OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CYPRUS: CAUSES, SYMPTOMS, CONSEQUENCES AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The survey attempted to look into the causes, symptoms and consequences that occupational stress has on teachers in Secondary Education in Cyprus and find ways to manage it. Thirty eight schools with 553 teachers participated in the survey. The sample chosen is a result of a simple random sampling and it is representative of the country's population. The survey is quantitative and descriptive. Its statistical analysis was carried out by SPSS 16.0. The measurement tool used is the questionnaire which is valid and also reliable for this research. Three hundred eighty seven women and one hundred sixty six men comprise the sample of this survey and the prevailing age of the participants is 30-41. Most of the educators operate in big, urban public high schools in the Nicosia area. The most important results of the research concerning the class environment are the time pressure on the teachers, the lack of school infrastructure and the misdemeanor of students. Regarding the environment outside the classroom there seems to be a deficiency in offering the educators the possibilities for further education. In addition, there are alterations in the content curricula and inadequate building facilities. The effects that the occupational stress has on the teachers are psychic and physical symptoms like exhaustion, migraines and anger – confusion. As a consequence of the aforementioned symptoms there is a negative attitude on behalf of the teaching stuff towards work. The proposed ways for dealing with occupational stress are the right planning on behalf of the educators, their better involvement in the decision making process by the administration of school and the reduction of the material taught.

Key words: Occupational stress, teachers, causes, symptoms, consequences, stress management.

Occupational Stress

Spielberger (1982), believes that stress exists at every stage of our lives, from the day of our birth. So the stress is caused by the reluctance of either the employee or the lack of skills, knowledge and skills to carry out their work duties. The Jex (2002) states that professional anxiety that is created for employees, is equivalent to the pressure of working conditions. The working stress consists of negative emotions experienced by the employee when pressed, the working environment, to reach desired outcomes (Crandall & Perrewé, 1995). Stress in the professional field can be defined as the accumulation of many tight situations associated with work in general or a specific work task (Kantas, 2009).

The business is a growing pressure in recent years has effects on health and performance of the employee (Spielberger & Reheiser, 1994). The Cooper & Marshall (1976) and Cartwright & Cooper (1997) distinguish some stressors in the workplace, as their professional roles, labor relations, structure and climate of the organization and finally the family factors that affect employee performance within the organization. Moreover, as work-related stress factors are lack of job security, fear of job loss, the evolution, the increase in salary and promotion (Antoniou, 2006). Causes include and individual worker characteristics such as personality, lifestyle, age, sex, education, past experiences and lack of support from family and social environment that enhance professional anxiety (Antoniou & Cooper, 2006).

The symptoms are indistinguishable in humans during exposure to stress can be divided into physically and mentally. The obvious physical symptoms of the worker's influence on stress is loss of appetite, indigestion, fatigue, insomnia, constipation or diarrhea, increased eating, smoking and loss of sexual interest (Antoniou, 2006). The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work states that the reactions in the body is weakened immune system, peptic ulcers, heart problems and hypertension. The person is suffering from cramps and muscle spasms, nausea and fainting (Clarke & Cooper, 2004). Diseases due to occupational stress shown are hypertension, heart attack, migraine headaches, asthma and allergies, colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, high blood pressure, dermatological disorders, panic attacks, depression and cancer (Antoniou, 2006).

Antoniou and Cooper (2005) report that during activation of the system's stress hormones are released that affect the behavior and body. Chronic hyper activation or less activation of these hormones leads to melancholic or atypical depression, leading to enormous harm and chronic illnesses. If the patient is not cured and has not committed suicide, a life spans 15-20 years (Chrousos, 1998). European Agency for Safety and Health at Work states that stress symptoms, each of the workers has different effects on their organisation. These effects are absent of human resources, high staff turnover, discipline problems, harassment, reduced productivity, accidents, mistakes and increased costs from compensation or health care and absenteeism. According to Clarke and Cooper (2004) observed a lack of productivity in the body, and no aversion, lack of commitment and accidents in the workplace. The employee abhors the professional environment because of work pressure exists (Jex, 2002).

