PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT AT WORK IN MOROCCO: HUMAN RESOURCES EXPERTS' POINT OF VIEW

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Abstract

This research examines the key elements of the phenomenon of workplace mobbing, highlighting its various manifestations, triggers, and repercussions on individuals, specifically victimized employees, and on organizations themselves. The impact of this phenomenon on employees' professional lives is examined from several angles, including its influence on their organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and their intention to leave their jobs. An important issue lies in the semantic ambiguity surrounding the term "workplace psychological harassment" in the Moroccan context. To provide answers, a qualitative contextualization study was conducted, revealing significant findings concerning the link between exposure to workplace harassment acts and employees' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and propensity to consider leaving their position. This relationship is informed by psychological contract theory and reinforced by the findings of our qualitative study involving experts such as Human Resources Managers, wellness consultants, psychologists, occupational doctors, and lawyers.

Key words: *Workplace harassment - mobbing – organizational commitment – job satisfaction – intention to leave - psychological contract theory.*

JEL Classification: *M10*

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, increasing research on workplace bullying has demonstrated its harmful consequences on exposed individuals, witnesses, and even organizations and societies as a whole, including workplace bullying, abusive supervision, incivility, harassment, social undermining, and emotional abuse (Zapf, 2004, p. 25).

Among these phenomena, workplace psychological harassment (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2007; Nielsen, Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010) has been the subject of numerous studies in psychology and organizational behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; George & Brief, 1992; Organ, 1988; Puffer, 1987). Bullying is commonly recognized as a specific form of aggressive behavior characterized by its repetitive nature and the presence of a power imbalance, which leaves the victim unable to effectively defend themselves (Olweus, 1999). While there are both similarities and distinctions when compared to bullying in school settings (Schuster, 1996; Smith, 1997), workplace bullying presents unique methodological challenges that make its study and management particularly complex.

In order to comprehend the psychological harassment in the Moroccan workplace, we ought to consider to conduct a qualitative research among experts in the human resources field using semi structured interview guides. Once the data collected, we analyze it using thematic content analysis method.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on psychological harassment are conducted in various ways. The objective of this article is to outline the conceptual and semantic framework of psychological harassment, discuss its forms, determinants, and consequences. We then aim to understand the impact of the phenomenon on the organizational commitment of employees considered victims of workplace psychological harassment, their satisfaction, and their intention to leave their job. The psychological contract theory serves as a conceptual basis to explain this relationship, as it is particularly relevant for studying the dynamics of psychological harassment between employees and their organization in the professional environment. Following this, a qualitative study was conducted through the administration of semi-structured interview guides to experts. The results were analyzed using thematic content analysis.

The increasing research on bullying, persecution, intimidation, psychological abuse, and/or workplace harassment reflects a growing problem of conflicts in concepts and definitions. This proliferation of definitions hinders the ability to conceptualize the phenomenon of workplace psychological harassment in clear and coherent

terms. An increasing number of meta-analyses have shed light on the profound impact bullying has on those who experience it (Nielsen et al., 2020a; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Verkuil et al., 2015). This growing body of research, encompassing both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, consistently demonstrates that exposure to workplace bullying is strongly linked to diminished well-being. Effect sizes ranging from medium to strong (e.g., .3 to .7; Mikkelsen et al., 2020) underline the significant toll bullying takes on individuals.

Importantly, these detrimental effects are not limited to specific industries or roles; the findings remain consistent across diverse occupational settings. This uniformity suggests that workplace bullying has universal implications for employee mental and emotional health, regardless of the work environment. These studies underscore the need for organizations to prioritize interventions that prevent and address bullying behaviors. Promoting a culture of respect and providing support mechanisms for affected employees are crucial steps to mitigating the pervasive and harmful impact of workplace bullying on employee well-being.

