STRESS MANAGEMENT AND WORK PERFORMANCE – A CASE STUDY

BAZGAN MAGDALENA-CAMELIA [1*], BAZGAN MARIUS [2]

[1]Center of Psycho-pedagogical Assistance from Braşov, 26 bis Aurel Vlaicu, RO-500178, România

[2]Transilvania University of Braşov, 29 B-ul Eroilor, RO-500036, România

Abstract: Currently, more and more organizations begin to understand and be increasingly concerned to obtain benefits from implementation of coherent human resource management, as a result of a modern management and professional focused especially on employees in order to maximize the performance during their remaining within the organization. Work is now no longer just a way of satisfying individual necessity but also as an opportunity that contribute to shaping a favorable self-image. This article aims to capture the relationship between stress management and work performance.

Key words: human resources, stress management, professional performance.

1. CONCEPTS AND ISSUES INVOLVED IN THIS RESEARCH

Job satisfaction is one of the multiple factors the general efficiency of labor. From the psycho sociological perspective, job satisfaction appears as a result of the difference between what individuals get as a reward f their work and what they think they would be expected to achieve. Job satisfaction was expressed as [1]:

$$Sm = (Or - Eo)/ Or \qquad (1)$$

where:
      Or is what individuals get (salary, status);
      Eo is what individuals would be expected to achieve.

If:
- $O_r = E_o$ - state of complete satisfaction;
- $O_r < E_o$ - there is a state of dissatisfaction, which is as stronger as the difference is bigger;
- $O_r > E_o$ - results a feeling of discomfort, of guilt.

As well as the contribution of people in employment is higher (quantity, quality, level of skill, effort of working hard, training, social importance), the expected compensation will be higher. Assessing the fairness or the unfairness of the reward for work, people take as a reference system other people or other human groups. When the proportion of contribution / compensation in work is different in relation to the others something happens and there is a state of tension and dissatisfaction caused by the lack of fairness.

The same author says that the job satisfaction can be analyzed on several dimensions:

- the economical satisfaction produced by financial stimuli and the importance for entering, staying in or leaving from this profession. It gives the feeling of security and the need of esteem, power, prestige and social position will be satisfied. However, people don't work only to earn money they work because they enjoy what they do or they have done the conditions under which they operate, because they have social contacts, emotional relationships with their peers;

- the satisfaction joined with their work, with their content and features. The work itself has a number of relevant features for human satisfaction, including working conditions, technical equipment and the actual content of work. Studies have revealed several important features for the state of satisfaction, such as: the variety of work, high professional skills that work requires, innovation, management responsibilities and not least the correlation between work and individual skills. Opposite monotony and routine in work, low professional skills and especially the mismatch between labor and skills, could become sources of professional dissatisfaction;

- the psychosocial satisfaction that derives from the fact that the man who is working is reported not only at his work, but also from his peers, his colleagues, his group, his working partners. Positive group atmosphere, positive relations among group members and between them and management are determinants of work satisfaction.

If the first two dimensions of satisfaction have strongly individual effects, the last dimension has a greater extension, including the entire community and some research revealed that psychosocial satisfaction and stimuli that are able to evoke it are placed on top. For this reason, we must be given it a special attention [2].

Experts have tried to identify factors or conditions that may determine the increase of job satisfaction. These include: choice of profession and employment according to his abilities and inclinations, improvement of physical conditions and aesthetic quality of the workplace, awareness of social utility of work, professionalism, participation in group o organization problems solving, improving interpersonal relationships, work climate by developing positive relationships, friendship between members of the group work, etc. When the concept of organizational culture appeared study of this phenomenon had an extraordinary impact. Having some important implications for organizational effectiveness, there have been numerous attempts to find its mechanisms and discover ways of manipulation.

Most times, however, studies on organizational culture have studied its effects on organizational functioning and performance; were focused on institutional groups issues, had not postulated a link between the concepts of individual nature, such as psychophysiological attitudes or variables. On the other hand, satisfaction and organizational commitment were often explained by a number of dispositional factors and personality, ones being developed even some theories that assume that these theories from above are inherent of the human nature. In this situation, the organizational environment influences were ignored and allowed institutions to evade the duty to take some measures for ensuring and increasing job satisfaction or commitment.

Adina Nicolae said that there is a circular relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction, organizational commitment [3]. Through its general characteristics, culture provides individuals a certain degree of satisfaction (and a certain type of commitment to the organization); satisfaction / commitment may vary depending on the personality traits of individuals.

