Stress and Coping Strategies among Teachers in Gymnasium Schools

Marcela Popescu*[i], Alina Cîrjă**[ii], Ancuța Duminică*[iii]

*Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest, Romania
**Faculty of Educational Sciences, "Dimitrie Cantemir" University, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

Introduction: The present study was intended to describe the sources of stress among teachers, the problems faced by them, the coping strategies they use to solve such situations and the interests in recreational activities.

Objectives: The objectives were: the identification of stress factors and collecting knowledge on the coping strategies used by teachers from the Romanian-Finnish High School in Bucharest; identifying the interests in recreational activities among the participants and the ways they spend their spare time.

Methods: A number of 35 teachers participated in revealing the stress factors and the problems faced by teachers at their workplace. To assess teachers' opinions, we used semi-structured interview with open questions, during the month of February 2018.

Results: Schools should make intensive efforts to design practical ways for teachers and psychologists to promote coping strategies among teachers through educational interventions.

Conclusions: The study has shown that teachers have a clear understanding of the stress and problems they face. This further emphasize the need for intervention programs to optimize teachers' coping strategies.

Keywords: programs, optimization, recreational interests, problems, parents and children

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[i] Corresponding author: Marcela Popescu, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest, 90 Panduri, Bucharest, Romania, email: marcela.popescu@scoalafinlandeza.ro.
[ii] Alina Cîrjă, Faculty of Educational Sciences, "Dimitrie Cantemir" University, 176 Splaiul Unirii, Bucharest, Romania, email: alina.cristiana@scoalafinlandeza.ro.
[iii] Ancuța Duminică, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest, 90 Panduri, Bucharest, Romania, email: ancuta.duminica@scoalafinlandeza.ro.

I. Introduction

Teachers' stress is defined by Kyriacou (1987) as negative emotional experiences such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger, and depression resulting from different aspects of teacher work (Brown & Uehara, 1999).

Teacher stress is caused by environmental factors as well as by individual characteristics. Major environmental factors include inadequate work conditions, resource shortages, high workload and inadequate student behavior. Individual characteristics may include gender, age, personality and ability to cope with stress (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). These factors determine 30% of the novice teachers to leave the profession within five years and not choosing it ever again (Mrozek, n.d.). Teachers have various responses to stress. In this context, the study aims to know the strategies for addressing stress used by teachers at the Romanian-Finnish Middle School.

A large number of teachers do not benefit from optimized programs for this purpose, even though over the past two decades the research done in this field has analyzed and highlighted the significant link between irrational cognitions and teacher stress levels, emotional exhaustion, somatization, depression, etc.

It is imperative for teachers to identify the stressful situations they face, to know how these situations affect their teaching. Stress can be diminished by optimizing strategies, which could lead to a healthy and performing career.

II. Literature Review

The first studies on stress among teachers have been conducted by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1977). Specialty literature refers to a variety of sources on stress among teachers such as: the working climate within schools (Finlay-Jones, 1986; Cano-Garcia, Grayson & Alvarez, 2008), lack of social support (Burke & Greenglass, 1993; Brissie, Hoover-Dempsey & Bassler, 1998; Sheffield, Dobbie & Caroll, 1994) and student behavior (Gevin, 2007; Pithers, 1995; Borg & Falzon, 1989).

Another research area investigated teachers in their early-stage of career – this age group being recognized as vulnerable. In the first five years of work, 20% of new teachers in England abandon this profession (Fimian & Blanton, 1987). The teachers at the beginning of their career have the same roles as experienced teachers, even though they do not have the same resources.

Other studies have described the nature of stressful events and reported that the lack of social support, the workload and the criticism of other teachers represent threatening situations for beginners (Brember & Ralph, 2002; Schonfeld, 2001).

In the context of primary education, Jaoul & Kovess (2004) demonstrated three major issues related to psychological stress among teachers: students' behavior, too many tasks, time and lack of social support from colleagues.

With regard to coping strategies used by teachers, studies claim that they develop confrontational strategies, behavioral changes, emotional or physiological responses. Over time, teachers embrace the technical, psychological and social coping resources needed to work effectively with students (Blasé, 1982). Most teachers use confrontational strategies. These strategies are used to reduce or eliminate external stress, such as student-related stressors (Blasé, 1986). Another type of strategies are adaptive strategies that do not directly affect the source of stress, but they manage the consequences for the teacher. These include ignoring the student and abandoning the situation (Blasé, 1982).