The absence of a common descriptive language for this phenomenon leaves employers, legislators, and other members of society perplexed as they seek to address this source of psychological suffering in the workplace (Crawshaw, 2009). Also, Sperry (2009) notes that the terms "bullying" and "persecution" are used both differentially and synonymously, and that attempts by authors to provide descriptions of definitions or models may seem tedious or confusing. According to Debout (1999), workplace psychological harassment is described as a form of persistent, repeated, and/or systematic suffering inflicted by one or more people on another. These acts manifest through various means related to relationships, organization, work tasks, and working conditions, diverting these elements from their original purpose. This attitude highlights a conscious or unconscious intent to harm, even destroy the targeted person. Similarly, Dejours (2001) emphasizes the psychodynamic perspective of work and asserts that harassment represents a form of pathological solitude characterized by an isolation process induced by management practices that encourage desolidarization within the work group. This approach reflects the importance of the collective dimension of work as an essential element for diagnosing this issue from an organizational perspective.

In the same vein, through his foundational article on workplace bullying, Heinz Leymann defines psychological harassment as a series of hostile behaviors towards a person occurring almost daily and over a long period, leading them to a position of powerlessness with high risks of exclusion (Leymann, 1996). Other definitions, notably those of Einarsen & Skogstad (1996), emphasize that bullying is subjectively experienced by the victim, not only concerning communication problems but also negative acts in general (e.g., physical violence or changes in work tasks), and that victims must have difficulty defending themselves against these acts (Nielsen et al., 2010).

In this research, the definition of psychological harassment retained is that advanced by Leymann (1996) as it specifies the scope within which acts of psychological harassment are exercised, particularly in the workplace, and highlights certain actions experienced and perceived by the victim as hostile, causing psychological harm. Leymann (1996) also identified a set of specific actions aimed at intimidating, isolating, and excluding a person, categorizing them into 45 hostile acts forming five main categories: Work relationships; systematic isolation; modification of professional tasks; attacks on the person; violence and threats of violence.

While the antecedents leading to inappropriate and unethical practices against a personal entity depend on specific situations and various contextual elements, it is undeniable that some authors have suggested determinants that may be responsible for the emergence of workplace psychological harassment, also known as "mobbing" by Anglo-Saxons. According to Meier (2009), the causes of mobbing primarily refer to the nature of the person and relationships between colleagues, while the important aspect is undoubtedly the inadequacy of organizational conditions.

Similarly, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work identifies the main factors that significantly impact the presence of "mobbing." These include: Corporate culture that does not properly recognize emerging problems; creation of unexpected changes in the company; job volatility and insecurity; dissatisfaction and poor relationships at the workplace, whether between employees themselves or between employees and supervisors; excessive demands; high exposure to stressful situations; conflicts of interest, and others (OSHA, 2002).

A qualitative study conducted by Strandmark et al. (2007) also examined how psychological harassment originates within professional settings. The results of this study highlighted that workplace reorganizations were the source of value-related conflicts, thus engendering power struggles. The characteristics observed in environments conducive to abusive behaviors included a lack of control in decision-making, deficient or passive leadership, unmet expectations, and role confusion. All these factors created a work context conducive to the emergence of deep conflicts related to both professional and personal values. In his study, Leymann (1990) also identified that professional conflict acted as a catalyst in mobbing incidents. He stated: "*Regarding the situations examined, it is established that the most frequently observed trigger is a conflict (often work-related)*" (p. 121). Other studies have identified the antecedents of these acts, including the characteristics of the mobbing perpetrator, characteristics of the victim, job design issues, leadership behavior gaps, and organizational characteristics (such

as low morale, poor leadership, or toxic culture) as possible antecedents (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen et al., 2002; Van den Brande et al., 2016).

Given this, it is essential to consider the elements of the Moroccan organizational and cultural context when analyzing the determinants of workplace psychological harassment in Morocco, as this can significantly impact how harassment is perceived, addressed, and prevented in the country. Social norms, managerial practices, and existing laws can influence Moroccan workers' perceptions and experiences of psychological harassment. Referring to Moroccan legal texts (constitution, penal code, labor code), unlike the legal systems of other countries such as France, Sweden, or Canada, we find laws that protect the health and safety of citizens and employees, indirectly addressing psychosocial risks at work but never directly employing the term "psychological harassment."