Stress, in general, and the organization stress in particular - the last one is often called "occupational" or "professional" is no longer a phenomenon with a single event or just have a personal significance, in the meantime becoming more especially in the current society, pervasive and poses a real social problem. Statistics from 1990 show that nearly nine in ten

Americans suffers from a very intense stress once, twice a week, one of four state claims he felt that day [4]. In these circumstances it is not surprising that the issue of stress in general and occupational stress in particular, had been a subject for extensive researches, discussions and controversies. Between 1981 and 1991 were published almost 300 articles exclusively devoted to the relationship between work and stress, so organizational stress [5]. And specialized Romanian literature has many works on the issue of stress. In some meet more general treatment of stress, without losing of our sight the organizational stress [6].

Stress affects everyone at some point for longer or shorter periods of time and with different effects on performance and our health. There is a beneficial stress that mobilizes us for exceptional results, but there is a harmful one, leading to very serious physical and psychological problems. Not all individuals respond equally to a specific stressor. Some are more resistant, going over difficult situations and to the others that install, sooner or

later. Specific negative manifestations may be mental - frustration, anxiety or depression and physical - high blood pressure, strokes, heart, digestive, respiratory, renal disease. The negative effects of stress have an impact on both organizations and individuals.

As a result of stress, there are an increasing number of illnesses, handicaps and retirement occurs earlier than normal. Also, the excessive irritability that appears is affecting the quality of life and induces additional costs by increasing violence. In this way the organization might increase expenditure on health care and social assistance. At the organizational level, stress has this main effect: increased absenteeism, staff turnover and reduced performance of employees (low labor productivity and quality of products or services, bad relations with customers). All this leads to damage reputation.

Consequently, recruitment and selection process has suffered, because the competitive skills and knowledge do not want to work there. Also, customers lose confidence in themselves and choose their other suppliers.

In the organizational context, employees are faced with positively stress perceived as a pleasant challenge with a limited duration, which helps them concentrate and have good performance, but also with negative stress, caused by continuous pressure on them when they are obliged to act in inconsistent ways with their actual skills, time and resources at their disposal [7].

Organizational policy can be an obstacle to the organization development and staff according to its orientation, such as:
- whether the organization is facing an intense control and employees consider that they only needed a little control, they possessing the maturity to make decisions at their job;
- if the organization feels that it must be sealed (closed-end) and prevents its hermetic employees to develop partnership relations "healthy" with customers;
- if the organization encourages competition between departments and employees would have better results if they would use cooperative structures.

These are just some examples that show how organizational policy, highlighted the elements that make up that organization culture can prevent employees to achieve satisfaction in work and required results. On the other hand, job-specific sources of tension are, in turn, factors with direct and obvious implications in the organizational culture.

Within this category is considered a specialist in human resources should be considered: intrinsic factors of the job actually held the roles within the organization, work relations with supervisors, peers and subordinates, the elements of career development, organizational factors, with direct reference to the culture and climate, home interface - service.

2. A SUMMARY OF THE INSTITUTION

County Multi-disciplinary Resource Centre (CJRAE briefly presented below) is relatively a new educational institution specializing in providing coordination and monitoring the educational services specific for children / students, teachers, parents and community members to ensure all access to quality education and appropriate assistance in this regard. Its mission is to improving the quality of life for children with special needs and their families through integration into normal society and school communities. Philosophy is an inclusive, promoting social integration and school children.

The main objectives of CJRAE activity are:
- enrollment and retention of compulsory education for all children / young people, regardless of the particular individual and their psycho-social;
- providing additional supports as necessary to conduct education on the basis of bio-psycho-social potential of each child / youth;
- information and advice in line with changing attitudes of teachers and improving teaching and educational activity;
- creating conditions for development of students / youth for their integration into school life, social and professional;
- parental involvement in specific activities of effective relationships: school - family - community

based adaptation to school and social integration of children.

3. THIS STUDY

3.1. Objectives and research hypotheses
The objectives of this study are the following:
- identify the level of job satisfaction of employees within CJRAE;
- identification of stress management skills of employees within CJRAE;
- identify the correlation between the level of professional satisfaction and stress management ability;
- analysis of factors that are influencing job satisfaction.

