

## Teachers' job stress & professional satisfaction in administrative education services in Greece

Aimilia N. Kazakou  
*Komotini Public Vocational Training Centre*

**ABSTRACT :** The present study investigated the level of work stress and the level of professional satisfaction of teachers working in the structures of the Education administration in the Region of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace, in relation to the demographic characteristics (gender, age, etc.), their state of health (e.g. alcohol consumption, smoking, etc.), personal health - well-being (e.g. difficulty sleeping, headaches, etc.), the workplace (e.g. equipment, comfort etc.), working conditions (e.g. safety, interest etc.) and personality type (e.g. formality). The sample of the present study was 80 Primary and Secondary Education teachers, who work in the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education in the Prefectures of Evros, Rodopi, Xanthi, Kavala and Drama. To fulfill the purpose, they were asked to fill in and answer a series of questions related to their work stress and job satisfaction. In order to analyze the collected data the researcher used quantitative research methods and descriptive statistics analysis. From the findings of the present study, it emerged that the specific teachers did not experience particular stress and pressure in their workplace (below the average value) and that they themselves were quite satisfied with their work in general at an above average level. Worthy of mention was the fact that in the cases of moderate work stress and more than moderate work satisfaction, their work stress greatly influenced the manifestation of mainly mental disorders and less physical ones, such as the state of great nervousness/tension.

**KEYWORDS:** Job stress, job satisfaction, Teachers, Educational Administrative Services.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a real fact of modern life. There is no specific definition and it is a state that is rarely clearly understood. Each of the definitions can describe the term with many aspects and include it with many extensions. In light of this, the concept "stress" can mean different things to different people. That is, all people do not respond in the same way or even to the same extent to the stress of everyday life. Among other things, stress also affects the workplace [1]. The stress experienced by employees at their workplace as well as the possibility of the occurrence of various diseases caused by this is a reality for many people. For example, excessive working hours, overloading of roles and responsibilities, pressure to complete a job, working conditions, are some of the most common causes of stress identified by employees. More generally, work stress is considered an intense psychological condition resulting from an imbalance between work demands and the employees' abilities to face them and cope to a satisfactory degree [2].

However, the satisfaction that each employee derives from his work (intrinsic job satisfaction) and its external aspects (extrinsic job satisfaction), i.e. the pay, the promotion system, the quality of working conditions, the way of management - leadership, communication, seems to be closely related to work stress, as the reduction or lack of job satisfaction can cause work stress and vice versa [3]. The purpose of the study was to investigate in depth the level of work stress and job satisfaction that teachers working in the administrative structures of education in the Region of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace, Greece, in relation to demographic characteristics (gender, age, etc.) a.), their state of health (e.g. alcohol consumption, smoking, etc.), personal health - well-being (e.g. difficulty sleeping, headaches, etc.), the workplace (e.g. equipment, comfort, etc.), working conditions (e.g. safety, interest, etc.) and personality type (e.g. formality). At the same time, the specific objectives were to identify:

- The effect of the gender on work stress and job satisfaction.
- Whether the age of employees affects the manifestation of work stress and affects job satisfaction.
- The effect of the family status on work stress and job satisfaction.
- Whether the years of service, affect the manifestation of work stress and job satisfaction.
- Whether the level of education affects work stress and job satisfaction.
- The type of work that affects job stress and job satisfaction.
- Whether the type of personality of the person/employee affects and to what extent the way he experiences stress and his professional satisfaction.

- Whether Work stress affects the health of individuals.
- Whether Work stress affects the manifestation of mental and physical disorders.
- Whether Working conditions affect the manifestation of stress in the workplace and professional satisfaction.

In order to properly investigate the research purpose and the individual objectives of the present research, quantitative research was chosen and in order to summarize the trends and relationships governing the two central concepts - variables of the problem, descriptive statistical analysis was used (Descriptive Statistics). This research was conducted during the month of October 2019 on 80 teachers who work in the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace as well as in the Directorates of Primary education (D.P.E) and Secondary (D.D.E) education of the prefectures of Rodopi, Evros, Xanthi, Kavala and Drama. Data collection research instrument used was a questionnaire, which is structured in six thematic sections and designed to measure job stress and job satisfaction.

