

COPING STRATEGIES - MODERN SOLUTIONS FOR INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF HIGHLY PROFESSIONALIZED HUMAN RESOURCES

Abstract.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the importance of coping strategies on the perception of occupational stress and staff satisfaction with the organization within a stressful environment like that of a military-type of organization. In the theoretical part of this study we have addressed the following issues: organizational usefulness of personal coping strategies in human resource streamlining process, the role of individual characteristics in coping development and the manner of designing / strategic use of the coping. The main objectives of this research are: 1) analyze the perception on occupational stress in the military employees depending in their coping skills development and 2) assess the impact of coping upon staff satisfaction with the organization. For this study we have used 60 subjects (executives in the same department) and organized them into two groups of 30 subjects each. For the first group we have held for one whole week daily training and coaching sessions on coping strategy design and application. Two weeks after the last training session, subjects of both groups were assessed by means of the occupational stress indicator, which has been adapted to the purpose and the environment covered by this research, with observations collected and analyzed in terms of frequency and correlation for each group. The comparative analysis of the observations obtained from the two study groups (trained and untrained) has revealed that the use of coping strategies will lower the intensity of personal and occupational stress while increasing satisfaction with the organization, leading to increased ability of the staff to concentrate and act. The study of coping skills in an occupational environment characterized by diversity of activities, extremely high expectations and the large size of the organization enables the formulation of conclusions regarding the influence of personal coping strategies on demanding and highly professionalized organizational environments.

Keywords: occupational stress, coping strategy, organizational crisis situation, human resources, professional efficiency.

1. Introduction

The performance and competitiveness of organizations lies in the effective activities of the human resource, which continuously subjected to a multitude of organizational and non-organizational stimuli, more or less stressful, diminishes its capacity to work and act. In the economy of any organization, the management style, organizational climate, labor relations, difficulty or ambiguity of professional tasks are stressors when they exceed employees' physical, mental and intellectual capacities. In organizational crisis situations such moments are magnified and affect more intensely organization members regardless of their status and position. The organizations oriented towards human resource, to its knowledge, motivation and training to optimally respond to tense situations by coping strategies succeed in maximizing employees' ability to generate competitive advantages even in crisis situations.

2. Organizational Usefulness of Coping

Tensed or crisis organizational situations (e.g., decrease in corporate competitiveness, poor organizational communication, negative managerial attitudes and organizational climate, work overload or underload etc.) generates in the human resource the feeling of professional uncertainty, insecurity, instability and stress. Such situations are adversely impacting on the lifestyle and work capacity of the human resource, causing conflict within the organization, low productivity, inefficiency, absenteeism and even strikes / protests. Under such circumstances, in addition to organizational management strategies, an important role is played by individual coping strategies, which come to support employee's motivation and maintain their competitiveness by helping them to psychologically and cognitively overcome

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(cope with) the stressful situation. Organizations that encourage and train their workforce to develop its coping strategies are enjoying the benefits generated by their staff proactiveness, loyalty and competitiveness. Coping strategies are aimed at the employee's psychological and cognitive self-support under stressful or crisis situations and thus to the success of the organization, which depends on maximizing the professional capacity and competence of the human resources.

In the economy of any organization, management style, organizational climate, labor relations, difficult or ambiguous job tasks and turn into real stressors when they are forcing the employee to perform tasks beyond his or her physical, mental and intellectual limits. Organizations that are oriented towards their employees and dedicated to enhance employee's knowledge and motivation and to train them to become capable to optimally respond to tense work-related situations by applying personal coping strategies, are successful in maximizing their employees' performance and in generating competitive advantages even in crisis situations. Understanding the personal variables that influence the relationship between stressors and reactions to stress is beneficial to both employees and the organization. Human resource is a sensitive resource that reacts spontaneously and unpredictably to environmental stimuli, having the capacity to adversely affect the welfare of the organization or, on the contrary, to generate professional excellence.

In 2005, before the current economic and financial crisis, occupational stress was experienced on average by 22% of workers in EU 27 and EU acceding countries (EU OSHA, 2009, p. 20), with occupational stress levels of the workers in our country ranking high on the list of the states analyzed, with a percentage of 35%, following Greece, Slovenia, Sweden and Latvia.

Table 1

Work-Related Stress in the EU 27 and Acceding Countries in 2005

<i>State</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Austria</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>27%</i>
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>Latvia</i>	<i>37%</i>
<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>Lithuania</i>	<i>31%</i>
<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>Luxembourg</i>	<i>27%</i>
<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>Malta</i>	<i>28%</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>The Netherlands</i>	<i>16%</i>
<i>Denmark</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Estonia</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>28%</i>
<i>Greece</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Spain</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>38%</i>
<i>Finland</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>	<i>38%</i>
<i>France</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>31%</i>
<i>Hungary</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>Ireland</i>	<i>16%</i>	EU	22%

Source: adapted from EU OSHA, 2009, p. 20.