Article 40 of the Labor Code is the only article explicitly mentioning violence and sexual harassment at work: "*The following are considered serious offenses committed by the employer, head of the company, or establishment against the employee:*

- *Serious insult;*
- *Practice of any form of violence or aggression against the employee;*
- *Sexual harassment;*
- *Incitement to debauchery. Considered equivalent to abusive dismissal is the fact that the employee leaves their job due to one of the faults enumerated in this article when it is established that the employer has committed one of these faults."*

However, the Moroccan labor code does not address psychological harassment in detail and does not list its forms, leaving ambiguity around the concept in Moroccan legislation. It is clear that an employee can report their employer through labor inspection or before the social court of first instance, but it remains very difficult to reveal acts of sexual or psychological harassment and prove them (Jerdioui, 2019).

According to a study conducted by the Moroccan Center for Social Sciences (CM2S), workplace psychological harassment is often linked to socio-economic factors such as gender, education level, type of employment contract, and hierarchical position.

Additionally, the issue raised by the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council (ESEC) on mental health is often considered only from the perspective of mental illness, whereas sociocultural, biological, and economic factors play a significant role. These determinants can either favor or compromise individuals' mental health, depending on their vulnerability and the risks associated with their environment. Although healthcare represents only a small part of this issue, several deficiencies have been identified in the legislative framework, judicial psychiatric expertise, and psychological services.

According to the exploratory study by Esserdi, Chaudat, & Mériade (2022), Morocco is a fertile ground for research since the notion of workplace psychological harassment is under-studied and not yet recognized by legislators. They state that the situation is exacerbated by the emergence of several risk factors often confused, such as work overload, poor employment conditions, managerial abuse, and authority misuse.

These authors affirm that "*in Morocco, as in other developing countries, this phenomenon remains relatively unknown, overlooked, or trivialized by civil society, employers, legislators, or managers. Even the harasser/harassed pairs experiencing it may not be able to name it, as the phenomenon does not yet have a name in the common lexicon and is often confused with conflict*" (Esserdi et al., 2022, p. 100).

The consequences of psychological harassment include physical health problems, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, burnout, and overall tension (Boudrias et al., 2021; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). Overall, we can advance that the antecedents and consequences of workplace psychological harassment have been extensively researched. Leymann (1996) states that some of the social effects of harassment, when it aims to expel individuals from active life, are well known. This situation is likely responsible for the development of severe illnesses that drive the victim to seek medical or psychological help (Leymann, 1995). These severely mistreated employees also tend to take early retirement, as shown by Swedish public statistics. Figures indicate that around 25% of the workforce over 55 years old took early retirement. Estimates by the Social Insurance Office reached high figures regarding the proportion of individuals developing illnesses due to unfavorable psychological work environments, particularly experiences of psychological harassment.

It seems that a larger proportion of these subjected workers (about 10 to 20%) are affected by serious illnesses or commit suicide. Leymann (1987) emphasizes that severe illness can lead to about one in six to fifteen officially reported suicides in Swedish statistics (a total of 1800 per year).

In Australia, for example, the costs the country incurs due to leave taken by employees mistreated at work are dramatic. Toohey (1991) criticizes that these employees, after being subjected to highly unfavorable psychosocial work environments for long periods, end up consulting their doctor who diagnoses "stress," excluding the traumatic experiences endured at work. Consequently, this type of policy does not encourage leaders to reorganize their company's work procedures and review their management modes.

As previously stated, the repercussions of psychological harassment, or what is called "mobbing" here, can take other psychological and economic dimensions. Indeed, Daniela Pauknerová distinguishes between two

categories of results associated with mobbing. The first concerns psychological consequences, manifesting through concentration difficulties, anxiety, or depressive episodes. Victims of mobbing also exhibit related symptoms such as migraines, digestive problems, and heart issues. The second set includes economic repercussions characterized by decreased employee performance (Pauknerová, 2006, p. 237).