A modern approach Kavitha (2009) for the management of occupational stress is the application of various strategies implemented by several organizations. These strategies are primarily the identification of factors that lead to stress on workers to give more autonomy and involvement at work. Then the proper management of time, duration needed for a job done and maintain priorities for each task, as suggested by Kavitha, deliver results. Anthony (2006) proposes the installation of a good leader in the body that has the vision and inspiration to inspiring employees. The Crandall and Perrewé (1995) suggest that if management strategies applied stress at work should aim to reduce the conflicting roles of worker and workload.

Occupational stress of teachers
Teaching is one of the professions that bring great stress (Kyriacou, 2000; Dunham & Varma, 1998; Travers & Cooper, 1996). Teachers, stress at work affects the mental, physical health and their behavior (Ferreira, 1994). The Cockburn (1996) separates the stress into five categories, which all people experience. The first category is the instantaneous stress in front of a second event and the stress is predictable. The third category is the stress caused people through their imagination, while the fourth category is the stress caused by events of past and in the fifth category is chronic stress. The most teachers belong to the fifth category of chronic anxiety that is created and grows over time. "The stress of training can be defined as an educational experience of unpleasant, negative emotions like anger, frustration, anxiety,

depression and anxiety" that, according to Kyriacou, these are some aspects of the work of teachers (1987, pp. 3). The Farmer, Monahan, and Hekeler, (1987), put that stress comes from personal, financial, and labor-matched related factors. According to Troman and Woods (2001) stress the teacher comes from inadequate resources available to meet the demands of school.

Factors contributing to teacher stress are initially the conditions under which the teacher is working in schools, indoor environmental conditions. Numerous researchers discern the time pressure as one of the most important sources of stress for teachers (Kyriacou, 1987; 1991; 1997, Brown & Ralph, 1994; Hansen, & Sallivan, 2003; Tang & Yeung, 1999). The limitation of time teaching and conducting this play an important role in the stress felt by teachers (Tang & Yeung, 1999). Regarding the participation of teachers in education, according to a survey of Coch and French (1948), explored the views of teachers to make decisions in the administration of education. The Gold and Roth (1993) define stress as the cause of the lack of discipline on the part of students. The discipline of students is one factor that anxious teachers (Dunham, 1977; Friedman, 1995; Coates & Thoresen, 1976), and the unseemly behavior of students (Tang and Yeung, 1999; Kyriacou, 1997). Disciplinary problems with students is the negative attitude of cooperation, aggression (Dunham, 1984), the opposite attitude to the power of education, abuse and poor phraseology (Lawrence, Steed & Young, 1983). "The increasing number of students who behave in an unacceptable manner" was recognized as a factor that anxious teachers (Billehoj, 2007, page 3).

The Gold and Roth (1993) and Nisbet (1999) define stress as causes of the accumulation of education by students in classrooms. Now the role of teachers in recent years is unclear (Goble & Porter, 1977), as to their responsibility towards children, the proper upbringing (Travers & Cooper, 1996). Teachers do not receive training to learn methods of discipline, but they are distinguished good teachers from discipline that prevails in the classroom (Taylor, 1987). Teachers today are faced with evolving technology and the many sources of information that must adapt to these and updated continuously, which causes the pressure, if their role differs from previously (Greenglass & Burke, 2003; Travers & Cooper, 1996). For equipment in schools is a problem in modern society. Faced with these modern requirements,

schools are not equipped or prepared for teachers to cope (Haberman, 2004).

The external environment conditions are interventions in the education system, which adversely affect teachers. The findings from the research of Brown and Ralph (1994), showed that the stress of the teaching staff comes from the lack of resources, and Kloska Raemasut (1985) cite as reasons the lack of infrastructure. The Jepson and Forrest (2006) note that just as stressful, the funds for schools. The Hammond and Onikama (1997) note that teachers consider as stressors lack of learning materials. The Dunham (1984) indicates that the reduction in school funding leads to lack of equipment and books in schools, emphasizing the importance of education in economic terms. Additional factors that teachers are worried the noise reduces their efficiency (Lucas, 1981) and inadequate premises (Buckley, Schneider, & Yi, 2004). The architectural layout of the school teacher isolates each of the other teachers because different tasks and may feel disconnected (Bennett & LeCompte, 1990). The Farber (1984) considers the stressor involuntary movement of teachers from one school to another, incurred in the conduct of courses or other educational needs.

