Stress at School Work

Karen Martins Peixoto
Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro

Paulo Lourenço Domingues Jr
Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro

Thomáz Teixeira Leal
Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro

Rayane de Oliveira Alves
Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro

Abstract
This article aims to analyze stress factors in school environments. The writing addresses topics such as anxiety, depression, discouragement, lack of investment in employees and various coefficients that directly influence the personal life of professionals. It will be explored here, the causes of these adversities, having as object of study employees from different areas within the organization, in order to investigate, how these conditions can interfere in the team's performance and, thus, hinder the productive flow of the institution, which in the case of school, it can directly harm students. In this study, comparisons will also be made about each employee's level of stress and how it affects different sectors, depending on the degree of responsibility that each role requires.

Keywords: Stress. School environment. Work

INTRODUCTION

Stress is the cause of many problems in the workplace, several elements contribute to its development and is increasingly present in the life of any worker. It is a disorder that involves the emotional state of the individual and causes problems in the subject's life. Although not classified as a disease, stress opens doors to several other problems that involve the health, which can lead to death. It is a challenge for many people to separate their personal lives from their professional lives, preventing one environment from having influence over another.

In this article, we studied a Rio de Janeiro State School located in the city of Paraíba do Sul. In general, part of the stress generated in public schools in relation to employees, is due to the lack of recognition. With regard to teachers in Brazil, they are not valued the way they should be, wages are very low and their work is not recognized.

One of the main causes of stress in the professional environment, whether in companies or schools, is the low salaries that do not correspond to their duties. Even though they are not satisfied, employees are, for the most part, obliged to remain in this condition, given the economic instability. All this instability contributes to make these individuals increasingly stressed, and this wear and tear reflects on their professional development and personal relationships.

In addition, employees are under pressure, encouraged to deliver results even when in poor condition, under such circumstances, they feel helpless, have a sense that they are not being helpful, and their self-esteem is steadily diminishing. Workers do not feel recognized in their areas, motivation fades as devaluation grows. It`s common knowledge, that recognition is the best fuel to energize someone, so the team is encouraged to do their best and work together. In the school studied, the dynamics of the whole process should be very well elaborated, the professionals live with acute emotional states of the students and it is very important that they know how to deal with these occurrences in the best way. How to give someone psychological support if their own is shaken?

The school structure studied is good compared to other state schools, but staff dissatisfaction with the government's devaluation is clear. Pedagogical coordinators and teachers claim that projects are impossible to carry out under the conditions they have. Some claim that these projects will never reach their goals and the feeling of helplessness becomes present in their lives. In addition, these poorly designed practices have direct consequences for students' progress, they are gradually losing their desire to achieve a better life through study.

Theoretical Foundations
1. Stress

The first concept developed to define stress was by scholar Hans Selye in 1929. According to him, stress is an element that produces changes in body structure and composition.

In 1936 Hans Selye considered stress reaction as a general adaptation syndrome and in 1974 reconsidered stress as a non-body specific response to any requirement, and thus defines stress (SELYE, 1956) [1]:

> [...] the word stress comes from the English stress. This term was initially used in physics to translate the degree of deformity suffered by a material when subjected to an effort or tension and transposed this term into medicine and biology, meaning the body's effort to adapt to situations that it considers threatening to its life and to inner balance (SELYE, 1956, p. 2)

It is observed that it deals with a strong reaction of the organism faced by the individual, either at a good or bad time that changes the subject's life. Thus, they are changes that anyone can detect their reactions when they feel it, as it causes a physical, mental and psychic imbalance.

1.2 Stress in school organizations.

First of all, it is necessary to conceptualize organizations as the union of people with various specializations aimed at achieving a goal, which can be transformed into products and services. Meireles and Paixão (2003) explain that the organization would be:

> […] Organization is an artifact that can be approached as an articulated set of people, methods and material resources, designed for a given purpose and marked by a set of determining imperatives (beliefs, values, culture, etc.). (MEIRELES, 2003, p. 46).

An example of organization is the school entity that has different objectives of a company, since its function is focused on the formation and progress of its students, enabling them as thinking and critical beings in the social environment.

The school environment is the universe that enables the subject to live together in the social environment, and enables them, through basic concepts and cultures, to live with the responsibilities of adult life. Therefore, this sphere must be endowed with dynamics that influence exemplary behaviors about what is ethical and moral. Rinaldi (2002) [3] states that:

> [...] The school environment should be a place that welcomes the individual and the group, which promotes action and reflection. A school or nursery is first and foremost a system of relationships in which children and adults are not only formally introduced to organizations, which are a form of our culture, but also the possibility of creating a culture. [...] It is essential to create a school or nursery in which all members feel welcomed, a place that makes room for relationships (RINALDI, 2002, p. 77).

With the presence of stress, it is virtually impossible for staff to be able to work harmoniously on behalf of students, as their psychological status effectively contributes to the better or worse performance of their duties. The structure of an organization primarily involves the emotional state of its employees, and its success depends largely on this factor.