Individuals subjected to psychological harassment often are not aware of the ongoing issue. Many of them persist in their roles without actively addressing the situation for extended periods, resulting in a decline not only in their professional achievements but also in their mental and physical well-being (Divincová & Siváková, 2014).

A survey conducted in Turkey highlighted that psychological harassment behavior leads to significant consequences for both workers and organizations. Individuals exposed to mobbing report various physical and mental disorders. Among the recurrently reported manifestations are symptoms such as chest pain, palpitations, gastrointestinal problems, eating disturbances, appetite disorders, insomnia, anxiety, depression, stress, exhaustion, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Yildirim & Yildirim, 2007; Gul, 2009; Pai & Lee, 2010).

According to the same authors, individuals targeted by psychological harassment observe a decline in their satisfaction within the professional environment, accompanied by decreased performance, motivation, and productivity. Additionally, disturbances manifest in their social interactions both inside and outside the institution (Yildirim, 2009). This author states that victims of psychological harassment also have an increased risk of developing health problems, leading them to distance themselves from their workplace and consider leaving their job.

In summary, the consequences associated with the existence of mobbing at the workplace affect not only the proper functioning of the individual but also that of the work team and the company as a whole. Thus, the analysis of the results advanced by these authors leads us to deduce that exposure to workplace psychological harassment affects not only the victims' psychological state but also directly impacts their job satisfaction, involvement, and can lead some victims to leave their current position.

We observe that psychological harassment takes various forms and can have different consequences on victims. The purpose of this article is to study this phenomenon in the Moroccan context to analyze its definition and its impacts on individuals considered victims of mobbing as well as on their job satisfaction, organizational involvement, and intention to leave. After thoroughly examining previous works in the literature review, it is now imperative to situate the conceptual framework in which this study is conducted. This aims to provide a solid theoretical foundation for this research by detailing the theoretical principles and key concepts that will guide the contextualization study. From a practical standpoint, numerous social media reports provide examples of how psychological abuse and intimidating behaviors have spread in the workplace. For more compelling evidence, one can refer to the statistic that organizations lose about 6 billion dollars annually due to bullying (Rayner et al., 2002).

One of the main cognitive processes likely to follow workplace psychological harassment is the attribution of its antecedents and the reevaluation of its context, i.e., the work relationship as a whole (Kakarika et al., 2017). This reevaluation is reflected in the psychological contract, a term developed by Argyris in 1960, which states that "employees subjected to positive leadership will give ideal performance to the organization, and this relationship between employees and the employer is known as the psychological work contract."

In a psychological contract, the employee and the employer and/or organization mutually commit to respecting the unwritten and informal agreements they have concluded. These mutual expectations lead to job satisfaction, employee commitment, work quality, and productivity within the organization. According to Schein (1978), these expectations do not only consist of knowing their performance and salary; they also include obligations, human rights, and moral values. The breach of this tacit contract can have significant negative consequences for employees, such as decreased work motivation (De Lange, Bal, Van der Heijden, De Jong & Schaufeli, 2011), job dissatisfaction, decreased organizational commitment, and intentions to leave (Zhao et al., 2007) and is therefore worth studying.

Similarly, Parzefall and Salin (2010) argue that exposure to acts of psychological harassment can lead to perceptions of psychological contract breach, and that this breach in turn can have negative consequences. However, we argue that any behavior, especially when respect and conduct codes are questioned (such as workplace psychological harassment), is considered more personalized (Rousseau, 1998) and is more likely to result in intense emotional reactions (i.e., psychological contract violation -PCV-) (Cassar & Briner, 2011). Researchers have established a theoretical and empirical distinction between psychological contract breach and its violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Psychological contract breach is a cognitive state where there is a divergence, while its violation is an "emotional and affective state that can result from the belief that one's organization has failed to adequately maintain the psychological contract" (Morrison & Robinson, 1997, p. 230).