If confrontational strategies do not work, teachers often use personal changes in their behavior. Most behavioral changes that occur as a result of stressors are unhealthy for the teacher. These changes may include smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, lack of emotional control, sedentary lifestyle, and sleep problems (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Teachers also express somatic issues such as sleep problems, low appetite, a decrease in overall health and energy (Sutton, 1984). Symptoms of chronic stress can also occur if stress continues to be present every day in a teacher's activities. These symptoms include fatigue, illness and inability to concentrate (Hepburn & Brown, 2001).

Some teachers may also have an emotional response to unwanted stress. The most common emotions that appear are anger, depression, anxiety and blame (Blasé, 1986).

Positive strategies that teachers use to alleviate stress include: physical exercise, social resources, reading, hobbies, movement and meditation (Gulwadi, 2006).

To change the perception of stress, a number of teachers adopt internal or external coping strategies. Internal strategies, such as concentrating on objects around us, include quest, silence, and focus. External strategies, like physical exercise, involve, first of all, the search for connections, distraction and movement (Gulwadi, 2006).

Other studies claim that teachers who have more support in their personal lives tend to experience

less stress at work (Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999). The active planning process involves concentrating efforts, drawing up a plan, actions, strategies, steps taken to keep the focus on pupils rather than on stressors (op. cit., 1999).

Restorative coping refers to the fact that teachers can relieve stress outside school by engaging in recreational and leisure activities (Gulwadi, 2006).

III. Objectives

In order to determine the teachers' needs it was necessary to identify the sources of stress among them, the problems they faced and also to reveal the coping strategies they use to solve such situations. To assess teachers' opinions, we used a semi-structured interview with open questions, administrated to 35 teachers, during the month of February 2018. This method of collecting data implied the construction of an interview guide with predefined questions, which offered the opportunity to ask other specific questions in order to guide the discussion. The completion of the interview lasted between 15-25 minutes. It began by identifying the definition of the term *stress*, in order to see what the understanding of the term was among teachers. We asked about stressful situations, problems they encountered, what they thought, felt and how participants acted to solve the problems. We have also enquired about their point of view on an optimization program for teachers for problem-solving strategies in school.

The study has two hypotheses:

Hypothesis #1: we presume that knowing the teachers' perceptions of stress and coping strategies used in school will provide a better understanding of how to develop optimization programs for coping strategies of teachers.

Hypothesis #2: we presume that knowing about recreational interests among teachers will lead to increased involvement in the optimization of their own coping strategies.

In order to test the first hypothesis, we made an analysis of the answers obtained from the interviews. The objectives were: identification of stress factors and collecting knowledge on the coping strategies used.

Regarding the persons that were interviewed, we sought to know their relationship with recreation, by applying the semi-structured recreation interview and analyzing their answers. The aim was to know the interests in leisure time among the participants and the ways they spend such time, in order to build the individualized optimization plan.

IV. Method

To investigate teachers' opinions about stress and coping strategies, we used the semi-structured interview that covered the following open questions: "1. What does the word *stress* mean to you?"; "2. What are the sources of stress for you? (When do you feel stressed?)"; "3. Describe a stressful situation at school."; "4. When you experienced this stressful situation, how did you feel?"; "5. When you experienced this stressful situation, what did you think?"; "6. When you experienced this stressful situation, what did you do?"; "7. What do *coping strategies* mean to you?"; "8. What are the issues you most often encounter in your life (home, school, and other environments)?"; "9. Describe an example of a problem that you have experienced lately."; "10. When you experienced that problem, what did you do?"; "11. What are the solutions you use most often for solving problematic situations?"; "12. What is your opinion on an optimization program for problem solving strategies for teachers?".

In order to probe the teachers' opinion, we applied a semi-structured leisure time interview. It had the following structure: "1. What are your recreational interests: a. Passive interests: (e.g. movies, TV, theater, watching sports, etc.), b. Active interests (e.g. performing arts, crafts, etc.), c. Athletic and Fitness interests: (e.g. sports and exercise, hiking), d. Interests on organizing and getting involved (e.g. church attendance, clubs, etc.), e. Would you commit to additional work after the end of the program? (*high risk for health*?)"; "2. How do you spend your spare time: a. How many hours a week do you work, on average?, b. How many hours a week do you invest in recreation on average?, c. On a scale from 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your lifestyle and leisure?, d. How much time do you spend with your family and friends?, e. What are the obstacles to your spending quality spare time with friends and family?, f. What are the barriers that stand in your way to your spending spare time?, g. How would you like to spend your spare time?" (Popescu, 2016).