In the school environment, stress can involve everyone who shares it, since interpersonal relationships, tasks to be developed cause concerns day by day. The organization model adopted at school influences the occurrence of stress, especially in the case of the teacher. This causes dissatisfaction in the teaching professionals, bringing reflection throughout the school organization.

2. The influence of stress on productivity

Stress in the school environment has been unfavorable to working conditions and directly influences the productivity of professionals. Psychological conditions make the work done massively and increasingly difficult to produce results. Linked to these factors, changes in educational governance, which are intended to benefit society, entail the overload of teachers' functions and bring health consequences (ASSUNÇÃO & OLIVEIRA, 2009).

The main causes of stress at the school level derive from factors such as: a reaction to an unexpected situation; excess time in the classroom; lack of time to plan, rest, have leisure time; professional devaluation; lack of institutional support; lack of support from family, students, among others.

This means that the individual does not develop an action that configures effective productivity. Teachers are beginning to lack, institutions have to bear the replacement of the missing professional.

Geraldina Porto (2003) says the following:

> At school, the work most directly linked to production is that performed by the teacher. The result of the production is constituted by what is found in the student in terms of the development of competences and skills established and interconnected in the school's objectives. This situation can generate a lot of stress on the teacher. (Porto, 2003, p.23)

Thus, the work of these professionals does not produce positive results, the students taught by these teachers will be highly harmed and have no chance of competing with colleagues who have not had this reality in their lives. It is very important to think school as a company, which must be managed logically and dynamically so that the professional has more and more incentive to work with his colleagues and students.

3. How stress affects health

Excessive stress, in addition to being bad, still carries various health-related complications. It causes harmful effects to anyone's health, such as:

- Increased blood pressure;
- Increased risk of stroke;
- Increased susceptibility to infections;
- Gastrointestinal disorders such as diarrhea and constipation;
- Eating disorders, excessive weight gain or loss;
- Insulin resistance that is associated with type 2 diabetes, and diabetes exacerbation;
- Tension-type headache;
- Insomnia;
- Decreased sexual desire and temporary impotence in men;
- Intensification of premenstrual tension;
- Decreased concentration, inhibited learning and reduced memory;
- Skin lesions like acne.

Occupational exhaustion has entered the WHO (World Health Organization) list of illnesses, this exhaustion is due to the stress caused by burnout syndrome, which affects many workers today.

3.1 Burnout syndrome

Burnout syndrome is a psychic disorder portrayed in 1974 by Freudenberger in the United States. The disorder is mentioned in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, as one of the factors that intervene in health, among problems related to employment and unemployment.

Its main characteristic comes from the emotional state and chronic stress triggered by physical working, emotional and psychological conditions. This syndrome develops especially in people whose profession is directed towards direct interpersonal involvement. Professionals in education, social work, human resources, etc. are more likely to develop the disease.

The typical sign of burnout syndrome is the feeling of physical and emotional exhaustion that is represented by negative behaviors, which are:

- Absences at work;
- Aggressiveness;
- Isolation;
- Sudden mood swings;
- Irritability;
- Difficulty concentrating;
- Memory lapses;
- Anxiety;
- Depression;
- Pessimism;
- Low self esteem.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is a method of scientific investigation that focuses on the subjective character of the object analyzed by studying its particularities and individual experiences. With qualitative research, respondents are free to point out their views on certain subjects that are related to the object of study. In a qualitative survey the answers are not objective, and the purpose is not to count quantities as a result, but to be able to understand the behavior of a particular group. Typically, qualitative surveys are done with a small number of respondents.

Interview is a conversation between two one or more people with a particular purpose. It may have a journalistic purpose, to inform the public, or it may be a conversation of two or more individuals to deal or settle a business. It plays a very important role for social development, it is crucial for the propagation of knowledge, for formulating opinions about something, someone or a fact.

There are different types of interviews: a job interview, journalistic interview, a psychological interview, behavioral interview, social interview, among others. Depending on the type of interview, there is the possibility of using either formal or informal language or even merging both. An interview can be classified as open (with a theme that is freely developed), semi structured interview (with a script as the basis) or closed (with questionnaires). And it can be done individually, as was the case in this study, or in groups, using a questionnaire.

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RESULTS

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The organization adopted as the object of study was a State School located in the city of Paraíba do Sul (Rio de Janeiro). This unit is a public institution with the purpose of providing free quality education and contributing to the social formation of children and adolescents. The teaching staff evidenced in the research totals 10 servers, being these: 8 teachers and 1 assistant of general services.

The instrument used in the research to collect data from teachers was a closed question questionnaire, containing only fixed answers. The first part of the questionnaire consists of 10 questions aimed at identifying the employee profile. The second part of the questionnaire, designed to analyze satisfaction with aspects of the teacher's work, was based on these issues: fair and adequate compensation, working conditions, capacity utilization and development, growth opportunities, social integration in the organization, constitutionalism, work and the total space of life and social relevance of life at work.

