

Psychosocial Work Environment and Mental Health Outcomes among Teachers: An Umbrella Review of Evidence Syntheses

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Direct Research Journal of Public Health and Environmental Technology



Vol. 11(2), Pp. 59-65, July 2026

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<https://journals.directresearchpublisher.org/index.php/drjphet>; <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/drjphet>

Review Article

ISSN: 2734-2182

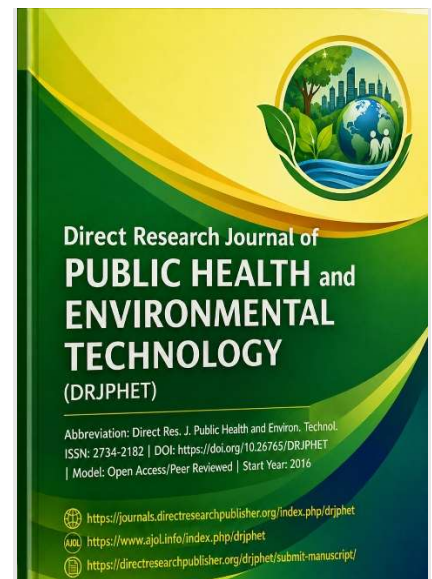
Received 10 April 2026, Accepted 15 June 2026, Published 3 July 2026

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Psychosocial risks in teaching represent a growing problem for occupational health due to their impact on physical and mental well-being and professional performance. Several studies have indicated that factors such as work overload, emotional demands, work-family conflict, and lack of organizational support contribute significantly to the deterioration of teachers' mental health.

Method: An umbrella review of systematic reviews published between 2020 and 2025 was conducted, using the PubMed, SciELO, Redalyc, and Dialnet databases. Reviews related to psychosocial risks, occupational health, and teacher well-being were included, while primary studies, reviews without an explicit methodology, and opinion pieces were excluded. The methodological quality of the selected studies was assessed using the AMSTAR-2 tool. **Results:** Of the 38 records identified, 5 systematic reviews that met the inclusion criteria were selected. The findings revealed a high level of exposure among teachers to psychological, organizational, and emotional demands associated with work-related stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. Work-family conflict, surface acting, depersonalization, low self-esteem, and insufficient organizational support were also identified as relevant factors. The use of instruments such as the CoPsoQ/ISTAS21 for psychosocial risk assessment was also highlighted. **Conclusion:** The evidence demonstrates that psychosocial risks constitute a priority issue among teachers, with direct repercussions on mental health and job performance. Strengthening preventive strategies, institutional support, and research in the field of education is needed to promote healthier and more sustainable work.

Keywords: Mental health, Teachers, Burnout, Occupational health program



Citation: Gutierrez, D. O. Z., Cruz, K. R. A. & Segovia, E. A. J. C. (2026) Psychosocial Risk Factors and Mental Health in Teachers: An Umbrella Review of Systematic Review. *Direct Research Journal of Public Health and Environmental*. Vol. 11(2), Pp. 59-65. <https://doi.org/10.26765/DRJPHE436376595>

INTRODUCTION

Psychosocial risk factors constitute a global problem; in 2019 alone, it was estimated that 15% of working-age adults had a mental disorder, and it is estimated that, worldwide, 12,000 million workdays are lost each year due to depression and anxiety, at a cost of US\$1 trillion per year in lost productivity (OMS, 2024). Currently, it is estimated that the impact of psychosocial risks at work affects more than 30% of the global workforce, and working conditions are among the main factors influencing mental health. This issue highlights the urgency of implementing effective strategies to prevent and mitigate their effects (Díaz-Patiño & Velasco, 2022). Stress was negatively associated with career advancement and development, good working conditions, and social support; however, it was also reported that social support did not significantly reduce psychological demands. The same study notes that the highest stress levels were associated with work organization and workplace conflicts among academics who telework several times a week (Díaz-Patiño & Velasco, 2022). Psychosocial risks, particularly cases of work-related stress and technostress, have an adverse effect on workers' safety and health. Although the emergence of stress and technostress in the workplace may seem relatively recent, stress has been part of the working world for decades (Hernández & Sánchez, 2023). In line with the objective of identifying the relationship between psychosocial factors and health among teachers, we will explore the available scientific evidence on the subject to broaden our understanding of this phenomenon.

