

# OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES

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**Abstract:**

*In the literature, stress is defined as the body's response to demands from the internal or external environment, internal or external stimulus or stressor, interaction or transaction between the person and the environment. When we want to reduce stress as much as possible, we need to identify potential sources of stress, realistically assess our sources of coping, and become familiar with stress management techniques. Sources of stress or tension at work are refers to: work environment, work in a particular job, excess or lack of activity, physical danger, the adequacy between the employee and his environment and the family-work relationship. We specify that, among the psychological factors, an essential role is played by the high perception of the person's efficiency, ie the confidence of a person that he can fulfill a specific task. Thus, the level of perceived stress will be much reduced in the case of people who have the belief that they can overcome obstacles in the workplace..*

**Key words:** professional stress, organization, organizational stress management, burnout syndrome, stress reactions.

**JEL classification:** A10, G22, N40, N90

Stress is a complex psychosocial phenomenon that arises from the person's confrontation with requirements, tasks, situations that are perceived as difficult, or with a high stake for the subject in question. Stress has a subjective component in the sense that it is: easy or even relaxing for one person, threatening or even impossible for another to achieve. Stress indicates, on the one hand, the unfavorable, novice, aggressive conditions that the individual must face (in this case we are talking about a stressful situation), and on the other hand, the state of the body following the action of stressors. . (Șchiopu, Ursula: 1997, p.168)

Nowadays, more and more managers are starting to pay more attention than in the past to the effects of stress on their employees. They are aware that stress consists of adverse reactions, both psychologically and physiologically, that a person has when he is unable to cope with the demands to which he is subjected. Most research admits that stress is a personal and subjective reaction to tension, so it depends on the perception of each individual, both on the size of the problem they face and on their personal ability to cope. If individuals believe that the problem can be kept under control and are confident in their ability to cope, then symptoms of stress are unlikely to occur, regardless of the pressures exerted by the problem. But if the problem is perceived as difficult to solve, and the individual lacks self-confidence, stress will not be long in coming.

Occupational stress refers to the stress generated by the work situation, namely occupations that impose a greater responsibility or a higher risk, activities that overload or underload the potential of the individual. Work can be an anti-stress factor if it is performed in optimal conditions or it can be a causal factor of stress if these conditions are not observed and can endanger the psychological integrity of the person. Therefore, carried out in favorable conditions, work is an anti-stress factor par excellence, because it concentrates the nervous activity selectively, orienting the conduct towards solving problems (individual and physical work tasks) located outside the employee. This

explains the fact that we meet people who immerse themselves in work, sometimes even "take refuge" in a work without limits to reduce mental tension, the state of stress in which they find themselves at some point and succeed. In these cases, work can be considered an "effect" of mental stress and not its cause.

The imposed or self-imposed task can, however, by its volume or difficulty, by the responsibility employed, be a stressful factor, just as the conditions in which the work is carried out (competition, unfavorable environment, frequent disturbances, etc.) example: failure) to favor stress (Floru, R.: 1974, p. 57). Sources of stress or tension at work refer to: work environment, work in a particular job, excess or lack of activity, physical danger, the adequacy between the employee and his environment and the family / work relationship.

In management, through stress, the behaviors of executives towards employees are supported by the idea that people are more efficient under intense pressure or even, in some cases, if they are afraid. This type of managerial functionality can only be effective for a limited time. Thinking long-term, failure is assured, not to mention the consequences for employees' health. Strong supporters of management through stress should meditate on the principle that "When people feel good, they work well." (Legeron: 2003, pp. 86-87)

Organizational stress is "one of the biggest causes of absenteeism from work, which has been on the rise in recent years. Research by authors in the field has shown that reducing stress at work increases the performance of employees, they get better results, generating an increase in productivity and profitability of the entire organization. What differs from person to person or from society to society are the factors considered: socioeconomic factors, culture, habits, mentality, personality of each. Even if there are a lot of standards that can be applied, the experience of stress is individual, because in addition to the motivators of stress itself, it is influenced by the individual character and his past experience. It must also be taken into account that stressors can be perceived in different ways, and the consequences of stress also differ from person to person". (Caracota Dimitriu, Maria, Mitovski Circovik, Andreea: 2012, pp. 2-3)

Regarding the syndrome of burnout, we specify that it falls into the category of "adjustment disorders" and refers to emotional exhaustion, dehumanization in the relationship with the other and loss of meaning and self-satisfaction in work. Burnt-out syndrome translates into burnout, namely as a multifactorial and multifactorial dimensional syndrome difficult to define. In addition to this type of stress, we mention other types, such as: the stress of loneliness, the stress of immigration, the stress of overwork and underwork, the stress of TV, etc.

However, there are psychological factors and psychological interventions that help prevent and combat stress. Among the psychological factors, an essential role is played by the high perception of personal efficiency. This term defines a person's confidence that he or she can perform a specific task. Such perceptions influence the person's behavior, generating more perseverance in the face of obstacles and frustrations and, implicitly, higher chances of success. Thus, the level of perceived stress will be much reduced in the case of people who have the belief that they can overcome the obstacles of life. These beliefs can be learned over time and are an effective means of combating stress.

The place of control in attribution theory is largely distinguished between two categories of subjects, those who have internal control, ie are considered responsible for what happens to them, respectively those who have no external control, considering that what happens to them it is due to chance. Of the two categories, the most affected by stress are people who feel they do not have personal control over how events unfold.

