

STATISTICS APPLIED IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELING OF TEACHERS

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Abstract: *Starting from stress theoretical presumptions and findings in the practice of the importance of knowing the level of stress in teaching staff, the present study aims to highlight the level of stress in the teaching profession, its implications on professional life, highlighting the reactivity and emotional dynamics, and the development of a teacher counseling plan.*

Keywords: *teaching profession; emotional dynamics; stress;*

The profession, even if it was chosen on the basis of a real vocation, can be a source of stress. Theorell & Karasek's researches, subsequently completed by Siegrist, materialized in a model of professional stress, constituting a three-dimensional situational complex (Theorell & Karasek apud Derevenco, 1998):

- Amplitude and quality of requests (continuity, pleasant-unpleasant)
- possibility of control and decision on the task (active-passive)
- social support as a filter for stress

Some professions are stressful, others less.

Statistics show that, for example, airline pilots, whose decisions involve safety and sometimes passenger life, suffer from hypertension (due to professional stress) at a rate four times higher than other professional categories (long-distance driver, guard night or portrait) or that the period for the preparation of the financial and accounting balance represents for the accounting experts a period of risk for the production of cardiac injuries (Derevenco, 1998).

On the other hand, the research done by S. Kobasa (apud Deverenco, 1998) on a group of 57 lawyers did not reveal any correlation between the frequency of exposure to stress and illness. It seems that we are dealing with an eustres since the mute of the interviewed lawyers have said they get better results when working in some kind of mental tension.

It is considered that work itself is not stress-generating but how we perceive the action of stressors (especially the environmental factors we come into contact with).

The main variables related to the work process that generate professional stress are:

- the level of workload
- Responsibility towards subordinates
- subjective perception that not all the knowledge and skills we possess (sub-load)
- the level of reward for the work done
- conflicts of role in work (conflicts with superiors, colleagues or subordinates)
- role conflicts at the family or social level

- Role ambiguity (ambiguous perception of professional tasks)
- lack of social support (lack of support from colleagues, family, friends or superiors)

S. B. Sells (apud Iamandescu, 1999) considers psychic stress to occur in the following situations:

- circumstances that capture the unprepared person to deal with them
- lack of training
- Physical and intellectual disability, etc.

The stakes are very high, a favorable response having important consequences for the individual, while the failure has a harmful effect, further stressing the psychological stress; the degree of "engagement" of the individual (depending on the stake), the limits of his personality give him an intensity directly proportional to mental stress.

Besides the stressful situations induced by over-stressing, stressful situations are also considered as under-stressing. This is explained by the fact that in man there is an innate need for affirmation of a range of possibilities to highlight its capacity, a need which is satisfied only in an activity during which these possibilities are adequately demanded.

A subtle, but more damaging, form of emotional subsistence, by satisfying social needs, involving inter-human communication processes and implicitly the need for self-affirmation.

Professional stress is determined by a multitude of factors dependent on the physical environment, intrinsic features of the activity and the psychophysiological peculiarities of the individual.

Professional stress sources:

- physical environment - the unfavorable physical environment exerts a stressful effect depending on the duration of the action, the degree of familiarity with the stressors and the type of work to be done;
- the social environment of work - the stressful phenomena from the free time, the lack of harmony in family life, the conditions of inhabitation, etc. reduce the resistance threshold to professional stress;
- the nature and organization of work - the volume of work tasks, the pace of its deployment, the extended working hours, the level of responsibility in the professional activity are factors of professional stress.

Also, the ambiguity of pregnancy and the role conflict can cause occupational stress. Unclear or contradictory information about the nature of the task or the means to accomplish the tasks creates tension and stress. Sometimes conflict arises between superiors' orders and interests or subordinate requirements or in situations where superiors or subordinates are rigid or routine, opposed to change.

A state of dissatisfaction and stress also occurs when the person has a low self-control over the decisions and is not consulted on matters concerning his / her own activity.