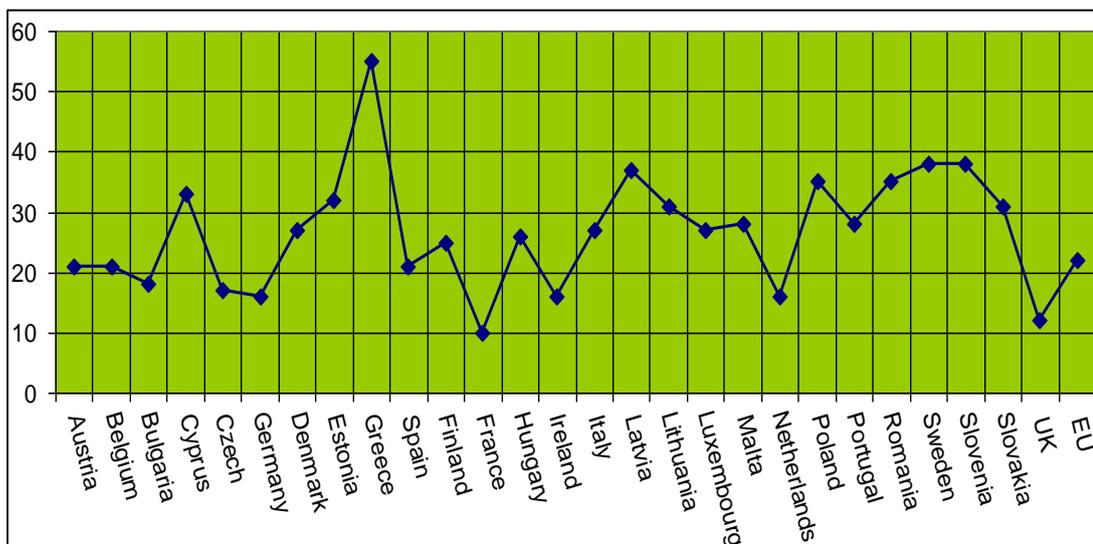


Figure 1 – Occupational Stress Chart in EU 27 and Acceding Countries in 2005

Organizational stress is not an effect of economic size but an effect of the attitude of workers and organizations with impact on productivity, workforce and economic efficiency. Employees' behavior and personality are more important in the management of work-related stress, requiring professional training and coaching. Training employees to effectively respond to (cope with) stress agents in the organization proves to be a necessary and beneficial investment, especially in crisis situation at the organization level, when human resources is seriously affected by a state of uncertainty, instability and insecurity. Under these conditions, the following contextual factors mediating stress exposure in the work environment are relevant for the increase of workers' efficiency and corporate competitiveness: locus of control, *type a behavior*, *self-esteem*, *robustness*, *negative affectivity*.

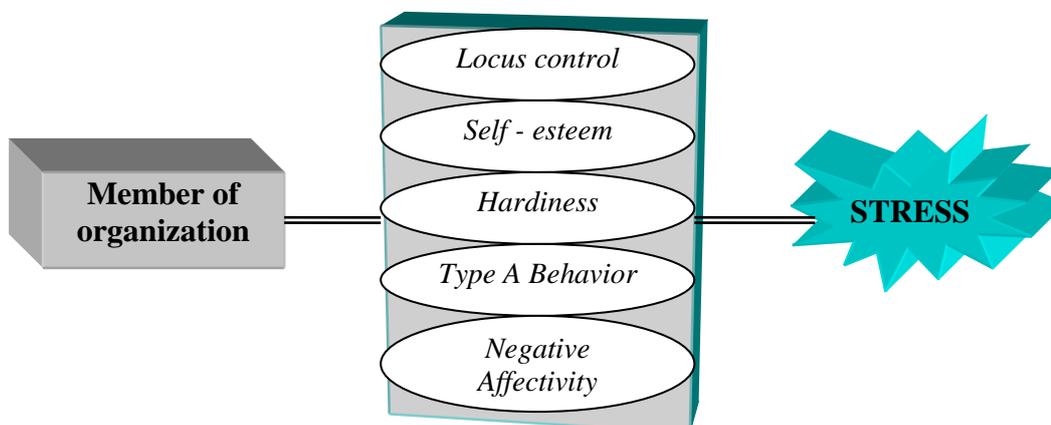


Figure 2 – The main individual features affected in crisis situations

The locus of control defines the individual's perception about the causes and control over events or current professional or personal situations (Rotter, 1966), explaining human resource's efficiency or inefficiency through external or internal causes, controllable or uncontrollable. Employees with *internal locus of control* consider the events in their professional and social everyday life as a result of their efforts and capabilities, while individuals with *external locus of control* believe that whatever happens to them is largely due to other persons, chance or fate (Rahim, 2011, p. 81). Externalists - members of the organization who place the responsibility and control of various organizational situations on other people or luck - will feel much stronger effects of the crisis situation as compared to the

employees who see themselves as causes of the situation. In the professional activity, for the same intensity and frequency of organizational stressors, internalists feel less intense reactions to stress, the internal locus of control moderating positively the relationship between stressors and reactions in the organization (Daniels & Guppy, 1997, p. 161). Moreover, the internal locus of control correlates with management efficiency, the managers with internal locus of control are more efficient professionally as compared to managers characterized by external locus (Miller & Toulouse, 1986, p. 1399).