In order to advance the research process, the individual research objectives were reformulated through specific research questions, so that the researcher could provide measurable answers [4]. The research questions that were formulated were the following:

- What was the level of work stress and professional satisfaction of teachers working in the administrative structures of education in the Region of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace.
- What was the correlation - relationship between job stress and job satisfaction with personal situation – health status – personal well-being – workplace – working conditions – personality type of teachers working in administrative services - structures of education of the Region of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace.

Subsequently, its methodological approach, the research process and the research tool used are following. The results of the research are depicted with the use of tables of frequency analysis and crosstabulation, and at the end, its consolidated conclusions are presented, with an extensive analysis and interpretation of its data, the limitations are highlighted and the proposals for further research are listed.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Research in the past has shown that employees suffer from work stress and in fact the degree to which it manifests itself depends on age. Inevitably, as a person grows older, gaining great life experiences, his brain ages, shows cognitive disorders, and thus becomes more vulnerable to the effects of stress [5]. Also, in other studies, work stress appeared to be inextricably linked to gender [6]. It was found that women experience more stress compared to male teachers, a fact that can be attributed to the many different roles they are asked to fulfill (family – work). Others, however, found that men experience more intense work stress compared to women teachers, because they have more difficulty than women to manage and deal effectively with the stressful situations that arise from their work environment. Others have argued that the dominant factors that make up a prolonged job stress, in addition to gender and age, include years of service, teachers' personality type, followed by working conditions and the general work environment. They pointed out the role of the management, which in times of heavy workload does not operate flexibly, but maintains its bureaucratic form and formalism and thus, does not provide support and information to employees on whether they are coping properly with their increased work demands. At the same time, the position of responsibility, which in fact is charged with high demands, the member's workload in combination with the limited time one has at one's disposal and the limited freedom in decision-making seem to be responsible for the manifestation of stress and ultimately lead to physical malfunctions in employees. These conclusions were reached by a long-term research by [7], who studied 200,000 workers from seven different countries. They even found that workers under these conditions are likely (with a rate of 23%) to develop a cardiac problem or even have a heart attack. They also reported that workers in such a workplace, but with more freedom to make decisions, are more likely to experience work stress, but not so prolonged that they experience heart problems.

Occupational stress predisposes to mental disorders and depression. This emerged from the research of [8] on 568 Egyptian teachers of both levels of education. The percentages even reached 100%, 67.5% and 23.2% respectively. Depression, as a result of work stress, was significantly higher among teachers over 40 years of age, female teachers, due to role conflict and private teachers (due to job insecurity), PE teachers, teachers with more years of service and teaching experience and finally those teachers with more qualifications and a greater workload. The high percentages found in their research were attributed to the continuous challenges faced by the

Egyptian education system since 2004 and in particular to the high workload and large teaching classes, issues that plague educational staff in all developing countries. All the harmful effects of work stress contribute to reduce job satisfaction and consequently employee performance. The impact of these consequences is reflected in job satisfaction figures in many European countries. [9] presented a report following a five-year survey on the job satisfaction of European workers in which, among other things, it states that within a decade (1985-1995) in Britain there was a significant decrease in the job satisfaction of workers, from 64 % to 53 %. Many other countries in Europe also reported declines in job satisfaction as the European workforce followed the American work pattern, which included long hours, job insecurity, constant restructuring, etc. Two years later [10] confirmed the previous research, pointing out that working long hours reduces job satisfaction because it burdens the health of workers, who present, among other things, musculoskeletal problems.

