

ПЕДАГОГІКА

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STRESS INFLUENCE ON PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF ACADEMIC STAFF AND STRESS MANAGEMENT IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract. *Subject under consideration in the article is the problem of stress in professional activity of academic staff. It has revealed modern scientific ideas about stress. The reasons, manifestations, consequences of professional stress of a university lecturer have been analyzed on the basis of applied sociological research conducted among the academic staff of National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine. The article presents the research results of professional stress impact on professional activity of academic staff. It has been shown that the professional activity of a lecturer is accompanied by numerous stress factors that determine professional stress and have negative influence on his/her professional activity effectiveness. It has been noted that the violation of adaptive mechanisms, low stress resistance with prolonged chronic influence of stress factors, leads to a number of psychosomatic diseases. The strategies of overcoming behavior in stressful situations have been studied among the scientific and pedagogical staff of NULES of Ukraine. The features of overcoming professional stress among teachers with different stress levels have been revealed. Gender characteristics of higher school teachers have been established: a high susceptibility of women to stress, due to their expressiveness, the desire for success in professional career and in personal life, as well as a high frequency of stress development among young teachers, since they have to gain credibility with students. It has been identified that professional stress among teachers with working experience is mainly due to numerous educational reforms and toughening requirements. The importance of stress resistance has been noted, which is associated with innate qualities, but can be strengthened by competent planning and administration responsibilities, the creation of a comfortable working environment by the heads of the faculties and departments, the work of psychologists and the lecturers themselves.*

Keywords: *professional activity, academic staff, high school, sociological research, stress, stress influence, stress factors, stress management, stress resistance*

Introduction. The modern era is not accidentally called stressful. Stressful states have become common in modern life. According to experts, stress is a type of emotional state characterized by high mental and physical activity, physiological signs of stress, such as asthma, back pain, migraines, ulcers, hypertension, arthritis and heart pain; psychological manifestations – depression, loss of appetite, irritability and decreased interest

in interpersonal relationships [2]. Stressful states are characterized by extreme instability [4].

The relevance of the presented research is due to the fact that the teaching profession belongs to the category of professions that are especially vulnerable to stress, since the teacher has to solve various professional tasks in conditions of lack of time and information, constant face-to-face

communication, which involves significant emotional and energy resources. The professional activity of a modern teacher requires constant and maximum mobilization of his own resources, making demands on his resistance to stress and adaptability. The ability to successfully cope with stress and minimize its negative impact is an important skill for a lecturer.

Thus, **the purpose of research** is to identify stress impact on academic staff; to determine the features of overcoming stressful situations by academic staff with different levels of personal anxiety; to present the outcomes of research conducted in National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine.

Methods. To solve these tasks, the analysis of scientific sources concerning stress, stress resistance and stress management has been applied. It has been used a large number of information sources, based on fundamental principles, approaches and views of foreign and national scientists on stress overcoming and adaptability.

Analysis of the latest studies and publications. Occupational stress affects the efficiency of performed activity, affects the state of psychological and physical health [1]. Researchers name some stress factors such as: physical working conditions (noise, room temperature, dust, illumination, etc.); social factors (conflicts with colleagues, management and subordinates); organizational factors (irregular working hours, the impossibility of career growth, high labor intensity, the need to make decisions, etc.) [5]. Professional stress is a stressful state of an employee, which appears when he is exposed to emotional negative and extreme factors associated with the performed professional activity. Occupational stress often manifests itself in the professional activity of teachers.

In the scientific literature, there are different approaches to the study of stress and stress resistance. Thus, A.

Ellis formulated the concept of emotional stress, the main thesis of which is that emotional disorder is not a result of real events that took place in person's life, but a consequence of the individual's irrational beliefs in relation to these events [7].

L. Levy's psychosocial theory of stress, according to which psychosocial stimuli, combined with bodily or psychoneural painful phenomena, cause stress, is based on the study of psychosocial stressors [3].

American psychologist R. Lazarus in his theory of stress assessment notes that it is necessary to take into account not only externally observed, recorded, but also psychological processes. One such process is the process of threat assessment. The stress response can only be understood by taking into account the defense processes generated by the threat. Physiological, as well as behavioral systems of reactions to a threat are associated with the internal psychological structure [4].

Effective management of any educational institution involves the development of measures to prevent and overcome stressful conditions.