The main hypothesis states that job satisfaction correlates with the personal ability to manage stressful work situations. Assumptions are as follows:
- capacity to manage stress and job satisfaction is dependent on the age profile of employees within the organization;
- managing stress and job satisfaction depend on the position in the organization.

3.2. Research methodology
The aim of the research is to diagnose the capacity to manage stress and its implementation in relation to personal satisfaction, taking into account a number of factors that can influence them positive or negative: gender, position, age, occupation in the organization and employees.

Research based on case study method and research is a descriptive-explanatory.

3.3. The group of subjects under research
All employees from CJRAE were questioned (15 members) (Figure 1). Research group are as follows (Figure 2).
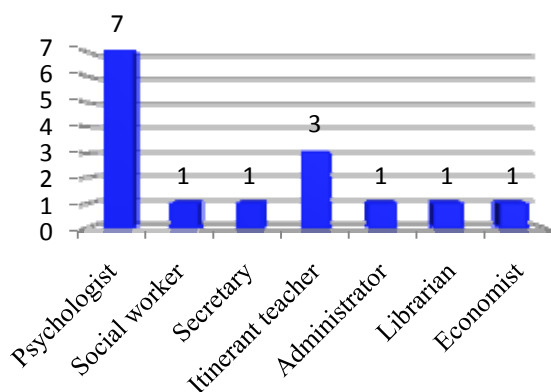

Fig. 1. The posts occupied by CJRAE employees.
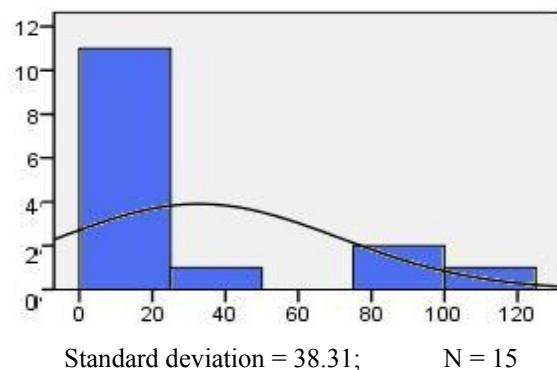

Standard deviation = 38.31; 　　　N = 15

Fig. 2. Seniority CJRAE employees.

With the recent restructuring of the Centre under the patronage of the Brasov County School Inspectorate, had been attracted new human resources within the organization, had been revision goals and mission of the institution. Most of its members have a reduced length in the organization.

3.4. Description of instruments used
In relation with the research objectives and the hypotheses presented above, we selected two research instruments, one to support our approach to the diagnosis of professional satisfaction and the second one to determine personal stress management ability.

Professional satisfaction questionnaire consists of a series of 32 written questions, according to the stimuli in relation to the research hypotheses. This questionnaire reveals 3 significant factors on job satisfaction and permits the calculation of an index of general satisfaction.

The significance of the three factors is as follows:
- remuneration and promotion factor: employee dissatisfaction (low scores) or its satisfaction (higher scores) on the reward for the work they perform (payroll and other financial rewards, recognition or promotion opportunities);
- driving factors and interpersonal relationships: employee dissatisfaction (low scores) or its satisfaction (higher scores) on the social climate and labor relations, both in terms of relations with colleagues or boss, and below the relaxed atmosphere;
- organizational and communication factors: employee dissatisfaction (low scores) or its satisfaction (higher scores) on how work is organized and carried out: the definition of tasks, effort, communication and feedback. Overall satisfaction is the extent to which the employee is satisfied / satisfied with the work they performed, both in terms of how its organization and as one of the rewards it receives for work performed (or moral rewards) and the interpersonal climate carrying out their work. We note here that the raw scores for each factor is to be divided by the number of items on each factor, then the result obtained by referring to the standard quantitative data to give a qualitative value.

The questionnaire for identifying stress management capacity includes 30 items, statements which are subject to associate a choice according to their own opinion. The final score is obtained by adding the gross rates and giving a qualitative value by comparing the latter to a standard.

The range of values included in the standard is as follows: 30 - 75 points, good stress management capacity, between 76 - 114 points, medium capacity, between 115-150 points, reduced capacity, the person requires a concentrated effort to balance stress.

3.5. Processing and interpretation of data obtained

We reaffirm our first research hypothesis "personal job satisfaction correlates with the ability to manage stressful work situations." Statistical processing of the scores obtained by applying the two assessment tools reveal a highly significant correlation between the two indicators measured (Table 1).

Table 1. The correlation between the ability to manage stress and satisfaction factors at work.