The review of the Greek and international literature showed that many times employees are under pressure in their workplace and this affects and reduces their levels of professional satisfaction. The satisfaction they derive both from their work and from their wider working environment is attributed to exogenous factors – variables (gender, age, marital status, years of service) and mainly to endogenous ones (workload, ambiguity of roles and tasks, low guidance and encouragement). The effects of all these, initially, negatively affect the employee himself, but then they prove burdensome for the organization - service itself. Most of the studies presented investigated the work stress and professional satisfaction of workers in the health sector (hospitals, psychiatric clinics) and teachers in PE and PE school units and in Universities. However, they are an unexplored field, the teachers who work in educational institutions and especially in the services of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and in the Directorates of P.E. and D.E. After all, management plays a very key role both in preventing and eliminating work stress and in strengthening job satisfaction. The current decentralized education administration system in Greece was shaped by the delegation of powers and responsibilities from the Central Administration to the regional level. In this light, the 13 Regional Directorates were enabled to take on certain tasks and eventually acquire certain powers to a certain extent. Often, however, their decentralized nature is confused with the term decentralization, i.e. the Central administration - agency transfers only the administrative responsibilities and does not grant them essential powers, which are necessary for their daily operation and efficiency. It is therefore perceived that under the constantly changing environment, in which public services and public organizations are negatively affected by the financial constraints of the public sector (movements and staff cuts), the situation in the said PDEs, is subject to further improvement, in order to be able to as decentralized services to act according to European standards and to be more flexible and efficient..

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to properly investigate the research purpose and individual objectives of the research and to study its research questions in depth, quantitative research was chosen. According to [4], the quantitative methodological approach involves the collection and analysis of measurable numerical data - elements in the variables under study, as in this study, which sought and recorded the causes and level of occupational stress and occupational teacher satisfaction in education administration services. At the same time, the trends and opinions of a representative sample and the correlation of variables were described and recorded, using descriptive statistics, at the given time. The simple random sampling (simple random sampling) was chosen, which is the most strict form of sampling and the researcher selected the participants by randomly drawing a number (80 members) for the sample, so that each person - teacher has an equal chance of being selected from the population. The intention of simple random sampling is to select individuals who will be the sample under investigation and will be representative of the population [4].

For this reason, a written and self-completed questionnaire was used and distributed as a research tool, which allows the collection of enough data in a short period of time, and a sample survey of a representative sample was attempted. The bulk of the questions were closed-ended, in order to cover the content of the research and to ensure measurable and numerical data, and to be collected in a short period of time and to code and process its results correctly. There were also disjunctive, multiple-choice and questions with answers on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = very much. Care was taken to ensure that the questions were clear and precise in order to avoid the possibility of misinterpretation and it is worth noting that a color gradient was used for this reason. This research tool was designed to measure work stress and job satisfaction, by the members of the Hellenic Society of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (2011), drawing on the experience of other questionnaires in the international literature [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], who dealt with these

two concepts and at the same time it was adapted to the Greek reality, so as to examine them multidimensionally, among Greek workers.

#### IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The statistical package s/w was used to process and analyze the quantitative data of the survey. In particular, tables of analysis-distribution of frequencies and intersections were created, so that the opinions of the teachers participating in the present study could be captured in the best possible way. Using the ANOVA technique (analysis of variance) it was observed that the "gender" factor did not seem to influence (Sig.= 0.968 > 0.05) the degree of work stress nor the work satisfaction (Sig.= 0.811 > 0.05) of teachers working in the decentralized services of the Education Administration in the A. M. Th. Region at a significance level of 5%. This may be due to the existence of other factors. The fact that one is male does not mean that one is less stressed than a female colleague, but also that one is less demanding from one's work (see Table 1):

**Table 1: Correlation of job satisfaction/job stress with gender**

		GENDER				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
stress	Between Groups	,064	1	,064	,002	,968
	Within Groups	3083,486	78	39,532		
	Total	3083,550	79			
Job satisfaction	Between Groups	,051	1	,051	,058	,811
	Within Groups	68,749	78	,881		
	Total	68,800	79			

Stress was found to have a positive effect on all the independent variables under investigation. In particular, it was observed that stress has a positive effect on the manifestation of mental and physical disorders at a significance level of 1%, since a quick look at Table 2 shows that everywhere the significance index was Sig.=0.00<0.01.