Results. In this regard, in 2020 – 2021 at National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, an applied sociological study «Stress in the professional activities of academic staff of modern university» was carried out. The method of in-depth interviews was used to interview 32 teachers of NULES of Ukraine. University teachers were asked to answer the following question: «Do you think that the problem of stress in professional activities deserves special attention and research?» The overwhelming majority of university teachers gave a positive answer, they are confident in the relevance of this problem studying, namely, influence of stress on the teacher's professional activity. Arguing their point of view, the survey participants noted that «a teacher activity is closely related to constant

communication, which presupposes the emergence of conflicts – a source of stress for a person»; «The stressful state negatively affects the professional activity itself, reduces its quality, inefficiency»; «The study of stress will allow the development of special methods of counteracting stressful situations». All respondents believe that teachers belong to the «risky» professions in terms of stress. The teachers of NULES of Ukraine participating in the study were required to name the most common causes of stress in the professional activities of university teachers. Most often, respondents indicated such stress factors as excessive workload (for example, «lack of time to prepare for classes», «the workload increases dramatically, and the teacher, due to his professional responsibility, strives to do as much as possible, but mentally and physically they are not able to do everything», «necessity to combine pedagogical and scientific activities»); constantly changing and toughening requirements for the academic staff (for example, «the emergence of new rules, requirements that come down from the top», «frequent checks at the university», «the need to prepare a huge number of documents»); unacceptable attitude of students towards training (for example, «bad faith of students who do not want to complete assignments»); poor financial and moral incentives for pedagogic work (for example, «salary does not meet expectations», «salary depends on the number of publications»), conflicts in which the teachers are involved (for example, «conflicts at the horizontal level – with colleagues and at the vertical level – with students); the danger of hours decreasing (for example, «situations in which the lecturer has risks losing this workload», «when hours at departments are reduced and it is necessary to redistribute them).

How are the stressful states of academic staff manifested? What are the symptoms of stress? – such questions

were also asked to the research participants. According to the lecturers of NULES of Ukraine, the manifestations of stress are diverse. They can relate to the physical well-being and mental state of a lecturer («bad sleep», «irritability», «nervous tension», «increased anxiety», «apathy», «sudden attacks of panic»). They can be expressed in behavioral peculiarities («aggression», «quarrels with colleagues», «emotional breakdowns» and manifest themselves in educational activities («poor-quality teaching», «students ignoring») Stress can be considered as a kind of personality adaptation to the changed conditions of existence. Depending on the characteristics of the psyche of a particular teacher, the stressful state appears differently in any case, stress is a kind of deviation from the normal state of a person.

The participants of the research project also had to answer the question: «What are the features of the occurrence and manifestation of stress states in different categories of university teachers (men and women, young teachers and experienced, etc.)?» It turned out that such features exist. Thus, almost all the interviewed teachers agreed in opinion that «women are inherently more emotional and expressive than men». They have «more causes of stress from the need to be successful both in their personal lives and in their professional career». Otherwise, men endure stressful states, «they are more restrained and immersed in themselves», «usually do not share their experiences with other people». A man is perceived in society as a «breadwinner», «he must work and his family is in the background for him» Therefore, a male teacher does not feel the discomfort of returning home late from work or having to work on weekends. According to the survey participants, the experience of working at a university has a different effect on the resistance to stress of teachers. Young teachers experience more stress than teachers

with sufficient working experience. They have to assert themselves, gain credibility with students, which does not always work out. Teachers with extensive work experience «know how to present themselves», can «stop a stressful situation, prevent conflict». However, sometimes an experienced teacher is «driven into a stressful, chronic situation». Stressful situations of teachers who have been working at a university for a long time can be generated by numerous educational reforms and the constant tightening of requirements for university teachers.

The participants of the research project were also suggested to answer the question: «How do the personality traits of a university teacher influence the occurrence and course of stress?» It turned out that the experience of stress can be influenced by temperament («the choleric is more explosive, it is easier to hurt him, and the melancholic is calm, may not pay attention to something, therefore he is less susceptible to stress»; personality orientation (extrovert or introvert); character; rigidity; state nervous system («the stronger it is, the less likely it is endured to stress»). According to the majority of respondents, stress resistance cannot be formed, because «this is a quality that is inherent in humans at the physiological level», «a person initially either has stress resistance or not». According to some respondents, stress resistance can be developed. It requires a set of measures, including trainings, simulation of situations. Also, a lot depends on the person himself, on his self-education.

«Is it possible to prevent stressful situations generated by professional activities among pedagogic staff?» The administration of the university should be engaged in preventive work («to plan work skillfully», «to distribute responsibilities evenly»), heads of faculties and departments («to create a favorable socio-psychological atmosphere»; «to provide comfortable

working conditions»), university psychologists («to organize trainings»), the teacher himself («to be engaged in self-regulation»). According to several respondents, stress prevention is unnecessary, since «stress develops adaptive abilities», «allows a person to change his behavior» and even «gives pleasure if the stressful situation is overcome».

The teachers of the NULES of Ukraine, the participants were also asked the question «If a teacher is under stress, what can be done to overcome it?». Most often, the respondents made recommendations related to the change (temporary or long-term) type of activity («shift attention to the family», «do science», «devote yourself to hobby»), with rest («go on vacation», «go travelling»), with an analysis of the causes of stress («it is necessary to understand the source of stress state»). A large role is assigned to the head and colleagues of the teacher experiencing stress («the benevolent participation of the head of the department», «psychologist consultation»).

