vital in enabling psychology professors to perform their duties to an acceptable standard of quality. Such tasks empower them to exercise symbolic authority while also providing the flexibility needed to identify issues that hinder the educational process.

Moreover, psychology professors are expected to propose or implement solutions to these problems. This definition draws on research findings, which utilized the method of actual work performance to gather pertinent data regarding these task requirements.

Determinants of Psychological Stress:

In the context of this study, psychological stress is understood as the excessive and often unanticipated workload caused by the demands of the new LMD (Licence, Master, Doctorate) system. This system requires psychology professors to adapt to conditions that are markedly different from those in traditional educational frameworks. The adjustments necessary for this adaptation can lead to a variety of negative psychological, social, and cognitive responses to the increased workload. The study adopts observational and interview techniques to gather data on these stress indicators, aiming to better understand and mitigate these responses.

Job Analysis:

In this study, job analysis is conceptualized as a methodological approach that involves collecting detailed data on the task requirements under the new LMD educational system. This analysis encompasses general, psychological, behavioral, and cognitive demands, in addition to the essential tools, regulations, and policies that must be in place to effectively perform the tasks. By utilizing a combination of data collection methods, job analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the tasks psychology professors are expected to execute under the LMD framework.

The LMD Educational System:

The LMD system represents a modern educational approach implemented by Algerian universities to align with advancements in Western higher education structures. The system is organized into three distinct levels:

Licence (6 semesters) •

Master (4 semesters) •

Doctorate (minimum of 6 semesters) •

The LMD system is further structured around specific fields of study, which are organized into individual academic tracks. The training is arranged by semesters, with each semester being associated with teaching units that are credit-based (Scientific Guide, 2011, p. 13).

The theoretical goal of the LMD system is to meet the evolving needs of the Algerian labor market, particularly by providing professional pathways that are aligned with each level of the educational system. This structure aims to foster the development of a workforce that is better prepared for the demands of the modern economy.

Theoretical Background of the Study

1. The LMD System in Algeria:

a) Definition of the LMD System:

The LMD system represents a modern educational framework that has been adopted by numerous countries, including Algeria, to facilitate higher education and research. It is designed to offer a structured curriculum organized by defined fields of study, which include specific academic tracks and individualized pathways. The system allows for the measurement of student progress through credit-based educational units, ensuring a standardized approach to learning and assessment (Scientific Guide, 2011, p. 13).

Theoretically, the LMD system aims to meet the educational needs and aspirations of various Algerian institutions, both within the productive and service sectors. It is intended to offer professional pathways that facilitate students' transition into the workforce. Despite its ambitious goals, the practical implementation of the LMD system faces significant challenges, primarily due to technological limitations.

While the pathways are designed to promote development in multiple fields, the system's adaptation in Algeria, which draws inspiration from the educational models of Northern countries, faces a disparity in technological infrastructure and resources between these countries and Algeria.

The LMD system in Algeria is structured into three levels, Licence, Master, and Doctorate, each representing distinct stages of higher education. These levels are designed to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for both academic and professional success. However, the process of integrating these educational frameworks into Algeria's context, given its unique socio-economic and technological conditions, requires continuous refinement.

b) Licence (Bachelor's Degree):

The Licence stage consists of two distinct phases. The first phase involves basic multidisciplinary training, referred to as the common core, which typically spans one to four semesters depending on the nature of the discipline. This phase is designed to equip students with foundational knowledge across a broad range of subjects within their chosen field of study. The second phase is focused on specialization, where the training is divided into two main types:

Academic Licence: This pathway prepares students for advanced studies at the Master's level, allowing them to continue their education in more specialized areas. •

Professional Licence: This pathway is intended to prepare students for immediate entry into the workforce, equipping them with the practical skills required by industry and service sectors. •

c) Master's Degree:

The Master's stage generally lasts for two years and follows the completion of a Licence (Bachelor's) degree. Students holding an Academic Licence can directly progress to the Master's program. In contrast, students who have completed a Professional Licence can also join the Master's program, but only after gaining practical experience in their respective fields, typically after three years of working in the industry.

The Master's program is divided into two primary tracks:

Academic Master's: This track is research-oriented, guiding students towards scientific inquiry and advanced academic study within their discipline. •

Professional Master's: This track is more practice-oriented, focusing on the development of practical skills that are directly applicable to industry and professional practice. It aims to ensure that students are prepared for immediate employment upon graduation, with the relevant technical expertise and hands-on experience. •

d) Doctorate:

Doctoral training in Algeria typically spans a minimum of three years, reflecting the rapidly advancing nature of knowledge in various fields. The Doctorate phase is focused on deepening expertise within a specialized area and involves extensive research, often culminating in the completion of a doctoral dissertation. The goal is to contribute new

knowledge to the field, and the successful completion of this phase results in the awarding of a Doctorate (Third Cycle) (Yahiaoui, nd, p 90).