The institution adopted as object of study has 33 teachers. However, the questionnaire was applied to 10 teachers, aged between 30 and 60 years old. Regarding teaching time, teachers stated that on average: 52% have more than 10 years of teaching work; 20% are up to 4 years old; 15% are 4-5 years old; and 11% are 5-10 months old.

Respondents were asked about working conditions. Regarding satisfaction with weekly hours and working hours, teachers answered: 60% find it tiring, 12% are satisfied and 28% think it could improve.

Satisfaction with salary. "How satisfied are you with your salary?": 70% dissatisfied, 20% satisfied and 10% very satisfied.

Still analyzing working conditions, the interviewees also answered about the stress: 50% are very stressed, 30% developed illnesses through stress and 20% had no stress.

Teachers were also asked about the importance of their work. At this point, they replied that: 48% consider themselves satisfied; 41% consider themselves dissatisfied; 7% consider themselves very satisfied; and 4% very dissatisfied.

Regarding the relationship with colleagues and bosses at work, answered that: 48% consider themselves satisfied; 25% consider themselves dissatisfied; 18% consider themselves very satisfied; and 7% dissatisfied.

Despite the democratic climate within the organization, the educational institution is a public entity and therefore has bureaucratic aspects rooted in its culture. Thus, there are rules and standards set by the institution. Regarding the satisfaction with these norms and rules, the teachers answered that: 56% are satisfied; 37% are dissatisfied; while 7% are very dissatisfied.

The influence of work on family life or routine is undeniable. The teachers, when asked about this, answered that: 41% are dissatisfied with this interference; 37% are satisfied, that is, they are not disturbed by it; 18% are very dissatisfied; while 4% are very satisfied.

In addition to leisure and rest time, the research proposed that teachers analyze the time each one spends with the family without taking work home. The results of this question were: 45% are dissatisfied; 27% are very dissatisfied; 24% are satisfied and 4% said they were very satisfied.

Regarding the pride of doing the teaching work, 63% of the teachers consider themselves satisfied; 26% consider themselves very satisfied; and 11% are dissatisfied.

About stress-related trauma, work-related depression, and illnesses that appeared due to these factors, they responded that: 48% have had stress-related illnesses, 37% have created trauma in the classroom, and 15% have not anything.

Knowing that psychology is of great importance in society and in people's mental health, teachers were asked how important it is to have a psychologist in each school institution, be it public or private. 54% answered that it is very important; 36% responded that it is necessary but not a priority; and 10% think it won't make a difference.

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DISCUSSION

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The current scenario, characterized by the growing process of technological innovation, began to demand professionals increasingly able to achieve organizational goals. Faced with this growth, and to be inserted in this increasingly broad and selective job market, employees seek to improve themselves, thus achieving their personal growth.

An organization concerned with the well-being of its employees considers quality of life at work as something that should be inserted in their daily activities. These actions ensure health and safety. This

concept includes fair remuneration, respect for the laws governing labor relations, the importance of work for the life of each one, among other aspects.

The objective of this research was to identify the aspects that directly influence the employee's stress and quality of life, aiming at what are the daily stress.

Given the results measurable by the research and presented through percentages, it is possible to identify the factors that generate satisfaction and those that cause dissatisfaction, interfering with the teachers' quality of life at work.

Factors that demotivate them: Salary, workload, tiredness, opportunity for professional growth, respect for workers' rights, norms and rules of their work, influence of work on their life/ family routine, influence of work on leisure time, work and rest times, time spent with family.

Factors that motivate them: Respect their individuality, performance appraisal, good managers (principals, educators), quality structure, participative students, motivations such as meetings, lectures and courses offered, flexible hours.

CONCLUSIONS

The teaching work has been undergoing profound transformations in order to adapt the needs imposed by society. Due to these changes, these professionals have gone through a process of devaluation and disqualification that negatively impact their quality of life at work to the present day. The quality of life at work of teachers working in public institutions should be inserted in the context experienced by these professionals to possible changes in educational policy. Moreover, it should be considered better ways to promote the satisfaction of teachers, providing the well-being of these professionals and motivating them, thus improving the negative image attributed to the exercise of this profession that contributes so much to the formation of individuals.

The bibliographic research and the school studied allowed to identify some factors that cause dissatisfaction and consequently affect the quality of life of teachers and causes stress. It was observed that the salary policy causes dissatisfaction in most professionals, and consequently stress. Thus, there is a need to reformulate the position and salary plan to reinforce the appreciation of these professionals.

Another aspect observed is the improvement in the working conditions of these professionals, with the availability of a psychologist to directly take care of the mental health not only of the teachers, but of the students, which is also a stressor within the institutions.

One factor that also needs to be reviewed and that should be improved is the respect for the rights of these professionals. By ensuring this aspect, other dimensions would be improved, such as the space that work occupies in the lives of teachers. Ensuring that teacher has the hours for planning activities inside and outside the institution, a right that is already in law, the teacher would have more time to devote to family and leisure. Thus, stress levels in school environments would fall sharply from what it is today. Regarding the devaluation, low salary and other factors that contribute to the insertion of teachers in the world of "stress", these would produce positive results and thus contribute to form citizens in Brazil.

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