The educational system reproduces stereotypes of society, preparing children to cope with this later. The Bowles and Gintis (1976), decided that "the education system is integral to the reproduction of the dominant class structure of society" (p. 125). This view is shared by Pierre Bourdieu, that "the culture of education is similar to the culture of the dominant classes" (Blackledge & Hunt, 1994, p 224). The training, although showing autonomous from external interference, but legitimizes the power and the culture of the dominant social structures.

The Girdano, Everly, and Dusek (1993), indicate that during the measurement of burnout, exhaustion cause symptoms that affect health. According to the official report of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE, 2007), the symptoms in teachers who were recognized in order of priority from European countries, is emotional exhaustion, absenteeism, sleeping problems, heart problems, interpersonal conflicts, migraines , hypertension, gastrointestinal disorders, staff turnover and dependencies on various substances (Billehoj, 2007). Teachers are still years in the profession in schools, where pension benefits are increased with the years of work (Troman & Woods, 2001). Stress contributes to the premature retirement of

teachers (Gaziel, 1993). Overloading functions of education is recognized as a factor leading to diseases associated with stress (Billehoj, 2007). Stress alters the teachers, resulting in premature removal from office (Hammond & Onikama 1997). Stress leads to absenteeism, dissatisfaction, reduced productivity and low morale (Kedjidjian, 1995).

In a survey of Brenna, Zimmer, and Womack (2005), suggested ways of stress management training such as administrative support to the concerns heard and their views regarding the treatment of students and general assessment of the teaching staff of the students, and respect for the teaching profession. Furthermore, we propose that teachers may choose what to teach, to the resources available to carry out certain activities, there is a consistency in discipline, teachers have access to the programs of study, be given better pay and be encouraging parental support . Also, the years of training to be more constructive, the school adapted to the levels of students in a school spirit more. Also be given more opportunities for career development and equitable distribution of the budget.

Effects reported widely by researchers are to avoid frustrations, be reasonable assessment of a situation, that notification of the surrounding effort and control reactions (Kyriacou, 1980). The Grey and Friedman (1988), suggest that people share their problems as soon as possible to be recognition and management problems and to keep balance both school and personal life. The Hayes (2006) states that the relations between colleagues there must be mutual, understanding, support and can share their problems. Equally important, however, other problems do not end up against the same teacher and does not become pawn of others who accept his help.
On discipline of students can be established discipline specific systems, such as assertive discipline developed by Canter and Canter in 1976 appealing to students who have behavioral problems. Teachers need recognition of education, autonomy and support from the community (Tuttemann & Punch, 1992). The desensitization of teachers for inappropriate student behavior and learning various techniques of stress management helps to reduce (Coates & Thoresen, 1974). Assistance of government can reduce stress to teachers as to conduct workshops to develop their personal and interpersonal level, the reduction of additional activities, provide opportunities for lifelong learning, to strengthen human capacity and resources caring for the

psychological well-being of teachers (Yeung & Liu, 2007). The Hansen and Sallivan (2003) suggest redesign of work, setting up of service and participation in the evaluation process. The Kyriacou, 1980, argues that we need to delineate the frameworks and duties of teachers, school administration and the government.

The occupational stress of teachers in Cyprus

Leading surveys of professional stress of teachers in Cyprus, made by Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis (2002) and Ioannou and Kyriakides (2007). The Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis (2002) refer to as critical sources of stress and intervention by parents cover the material in terms of time pressure, the presence of the inspector, the role of the Ministry of Education in guidance and introduction of innovations changes in schools by teachers and students in the discipline, level and their number in the classroom. In several studies used research models for the measurement of professional stress. The Maslash Burnout Inventory (Maslash, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) emphasizes the emotional exhaustion, which explores how the stress experienced by the person in depersonalization than others and reduced personal accomplishment in relation to others (Antoniou and Cooper, 2005). Many researchers around the stress of professional training applied these tools in their surveys to identify these factors, and relate them to categorize them. Using this model, was found in the survey results of Ioannou and Kyriakides (2007), that the Cypriot teachers have a positive correlation between emotional exhaustion and job requirements, assess the role of the inspector and the support of colleagues.

