

THE IMPACT OF STRESS UPON THE BIHOR COUNTY ENTREPRENEURS.

Bucurean Mirela¹, Costin Mădălina-Adriana²

^{1 2} University of Oradea, mbucurean@uoradea.ro, mcostin@uoradea.ro

Keywords: impact, stress, entrepreneurs.

Abstract: In the nowadays economic and financial situation in Romania, stress is a very present phenomenon and it can have long term negative effects on health, performance and productivity. The purpose of this survey was to identify the area/field where entrepreneurs and their employees are affected the most by stress factors, if they are aware of its negative effects and if they apply certain methods in order to prevent stress. The questioned entrepreneurs belong to the three different business fields: production, trade, services.

1. STRESS AT WORK

In Europe more than 40 million people are under stress due to job. Although the statistics figures that there are significant loss of money and people, many companies do not realize how much stress at work affects lives. [1]

Stress is caused by:

1. Labor content;
2. Conditions of employment;
3. Employment agreement;
4. Labor relations.

Physical and psychological health of entrepreneurs are the most important resources that organizations can rely on. Unfortunately, stress seriously affects the health of everyone in the organization, which is reflected in the end in the organizational effectiveness.

Researchers believe that between stress and entrepreneurial performance level there is a relationship in the sense that at first, increases gradually but mild stress (zero stress level to low level and then average) is associated with increased performance, but from a some point further the risk increases of stress causes a decrease in performance.

This view was opposed to one another, even at low levels of stress, performance is undermined, there is no initial evidence of increased performance. They brought a number of arguments for this view [2]:

a) even relatively mild stress disrupt the entrepreneurs and make them focus more on the negative emotions produced by stress than on the tasks;

b) even prolonged exposure to low or moderate levels of stress negatively affects performance.

Another factor that completes the relation between stress and performance is the presence of personal characteristics of entrepreneurs who experience stress. Entrepreneurs that are capable, gifted with exceptional skills, with extensive previous experience, experts in a field, etc., will be performing even under a high stress level. There can interfere some dispositional traits of individuals, particularly those of character and temperament that predispose to certain attitudes and behaviors that will promote or inhibit positive or negative effects of stress on performance.

2. HOW TO PREVENT STRESS

In order to prevent stress, entrepreneurs can take into consideration the following aspects [3]:

- „choosing a business based on personal inclinations;
- always choose some elements of social or extra professional support;
- professional tasks approach based on an algorithm that involves: prioritizing objectives, terms and breakdown phase of the tasks, frequent switching on areas of greatest interest and efficiency in times of stress caused by accumulation of fatigue, increase communication relations in professional team.”

Referring to the entrepreneurial conduct in order to eliminate stress, we will present some of the most important principles [4]:

- hierarchy of objectives, for a limited period (day, week, month), in major and minor objectives;
- effective planning time;
- the pursuit of favorite activities at least once a week;
- the every day reservation of a quiet moment;
- achieving a balance between job-creation, work-family;
- rest for 7-8 hours per night, at least twice a week;
- using relaxation methods (acquired individually or with a psychologist);
- giving and receiving affection;
- discuss the difficulties with friends or relatives;
- cultivating positive emotions and feelings;
- practice physical exercises.

Following most authors, there are five types of interventions entrepreneurs [5]:

- „Identification intervention: early detection of the job stressors and reactions to stress;
- primary prevention intervention: proposed to reduce the job stressors;
- secondary prevention intervention: focus on change how employees respond to job stressors;
- therapeutic intervention: healing the employees who suffer from severe stress because of the job;
- rehabilitation intervention: return / reintegration to / in the job.”

3. CASE STUDY

This paper presents the results of a questionnaire that we applied on a number of 50 entrepreneurs from Bihor County, in order to find out if they are stressed at work and in which of the fields: manufacturing, services or commerce, stress is most present.

The businesses they started have different fields of activity such as: manufacturing leather footwear, garments manufacturer, furniture manufacturer, flooring producer, upgrade services for navigation systems, laundry and cleaning services, organising events services, beauty services, selling cosmetics, selling flowers and plants, etc.

Gender structure. In order to analyze the point of view of both men and women, we chose to apply the questionnaire to 25 men and 25 women.

Age. Taking into consideration the age of the respondents, we can say the following: 5 % 20-24 years, 65% 24-45 years, 20% 46-56 years, 10% 57-65 years.

Marital status: 75% of the respondents are married, 24% are unmarried and 1% are divorced.