Please note that all psychological factors to prevent or combat occupational stress may require a series of interventions at the individual level, non-specific to work or organizational psychology such as: relaxation techniques, bio-feedback techniques or training programs aimed at time management or improving skills social. The former are called secondary interventions, and the training programs are called tertiary interventions, both of which act at the level of reducing general morbidity rather than at the level of occupational stress-inducing agents. Primary interventions in turn are interventions designed to combat stress by reducing the influence of novice organizational agents: reducing role ambiguity, streamlining the work schedule, improving the organizational climate, achieving health programs, etc.

In addition to the psychological factors of stress prevention, a rich work experience can be the source of coping strategies designed to reduce stress levels, while a well-developed social support network can provide more consistent support to people in stress. The main skills and behaviors of stress management are: developing bondage (easily expressing point of view and interest, without anxiety, without denying the point of view of others), developing positive communication with others, learning methods to solve problems and decision making, learning methods of relaxation. Among the ways to establish adequate social support we mention the following: asking for direct help and receptivity to it, developing and maintaining friendships. The development of self-esteem is, in turn, a way of managing stress that can be achieved by: setting personal priorities and boundaries, participating in activities that develop self-esteem (therapy sessions), setting realistic goals.

The main ways of time management are: reviewing goals, choosing priority activities in a day or week; making a list of tasks to be performed and another list of tasks that the individual wants to complete and the time allocated to them; analysis of the consequences of postponing certain works to be carried out; selection of activities in the order of their realization; performing a single activity until its completion; avoiding the rapid transition from one activity to another; self-giving a reward for performing an activity. (Băban, A.:2001, pp. 174-175).

Regarding the stress indicators within a state or private organization / institution, we specify that, when their employees suffer from stress, the effects of this situation will usually have at least one of the following formulas: high levels of illness and absenteeism; decreased productivity and inability to achieve required targets; increasing the accident rate and the error rate; increased number of internal conflicts between employees; exaggerated staff turnover rate.

Assuming that these visible manifestations of stress are probably just the tip of the iceberg, then there is every chance that the organization will face a number of other symptoms that indicate job dissatisfaction. The costs to the organization could be substantial, so senior management has every interest in implementing measures to reduce stress levels so that the organization as a whole functions properly. The measures that management can take to reduce stress in the workforce could be divided into two broad categories: stress prevention measures and stress reduction measures. The former aim to eliminate the potential for stressful situations, while the latter try to keep stress within reasonable limits when it occurs. Both categories of measures are implemented at the organizational rather than the individual level.

Possible sources of stress for employees include job characteristics, employment relationships, the structure of the organization and its culture. Given that, when at a certain level, the requirement can have a positive effect on employee performance, which is what organizations can do to ensure that, while voluntarily maintaining a beneficial degree of difficulty, they ensure that pressures on will individuals not lead to stress? Such a balance is difficult to achieve for any healthy and active organization.

However, there are some measures that can be taken to provide employees with the necessary incentives, without causing a chronic accumulation of stress, namely: defining positions in a way that allows a maximum degree of exercise of skills by the job holder, incorporating sufficient tasks varied and difficult to keep his interest awake; designing the activity so that the job holder has a certain degree of responsibility, giving him sufficient authority and allowing him to take part in the decisions that influence his activity, as well as the stability of objectives that do not conflict with the objectives work of others; encouraging senior management to adopt participatory leadership styles, paying due attention to the needs of both individuals and those of collective activity and the group as a whole; encouraging team spirit so that team members support each other and the role of each of them is properly valued; encouraging communication between departments / sectors, as well as vertically, along the hierarchical managerial chain, as well as ensuring constructive feedback to each individual (on work results, staff evaluation, etc.); delegating decision-making authority so that people at all levels of the organization can take part in decisions that affect their work and promotion opportunities; developing an organizational culture in which the attitude towards employees is a positive one, attention to the quality of products / services is reflected in respect for the knowledge and contribution of employees, and mistakes are seen as opportunities to learn from their own experience rather than reasons to criticism; reducing the number of changes imposed on each individual or team, etc.

Nowadays it has become more and more normal for organizations to provide qualified employee counseling services. Counseling at work means the situation in which "a person uses a set of methods or skills to help another person to think in an organized way and to take responsibility for their own decisions, regardless of decisions about professional life. or the private one ". (Cole. G.:2000, p. 320) Essentially, counseling is a process in which the counselor helps his client identify the problem, admit what would be the ideal or preferred solution, and consider ways to -could get the desired results. In the team, the influence of new technologies and taking into account the wishes of the occupational environment.

Also, organizational behavior nowadays has become increasingly important, in the sense that new trends in the way of working are highlighted, such as the desire to integrate ethical behaviors into the organization, the disappearance of forms of excessive centralization, the influence on teamwork, the influence of new technologies and the consideration of the desires of the occupational environment. (Dobrescu, A. : 2016, p. 8) The role of the organization manager is fundamental, because he must be able to meet the goals set with the help of his team, to motivate employees, to avoid the harsh or tense work climate that leads to stress and dissatisfaction.

In conclusion, we specify that stress is a global problem, and managers who use counseling services for their employees do so first for their own interest and then for their own good. When employees are unhappy, anxious or very stressed they will not be able to give a high performance at work and may take more sick leave or, as the case may be, change their job thus leading to increasing staff turnover. Therefore, it is in the direct interest of the organization to prevent such uneconomic use of its human resources, and the provision of qualified counseling services can be one of the ways to support employee performance, achieve goals and demonstrate attachment. the company to its employees, as individuals.

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