Paul (2008) is critical in shaping the Cyprus educational system of Cyprus, the effects that lead to teachers and students. The violence and delinquency in schools that are more and more relevant is the effect of making the school. The school fosters competition for students since the curriculum aimed at students' success in examinations and fails to support the weak students. Moreover "our school has psychological violence on teachers, and through them the students' page 104. Even the issue of makes incompetent teachers to properly perform their teaching work in schools and social eliminated, but the teachers themselves maintain evening schools. It also stresses that the relationship between teacher and student is in a dilemma, since the relations have a pedagogical character and the other is the pressure to cover curriculum. The pressures even to the educational non-teaching duties, such as

bureaucracy, make it unprofitable to their teaching duties.

In a survey done by Ioannou and Kyriakides (2007) in Cyprus was found that the ways to deal with stress is effective rules for student behavior, better working conditions, related classrooms, reducing the workload and time pressure . Also suggests the role of the inspector to be redesigned, teachers participate in decision making, enhance the teaching profession, reduce labor requirements and enhance labor resources. The parents' education, reduction of material, changing the role of the inspector, creating good relations and cooperation with persons of both professional and friendly environment, good planning and positive management of things are strategies that can reduce anxiety (Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2002).

Methodology

Purpose and research objectives

The purpose of this research is to investigate the causes, symptoms, effects and ways to manage stress of professional teachers of High School teachers in Cyprus.
The specific objectives are given for the widening of the research is:
1. to finding the causes of stress, secondary school teachers in Cyprus, and recorded the main causes that hinder their teaching work.
2. to identify the symptoms of Cypriot teachers and the impact caused by stress and impede the normal flow of their professional path and explore the key.
3. to detect the different ways of stress management training and to highlight the main that can be applied by the same teachers, the school unit and the Cyprus educational system.

Questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire contains questions that seek information about demographic characteristics and information regarding the school where the teachers work. In the second part of the questionnaire is an effort to identify the main causes that create stress for teachers. The third part deals with the symptoms and effects of stress caused to teachers, the main psychosomatic symptoms felt by teachers, according to the literature, in tabular and closed questions. The fourth and final part of the questionnaire is about the management and reduction of stress which is likely

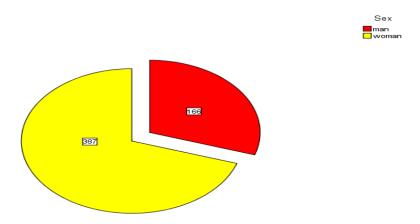to help, teachers, stakeholders of the Cypriot education.

Sampling

Schools were chosen from the official list of schools by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus. The determination of the general population of secondary school teachers by providing Cyprus became a full list of the official report of Ministry of Education Cyprus for 2009. In the survey population were 59 schools nationwide, both public and private, of which the final participating schools was 38. Participants' teachers nationwide totaled 553, while the total number of questionnaires totaled 1180. The nationwide survey includes the cities of Cyprus, namely Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Famagusta and Paphos.

Demographic characteristics of educators

The first question in the questionnaire on sex education. The question was answered a total of 553 teachers attended 166 men and 387 women (see Figure 1). By involving teachers in relation to gender, women predominate in the population than men. Women occupy 70%, more than twice that of men, who hold only 30%.
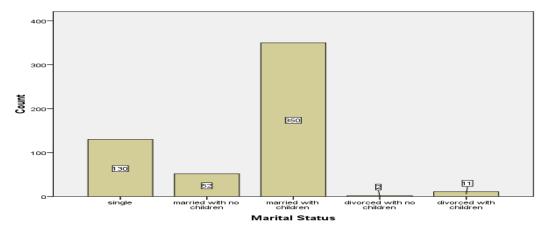
Figure 1 - Sex

The second question concerns the marital status of teachers and answered by 545 teachers. The celibate teachers amounted to 130 teachers and married without children is 52. The majority of teachers, which amount in total to 350, are married with children. Two teachers are divorced and without children and 11 teachers are divorced with children (see Figure 2). Most teachers are married and have children,
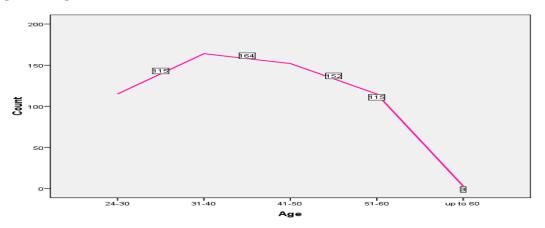
accounting for 63.3%, while the next great group of teachers with regard to marital status, are the group of single teachers, accounting for 23.9%.