Type A behavior is a concept proposed in the late '50s by cardiologist Meyer Friedman (1910-2001) to describe the set of characteristics of individuals involved in a chronic struggle to obtain an unlimited number of things in a short period of time, fighting if necessary even against rival environmental situations or people (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974). In terms of behavior, individuals can be divided into type A and type B persons. The persons who fit the type A behavior display: exigency, perfectionism, strong desire for affirmation, hostility, professional over-involvement, competitive, professional overload. The disadvantage of this type of behavior is the permanent state of crisis the person who engages in many activities without an effective prioritization, who displays impatience and overload and, in crisis situations, shows indifference, sarcasm and cynicism. Type A behavior is identified with the stressed and stressful person, who is constantly under pressure, avid for success and control. Usually, such people try to convince themselves of their own capacity and mask their fears by work. Behavior Type B is specific to those quiet, working slowly, avoiding conflicts, have reduced hostility and show no tendency to engage in two activities simultaneously.

Organization members with type A behavior are preferred by managers rather than the ones with behavior of type B because they are more active and effective professionally, because they want responsibility and control. Under similar work conditions, the employee with type A behavior perceives the job as being more stressful than the one with type B behavior due to the time pressure, which causes additional stress and effort. In terms of labor health and safety, Type A behavior causes health problems, particularly coronary problems, correlated with increased risk of occupational accidents.

Self-esteem is an important coping resource defining employees' tendency to self-evaluate positively. Organization members with high self-esteem "perceive professional challenges as manageable situations from which one can benefit, as compared to those who have low self-esteem, and consider the same situation as an undesirable failure possibility" (Judge & Bono, 2001, p. 81). Moreover, in crisis situations "people with low self-esteem experience more reactions than those who have high self-esteem and perceive a high level of stress" (Cassidy & O'Connor, 2004, 329) because they are unable to correctly assess and to act best in case of demanding organizational situations. Self-esteem plays an important role in the professional improvement of the human resource, which can be stimulated through: psycho-affective support and social approval, interest in identifying the causes of low self-esteem, support of affirmation desire, motivational attitude and psychological support for the stress-affected human resource.

Hardiness is an important resource of the individual which influences resistance to stressor stimuli, being specific mainly to people with internal locus of control who feel they have control of their own lives, they take family and professional responsibility and perceive changes as challenges, not obstacles (Maddi, 2005). Robustness increases resistance to a wide variety of changes and stressful circumstances, the employee perceiving the crisis situation as a challenge that needs to be overcome, superior's admonition or the change of professional tasks as opportunities to improve knowledge and performance.

The robustness explains individual's ability to develop, to respond effectively to stress and to assume professional and social responsibilities, while on organizational level it targets decision-orientated actions, responsabilisation of the human resource and development of the organizational commitment.

Negative affectivity defines a personality trait characterized by anxiety, neuroticism, pessimism and even low self-esteem. Negative affectivity reflects the tendency of employees to exhibit high levels of negative emotions, to react negatively in the crisis situations, to focus on subjective experiences to the detriment of the objectives ones. Employees who have negative affectivity reflect a negative perception towards work and organization, influencing the attitude of the group of belonging, they often have conflicts with others, they have poorer efficiency and show a greater sensitivity to environmental stimuli. In contrast, the state of positive affectivity determines flexibility, cognitive integration, emergence of alternatives, elaboration of strategies, situations where the risk of failure is low. Negative affectivity influences the response of the human resource to stressors specific to the crisis situation: the physical work environment, job insecurity, role ambiguity, work overload and under load. Also, negative affectivity influences the optimism and pessimism of the human resource, labor relations, coping style and orientation towards results.

Organizational tensions resulted from crisis organizational situations are costly and damaging to economic reality, society and individuals, requiring individual and organizational strategies for prevention and management of organizational stress.

3. The role of coping strategies in organizational crisis situations

The organizations oriented towards the human resource, to motivate and retain it through organizational stress prevention and management strategies, maintain competitiveness even in crisis situations. When such strategies are inexistent, too expensive and impossible to achieve or they do not generate the expected effects, the coping strategies developed by each member of the organization prove extremely profitable in maintaining organizational balance and efficiency.