The attitude toward stress

At the question "Do you feel stressed at work?", the answers were the following:

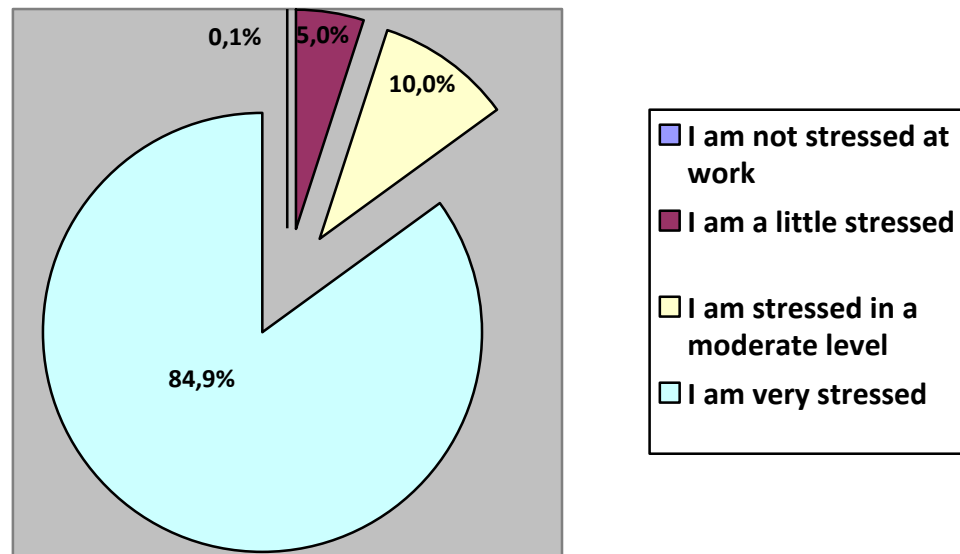


Figure 1. Entrepreneurs' attitude toward stress

At the question "Which do you consider the most stressor factor?" we had the answers showed below:

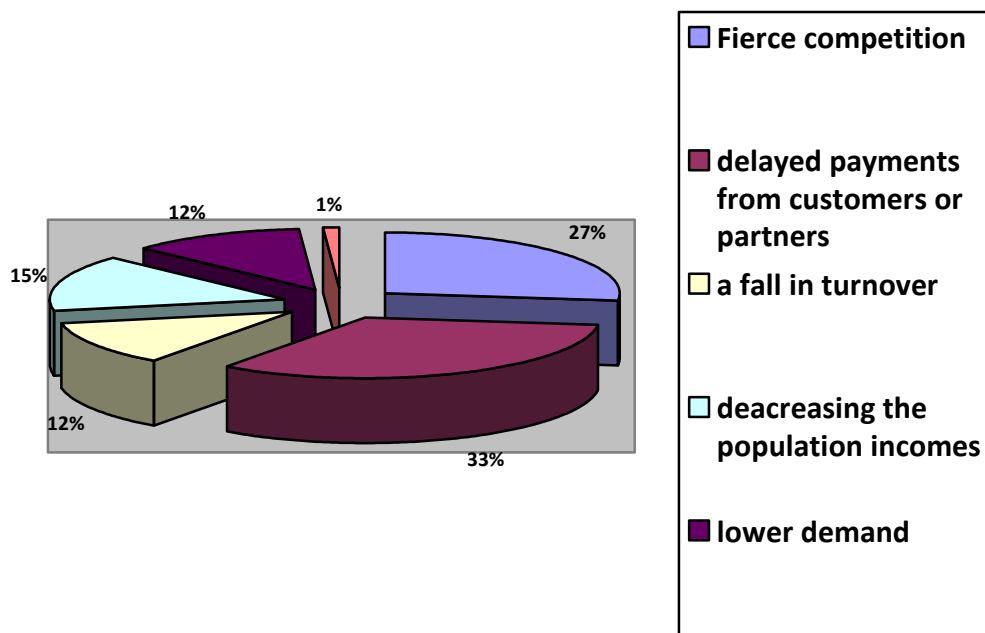


Figure 2. The most stressor factor in entrepreneurs' view

Another stressor factors mentioned by the respondents are:

- decrease the population purchasing power
- the liquidity lack of the population
- fiscal instability
- increasing interest from banks

After the interpretation of the questionnaire, we can conclude that stress is present in all the studied fields: production, trade, services. In the trade industry there have been the most replies considering that stress is indeed an impediment to health, individual skills, decision-making capacity and therefore the welfare of firms.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In order to prevent stress at work, entrepreneurs can take certain measures at individual and organizational level through different programs of prevention and stress management. First of all, they must be sure that they and their employees are constient of the consequences of experiencing stress. That's why, they can provide information about occupational stress, what is it and what are its negative consequences on our state of health and efficiency at work. Entrepreneurs must study some informative materials and must recommend to the stuff some web sites, magazines about healthy lifestyles, which have an effect on reducing the effects of stress: healthy eating, personal rigorous hygiene the regular practice of exercise, regular medical assessment.

It is very important to take into consideration that both entrepreneurs and employees react differently in a stressful situation depending on the personality of each people, for example, extroverts and introvert type react differently to the same life situations.

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