Figure 2- Marital Status

The age of teachers is divided into five age groups. These groups are separated at ages 24 to 30 years, 31 - 40 years, 41 - 50 years, 51 - 60 years and the group of teachers over 60 years. The question was answered in total 549 teachers. At the age of 31 to 40 are most teachers at the rate of 29.7%, while fewer teachers are over 60 years with a rate of 0.5%. The second largest group in the population is aged between 41 and 50 years old with 152 participating teachers. The age of 24 to 30 and 51 to 60 are equal in number and occupy the third position relative to the many teachers, accounting for 20.8%. Diagram 3 shows, graphically, the age of teachers.
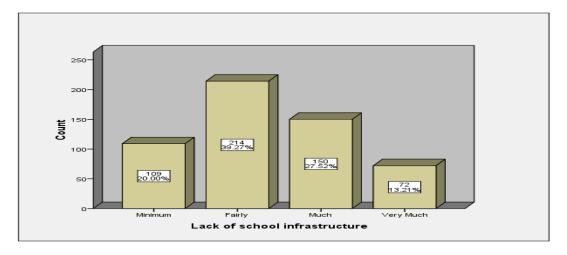
Figure 3-Age

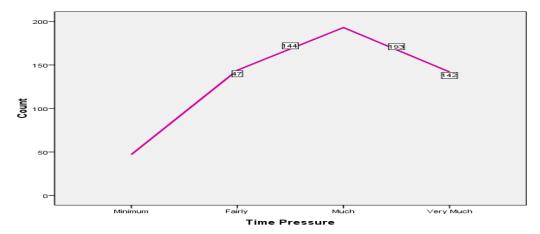
Stressors of internal training school environment

The major stressors for teachers is initially inadequate infrastructure (see Figure 4).
Of the 545 teachers who participated in the overall survey, 214 answered "fairly" with
the highest percentage of all stakeholders to rise to 39.27%.

Figure 4 - Lack of school infrastructure

In Figure 5 is analyzed statistically the second cause of stress that teachers feel the
pressure of time. Of the 526 teachers, 193 anxious 'very', the pressure of time,
accounting for 34.9% and is the only factor in the internal environment of the school,
for which teachers are so anxious.

Figure 5 – Time pressure

The questions concerning the misbehavior of students answered that 188 teachers have "much" stress with rate of 34.0% (see table 1).

Table 1

Misbehavior of students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Minimum	49	8.9	9.1	9.1
	Fairly	188	34.0	34.8	43.8
	Much	166	30.0	30.7	74.5
	Very Much	138	25.0	25.5	100.0
	Total	541	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	12	2.2		
Total		553	100.0		

Stressors of external educational school environment

Teachers, in response to questions 13 and 14 of the questionnaire revealed that the main factors "sufficient" anxiety is the curriculum content changes (see Figure 6), lack of training opportunities (see Figure 7) and inadequate building installations (see figure 8), possessing the same 44.8% and the same number of entries (248). Second reason is the lack of logistics with a 43.2%. Of the three major stressors encountered, we compared the average, and the lack of training opportunities is the major stressor external environment (N = 536, M.O = 2.11, SD = 0.843) and statistically significant

($t = 55.908$, $df = 535$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$).
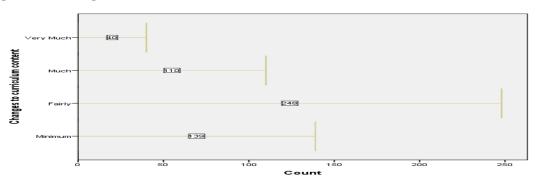
Figure 6- Changes to curriculum content

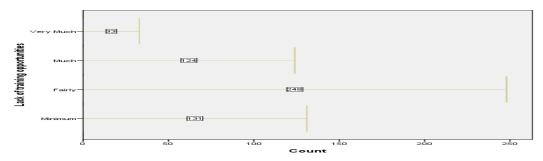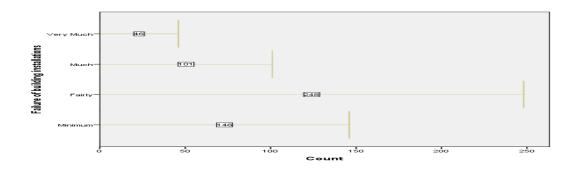**Figure 7-Lack of training opportunities**