Coping strategies involve the control of organizational stressors and stressful situations by each member of the organization, requiring knowledge and even training. In the local organizational environment, coping is not sufficiently concerned about the human resource, most of the responses to stress being rather personality reactions than the result of knowledge and conscious control. In organizational crisis situations, when human resource programs become a secondary concern for managers, coping consisting in trained reaction is the only possibility to manage organizational stress.

The coping strategy of each employee, regardless of the position in the organization, is based on: awareness of stress, cognitive evaluation of the employee - organizational environment relationship and coping itself (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 118).

Awareness of stress depends on the way the employee perceives the organizational crisis situation and on the stressful organizational stimulus intensity, on the ability to direct efforts and focus only on relevant stimuli and events. Awareness of stress is the effect of the personal analysis and introspection, the obvious symptoms of weakness being defined by professional inability or blockage, psychological or even physical illness.

Cognitive evaluation is the process by which the employee interprets organizational and situational events or stimuli. In many cases, tension sources are inherent to professional activity, stress intensity is determined by personal interpretation, by the assessment of difficult, threatening or challenging situation or by the professional experience of the employee. The interpretation frequently over assessed as threatening leads to chronic anxiety, fatigue and stress, while the correct / objective interpretation maintains focus, results-orientation and triggers increase of self-confidence.

Coping is achieved depending on the employee's capacity and on the assumed or avoided cost at the cognitive and behavioral level.

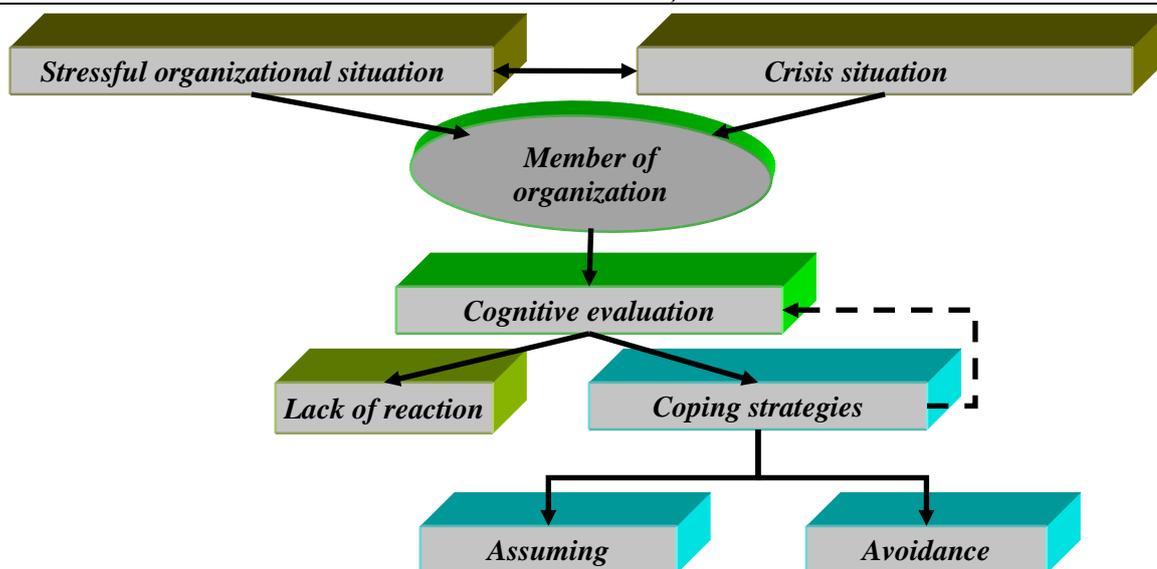


Figure 3 – Coping strategy in crisis situations

Coping by assuming has the aim to understanding the stressful situation, controlling and identification of personal resources necessary to combat stress.

Cognitive assumption involves self-infliction of the feeling of satisfaction through personal strategies, as follows:

- awareness and recognition of professional or personal errors in the work environment and considering them as accumulation of experience;
- role plays which mentally practice various organizational situations in the past (for self-evaluation) or situations that will take place (for training);
- orientation of professional efforts to identify and manage the personal resources needed to achieve tasks and organizational objectives;
- self – motivation even in the absence of managerial motivation and of leadership.

Behavioral assumption involves interaction with a stressful situation and activities aimed at mitigation and control through:

- gathering information about organizational situation considered as stressful;
- communicative approach to organization members regardless of their organizational status;
- gaining appreciation, praise and professional recognition through empathic attitude, professional responsibility, conscientiousness and proactive involvement;
- Seeking support from persons or entities in which the employee trusts (family, manager, psychologist, church).

The coping by assumption strategy requires self-confidence, strength of action, superior time management, responsiveness, communication, self-control, being the most effective personal approach to organizational stress. The members of the organization who know how to develop strategies of coping by assumption display robustness, self-esteem, internal locus of control, lack of negative affectivity, with the ability to generate professional effectiveness during organizational crisis situations.