- psychological and social factors - are responsible for producing many cases of professional stress due to interpersonal problems. The emotional tension created by professional insecurity, lack of safe income, job insecurity, professional failures, lack of social support, increase vulnerability to stress.

An important approach to psychic stress is to highlight the existence of a relationship between the level of stress and the performances performed by the individual (Lupu, 1999). It has been found that, in general, low levels of stress lead to low performance. Moderate stress stimulates personality and leads to improved performance, while at high levels of stress the performance is diluted.

Low levels of stress result in poor motivation, subservience, lack of involvement, boredom and, implicitly, poor performance.

Very high levels of stress cause anxiety, fear of failure, overuse that have the same purpose: low performance. In the long run, intense stress results in loss of work performance, interest in it and creative capabilities

Instead, moderate stress induces optimal motivation, optimal solicitation, engagement and increased performance, becoming a factor of dynamism, combativeness and creativity in accomplishing tasks

Didactical stress

The concrete tasks of the teacher are found in:

- designing and designing the didactic activity (setting educational and educational objectives and their operationalization)
- observance of the methodologies imposed by updated psycho-pedagogical principles
- using the available material base and promoting all measures aimed at broadening this basis
- stimulate student creativity to the detriment of just their intellectualization
- Education, not just training
- observance of the principles of professional ethics

The effect of stress on teachers has been studied since the 1930s when they began to defend numerous articles about the health and well-being of teachers.

In a study conducted by the American Association of Teachers, 40% of teachers surveyed said they did visit doctor about stress-related problems, occurred in the last year, 20% believe that drinking too much and 15% think they are alcoholics , 25% suffer from health problems such as hypertension, insomnia, depression and gastrointestinal disorders.

Accelerated development of the company, its rapid modernization, more advanced technologies, enhanced mobility, teachers produce a feeling of incompetence and stress due to their inability to stay current in their field of interest (Fimian, 1982).

Criteria for the diagnosis of didactic stress

The stress model closest to the didactic stress is the interactive one. In the case of teachers, stress factors can be divided into three categories:

- Factors intrinsic to the educational process
- cognitive factors (which affect individual vulnerability to stress)
- Systemic factors (linked to institutional level and political level)

The intrinsic factors of didactic stress have been studied by Travers and Cooper (apud Bogathy & Petroman, 1999). They investigated 800 teachers from England and France about the stresses induced by their profession. Thus, 22% of sufferers living in England, compared to only 1% in France, 55% of English teachers, compared with only 20% of the French said they intended to leave the education system soon.

However, there were some common elements regarding the sources of tension in the teaching environment: student discipline, low social status, lack of support from the students' parents. English teachers have reported, however, more problems related to prolonged work, high workload and interference of policy makers in their work. For them, the major sources of stress are low social status and low incomes.

Some professors said they did not think they were recovering during the weekend after their work during the week and are waiting for their holidays. The discipline of students is another source of stress.

Other teachers assert that they fail to master the class properly. For them, classroom management is the second major source of anxiety after evaluating the degree of apprehension.

A high level of stress has been associated with low emotional, appreciative, instrumental, and integrative social support.

Driving style has been identified as a significant organizational factor in the area of stressors. Thus, the director's democratic leadership style reduces the level of stress perceived by subordinates.

The results obtained by Pelsma and Richard (1988) have shown a strong correlation between work satisfaction and the stress of teachers, as well as the fact that stress intensity and work satisfaction is directly influenced by the quality of the didactic act.

Teachers also highlighted a series of life events that influence professional performance: marriage, divorce, pregnancy, someone's death, or home change.

Rotter (1966), shows amongst the first that attitudes and beliefs have an important role in personality development, ultimately crystallizing as a stable feature, which he calls the "Locus of Control" idea. Individuals, characterized by external LOC, are convinced that personal power has a minimal effect on events, caused by destiny, chance or the power of others. Internal LOC implies the belief that personal strength and control can influence events, that their own success is due to the skills and work done.