Various researchers have highlighted the correlation between psychological contract theory and the phenomenon of workplace psychological harassment. For instance, in their article "Workplace Psychological Harassment and Psychological Contract Breach," Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) explored how psychological harassment can be understood as a breach of the psychological contract. They suggested that cases of psychological harassment occur when employers do not meet employees' expectations of fair and just treatment. Similarly, in

their publication "*Workplace Psychological Harassment: A Consequence of Psychological Contract Breach*," Robinson and Bennett (1995) emphasized that psychological harassment can result from a response to psychological contract breach, particularly when the employer violates crucial employee expectations such as respect or recognition. Specifically, drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the work of the aforementioned authors, we can postulate that when employees receive negative treatment from their superiors or organizations in the form of workplace bullying, they may, in response to this negative treatment (Gouldner, 1960), withdraw behaviors and attitudes that are beneficial to the organizations.

We can therefore advance that psychological contract theory explains how exposure to workplace psychological harassment can occur when employees perceive themselves as betrayed or disappointed by their employer.

III. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND RESULTS

To understand the phenomenon of workplace psychological harassment and its impacts on workers' satisfaction, organizational involvement, and intention to leave in the Moroccan context, we opted for a qualitative approach. To this end, a semi-structured interview guide was developed, structured around three fundamental axes and comprising a series of 21 questions. Given the diversity of the participants' profiles, the questions were formulated uniformly, while being slightly adapted according to individual specificities, particularly during the introduction.

The first axis of the guide, entitled "Main missions, responsibilities, and personal opinions," aims to analyze the participants' individual perceptions regarding their professional roles and responsibilities while evaluating their personal opinions on the theme addressed. The second axis, "Workplace Psychological Harassment: Definitions, Causes, Symptoms, and Manifestations," examines the conceptions and definitions attributed to psychological harassment by analyzing the triggering factors, early warning signs, and specific manifestations of the phenomenon. The third axe, "Workplace Psychological Harassment: Dimensions and Impacts," aims to deepen the understanding of the dimensions of psychological harassment, such as interactions with colleagues and hierarchy, as well as the resulting psychological and professional consequences.

These three axes provide a rigorous framework for a detailed understanding of the phenomenon of workplace psychological harassment, enabling an in-depth and holistic analysis of its multiple facets in the Moroccan context. To shed light on workplace psychological harassment in the Moroccan context, we focused on a sample of 10 professionals from various fields. This sample includes four human resources professionals, such as Human Resources Directors and consultants specializing in health, safety, and well-being at work. We also targeted experts in workers' mental and physical health, including two psychologists and two occupational doctors. Finally, we included two labor law lawyers to provide insights into the legal aspect of the phenomenon.

The interviews were meticulously transcribed in full and subjected to analysis in accordance with the thematic content analysis methodology. This analytical approach encompasses a thorough evaluation of the data, involving both a horizontal analysis to identify cross-cutting themes and a vertical analysis to discern specific and detailed elements. The in-depth analysis of the interviews revealed three main themes: Main missions and responsibilities towards employees; definitions, determinants, symptoms, and manifestations of workplace psychological harassment; dimensions and impacts of workplace psychological harassment. All respondents indicated that they feel an obligation to protect employees and share a common concern for their mental and physical health. They pay particular attention to their advisory role, aiming to establish mutual trust, enabling the employee/patient (according to the terminology used by our psychologist experts) to share their discomfort and suffering freely.