Coping by avoidance has the aim at giving up the fight against a stressful situation, focusing on a different task or professional activity.

By **cognitive avoidance**, the employee directs his intentions and actions to situations that allow distraction and ignoring the source of stress, with the use of personal strategies, such as:

- rejection and refusal to accept the existence of external dangers in the professional environment;
- projection of illogical and inconsistent ideas by excessive reasoning which would trigger for the stressed employee a more relaxed and optimistic approach of work;

- humorous approach of stress generating situations.

Behavioral avoidance implies the physical removal of the employee from a stressful situation, which reduces the intensity of stressors in two modes of expression:

- adaptive manifestation by involvement of the stress affected employee in sports or relaxing activities, distraction from the stressful event and increasing physical and mental stress tolerance;

- maladaptive manifestation of the alcohol and tobacco consumption as momentary distraction from stressful thoughts and professional experiences.

At the organization level, adaptive coping strategies are recommended for all employees, being imperative for the highly trained staff as they require specific professional capabilities and competence, the advantages consisting in: complete elimination of sources of stress, anxiety and tension mitigation.

Avoidance coping is highly preferred in highly tensed organizational situations which cannot be controlled. On a short-term, the avoidance strategy distracts the employee from stressors, but, in the long run, avoidance is insufficient.

4. Coping Survey Design in the Military

4.1. Survey Objectives and Assumption

4.1.1. Survey Objectives

The first objective of this survey: analysis of perception of occupational stress in employees in military workplaces in relation to their ability to define and apply coping strategies. This survey will examine the influence of the following *work-related stress factors: work overload, managerial role, work-related harassment, work-family imbalance, interpersonal relationships, personal recognition, organizational climate, professional responsibilities.*

The second objective of the research: analysis of coping strategies influence on employee's satisfaction with the organization under the same working environment.

4.1.2. Survey Assumptions

The first general assumption

Application of personal coping strategies positively influences the level of perceived intensity of the job-related stress by workers at their workplace, thereby contributing to increasing workers' concentration, initiative and their drive for results.

The second general assumption

Using personal coping strategies positively influences employees' satisfaction with their organization, leading to increased motivation, loyalty to organization and assertive behavior of the employees.

4.2. Research Methodology

To test the research hypothesis above we have used 60 subjects holding executive positions from military organizations and grouped them into two distinct categories as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Grouping of Research Subjects

CATEGORY	<u>GROUP 1</u>	<u>GROUP 2</u>
<i>Gender</i>	<i>13 female 17 male</i>	<i>13 female 17 male</i>
<i>Graduates of higher education</i>	<i>All 30 subjects in the group</i>	<i>All 30 subjects in the group</i>
<i>Professional experience</i>	<i>between 1 – 5 years: 2 subjects between 5 – 10 years: 6 subjects between 10 – 15 years: 13 subjects between 15 – 20 years: 9 subjects</i>	<i>between 1 – 5 years: 3 subjects between 5 – 10 years: 5 subjects between 10 – 15 years: 13 subjects between 15 – 20 years: 9 subjects</i>

“**Group 1**” was trained for a week in training and coaching sessions to meet organizational stressors by means of coping strategies. “**Group 2**” did not participate in such training sessions.

Two weeks after the last training session, both study groups were evaluated in terms of their perception of work-related stress and level of satisfaction with their organization.

To assess the *perception of organizational stress* and job satisfaction, we have adapted to the purpose and the work environment of the target population the Occupational Stress Indicator (Cooper at all, 1988), with subjects' responses being indicated on a six-point Likert scale, as follows:

✓ “strongly disagree” and “disagree” - low-intensity stress and lack of satisfaction with the organization;

✓ “possibly agree” and “probably agree” – moderate-intensity stress and moderate satisfaction with the organization;

✓ “agree” and “strongly agree” - high intensity of stress and satisfaction with the organization.

Occupational stress was analyzed by means of eight evaluative scales: work overload (WO), the managerial role (MR), occupational harassment (OH) work-family imbalance (WF), interpersonal relations (IR), work-recognition imbalance (WRI), working environment (WE), and job-related responsibility (JR)

Applying the Occupational Stress Indicator we have also analyzed the level of satisfaction with the organization (SO) of the respondents in the two target groups.

The assumptions have been tested by a comparative analysis of the frequencies and correlations derived from observations collected from the two target groups.

The research was conducted in 2011 on senior officers in Bucharest engaged in fighting terrorism.

4.3. Presentation and Review of Research Data

Data collected from two target groups were studied using Microsoft Excel software on two research directions: analysis of the frequency of respondents' answers related to occupational stress perception / satisfaction with the organization, one the one hand, and the analysis of the correlation between occupational stress-satisfaction with the organization.