V. Research results

The qualitative data were processed using thematic analysis as described by Hayes (2000). Responses have been grouped into categories as follows: Significance of the word *"stress"*; Stress sources at school; Stress-generating situations at school; Emotions, thoughts and actions; Significance of coping strategies; Types of problems encountered; Examples of issues encountered; Strategies used by teachers in problematic situations; Strategies used most frequently by teachers;

Opinions about the program for optimization of coping strategies.

Significance of the word "stress"

Subjects described stress as a challenge or threat that tends to develop in response to conflicting requirements and/ or lack of personal control over a situation. Even if they were asked, "What does the word *stress* mean to you?", the subjects often responded that "Stress is when this ... happens". The answers gathered were divided into three categories: problems with parents (P.D.'s answer consists of a summary of all subjects' answers: "Permanent discontentment of parents and children"), the shallowness of children (M.I.'s answer includes a summary of all subjects' responses: "Shallowness of children"), unfinished tasks (V.M.'s answer includes a summary of all subjects' responses: "The multitude of tasks I have to do in a short time").

Stress sources in school

Answers about stress sources at school ("What are the sources of stress for you?") have been divided into four categories: "too many tasks", "limited time", "poor communication with parents", and "conflicts between students".

Out of the interviewed subjects, 12 consider "too many tasks" as a stress source. V.M.'s answer summarizes best all the other similar answers: "The multitude of tasks I have to accomplish in a short period".

A number of 9 subjects considered "limited time" as the stress source. The answer given by P.C. summarizes the respondents' similar answers: "Lack of time is a source of stress for me".

Other stress sources for 5 of the subjects are "faulty communication with parents". The answer of the subject C.R. synthesizes best the other similar answers: "Time, too many tasks, meetings with parents".

Also, 4 subjects are stressed due to student conflicts. S.O.'s answer best represents these subjects' answers: "Conflict among students (the fact that they are aggressive to each other)".

Situations generating stress at school

From the group of answers referring to examples of stressful situations at school ("Describe a stressful situation at school") it is understood that the subjects did experience stressful situations that can be divided into three categories: "stressful situations involving parents", "stressful situations involving students", "too many activities".

Of the subjects interviewed, 18 experienced stressful situations involving parents, and the answer given by P.D. best represents these subjects' answers: "A parent reproaches me extremely aggressively for his/ her dissatisfaction with me as a person and as a teacher".

A number of 13 subjects have experienced stressful situations involving students, and C.R.'s answer is representative: "When a child called me and another teacher liar and made me feel bad".

Also, 4 subjects gave as examples of stressful situations, the fact that they have too many activities and the strict compliance to the curriculum. O.A.'s answer represents a good summary of the other similar answers given: "A lot of planned activities over a short period".

Emotions, thoughts, and actions

To the question "When you experienced this stressful situation, how did you feel?" 34 subjects affirmed that they had experienced negative emotions during the stressful situation.

The following responses summarize these subjects' answers:

I.A.: "Unappreciated for the work done, upset, frustrated for the lack of effective communication with some parents", C.R.: "I felt very badly, I felt that the child did not want to be honest and just made fun of me.", O.A.: "Tired", P.D.: "Exhausted, that I am not understood, disappointed, aggrieved", B.L.: "Agitated", D.I.: "Frustrated, overwhelmed, agitated".

The responses regarding the thoughts they had ("When you experienced this stressful situation, what did you think?") were grouped, following the analysis, into 3 categories, theorized as cognitive coping strategies from the CERQ questionnaire – Self-Blame, Refocusing on a plan, Positive reassessment.

A total of 16 subjects gave examples of thoughts that were grouped as Self-blame (P.A.'s answer summarized these subjects' answers: "I thought I was not capable, I did not know if I could cope with this stress"), 12 subjects used Refocusing on a plan (S.R.'s answer summarizes these subjects' answers: "I thought I had to find another way, I had to find a solution, I couldn't give up"), and 7 subjects have Positively reassessed the situation (I.A.'s answer summarizes best these answers: "That I can deal with them, that I am strong").

When referring to the strategies used by the subjects ("When you experienced this stressful situation, what did you do?"), these were grouped, following the analysis, as: Refocusing on a plan, Positive reassessment, and Social support strategies.

Of the total number of interviewed subjects, 26 of them used Refocusing on a plan strategies (R.A.'s answer summarizes the answers of the other subjects: "I had an individual discussion with the child to see how we can work better, I talked to the parents, and I took into consideration the child's personality in order to relate to him/ her in a different way").