METHODOLOGY

An umbrella review was conducted of articles in the field of education related to psychosocial risks in indexed publications. The SciELO, PubMed, Dialnet, and Redalyc databases were used to conduct a search using the terms "Teachers," "Systematic review," and "Occupational health/Occupational diseases." The research period was limited to 2020–2025 to include the most recent studies reflecting contemporary research on psychosocial risks among teachers. Only articles published in Spanish and English were considered; those in Spanish were selected for analysis and review due to the significance of scientific output in these languages and the accessibility of available resources. The Zotero reference management software was used to manage and organize bibliographic references, thereby facilitating systematic control of citations and duplicates. Systematic reviews addressing psychosocial aspects, occupational health, and the well-being of teaching staff were included. Where feasible, the reviews were required to incorporate the PICO model (Patient, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome) to ensure greater clarity regarding the population, intervention, and outcomes under investigation. Primary studies, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and reviews that did not use an explicit

synthesis method were excluded. Data collection and the assessment of methodological quality were conducted by two independent reviewers using the AMSTAR-2 tool, ensuring objectivity and consistency in the categorization of the evidence. Disagreements were resolved through discussion and consensus among the reviewers.

RESULTS

In this study, a total of 38 articles on the topic of psychosocial risk among teachers were reviewed. Upon examining each article, it was found that they did not meet the established criteria for inclusion, such as being published between 2020 and 2025, written in Spanish, and in the education sector. Five articles were found that met all the requirements. It is worth noting that while there are many articles on the proposed topic, there are not a large number of review articles specifically on this subject. It is also important to point out that the search was limited to articles in Spanish in order to include them, which further reduces the number of potential articles; however, since Spanish is an important language, it was retained as part of the selection criterion (Figure 1 and Table 1).

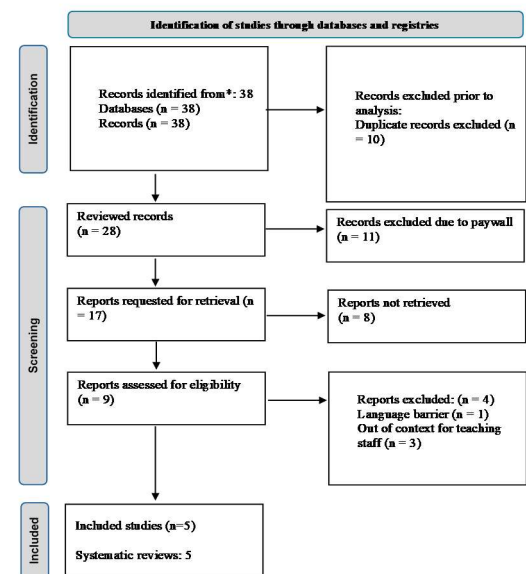


Figure 1. Study Selection Process (PRISMA Flowchart): **Source:** Prepared by the author based on the segmentation matrix from the selected studies.

This review identified five categories related to psychosocial risks among teachers: Psychological demands, Work-family balance, Surface acting, Burnout, Coping strategies, and Low self-esteem. Taken together, these categories reveal a clear overall trend: most reviews agree that teachers are exposed to high levels of job demands, which have negative effects on mental health (Table 2).