The first general hypothesis was confirmed.

Collected observations have revealed that the respondents who were instructed and trained (“Group 1”) to respond to stressors of all kinds by personal coping mechanisms perceived to a lesser extent the high intensity of job-related stress compared with the untrained subjects (“Group 2”), thus becoming more efficient and more focused on their professional goals.

Table 3

Perception of occupational stressors intensity by subjects by target group (NSF– No Stress Factor; MSF - moderate stress factor, PSF - Powerful Stress Factor)

NO	OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS	GROUP 1 (TRAINED)			GROUP 2 (UNTRAINED)		
		NSF	MSF	PSF	NSF	MSF	PSF
1.	Work overload	50%	30%	20%	13,33%	23,33%	63,34%
2.	Interpersonal relationships	46,67%	36,67%	16,66%	16,66%	23,34%	60%
3.	Work-family balance	40%	33,33%	26,67%	16,66%	33,34%	50%
4.	Managerial role	66,67%	20%	13,33%	13,33%	40%	46,67%
5.	Responsibility	43,33%	50%	6,67%	16,67%	30%	53,34%
6.	Occupational harassment	43,33%	46,67%	10%	20%	33,33%	43,67%
7.	Lack of recognition	36,67%	50%	13,33%	6,66%	23,34%	70%
8.	Working environment	50%	33,33%	16,67%	10%	33,33%	56,67%

Most subjects in “**Group 1**” have found that the occupational stressors analyzed are *Not a Stress Factor (NSF)* or are *moderate stress factors (MSF)* with the following distribution of dominant frequencies: work overload (15 subjects - NSF), interpersonal relations (14 subjects

- NSF) family-work balance (12 subjects - NSF), managerial role (20 subjects - NSF), professional responsibility (15 subjects - MSF), workplace harassment (14 subjects - MSF), lack of recognition of merits (15 subjects - MSF), work environment (15 subjects - NSF).

Regarding “Group 2”, most of the 30 untrained subjects have appreciated the same occupational stressors as powerful stress factors (PSF) with the following distribution of dominant frequencies: work overload (19 subjects - PSF), relations interpersonal (18 subjects - PSF, family-work balance (15 subjects - PSF), managerial role (14 subjects – PSF), professional responsibility (13 subjects - PSF), workplace harassment (14 subjects - PSF), lack of recognition of merits (21 subjects – PSF), working environment (17 subjects - PSF).

Occupational stress intensity is perceived differently by the subjects in each of the two target groups by each stressor considered (Figure 4 and Figure 5). “Group 1” succeeds by applying coping strategies to develop effective anti-stress reactions and to perceive to a lesser extent the effect of stressors at their workplace compared with their colleagues in “Group 2”.

The most obvious differences between the two study groups deal with:

- Stress generated by lack of recognition of their personal merits. 70% (21 subjects) of the subjects in “Group 2” admit that the lack of recognition at workplace is a powerful stress factor, while only 13.33% (4 subjects) of “Group 1” agree with this idea;
- Stress associated to managerial role. 66.67% (20 subjects) subjects in “Group 1” consider that managerial role is **not a job-related stressor**, compared to only 13.33% (4 subjects in “Group 2”.