A number of 6 subjects used Positive reassessment strategies (P.A.'s answer summarizes the subjects' similar answers: "I have tried to focus on the positive aspects").

The rest of the subjects (3) turned to Social support (M.A.'s answer summarizes these answers: "I tried to talk with my friends to help me").

Significance of coping strategies

All answers to the question "What do *coping strategies* mean to you?" reflect the understanding of what these mean to the teachers. From the analysis that was carried out we could not categorize the answers. The following responses incorporate the summaries of the subjects' answers:

M.B.: "Recovery, redressing, finding solutions", C.E.: "The ways I act in order to deal with stressful situations", B.S.: "Things to do", C.G.: "Personal strategies to deal with unforeseen situations", D.O.: "Models to be put into practice", P.C.: "Managing emotions", H.S.: "What I use to deal with stressful situations", A.A.: "Various ways to solve my problems", D.A.: "Solving stressful situations," L.A.: "What helps you to deal with stress".

Types of problems encountered

With regard to the problems most often faced by the subjects at home, school and in other settings ("What are the issues you most often encounter in your life (home, school, and other environments?"), following the analysis, the answers have been grouped into 4 categories: "time management", "conflicts with parents and children", "tasks to solve", "personal problems".

Of the total number of subjects, 11 encountered issues related to time management and representative for this group is M.B.'s answer: "Lack of time and the desire to do too many things".

A number of 8 subjects mention as problems the conflicts with parents and children. S.R.'s answer includes the summaries of these respondents' answers: "Unsatisfied parents who do not take action, students who show no respect".

5 subjects consider as problems "the tasks to be solved". T.M.'s answer summarizes these similar answers: "A lot of requirements in a short period of time".

Other issues have been mentioned by a total of 11 subjects. The following responses include a summary all of these subjects' answers:

I.A.: "Financial worries", F.S.: "Lack of effective communication", M.I.: "Shallowness", V.M.: "Time management".

Examples of problems encountered

Following the analysis carried out, the problems that have been experienced lately, ("Describe an example of a problem that you have experienced lately.") were grouped into three categories: "lack of time", "problems involving children" (discipline, attention and concentration, communication, lack of interest, defiance), "other problems" (such as family suffering, exams, etc.).

Among the responses that summarize the subjects' answers, we mention:

I.A.: "Lack of assuming responsibility for the consequences resulting from an action, not dealing with the child and the parent", O.A.: "Effective time management for the completion of projects", P.D.: "Negativism, exhaustion", B.L.: "Lack of gratitude for involvement in activity", D.I.: "Besides the ones mentioned (children and parents), there are also situations characterized by a lack of a comradeship spirit", R.A.: "I was also during exam session, so I had to learn quite a lot in a short time", D.A.: "Writing the thesis," T.M.: "Suffering within the family", S.O.: "Stress due to conflicts among class students", L.A.: "A parent does not accept that his/ her child has some problems with attention and concentration", I.A.: "I want to please my colleagues and family, risking my health", F.S.: "The failure to complete the tasks on time", M.I.: "Children lacking interest".

Strategies used by teachers in the situations they encountered

When asked what they did in those situations ("When you experienced that problem, what did you do?") the subjects gave answers which, after conducting the analysis, were grouped in theoretical categories, as the cognitive coping strategies from the CERQ questionnaire: Blaming, Indictment, Self-blame, Rumination, Planning and Problem solving.

A number of 6 subjects turned to non-adaptive strategies (Blaming, Indictment, Self-blame, Rumination), and the following responses incorporate the summaries of the subjects' answers:

A.A.: "I felt scared, agitated, worried", D.I.: "I was sad, angry, and I complained to a colleague", P.A.: "I was torn apart", D.A.: "The lack of ideas frustrated me and I gave up for a while".

The rest of the persons (29 subjects) used Planning and Problem-solving strategies, and I.A.'s and L.A.'s answers include a summary of the subjects' similar answers:

I.A.: "I talked with both the parent and the child to find ways to raise awareness", L.A.: "I looked for evidence to help me solve the problem in a satisfactory manner".

Strategies used most frequent by the teachers

The strategies most often used by the subjects to solve problems ("What are the solutions you use most often for solving problematic situations?") have been grouped into three categories: Planning strategies (B.A.: "I search for information, I talk to those who have had similar problems, I try to get out of that problem", D.A.: "Establish steps to reach a the solution."), Social support strategies (I.A.'s answer best represents the subjects' answers: "Discussions with colleagues and some good friends, rest"), Relaxation strategies (P.A.'s response includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "Withdrawal to a quiet place").