Effects of didactic stress

These effects of stress are manifested physiologically and psychologically (Bogathy & Petroman, 1999) through somato-physiological and behavioral responses.

Usually, biologic and behavioral changes caused by stress are attenuated with the body's adaptation to stress. However, there are also cases where stress exceeds the average (beneficial) level and then the adjustment is disrupted.

Symptomology of stress manifested by pathological fatigue or overworking is not recovered during or at the end of the day or during holidays. Pathological fatigue is preeminent intellectual that certifies the existence of stress. Thus, the didactic stress has as a first consequence the chronic pathological fatigue of the teachers, which manifests at the emotional and cognitive level, with repercussions on the didactic (and not only) efficiency, and the decrease of the general resistance of the body by affecting the immune system.

In a study by P. Miuț (Bogathy & Petroman, 1999), teachers' answers to a questionnaire on the consequences of didactic stress confirmed a high level of chronic fatigue, mainly generated by school activity (especially by the number of hours foreseen in framing and the large amount of information included in curricula). The manifestations of this chronic fatigue are: the fluctuation of attention, the decrease of the capacity for engraftment and storage, the inconsistent activity, the diminishing of the concentration power, the inadvertencies.

Under exceptional circumstances, chronic stress can lead to "burn-out", characterized by emotional exhaustion, physical and mental exhaustion, and is expressed through affective flattening, depersonalization, and loss of personal achievement.

Consequently, the teacher's personality, unable to be stress-stricken beyond that medium, stimulating, could have the following characteristics:

- Normoreactive person (Krantz & Manuck apud Băban, 1998), where the differences of psychophysiological activation between resting and post-exposure to stressful stimuli are small.
- Person with positive tropism reactions (Cohen apud Băban, 1998), characterized by search behaviors and subjective state of pleasure in stimulation situations.
- A person with active adaptation reactions (Cohen apud Băban, 1998), characterized by environmental control, information development and behavioral strategies appropriate to the situation.
- Person with tolerance to high ambiguity
- A person characterized by robustness (Kobasa apud Derevenco, 1998), ie through self-employment, a sense of competition and control of the environment and of one's own life.

- Self-conscious person (Mullen & Suls apud Derevenco, 1998), that is, the person who has the mood to focus on internal issues such as "affections, emotions, feelings" to mitigate the impact of life events on homeostasis body.
- A person characterized as having the concept of coherence (Antonovsky apud Derevenco, 1998), characterized by the perception of a finality, the comprehension of the situation and its mastery.

The objective of the research

Starting from stress theoretical presumptions and findings in the practice of the importance of knowing the level of stress in teaching staff, the present study aims to highlight the level of stress in the teaching profession, its implications on professional life, highlighting the reactivity and emotional dynamics, and the development of a teacher counseling plan.

Research hypotheses

In line with the objectives outlined above, I propose the following hypotheses:

1. The level of stress on the staff employed by the state is higher than that of employees in private companies.
2. In both cases - employees in state or private - employees have a good resistance to intense and long-term demands.
3. In both groups there is an increased resistance to stress and a good emotional balance.

Study variables

In order to achieve the research objectives, the variables involved in the present research were established, as follows:

Demographic and socio-occupational variables: Age, Level of education, Type of education and Graduate level

Personality Variables: Employee stress levels, Nerve energy, Nervous mobility, Force inhibition, Reactivity and emotional dynamics

Description of lots of subjects

This research was attended by 50 subjects, employed in the professions of educator and preschool teacher and mayor. They were divided into two equal lots, of 25 employees, the first group of employees of the state education, and the second group of employees of the private education.

In the first batch we only have female employees, and in lot II we have both women and men.

Subjects are between the ages of 23 and 60, with an average age of about 37 years.

Description of methods of investigation and processing of information

To demonstrate the hypotheses, we used two tests: Self-assessment of stress level and RDE questionnaire - Reactivity and emotional dynamics.