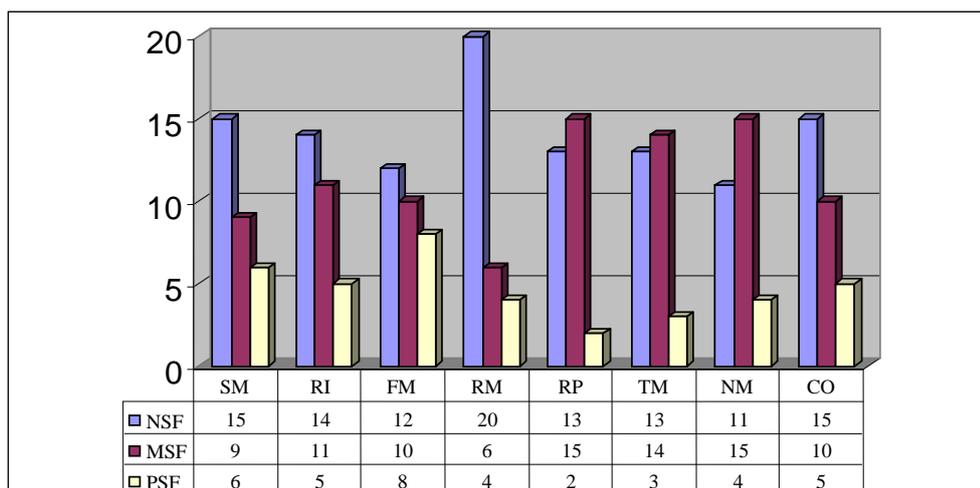


Figure 4 – Occupational Stress Perception in Group 1 Subjects

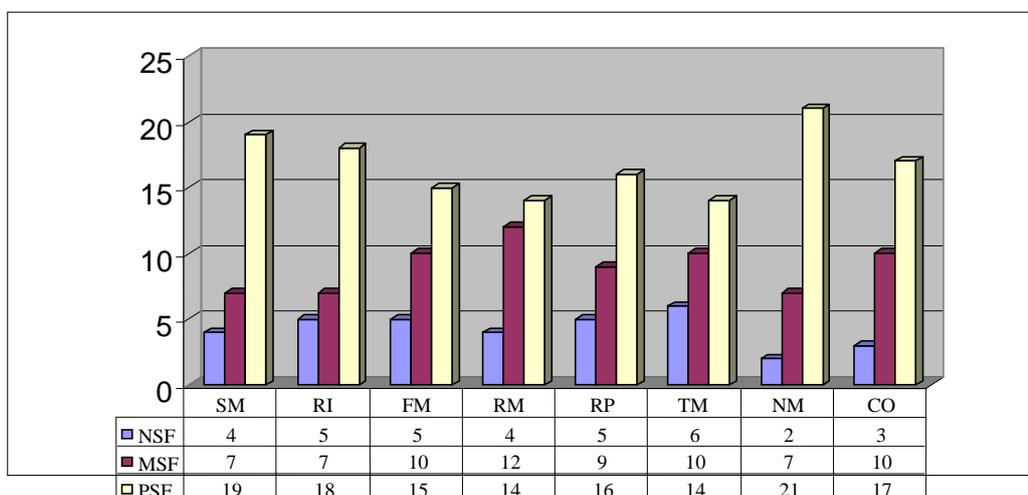


Figure 5 – Occupational Stress Perception in Group 2 Subjects

The second general hypothesis was confirmed.

Data obtained have revealed that subjects who were instructed and trained (“**Group 1**”) to respond to work-related stressors by means of coping strategies are in a greater proportion satisfied with their organization, compared with the untrained subjects (“**Group 2**”), which makes them more motivated, assertive and loyal to the organization (Figure 6). Correlation analysis reveals that for both groups there is an inverse relationship between stress and satisfaction with the organization, with workplace stress adversely affecting without exception the subjects’ satisfaction with their organization. Thus, the greater job satisfaction of the subjects in “**Group 1**” (63.33% satisfied with the organization) compared with those in “**Group 2**” (20% satisfied with the organization) is determined by perception of a lower level of occupational stress and implicitly by the coping strategies.

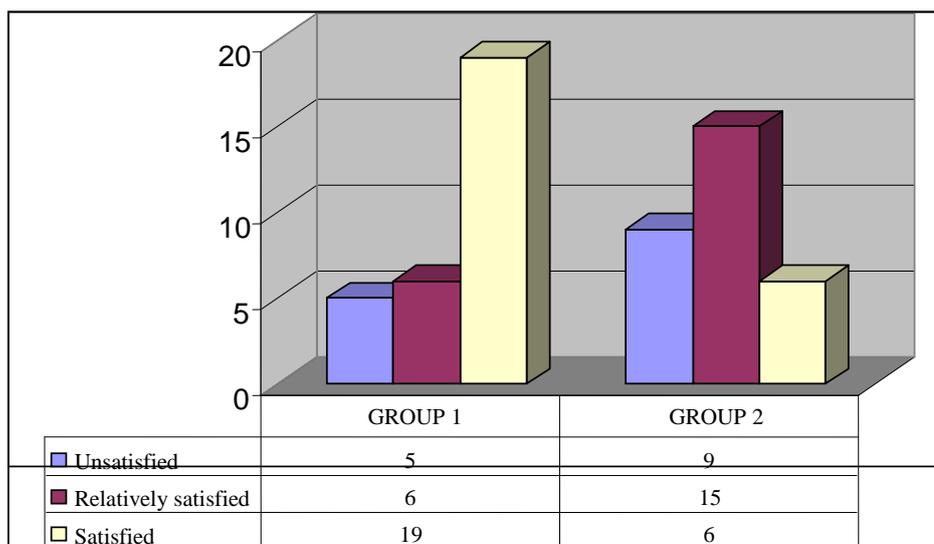


Figure 6 – Occupational Satisfaction Bar chart

Correlation index in most occupational stressors analyzed is negative and significant both in “**Group 1**” and in “**Group 2**”