Opinions about the optimization program for coping strategies

To the question "What is your opinion on an optimization program for problem solving strategies for teachers?" 34 subjects consider that such a program is needed and have provided recommendations in this respect.

T.M.'s answer embraces the summaries of the subjects' answers: "It would be very effective as long as there is a desire to find solutions, while there is interest and things to be solved in this trunk: parent, child, teacher".

In order to probe the opinion of the teaching staff in connection with building the training program, we also applied the structured recreational interview. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis as described by Hayes (2000). Responses have been grouped into categories as follows: "Recreational interests", "Activities with high risk in health", "Recreational methods", "Weekly working time", "Weekly recreational time", "Satisfaction with lifestyle and leisure time", "Spending time with family and friends", "Barriers to spending the spare time", "Ways of spending leisure time".

Recreational interests

After evaluating recreational interests ("Which have been your leisure interests lately?"), the responses were grouped in three categories: Passive interests, Athletic and fitness interests, Organizational and engagement interests.

Among the subjects who have been interviewed, 8 relax with Passive interests, 3 use Organizational and engagement interests and 24 subjects use Athletic and fitness interests.

The responses of H.S. include a summary of the subjects' answers: "Passive interests: movies, Athletic Interests: hiking, Organizational and Engagement: church".

None of the subjects are involved in active relaxation interests such as art-therapy techniques: basic and complementary techniques (crafts).

"High-risk" activities regarding health

On the question about engaging in "high-risk activities for health" (doing additional work, after the working hours: correcting pupils' papers, phone conversations with parents, devising activities for pupils) ("Would you commit to additional work after the end of the program?"), 3 of the respondents answered that they would be involved in such activities, the rest of them giving a negative response to this question.

Ways of spending free time

To the question "How do you spend your spare time?" 2 subjects mentioned that they did not have spare time and the responses for 33 subjects were grouped into three categories: Passive Interests, Sports interests, Organization and engagement interests. Also, the subjects mentioned the time spent with family and friends as leisure, relaxation.

The answer of M.B. includes a summary of the answers given by the subjects who did not have spare time: "I did not have much free time. The little one I had, I used it for homework and a visit to another city".

V.M. and I.A.'s answers include the summaries of the responses given by the subjects involved in passive activities, sporting, organizational and involvement interests: "Investing in my relationship with my husband and those close to us, reading and watching movies with friends, investing in the spiritual and professional sphere", "DIY, flower arrangements, outings with friends, trips, taking walks with my younger child with the push scooter".

Weekly work time

When analyzing the number of average

working hours per week ("How many hours a week do you work, on average?"), the answers were grouped into three categories: *20-40 hours, 40 hours, 40-50 hours.*

A total of 9 subjects work between 20-40 hours a week, 16 subjects work more than 40 hours a week, 6 subjects work between 40-50 hours, and 4 subjects over 50 hours a week.

Weekly leisure time

The responses regarding the number of weekly hours spent in recreational activities ("How many hours a week do you invest in recreation, on average?") were grouped, following the analysis, in four categories: 1-4 hours, 5-9 hours, 10-14 hours, 15-20 hours. 8 of the subjects spent between 15-20 hours, 10 subjects between 10-14 hours, 11 subjects spent 5-9 hours and 6 subjects spent 1-4 hours.

Satisfaction with lifestyle and leisure

Regarding satisfaction with lifestyle and leisure ("On a scale from 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your lifestyle and leisure?"), the answers were grouped, following the analysis, as follows: between 1-4, between 5-7, and between 8-10. A number of 15 subjects gave grades from 8-10, 10 subjects graded 5-7, and 10 subjects graded 1-4.

Free time dedicated to family and friends

To the question "How much time do you spend with family and friends, per week?" the subjects' answers were grouped as follows: 11 subjects spend over 10 hours per week, 5 subjects between 5-10 hours, and 19 subjects between 1-4 hours a week.

Obstacles to the spare time with friends and family

The obstacles in the subjects' way to spend quality spare time with close ones ("What are the obstacles to your spending quality spare time with friends and family?") were grouped by the analysis in four categories: lack of time (B.S.'s answer summarizes the answers of the subjects: "Lack of time"), a full program (R.A.'s answer is representative: "External tasks and the stress caused by them, the fact that it is difficult to coordinate my program with that of my friends, and we have a hard time finding a free time window"), family problems (A.A.'s answer summarizes the answers of the subjects: "Children's program, their homework"), physical and psychological problems (D.I.'s answer summarizes the answers of the subjects: "Psychological tiredness and personal problems").