Noteworthy are the answers to the questions: «What are the consequences of the impact of a stressful state on a university teacher?» «How does stress affect different aspects of his professional activity?» «Are the positive consequences of stress possible?» Among the consequences of stress, the respondents identified professional burnout («the teacher becomes absolutely all the same»), conflicts with others («the teacher cannot contain himself and directs his emotions on colleagues and students»), mental disorders («professional deformations», «depression», «apathy»), transfer of stress to the family («exacerbation of relations with relatives»). Despite the fact that stress is destructive, some respondents pointed to the positive aspects of stress. For example, «experienced stressful states provide experience for resolving various

conflicts», «if stress is caused by overload, then the teacher can learn to plan his work».

The answers to the question about the difference between stress in professional activity and stress in everyday life turned out to be different. Some respondents believe that there is no difference between these stresses, because «stress is in any case a source of experience and in both types it is similar." Other respondents, on the contrary, indicated that «stress in everyday life passes faster, the main thing is to throw off emotions». The study showed that the majority of respondents had to experience stressful conditions, the causes of which had background in professional activities. The reasons themselves turned out to be quite varied: non-fulfillment by students of the requirements, excessive workload, conflicts with students and their parents, acute shortage of time, difficulties in adapting to a new position. In this case, most often stress can be overcome or minimized at the initial stage.

Discussion. After analyzing the answers of the research participants, we can conclude that the teacher's activity involves frequent stressful conditions. The reasons for such stresses are usually a lack of time, a large amount of work, educational reforms. The stressful state is influenced by personal qualities, for example, the type of temperament, personality orientation, character, properties of the nervous system. Stress itself almost always has a negative effect on a person. It manifests itself in irritability, nervous tension, aggression, fatigue, emotional breakdowns. Stress is a destructive phenomenon, but, overcoming stress, a teacher can discover new qualities in himself, learn to resolve some conflict situations, mobilize to solve new problems, and learn to plan his work. To prevent stressful conditions, teachers should clearly plan their professional activities, evenly distribute the load; it is necessary to maintain order

at your workplace so that at any time you can easily find the necessary documents, lecture notes, assignments for students, examination sheets, etc.; it is useful to alternate work with rest during the working day; it is important to have rest after a working day, on weekends, on vacation, «disconnect» from thoughts about their teaching activities; you do not need «to get hung up» on pedagogical work, but in your free time to be interested in news, to engage in hobbies, travel, etc.; at first signs of stressful situation, it is advisable to «relax», rest, shift attention to something positive; in conditions of severe stress, it is necessary to consult a psychologist, warn your authority. The managers of universities should pay attention to maintaining a favorable socio-psychological atmosphere in the team of departments (faculties); it is necessary to constantly engage in conflict prevention, to monitor the psychological state of teachers; it is important to create conditions that provide psychological «relief».

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ВПЛИВ СТРЕСУ НА ПРОФЕСІЙНУ ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ ПРОФЕСОРСЬКО-ВИКЛАДАЦЬКОГО СКЛАДУ ТА УПРАВЛІННЯ СТРЕСОМ У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

Качмарчик С. Г.

Анотація. Предметом дослідження у статті є проблема стресу у професійній діяльності наукового персоналу закладу вищої освіти. В статті розглянуто сучасні наукові погляди на проблему стресу та стресостійкості. Причини, прояви, наслідки професійного стресу викладача університету проаналізовано на основі даних соціологічного дослідження, проведеного серед викладачів Національного університету біоресурсів та природокористування України. У статті представлено результати дослідження впливу професійного стресу на професійну діяльність викладачів. Доведено, що професійна діяльність викладача супроводжується численними стресовими факторами, які визначають професійний стрес і негативно впливають на ефективність професійної діяльності. Відзначено, що порушення адаптаційних механізмів, низька стресостійкість з тривалим хронічним впливом стресових факторів призводить до низки психосоматичних захворювань. Досліджено стратегії подолання поведінки у стресових ситуаціях серед науково-педагогічного персоналу НУБіП України. Виявлено особливості подолання професійного стресу серед педагогів із різним рівнем стресу. Встановлено гендерні особливості викладачів вищої школи: висока схильність жінок до стресу, що обумовлена їх прагненням до успіху в професійній кар'єрі та особистому житті, а також високий рівень розвитку стресу серед молодих викладачів, оскільки вони прагнуть завоювати авторитет серед студентів. Виявлено, що професійний стрес серед педагогів із досвідом роботи пов'язаний переважно з численними освітніми реформами та посиленням вимог. Відзначено важливість стресостійкості, яка пов'язана з вродженими якостями, але може бути посилена компетентним плануванням та адміністративними обов'язками, створенням ефективного робочого середовища керівниками факультетів та кафедр, роботою психологів та самих викладачів.

Ключові слова: професійна діяльність, науково-педагогічний персонал, заклад вищої освіти, соціологічне дослідження, стрес, вплив стресу, стресові фактори, управління стресом, стресостійкість