Table 4 – Results of the Occupational Stress - Satisfaction Correlation Analysis

Studied variable	CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS			CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS		
	GROUP 1			GROUP 2		
	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig. F</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig. F</i>
Work overload	- 0,4069	2,3574	<i>p</i> <0,05	- 0,3672	2,0892	<i>p</i> <0,05
Interpersonal relationships	- 0,3664	2,0838	<i>p</i> <0,05	- 0,4081	2,3654	<i>p</i> <0,05
Work-family balance	- 0,4531	2,6897	<i>p</i> <0,05	- 0,2746	1,5112	-
Managerial role	- 0,5396	3,3919	<i>p</i> <0,01	- 0,3711	-2,1148	<i>p</i> <0,05
Responsibility	- 0,5596	3,5735	<i>p</i> <0,01	- 0,4141	2,4076	<i>p</i> <0,05
Occupational harassment	- 0,3796	2,1711	<i>p</i> <0,05	- 0,4168	2,4267	<i>p</i> <0,05
Lack of recognition	- 0,3083	1,7153	-	- 0,4125	2,3963	<i>p</i> <0,05
Working environment	- 0,3803	-2,1761	<i>p</i> <0,05	- 0,4970	3,0308	<i>p</i> <0,01

In “**Group 1**”, occupational stressors have significantly correlated with workplace satisfaction: *work overload* ($r = - 0.4069$, $p < 0.05$), *interpersonal relations* ($r = - 0.3664$, $p < 0.05$), *family-work balance* ($r = - 0.4531$, $p < 0.05$), *managerial role* ($r = - 0.5396$, $p < 0.01$), *professional responsibility* ($r = - 0.5596$, $p < 0.01$), *workplace harassment* ($r = - 0.3796$, $p < 0.05$), *working environment* ($r = - 0.3803$, $p < 0.05$), *lack of recognition of merits* (insignificant relation).

Correlations in “**Group 2**” show the same trend in the occupational stress – satisfaction relation: *work overload* ($r = - 0.3672, p < 0.05$), *interpersonal relationships* ($r = - 0.4081, p < 0.05$), *managerial role* ($r = - 0.3711, p < 0.01$), *professional responsibility* ($r = - 0.4141, p < 0.01$), *work-related harassment* ($r = - 0.4168, p < 0.05$), *working environment* ($r = - 0.4970, p < 0.01$), *lack of recognition of merits* ($r = - 0.4125, p < 0.05$), family-work balance (insignificant relationship).

We can see a stronger inverse relationship in “**Group 1**” in the case of the stressors: work overload, family-work balance, managerial role and job-related responsibility, while in “**Group 2**”, in the case of stressors: interpersonal relations at work, work-related harassment, non-recognition of personal merits and working environment.

A review of the survey data leads to the *following conclusions* concerning the role of coping in the organization:

- *Use of personal coping strategies decreases the proportion of employees affected by occupational stress and increases the proportion of those who respond effectively to stress factors;*
- *Occupational stress affects inversely proportional satisfaction with the organization, with the coping acting only for determining the optimum response of the individual to a stressful situation and for reducing the perceived tension;*
- *By inducing a lower perception of occupational stress, coping also influences workers satisfaction with their organization, enhancing their motivation, determination and their occupational initiative;*
- *Organizing training and coaching sessions on occupational stress and strategic coping skills helps the workforce to release/control work-related tension and focus on their relevant job tasks.*

Coping strategies are the result of the individual effort of each employee, but their effective realization and materialization at organization level requires corporate sustenance, social support and sympathetic mismanagement of the human resources.

4. Organizational Benefits of Coping Strategies

Coping gives the opportunity to support organizational excellence when human resource development programs are not sufficiently attractive or are poorly designed and do not generate optimal behavior and attitude to work. Also, organizational encouragement and support through *coaching and training programs* generate long term savings to the organization, given the directly proportional relationship existing between the efficiency of coping strategies and teamwork, professional effectiveness, result-orientation, less number of sick leave days, reduced absenteeism and resignations, non-financial motivation and organizational performance.

Occupational stress affects sooner or later any organizational environment, with Romanian workers ranking amongst the most work-related stressed workers in the European statistics. In the absence of an efficient human resource management, an organization should proceed to train its workforce to become able to respond to occupational stress and develop combined coping strategies tailored to individual personality and personal characteristics. For an effective response to stress, the combined coping is recommended, which is more complex and varied, which can be phased out as follows:

- a) *Cognitive coping strategy* with self-motivation, designed to overcome a stressful situation and identify the necessary personal resources;
- b) *Behavioral coping strategy* with involvement in other business activities and gaining the appreciation of others;
- c) *Cognitive stress avoidance strategy* by managing with a sense of humor the stressful situation and by forgetting it.

Or

a) Behavioral stress avoidance strategy, in the first seven days of the occurrence of the stressful situation, by focusing on other activities (sports / relaxation) or by getting a few days off;

b) Behavioral coping strategy by engaging in business activities and gaining appreciation of others, after the seven days of behavioral stress avoidance.

Be it simple or combined, coping is beneficial to both the employees and the organization, as it is a well known fact that *it is only when people who good work better*.

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