2. Principles of the LMD Education System in Algeria

The LMD education system in Algeria is underpinned by several fundamental principles designed to enhance the quality and efficiency of higher education. These principles include:

The curriculum within the LMD system is carefully structured, ensuring that lessons and content are organized within major training fields. •

One of the defining features of the LMD system is the personalization of teaching to suit the individual learning trajectories of each student. •

As a result, it is essential to organize university training around both mandatory and elective teaching units. These units are designed not only to strengthen students' academic competencies but also to provide opportunities for them to engage with modern technologies and foster an increased awareness of entrepreneurship.

However, the realization of these goals remains a significant challenge. The economic and technological realities in Algeria often impede the straightforward implementation of these ideals. The infrastructure limitations and the relatively slow pace of technological adoption within the country make it difficult to provide the ideal educational experiences envisioned by the LMD system.

• Student Pathway Design:

The educational trajectory for each student under the LMD system is carefully structured to ascend progressively, ensuring that each stage of learning builds upon the previous one. Each group of educational units is designed with a dual focus: on the one hand, the quality of education and training, and on the other, the competencies that students are expected to acquire at each stage of their academic journey.

Higher education, by its very nature, is intended to equip students with a structured body of knowledge and skills, which follows a rhythm set by pedagogical authorities. The pace and scope of this education are designed to provide a coherent and comprehensive academic experience. However, this system also exposes disparities between the theoretical

expectations and the practical realities of the educational process. (Ben Ali & Flahri, 2013, p. 190).

3. Reasons for Adopting the LMD System in Algeria

The introduction of the LMD system in Algeria was driven by several key factors aimed at addressing both national and international educational needs. These motivations include:

- Providing high-quality education.
- Aligning with technological advancements and globalization.
- International relations, the global expansion of education has underscored the need for common frameworks that support academic exchanges, collaborations, and the mutual recognition of degrees.
- Successful international experiences, the decision to adopt the LMD system was also influenced by the success of similar reforms in other countries. (Yahiaoui, p. 90).

4. The Current State of Higher Education Under the LMD System

In pursuit of these objectives, Algerian universities have adapted their educational models to better address the evolving demands of professional life. These changes are increasingly shaped by globalization and the rapid advancement of technology, which have transformed the nature of the workforce and the skills necessary for success in modern industries. To remain relevant, Algerian universities have undertaken significant reforms in their educational practices, aiming to align with global higher education standards. This transformation is designed to better prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of a globalized, technology-driven world (Yacoubi, 2008, p. 60).

Given the considerable challenges confronting higher education, it is crucial to have qualified academic staff capable of leading the transformation necessary to ensure its success. To achieve this, well-structured study programs are required, delivering content aligned with the most effective educational pathways. These pathways should be designed with the goal of preparing students adequately for the labor market. This would enable higher education to better meet the needs of various productive and service sectors by strengthening the link between academia and workplace organizations (Yacoubi, 2008, p. 7).

5. Barriers to Achieving Quality University Training in Psychology under the LMD System

In recent years, Algeria has pursued a strategy aimed at advancing higher education and scientific research. This strategy has involved the adoption of sweeping reforms, especially in improving educational programs at all three levels: Licence, Master, and Doctorate, with the aim of promoting development within various sectors.

An analysis of the LMD system reveals that, in principle, it should foster the development of human resources well-prepared to enter service-oriented fields with a focus on quality. However, in practice, achieving this goal remains challenging. Any reform requires building on past successes while ensuring the necessary conditions for success are in place.

The current state of higher education indicates that the technological resources needed for the LMD system are insufficient, with many infrastructures either outdated or nonexistent. This situation places a significant burden on professors, particularly in fulfilling their responsibilities. Furthermore, libraries are lacking essential books and specialized journals, and there is a lack of active involvement from supervising professors (El Yazid, 2015, p. 168). These issues highlight the inadequacies of the regulations governing the system (Boudouh, 2013, p. 140).

This situation leads to undesirable responses from professors, which, if persistent, can cause high levels of psychological stress, impeding their ability to meet job demands and negatively affecting their performance. Additionally, this environment can foster negative attitudes in students towards the educational process and their academic and professional futures.