Figure 8-Failure of building installations

Anxiety symptoms of education

The main psychological and physical symptoms presented by teachers from professional stress is burnout (see Figure 9), migraine (see Figure 10), and anger - confusion (see Figure 11). The main symptom of the occupational stress of teachers is the burnout rate of 88.4% ($N = 533$, M.O $= 1.08$, SD $= 2.75$), with statistically significant result ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$), where 489 teachers answered positively to the

symptom. The next symptoms are headaches and anger, confusion with the same response rate 86.6% and these symptoms 479 teachers responded positively.
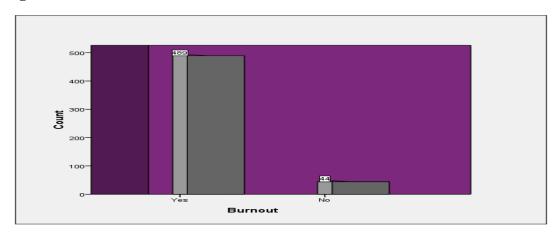
Figure 9-Burnout
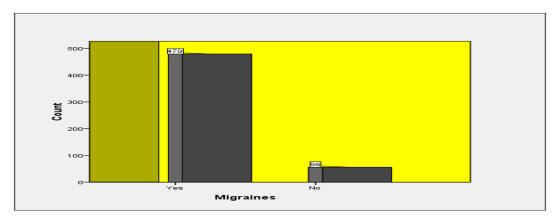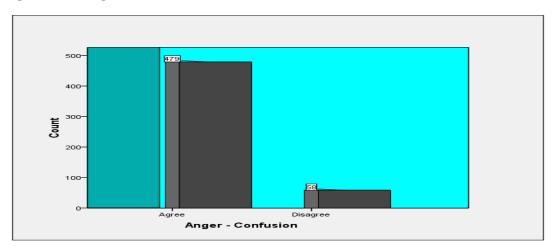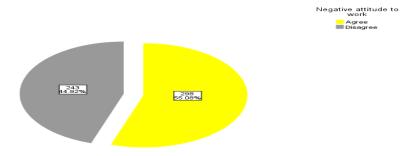

Figure10 - Migraines

Figure11 – Anger-Confusion

Effects of teacher stress

The main effects of education on the occupational stress is the negative attitude towards work. Of the 541 teachers, 298 teachers with a 55.1% agreed that the first of the major impacts is the negative attitude to tackling the job (see Figure 12).
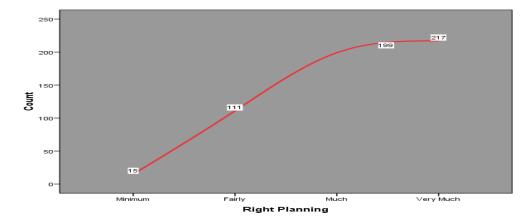
Figure 12-Negative attitude to work

Ways to manage stress

The main types of professional stress management identified the good and timely planning, more involvement of teachers in school decision making and reducing materials. Good and timely educational programming selected by teachers as a professional stress management agent. Teachers said that if you achieve good and timely planning, stress will be reduced "too much". The whole question was answered by 542 teachers 98%. The question was whether it would reduce the stress of teachers and 217 teachers responded that good and timely planning will reduce the stress "too much", the 199 respondents 'very', 111 answered "pretty" and only 15 teachers responded "minimum "(see Figure 13).

Figure 13- Right planning

The professional way to manage stress, coming second in the standings, is the greater involvement of teachers in decision making at school, with a 98% positive response. This method of stress management professional, he found consistent 493 teachers, answering "yes" to greater teacher involvement in decision making at school (see Figure 14).
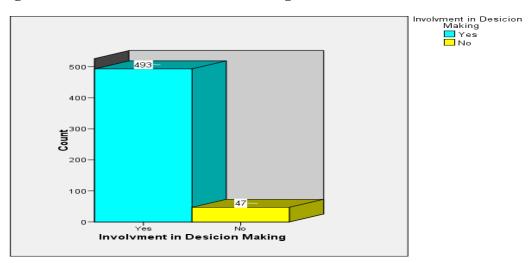
Figure 14- Involvement in decision making

With respect, the open-ended questions, described the statistics teacher participation in the proposed strategy with 177 participants, with 47 different answers. The main strategies of stress management, according to 28 of the 171 teachers who responded to this question is the reduction of material taught.