Table 1. Profile of Studies Selected for Analysis

Author (year)	Study title	Country or region	Main objective	Population Context	Number of studies included	Key Findings
Pujol-Cols, Lucas, & Lazzaro (2021)	Ten Years of Research on Psychosocial Risks, Health, and Performance in Latin America: A Comprehensive Systematic Review and Research Agenda	Chile	To analyze the relationship between workplace psychosocial risks, health, and performance in Latin America over the past ten years	Faculty	142	1.The faculty population in this study shows that the profession is characterized by high exposure to psychological, organizational, and emotional demands, with work overload and performance pressure standing out as the most frequent psychosocial risks. These conditions are consistently associated with work-related stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout syndrome, affecting both mental health and professional performance.
Matabanchoy Tulcan, S. M. (2019)	Progress Toward Work-Family Balance in Latin America: A Systematic Literature Review	Colombia	To identify progress in the area of work-family balance that has occurred between 2008 and 2018 in Latin America.	Teachers and the education sector included	55	2.Work–Family Conflict: Work demands interfere with family responsibilities, causing emotional stress and difficulties in achieving work–family balance. 3.Gender: Women are more exposed to work-family conflict due to caregiving and domestic responsibilities
Kariou A, K. P. (2021) and Olga Lainidi (2021)	Emotional Labor and Burnout among Teachers: A Systematic Review	Greece	To examine the relationship between emotional labor and burnout among elementary and secondary school teachers.	Elementary school teachers	21	1. Emotional exhaustion associated with surface acting. 2. Emotional labor (surface acting): feigning emotions or suppressing feelings significantly increases burnout.
Rivera Rodríguez, L. G. (2023)	Psychosocial factors in teachers: a systematic review based on meta-analysis.	Mexico	To analyze the instruments used and the associations studied regarding the health (physical and emotional) of teachers through a systematic review.	Teachers 2006 and 2021 in Latin American countries and Spain.	41	1Work absenteeism: Adverse psychosocial factors can lead to absenteeism and reduced work performance. 2Burnout: Workplace violence and psychological harassment emerge as psychosocial factors that increase emotional exhaustion and burnout.
Echeverry E, G. D. (2025)	Psychosocial Risk Factors of Teaching and Administrative Staff: A systematic review of the main trends in its approach.	Mexico	To identify the most common psychosocial risk factors affecting teaching and administrative staff in the education sector	Teachers and administrative staff	32	1Low job autonomy: Limitations on participation in work-related decisions increase psychosocial stress 2Job demotivation: Prolonged burnout reduces satisfaction and commitment to educational work.

Table 2: Thematic Categories for Analysis of Selected Studies.

Authors	Analytical Categories	No. of reviews reporting it	Level of consistency or agreement	Average methodological quality (AMSTA-2)
Pujol-Cols, Lucas, & Lazzaro	Psychological Demands and Organizational	4	High	Moderate
Matabanchoy Tulcan et al.	Work-Family Balance	3	Moderate	Moderate
Anna Kariou et al	Surface Acting and Depersonalization	4	High	Moderate
Rivera Rodríguez, L. G	Burnout Psychosocial Intervention Tools Work absenteeism	3	Moderate	Moderate
Echeverry Saldarriaga, E., & García Rodríguez,	Low self-esteem and lack of motivation at work.	3	Moderate	Moderate

Source: Prepared by the authors based on categories extracted from the analysis matrix in selected studies.

DISCUSSION

This research establishes a valuable benchmark, as it acknowledges the growing demand for mental health interventions and highlights the dimensions that studies are identifying as essential factors for intervention in the education sector and its primary asset: educators. The literature's primary focus is on the psychological demands intrinsic to the job. According to research in Latin America (Pujol-Cols, 2021), more than 400 teachers evaluated reported a high level of cognitive demand, with emotional exhaustion standing out as one of the predominant factors. In this line of reasoning, Central American authors demonstrate that the teaching role, by its very nature, is characterized by high cognitive demands that foster emotional dissonance, and this factor is perceived as closely

linked to pathological conditions such as burnout (Hodgson Suárez, 2013). In this context, given that educators are promoters of critical thinking, interventions addressing these dimensions emerging in the studies should be a priority for further investigation. Furthermore, educators demonstrate a high susceptibility to factors related to their role and the support they receive from their organizations (Y, 2024). Research based on structural equation modeling and JD-R models has shown that mental load is inversely proportional to organizational support, which clarifies the fundamental objectives for mitigating this occupational health issue among the study population.

The high workload demanded of teachers permeates their activities both during and outside

of working hours, which, according to certain authors, represents a challenge that goes beyond a mere obstacle to work-family balance among educators. European research has examined this relationship, finding that teachers' workloads act as a catalyst for an imbalance in this relationship and are closely linked to burnout. This imbalance is primarily attributed to occupational exhaustion associated with difficulties in the organizational environment (Junça-Silva, 2022). This suggests that workplace adversities spill over into one's personal life, challenging the paradigm of non-interference between these two dimensions. At the same time, other researchers postulate that this linked relationship contributes to depressive processes and that the latter partially explains a conflictive trend in the family-work relationship,

given that burnout enters a self-perpetuating spiral of work-related fatigue (Li, 2024; Matabanchoy Tulcan, 2019).