Consequently, it is essential to conduct scientific studies to address these challenges (Zerqan, 2012, p. 27). Additionally, concerns about financial debt and limited job opportunities contribute to student frustration, making it difficult for them to adapt (Assiri, 2007, p. 22). This, in turn, worsens the psychological well-being of professors.

The shadow of unemployment and its impact on university students:

The looming threat of unemployment that university students often face tends to result in disengagement, absenteeism from classes, and the development of negative behaviors. These behaviors serve as clear indicators of maladaptation to the academic system (Boudouh, 2013, p. 153). The primary factors contributing to the growing levels of stress linked to the LMD system can be summarized as follows:

From the students' perspective, the teaching methods, program content, and scheduling are deemed inappropriate. The courses are often overcrowded, and the number of hours allocated to each subject is insufficient to fully grasp the material. The limited time for each subject creates a disconnect between the lecture content and its practical application, making it challenging for students to experience consistent and meaningful learning.

Under the LMD system, students frequently lack adequate guidance and continuous monitoring, largely due to the neglect of academic advisors and the insufficient flow of information critical to the training process. This shortfall negatively impacts both professors' and students' engagement with the educational process, resulting in a loss of the student's sense of identity in their academic journey.

6. Work-Related Stress Among University Professors Under the LMD System

In light of the characteristics of the new university education system, particularly the time constraints and the limited number of hours allocated to each course, as well as the ambiguity surrounding pedagogical support and objectives, professors frequently find themselves in stressful situations. These circumstances force them to develop coping mechanisms, which over time become sources of stress. This stress manifests in various forms, including anxiety, depression, tension, and frustration. The sources of this stress can be identified as follows:

A. Organizational Sources of Stress Under the LMD System:

Role Conflict:

Role conflict arises when professors are burdened with too many tasks, making it difficult to prioritize them effectively. Under the LMD system, professors are expected to provide pedagogical support to students from their very first day at the university. This means the professor-student relationship is built on a learning process that includes tasks such as orientation, guidance, and advice for new students. According to Algerian law, supervision is defined in Article 2 of Executive Decree No. 09-03 as:

"Supervision is an ongoing task of monitoring and supporting students to help them integrate into university life and facilitate their access to information about the job market" (Executive Decree, 2009).

This relationship should be interactive, with professors helping new students adjust to university life and supporting their academic progression in a way that ensures they understand and can apply the material in their future careers. However, despite the legal framework for pedagogical support, practical issues reveal that the professor-student relationship, as envisaged, lacks clarity, particularly in terms of the elements that ensure its effectiveness.

The absence of well-defined procedures for implementing supervision contributes to tensions between the two primary components of the educational process, the professor and the student, leading to dissatisfaction and, ultimately, to the development of psychological stress among professors.

- **Role Ambiguity:**

Role ambiguity refers to the lack of clarity regarding the professional responsibilities that university professors are expected to fulfill. This often occurs when a professor assumes a new role, such as department head or program coordinator, without clear guidelines outlining their specific duties. In the absence of explicit regulations defining these responsibilities, professors may experience confusion and uncertainty, which directly threatens their professional identity. If this ambiguity continues, it becomes an additional source of stress for professors working within the LMD system.

- **Increased Workload:**

This variable can be likened to a power outage, where the load demand exceeds the capacity of the electrical generator. Similarly, professors often face a situation where their workload, whether in terms of the number of tasks or their complexity, surpasses the available time and resources.

With insufficient time allocated to each task and a lack of support, this situation leads to various psychological, behavioral, physical, and relational issues. When these issues interact, they result in emotional exhaustion, ultimately compromising the quality of educational services provided to students. Professors' awareness of these negative consequences can lead to unhealthy responses toward the quality of their work, manifesting as psychological stress.

The burden experienced by university professors can be categorized into two dimensions: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative aspect refers to the realization that the demands placed on professors exceed their available time and resources. For example, when the content of a course is disproportionate to the allocated time for its delivery, this

often results in reduced job satisfaction and lower self-esteem, both of which serve as indicators of psychological stress for professors.

In addition to this, the educational environment and the experiences within it influence how professors perceive their professional development and engagement in social, pedagogical, and scientific activities. The professor's perception of the dynamic interplay between these factors leads to various signs of psychological stress, including persistent anxiety, frustration, and a sense of job insecurity.

- **Organizational Climate**

The organizational climate within a university, including communication patterns, leadership styles, and incentive policies, can hinder task execution when these elements are poorly designed or implemented. A review of the organizational climate since the introduction of the new training model reveals that communication within the university is ineffective due to the lack of clarity in how information and instructions should flow. This issue arises primarily from the absence of technological infrastructure that facilitates smooth and timely communication, which is essential for the successful operation of the LMD system.