Barriers to the subjects in spending their spare time

The barriers that stood in the way of the subjects spending their spare time ("What are the barriers that stand in your way to your spending spare time?") were grouped by analysis in five categories: exams (B.S.'s answer includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "Dissertation, final projects, exams, jobs"), too many tasks (R.A.'s answer includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "Many outside tasks, projects, exams, work tasks"), family problems (A.A.'s response includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "Housework, work hours, children's program"), limited time (P.C.'s response includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "Lack of time"), the physiological needs (S.O.'s response includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "The need for rest").

Ways of spending spare time

Regarding the ways in which free time is spent ("How would you like to spend your spare time?"), the answers of the subjects were grouped, by analysis, in three categories: time spent with the family (I.A.'s response includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "Reading, traveling, spending time with the family"), investing in sports interests (I.A.'s response includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "Walks, going out with family in the nature, trips in the nature"), investment in active and passive interests (C.R.'s response includes a summary of the subjects' answers: "Going with the family on trips, camping").

Involvement in passive relaxation interests as well as in the field of sports and engagement are common ways to avoid stress. Some of the interviewed subjects are not satisfied with their lifestyle and leisure, they spend too little time with family and friends because of overlapping tasks. There is a tendency among them to resort to non-adaptive coping strategies, such as stopping to engage in other activities, resting, engaging in relaxation activities, etc. In the long run, disengagement can lead to cumulative workloads, disorganized classes and feelings of low self-esteem and helplessness (Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999). Reducing demand for other aspects of life and focusing only on classroom activity lead to teachers having increased perception of stress levels, which prevents them from allowing themselves time for relaxation (op. cit., 1999).

This phase of the study has demonstrated that teachers have a clear understanding of the problems they are facing, experiencing problems associated with a

variety of specific tasks that teachers have to fulfill in their teaching role. There is an urgent need for support in terms of time management, optimization of planning coping and organization of activities, as well as problem solving with parents and children. Schools should concentrate on designing practical ways for teachers and psychologists to promote coping strategies among teachers, through educational interventions.

VI. Discussions and conclusions

• The presence of stress among teachers continues to grow and this leads to an increasing need to develop and implement effective educational programs aimed at primary school teachers, the stressors they encounter, and the coping strategies they use. Getting to know the experiences of current primary school teachers is an important part of planning and developing training and intervention programs. Participants in this study have shown that the main stressors faced by teachers are: unrealistic expectations from parents, problems with students, and time management difficulties in carrying out tasks.

• The participants in this study argued that most of the time they did not feel appreciated by the parents, that they had too many tasks related to documents that need to be drawn up for the School Inspectorate.

• The participants in this study had too little time during the school year to practice recreational strategies described in terms of passive interests, active, organizational and engagement interests, as well as athletic and fitness interests.

• The participants mentioned the importance of using relaxation interests in order to prevent stress in the near future. The strategies used included sports interests as well as organizational and engagement interests. They also mentioned time spent with family and friends, watching movies, reading, helping friends, engaging in administrative activities. These relate to the ability of a teacher to relieve stress in places that are away from the school environment. Participants mentioned the church, nature-related outdoor places as places to escape school stress.

• It is easy to see from the survey results that participants mentioned they had student related problems such as lack of respect, lack of social skills, lack of attention and concentration.

Limits:

• The study included all teachers from the Romanian-Finnish High School. It is therefore necessary to survey primary and secondary school teachers, as well as the After-School Programs' teachers.

• There is a need to conduct surveys in public schools, studying the teachers who are at the beginning of their career and those who have been integrated in this field for many years.

• The results of the study may be an incentive to help primary school teachers to do more for optimizing the coping strategies in order to cope with school issues.

• It is imperative to have vocational training in the field of counseling, so that staff members could provide support to children who have difficulties at school.

• Coping strategies allow individuals to use their cognitive resources to control their emotions. More teacher training programs should be organized in order to cover topics such as mental techniques for replacing self-destructive thoughts with constructive thoughts, improvement of time management and goal-setting skills, the use of problem-solving techniques, the management of emotions and addressing life changes, identifying irrational beliefs (Brown & Uehara, 1999).

• Research involving primary school teachers is absolutely necessary for really knowing about this population group and their perceptions and experiences regarding stress.

• This study was conducted at a single private school in Bucharest. Therefore, researchers may wish to reproduce this study on a larger scale.

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