Through the analysis of responses, it was raised that respondents provided a common definition of the phenomenon of workplace psychological harassment, encompassing acts of repression aimed at marginalizing the employee, intimidating, destabilizing, and humiliating them with high risks of exclusion. However, the aspect related to the repetition of these acts over time was not mentioned by the interviewees. According to them, "workplace psychological harassment starts with nonchalant and unjustified remarks that the person allows themselves to make in a work context to intimidate, belittle, make the other person doubt themselves, and make them lose confidence in themselves." (Human resources Director and well-being consultant at work). Regarding the determinants of this phenomenon, "the lack of managerial skills" tops the list. This cause resonated more than once in the collected responses, and one of the interviewed Human Resources Directors stated that "90% of the manager's shortcomings are not technical; they are human. It's not enough to do; the manager is expected to make things happen, lead, and enable."

"The lack of productivity among employees" also represents one of the main reasons that would push a manager to exert pressure on their collaborator, which can quickly escalate into certain acts of psychological violence perceived by the employee as an exercise of psychological harassment: "I don't see any other reason that would push a superior to exert pressure on their employees gratuitously. In my opinion, a manager targets the least productive employees to make them work more, be absent less, be more vigilant and attentive..." (Human Resources Director). The legal aspect plays a crucial role in the emergence of acts of psychological harassment in

the workplace due to the legal ambiguity surrounding these practices. "The legal void on this subject encourages these vile practices. We have observed a case of psychological harassment in the company, and it's factual. What do we do about it? This is where my frustration lies." (Labour lawyer).

The symptoms experienced by the victim of workplace psychological harassment can be either visible or invisible. The most repetitive symptoms were in the form of migraines, stomach aches, irritability, anger outbursts, insomnia, absenteeism, chronic fatigue, and isolation. It was important for respondents to specify that neither the employee's gender, age, nor position plays a role in their predisposition to being a victim of workplace psychological harassment. "Victims develop physical symptoms or what we call somatic symptoms originating from psychological suffering, such as musculoskeletal pain, back pain, migraines, stomach aches, chronic fatigue. Psychologically, victims feel sadness, suffer from social isolation, are often very irritable, and experience anhedonia (loss of joy in life)" (Psychologist).

According to the analysis of the responses, a list of hostile acts identified by the interviewees emerged, mainly consisting of isolating the person by no longer speaking to them, verbal attacks, derogatory remarks aimed at belittling or intimidating the other, mockery, showing indifference towards the employee, spreading rumors about the person, changing the employee's work tasks without reason and without prior warning, belittling, daily conflicts, assigning humiliating tasks, and more. Also, regarding the impact of these acts, respondents affirmed that an employee victim of workplace psychological harassment is often demotivated, lacks involvement, and expresses job dissatisfaction. Some may even consider leaving their job in search of a better opportunity. "An employee victim of workplace psychological harassment can only think about changing their professional environment. They spend less time working and more time looking for another position in a less toxic work environment." (Human resources director and well-being consultant at work). The Human Resources Director also stated, "Generally, in the company, when an employee stays, it's the manager who makes them stay, and when they leave, it's the manager who makes them leave."

However, another Human Resources Director thinks differently, asserting that in a company where they have worked for over 10 years, they notice that for some employees, the consequences of their exposure to psychological harassment are not always negative. "In Moroccan culture, we were raised with certain principles instilled by our parents, who told us that work came with pressure, harassment, belittlement... The employee then becomes immune to these actions, and they don't prevent them from being involved in their work; it can even push them to be more involved."

Our interviews reveal that psychological harassment is a concerning reality in the professional context in Morocco. Despite the lack of a solid legal framework dedicated to this phenomenon, our experts unanimously expressed their concern about it, highlighting the positive initiatives undertaken by companies to raise awareness and prevent this issue among the active population. The definitions provided by our respondents present similarities with Leymann's (1996) classic definition of psychological harassment, except for the duration and recurrence of acts, which were not explicitly specified.

The symptoms mentioned by our interviewees among victims of psychological harassment, such as fear, tears, anxiety, depression, insomnia, anger, isolation, and sadness, align with those described in the psychological contract breach theory (Morrison & Robinson, 1997), which we mobilized in our study. This theory posits that individuals have implicit mutual expectations and obligations with their employer beyond the formal terms of the employment contract. When these expectations are not met, it can lead to a breach of the psychological contract, which in turn can be the cause of psychological harassment and result in employee disengagement or intention to leave the job or both, along with job dissatisfaction. (Djurkovic, McCormack & Casimir, 2004).