This communication breakdown contributes to various forms of dissatisfaction among professors, which, in turn, negatively affects the quality of the information and knowledge they impart to students. This dissatisfaction often manifests as a sense of pessimism, a common symptom of psychological stress among university professors. Additionally, the leadership within the university lacks scientifically-based principles to define the responsibilities of managerial positions, further complicating the implementation of tasks according to established methodologies.

B. Individual Sources of Work-Related Stress:

It is clear that individual differences among university professors play a significant role in how they respond to the demands and pressures of the LMD system. While some professors react positively to these pressures, others may react negatively, particularly when intervening or mediating factors contribute to the interaction between stress sources and responses. These mediating factors often include age, gender, and personality traits, which are typically classified into Type A and Type B personalities.

Professors with Type A personalities tend to embrace challenges and tackle pressure head-on to complete their tasks, even if this means working under time constraints that do not

align with the required tasks. As a result, these professors are often highly engaged in their duties, even when the organizational climate and available resources are less than ideal.

Conversely, professors with Type B personalities adopt a more cautious approach to stress. Their responses are especially influenced by the amount of time they perceive is necessary to complete their tasks.

3. Answering the Study Questions

Given the nature of this qualitative analysis study, both the qualitative examination of theoretical literature and the data collected through real task execution served as essential methods for understanding work dynamics. Additionally, interviews were conducted.

A. Answer to the First Question:

What tasks should a university professor in the field of psychology in Algerian universities accomplish under the LMD system?

Several factors related to the ethical principles, rights, and responsibilities of university professors have been explored to highlight the core dimensions and their significance, as well as the mechanisms that need to be activated for their effective implementation. Observation and actual task execution were used as primary methods for analyzing these tasks.

The conclusion drawn is that professors should present themselves in a dignified and exemplary manner, displaying tact and excellence. These attributes are vital indicators that help activate the ethical principles governing university operations and contribute to the fulfillment of a professor's role. This, in turn, fosters a positive approach to student engagement, particularly when coupled with a healthy organizational climate.

Based on work analysis methods, including random sampling of performance levels among professors, it was found that the psychology faculty requires specific cognitive, psychological, and relational traits. These include self-confidence, a willingness to engage openly with others, emotional intelligence in handling stress, the ability to establish positive relationships with all categories within the university's organizational structure, a situational personality, and an openness to constructive criticism.

B. Answer to the Second Question:

What are the determinants of psychological pressure resulting from the performance of task requirements by the psychology professor under the implementation of the LMD system in Algerian universities?

In response to this question, a job analysis technique was employed, yielding the following results:

- _ A sense of unfulfilled accomplishment.
- _ Pressure to conform to the procedural requirements of the LMD system.
- _ Task ambiguity and unclear responsibilities.
- _ Lack of recognition and appreciation for efforts.
- _ The burden of administrative and technical duties.
- _ Organizational conflicts and inconsistencies.
- _ Insufficient technological resources necessary for training.
- _ Undefined authority and responsibility structures.
- _ Repetitiveness and lack of task variety.
- _ Overbearing supervision levels.
- _ Negative or unhealthy competition.
- _ Lack of opportunities for creativity and innovation.
- _ A tendency towards professional isolation.
- _ Absence of a dedicated information bank for work processes.
- _ Variability in personal characteristics and professional coping mechanisms.
- _ Lack of designated spaces for task execution.
- _ Ambiguity in the regulatory frameworks governing both pedagogical and administrative processes.
- _ Inconsistencies in the training formats provided by universities.
- _ A deficit of a comprehensive, accurate database on the labor market.
- _ Universities' failure to adequately integrate technological advancements.

Research Results:

From the qualitative analysis of the study's concepts, coupled with the data collected through job analysis and the methods used for assessment, it is evident that the psychology professor at Algerian universities is expected to fulfill a series of goals that largely fall under the professional ethics of university education, particularly within the framework of the LMD system. However, while striving to achieve these objectives, professors encounter a wide array of individual and organizational pressures that impede their ability to fully establish their professional identity and achieve success in their roles.

Conclusion:

It is clear from the findings of this study, focused on the task performance requirements for psychology professors and the sources of psychological pressure they face under the LMD system, that professors continue to struggle with adapting to these pressures. To facilitate this adaptation, it is crucial for higher education authorities to involve specialists in evaluating the current state of affairs and addressing the existing shortcomings. This can only be achieved through a heightened focus on scientific research in this field, ensuring that the necessary corrective actions are taken to improve both the working conditions and overall effectiveness of the LMD system in Algerian universities.

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