In the complete evaluation of the subjects we also used the following tests from the PSITEST battery:

- RCR - Quickness and clarity of reasoning, a test that contains 24 items from the series of figures; he reveals the level of general cognitive aptitude
- MA - Mobility of Attention, contains a table in which 50 numbers must be searched in increasing order within 5 minutes; the ability to move from one information to the next can be evaluated.

- PRAGUE - the ability to distribute attention, includes 4 columns with numbers that have a smaller correspondence that needs to be identified, each column is worked out in a 4 minute interval each.

The stress self-evaluation test contains 20 statements with 3 variants of response: "1 - absent; 2 - sometimes; 3 - frequently ". Every statement is generally addressed. After they have checked the option chosen for each statement, the accumulated scoring is performed.

If the amount is:

- Less than 30 points - the stress level enters a NORMAL beach
- Between 30-50 points - the level of stress is NORMAL.
- Between 50-60 points - level STRES EXTREM.

As a result of the pencil-paper test, a slightly higher average value was observed in the case of group I, even if both fall into the level of a stress level that enters a normal range.

The next relevant test for our study is the RDE Questionnaire - Reactivity and Emotional Dynamics. It includes 75 questions that relate to the ways in which people behave, manifest themselves in certain situations. It is a questionnaire with YES or NO answer questions, and the respondent ticks the answer in the answer sheet. This questionnaire has no time limit. He also has a lying scale: if a score greater than 13 is obtained, the questionnaire is no longer relevant.

The factors studied by this questionnaire are:

- Nervous energy (Eg) - the average value is between 7 and 10. If it exceeds the value of 10, we have an increased force of excitement. If we have a value of less than 7, we have to deal with a person with nervous weakness, low resistance to intense and long-term stress, to stressful, affectionate, predisposition to neurasthenia. In our study, although both groups have values ranging from 7 to 10, those in lot II have a higher average value than those in the first lot, so a better resistance to requests.

- Nervous mobility (Mn) - the mean value is between 5.5 and 8.5. If it exceeds the value of 9, we have an ideative instability, motor and emotional instability, low concentration time; the tendency towards superficiality. If we have a value less than 5, we have to deal with a person with inertia, low reactivity; degree of high inhibition; initiative and reduced promptitude. In our study, both batches have the same average value of 8.2, so a good concentration time over time.

- Inhibition force (Fi) - the mean value is between 8 and 11. If it exceeds 11, we have hyperpredence, excessive delayed reactions, increased sensory thresholds, indifference or emotional flattening. If we have a value of less than 8, we have to deal with a person with an exaggerated impulsivity, the weakness of the self-control mechanisms, balancing difficulties in tensional, affectionate situations. In our study, although both groups have values ranging from 8 to 11, those in group II have a higher average value than those in the first batch, so they have rapid responses and mean sensory thresholds.

- Reactivity and emotional dynamics (RDE) - the mean value is between 10.5 and 15.5. If it exceeds the value of 16, we have low emotionality, increased resistance to stress, good emotional balance. If we have a value of less than 10, we have to deal with a person with fragile emotional balance, instability, predominance of asthenic effect, disruptive emotions on behavior and affections, emotional tension and increased anxiety, predisposition to neurotic and psychotic disorders , emotional hypersensitivity. In our study, although both groups have values ranging from 10 to 16, those in lot II have a higher average value than those in the first lot, so they have a high resistance to stress and good emotional balance.

Working procedure.

The tests were individually shared with each employee by the examiner. During testing it was a quiet atmosphere, no employee refused to answer the questions, the whole procedure proceeding normally.

Employees were promising and receptive to this request to complete the tests; of course, before completing the training they were trained and confidentially informed of the answers and the identity.

After collecting and processing the obtained data it was observed that all the assumptions were confirmed.

1. The level of stress on the staff employed by the state is higher than that of employees in private companies.
2. In both cases - employees in state or private - employees have a good resistance to intense and long-term demands.
3. In both groups there is an increased resistance to stress and a good emotional balance.

Although the assumptions have been confirmed by the results, they cannot be generalized because the batches have a small number of subjects, insignificantly statistically.

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