Teaching is a professional activity that takes place during the academic planning stages and demands a considerable amount of time from teaching teams. Therefore, faculty members routinely implement strategies to psychologically alleviate this burden. In Turkey, research has shown that surface acting exhibits a positive and statistically significant correlation with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The simulation of a certain mood chronically contributes to the adoption of distancing attitudes toward students (Bayram, 2023; Anomneze, 2016).

In this context, the phenomenon of Surface Acting stands out as one of the strongest psychosocial predictors of emotional exhaustion among educators (Kariou, 2021), without overlooking risk factors such as burnout, considered a multidimensional aggravating factor (Jiron Urbina, 2026) to such an extent that it already has a significant impact on the public health of nations, which has led the WHO to incorporate this condition under a special code, QD85, to characterize this phenomenon as a growing psychosocial pathology (WHO, 2019).

Research aimed at understanding this phenomenon over time has led to the development of multiple instruments capable of segmenting risks according to various characteristics that converge as spectra emerge in response to psychosocial conditions of varying magnitude and impact at both the individual and collective levels. The authors note that these instruments have taken a clear approach focused on defined areas such as managerial support, organizational climate, institutional resources, and work engagement (Rivera Rodríguez, 2023). There are widely accepted instruments, such as CoPsoQ and ISTAS21; these two have gained prominence because they integrate many of the elements we have previously discussed. Undoubtedly, the technical evidence suggests that processes reach a turning point when commitment is demonstrated by management and governance structures, and when the issues are perceived as emerging problems (Y, 2024). In this context, it is important to emphasize that interventions must emerge as a consensus-based effort and that organizations must have the capacity and the courage to implement changes before seeing results. Various studies confirm that the progression of this issue reveals highly correlated relationships. In Spain, an analysis of 210 teachers revealed an unequivocal relationship between those with low risk of developing burnout and a high level of self-esteem (Méndez, 2020). At the same time, the growth of this pathological factor directly interferes with job performance levels, as we include individuals who have a negative self-perception, and this is a way of harming those outside the individual (Echeverry, 2025). This phenomenon is linked to a set of factors that collectively

drain staff, particularly those who perceive themselves as unfit for teaching or any workplace, according to Rosidah (2024). Undoubtedly, this approach broadens our perspective on the social strategy we must adopt, since there is no single-pronged effort in the reviewed literature that generates added value and a higher success rate for mitigating these psychosocial effects on teaching staff; however, it is possible to deduce that the support of decision-makers within organizations constitutes an essential component in the training cycle of educators.

Conclusion and Limitations of the Study

This umbrella review facilitated the consolidation of existing scientific evidence regarding the predominant psychosocial risks affecting teaching staff. The predominant categories include psychological and organizational demands, work-family conflict, surface acting, depersonalization, low self-esteem, and deficiencies in organizational support. The findings reveal significant consistency across the reviews examined, indicating that these conditions correlate with increased levels of work-related stress, emotional exhaustion, burnout, and deteriorating mental health. Furthermore, it was found that organizational circumstances play a crucial role in both the manifestation and mitigation of these risks. Teaching is characterized as a profession with a considerable emotional and cognitive load, whose complexity demands holistic interventions focused on strengthening workplace well-being. In the current context, it is imperative to promote institutional strategies grounded in prevention, organizational support, and work-family balance. Ultimately, this review provides a contemporary foundation for decision-making and for the development of future research aimed at improving the psychosocial conditions and occupational health of educators. Secondly, the research was limited to four databases (PubMed, SciELO, Redalyc, and Dialnet), suggesting the possibility that systematic reviews indexed in other specialized sources such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, PsycINFO, or Embase may not have been identified. A significant limitation lies in the small number of systematic reviews ultimately included ($n = 5$), a circumstance that hinders the ability to make more robust comparisons across geographic contexts, educational levels, and methodologies employed.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this synthesis declare that there is no conflict of interest in the creation of this manuscript.

Author Responsibility Statement

Darling Odily Zepeda Gutierrez: Conceptualization, development of results, initial draft. Methodology, formal analysis,

Kevin Renato Arana Cruz: Visualization, drafting and revision, and editing. Supervision, validation, and review of the final document.

Erick Alexander de Jesus Chamorro Segovia: Supervision, validation, and review of the final document.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors declare that they used artificial intelligence to assist with this article in determining the word count for the abstract; this tool in no way replaces the intellectual task or process of analysis in this manuscript.

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