In more detail, it emerged that there is a statistically moderate correlation between the variable "hasty movements" and stress, since the correlation coefficient was found to be  $r=0.572$ . But because it has a positive sign, the two values change in the same direction. That is, the more work stress increased among teachers, the more they made hasty and reckless moves, or vice versa. The exact same results were obtained for the following variables "you were bored easily", "fear of loneliness", "fear of the unknown" with correlation coefficients  $r=0.578$ ,  $r=0.419$  and  $r=0.376$  respectively. This may have meant that the more teachers worked in a negative work environment and could not manage the pressure and stress that came from it, the more they were driven to fear, panic and possibly anger. In short, they also increased the chances of developing mental disorders. Subsequently, the dependent variable "stress" moderately affects the variables "difficulty sleeping at night" and "fatigue/exhaustion", since the correlation coefficients were  $r=0.572$  and  $r=0.601$  respectively. In other words, the more their work stress was, the more tired they were and had difficulties sleeping at night or vice versa. That is, the more disturbed their sleep schedule was (difficulty sleeping or even insomnia) or its quality for the participating teachers, the more they manifested anxiety and pressure at work. However, these physical dysfunctions may also be due to other factors outside the workplace.

From the results, it was found that the work stress of teachers, in addition to physical problems, also affected their mental health. In particular, it was observed that it had a moderate effect on the variables "thought rush" ( $r=0.605$ ), "irony/aggression" ( $r=0.578$ ), "nervousness" ( $r=0.639$ ) and a statistically significant correlation of stress with the variable "sensitivity /you were easily hurt' ( $r=0.739$ ). This could mean that the longer teachers worked in a high-demand work environment, with suffocating hours, without clear roles and responsibilities and without the necessary support, they became frustrated and more irritable and nervous, with a serious impact on their personal well-being but and by extension in their work performance. From Table 3 and taking into account the results of this research, it was seen that the teachers working in the administrative services of Education in the A. M. Th. , above average. This is possibly due to the fact that civil servants and especially teachers who work either in schools or in the administrative structures of education, despite the economic hardship, still enjoy

better working conditions and feel to a greater extent the security of a stable and permanent job , compared to private employees. It should also be noted that the physical and mental dysfunctions identified in her may also be due to external work factors.

**Table 2: Pearson correlation analysis between job satisfaction/job stress and occurrence of mental and physical disorders**

		stress	Work satisfactio
HASTY MOVES	Pearson Correlation	,572(**)	-,017
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,882
	N	80	80
THEY GET BORED EASILY	Pearson Correlation	,578(**)	-,151
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,182
	N	80	80
EIP IRONY - AGGRESSIVENESS ΩNEIA - ΕΠΙΘΕΤΙΚΟΤΗΤΑ	Pearson Correlation	,578(**)	,043
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,705
	N	80	80
SENSITIVITY - EASILY HURT	Pearson Correlation	,739(**)	,055
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,626
	N	80	80
SILENCE OF THOUGHTS	Pearson Correlation	,605(**)	,041
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,715
	N	80	80
FEAR OF LONELYNES	Pearson Correlation	,419(**)	,118
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,296
	N	80	80
FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN	Pearson Correlation	,376(**)	,118
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,297
	N	80	80
NERVOUSNESS	Pearson Correlation	,593(**)	,097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,393
	N	80	80
DIFFICULTY SLEEPING AT NIGHT	Pearson Correlation	,572(**)	-,002
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,985
	N	80	80
TIRED EXHAUST	Pearson Correlation	,601(**)	,122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,282
	N	80	80

**Table 3: Level of work stress and job satisfaction**

LEVEL OF JOB STRESS AND PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION OF TEACHERS WORKING IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OF EDUCATION IN THE A.M.TH DISTRICT					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
stress	80	2,00	29,00	12,4250	6,24758
Work satisfaction	80	,00	4,00	2,8000	,93321
Valid N (listwise)	80				

## **V. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE EXTENSIONS**

With reference to the level of stress experienced by teachers in administrative structures, it is concluded that they do not experience work stress and more specifically their stress ranges at below average values. Regarding the level of teachers' satisfaction, it is found that this is above the average value (2.8). In the literature review, the results of several studies, which dealt with the investigation of the work stress of employees, do not coincide with the findings of the present study, but support the existence of a high level of work stress, which is due to many factors [16].