Our respondents share divergent views on this subject. Some state that no specific category of person is spared from psychological harassment, as this phenomenon can affect any professionally active person. "Each category of person has its own characteristics and issues that would make them a potential victim of psychological harassment, whether a young graduate, senior, man or woman; a harasser will always find a reason to harass you, whoever you are." (Human Resources Director and well-being consultant at work). Others think differently. For instance, the psychologist believes that women are more likely to be harassed than men, explaining that "women are generally much more vulnerable to a harassing manager due to the difficulty of finding a job, keeping it, and finding another one. They, therefore, have a slightly higher chance of being harassed than men." (Psychologist).

The factors responsible for psychological harassment identified by our interviewees are mainly professional, cultural, and personal. The lack of managerial skills emerges as a predominant reason behind these behaviors. Additionally, Moroccan culture significantly influences interactions within companies, particularly those between superiors and subordinates. "When a manager exerts additional moral pressure on an employee, it's to make them work, to push them, and to get them to give their best; it's cultural." (Human Resources Director). The personal aspect involves the mental and psychological state of the harasser, who, according to several respondents, may have difficulty managing their emotions and projecting their stress onto their subordinates. "A manager under pressure will seek to share it by passing it on to their subordinates." (Human Resources Director).

The dimensions of psychological harassment identified in our analysis correspond to the 45 behaviors listed by Leymann (1996). Our study aligns with this author's definition, which characterizes psychological

harassment as a sequence of recurring hostile acts, occurring almost daily over a prolonged period, leading the victim to a state of vulnerability with high risks of exclusion. These behaviors were classified into five distinct categories: work relationships, systematic isolation, modification of professional tasks, personal attacks, and violence or threats of violence. The discussion of results is significantly enriched by the elements concerning the impact of workplace psychological harassment on employees. Almost unanimously, our interviewees affirmed that employees who are victims of psychological harassment show signs of demotivation and job dissatisfaction. They also show less involvement in their professional tasks and often consider or actually leave their current position in search of a more favorable opportunity. This finding corroborates previous studies that have consistently identified psychological harassment as a significant factor in deteriorating job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational involvement among employees (Einarsen et al., 2003; Hoel et al., 2004; Nielsen et al., 2012).

However, it is essential to note that a divergent perspective was expressed by Human Resources Director No. 1. They highlight that in Moroccan culture, there is a tacit acceptance of certain levels of pressure, harassment, and even uncomfortable work-related situations. These statements suggest that the consequences of psychological harassment on employees are not necessarily negative for everyone, but depend partly on their individual perspective and adaptation to perceived pressures.

III. CONCLUSION

Through this research, we have been able to analyze some key elements of the phenomenon of workplace psychological harassment, presenting its forms, determinants, and consequences on both the individual (specifically the employee victim) and the organization. We highlighted its impact on the employee's professional life within the company, regarding their organizational involvement, job satisfaction, and the role that exposure to psychological harassment plays in their intention to leave their job.

We pointed out the semantic ambiguity surrounding the term psychological harassment at work in the Moroccan context, explained by the absence of a legal and social consensus capable of defining the concept clearly and precisely. Additionally, the limited information on concrete cases of individuals who are victims of workplace psychological harassment, as revealed through our interview responses, is explained by the victims' reluctance to share their experiences out of shame or fear.

This article highlights a set of results related to the relationship between exposure to acts of workplace psychological harassment and its impact on employees' organizational involvement, job satisfaction, and intention to leave their job. This relationship was demonstrated through psychological contract theory and affirmed by the results of the qualitative study conducted with experts such as Human Resources Directors, wellness consultants, psychologists, occupational doctors, and lawyers.

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