	Satisfaction factors at work			General satisfaction
	Remuneration and promotion	Communication and interpersonal relationships	Organization and communication	
Stress management	.058	.396	.676**	.941**
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

There is a clear association between job satisfaction of members of the organization and the ability of stress management at a level of correlation of .941. Analyzing the relationship between the three factors of professional satisfaction and the ability to manage stress, we see that when the quality of the organization and professional communication increase so stress management ability increases also, as the organization and communication is more effective the ability to manage stress increases at a correlation of .676.

The data presented above support our first hypothesis.

Taking as reference the three composite factors of general professional satisfaction, we state that the value of satisfaction strength in relation to each of the three factor analysis is similar, intense (mean values 4.55 and 4.63 - that leadership and interpersonal relations and organizational communication) and intense (mean 5.81 - pay and promotion) (Figure 3).
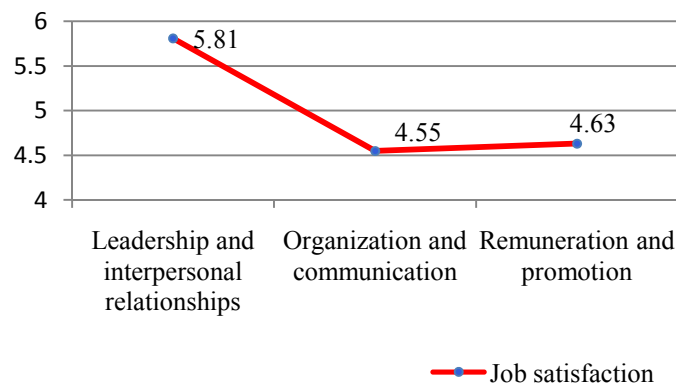
Fig. 3. Mean values for each dimension of personal satisfaction.

In our studied organization most of its members shows a higher to medium job satisfaction.

Our secondary research hypothesis states that job satisfaction is affected by the age in the organization. We note that members with seniority have a lower level of professional satisfaction (weak satisfaction according to the standard instrument used) than new members of the organization (increased satisfaction according to the standard instrument used).

By reporting the same criterion, age in the organization to the capacity of manage stress. We have got the following situation: new members of the organization have a capacity to manage stress better compared with the veterans in the organization.

Considering the occupation of employees we consider two important variables for our research, life satisfaction and stress management ability (Table 2).

Table 2. Job satisfaction and stress management skills.

Occupation	Job satisfaction	Stress management
Teacher-psychologist	3.97	78.71
Itinerant teacher	4.38	80
Auxiliary staff	4.87	76.8
	(preferably high scores)	(preferably low scores)

Professional category that seems to have an advantage is the support staff with friendly averages both in terms of job satisfaction and stress management ability. Disadvantaged in this respect are members of the organization whose occupation is the psychologist teacher, most of the staff.

Sex of the employees also occupies an important role in our analysis (Figure 4). We find that overall satisfaction is higher in male employees against female employees. Depending on sex and we see a greater capacity for stress management for men than women.

In relation to his position in the organization we realize that there is no significant difference between holding a position in the organization toward those who do not hold.

4. FINAL RESULTS

We point out synthetic conclusions of our study according to the previously established goals and assumptions:
- there is a statistically significant correlation between the intensity of overall professional satisfaction and the ability of members of stress management;
- professional satisfaction factor with the highest weight is related to leadership and interpersonal relations within the institution;

- the newest members of the organization have a higher level of professional satisfaction than members with seniority;
- the newest members of the organization have a greater capacity for stress management than senior colleagues;
- support staff is privileged compared to the other two categories (teacher-psychologist, teacher and itinerant) in terms of job satisfaction and stress management capacity;
- organization members are more satisfied with professional male and have a greater ability to manage stress by members of the female
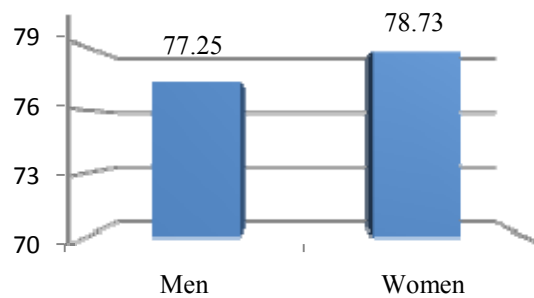

Fig. 4. Stress management capacity in relation to sex workers.

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