These differences can be attributed to the fact that in other researches the target population was workers in health facilities and in the private sector, who are affected by several problems (e.g. under-staffing, under-funding, etc.). In contrast to these workers, civil servants and especially teachers who work either in schools or in the administrative structures of education, despite the economic hardship, continue to enjoy better working conditions and to a greater extent feel the security of a stable job and permanent, compared to private employees. The teachers who work in the education services follow a fixed work-office schedule, making use of the official school holidays and holidays and the summer. An important limitation was that the results of the present research came from a limited and specific region of Greece, that of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace with its particular and individualized characteristics and in this light did not represent large geographical divisions of the country (e.g. urban - semi-urban centers, islands, etc. a) so that it can make generalizations of its results and confirm its findings.

However, despite any objective difficulties, the present study was the first project to capture the concepts under investigation to the teachers who work in the education administration structures. In this light, it would be of great interest to conduct a similar survey in a larger sample, including seconded teachers who work in the central administration of education (Ministry of Education) and in other Regional Directorates of the country, so that a more general investigation can be made and a reduction of the results on the whole of seconded teachers in the country's education administrative services. In addition, for its enrichment, a combined approach to the specific research could be made, i.e. collection of quantitative as well as qualitative data.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] J. Dunham, *Stress in the Workplace Past, Present and Future*, (Management and stress Management Consultant London: Whurr Publishers. 2001).
- [2] J. Stranks, *Stress at Work: Management and Prevention* (Boston: Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann Press, 2005)
- [3] E. P. Spector, *Job Satisfaction: Application, Assessment, Cause and Consequences* (London: Sage Publications, 1997).
- [4] W.L. Creswell, *Educational Research. Planning Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. (University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Pearson Education, 2011).
- [5] S. B. Mc Ewen, and N. E. Lasley, *The End of Stress. As we know it* (Joseph Henry Press, Washington, DC, 2002).
- [6] A. Leontari, A. Kyridis, and B. Gialamas. *The Professional Stress of Primary Education Teachers*. *Pedagogical Review*, 7(30), 2000, 139-161.
- [7] M.J Kivimaki, S.T Nyberg, G.D Batty, E.I Fransson, K Hiekkila, L Alfredsson, J.B Bjorner, *Job Strain as a Risk Factor for Coronary Heart Disease: A Collaborative Meta-Analysis of Individual Participant Data*, *The Lancet*, In Press, 380,(9852), 1491-1497.
- [8] D Desouky, and H Allam, *Occupational stress, anxiety and depression among Egyptian teachers*. *Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health*, 2017, pp. 1-8
- [9] J. Arnold, J. Silvester, C. Cooper, and I. Robertson, *Understanding Human Behavior in the Workplace* (Financial Times, Prentice Hall, 2005)
- [10] M. Nordin, G. Anderson, and H.M. Pope, *Musculoskeletal disorder in the workplace: Principles and Practice* (Mosby Elsevier, Philadelphia, USA. 2007).
- [11] A Griffiths, T Cox, M Karanika, S Khan, and J.M Tomas, *Work Design and Management in the Manufacturing sector: Development and Validation of the work Organisation Assessment Questionnaire*. *Occupational Environmental Medicine of BMJ Journal*, 63, 2006, 669- 675.
- [12] D.A Koustelios, and K Bagiatis, *The employee satisfaction inventory (ESI): development of a scale to measure satisfaction of Greek employees*, *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 57(3), 1997, 469-476

- [13] J Siegrist, Adverse Health Effects of High-Effort/Low-Reward Conditions, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 1(1), 1996, 27-41.
- [14] A Tsutsumi, Psychosocial factors and health: Community and Workplace Study, *Journal of Epidemiology*, 15, 2005, 65 – 69.
- [15] X.M Wu, B.Y Wen, and M Du, A Multi-Level Research on the Antecedents and Consequences of Group Task Satisfaction, *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 5, 2005, 264-271.
- [16] E.M Skaalvik, and S Skaalvik, Teacher self - efficacy and teacher burnout: a study of relations. *Teach Teaching Education*, 26, 2010, 1059–1069.