Conclusions

Regarding demographic characteristics, the majority of teachers are women, married with children. In this case, the majority of the samples are women, so it is a natural consequence to occur more prone to stress. The Antoniou et al., (2006) and Chen and Miller (1997), emphasize that women teachers tend to be more anxious. The features of the school seem to be directly related to the stress of which affected teachers. The reason for this is that teachers who work in large, urban schools are pressed and anxious enough, given the diversity of students in classrooms and indecent behavior resulting from these large classes. The large schools in urban areas suffer from inadequate building facilities and the lack of logistics. These problems seem to be initiated by urbanization and continued expansion of urban population (Lortie, 2002). So as a consequence of these problems teachers are very anxious from the pressure of

time in the classroom. The lack of training opportunities as a stressor outside the classroom is directly related to time pressures faced by teachers. Moreover, one of the demands of teachers, on a proposal for relief from stresses, the reduction of matter, and declared as one of the main causes of stress, to cover the material taught.

The exhaustion, migraines and anger - confusion, frustration and emotional exhaustion are the results of the general pressure on teachers from the school environment. The impact of personal problems of teachers in the school is the frustration with the students, the voices and the sudden behavior towards children. The general picture is in school events is that teachers are obliged to tolerate indecent and provocative behavior of students and serves as an excuse for tolerance of such behavior. A teacher meets the standards of the profession's need to love children too, wants to educate them properly, to have patience and perseverance. Also, be keen to contact other people, to seek cooperation, be active and can generally cope with the demands of the teaching function. This view identifies with the view of Fontana, D. 1995 that a teacher needs to have confidence, preparation, organization, use a positive approach towards the children and show that love. Thus, the impact made to the Cypriot educational system of the symptoms of many teachers is the negative attitude to work, loss of interest in teaching and their application for early retirement. Moreover, the failure of the school regulations give the message to students stranded for easy and no violation properly educated about the real reason of existence, since it moved to the students, the right message. The ineffective school administration is a parameter that is consistent with the symptoms that bring teachers and cultivating a negative stance towards their school environment. In this light, it is understood that even teachers who are "born" for this profession, have severe symptoms and consequences when confronted with the reality of inspection, inefficiency of government and non-compliance with regulations for the schools. These findings, to converge in terms of Hammond and Onikama, those passionate, idealistic and dedicated teachers are more prone to anxiety (1997).

Cypriot teachers regard as the management of occupational stress to make a timely and functional programming in Cypriot education. This view is regarded by teachers as the dominant way of managing stress and the corresponding implicit parallel programming wrong, or the competent bodies, either by the school administration or

even by the teachers themselves. It is therefore proposed, an early programming consistent finding all involved, the proper stress management. The willingness of some teachers to become more involved in decisions of the administration of the school fosters dialogue and involvement in this planning. Teachers who are positive on this issue, have more energy and perhaps innovate in the school than those who are forced and obliged to carry out a thoughtful plan, including in their duties. Teachers recommend the provision of the Cyprus educational system to learn methods to manage stressful situations in school education events. The development of a healthy collegial relationship between teachers and managers, improve the quality of services provision of schools, contributes to the activation of the teachers and elevates the desire for recognition of education, participation and respect of their profession. Moreover, lack of educational cooperation with the school sends the wrong standard in children, while teachers and the director, teach and require children to have team spirit. Compliance with the rules of the school should not depend solely on the school administration, but concerns all the teaching staff. Thus, the further involvement of teachers in decision making for the school and their collaboration with management, make the educational system as impartial, beyond any doubt and strengthen the educational institution. The choice of appropriate and unique technique for the achievement of teaching by the teacher, the praises, making creative and reinforces positive attitudes toward the educational tasks at school and not eliminated as a professional from the educational system.

Suggestions

In Cyprus there is some provision for the management of occupational stress for teachers. The suggestion therefore is to design measures to prevent the stress from all stakeholders in education for those affected by the serious and damaging problem of anxiety. The stress on teachers, it is difficult to treat because new problems always occur, because of the association of the school environment with too many components. Therefore needs a careful study on stress prevention, causes, symptoms and modes of management involvement and cooperation with all relevant bodies.

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