The relationship between Eustress, Sources of Stress and Strategies of Savoring Among University Teachers in Portugal

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions no longer offer work environments with low levels of stress as before (Winifield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, Hapuarachchi & Boyd, 2003). This research aims to explore the relationship between eustress, sources of stress and strategies of savoring among higher education teachers in Portugal. Data were collected by an inventory applied to a sample of 239 Portuguese teachers. Our results suggest associations between eustress and behavioral expression and sharing with others strategies. The results point associations between behavioral expression and organizational climate and work conditions, between memory building and organizational climate and working conditions. In future research, it may be beneficial analyze other variables such as job satisfaction, distress and coping strategies, making the study of the stress of university teachers more complete and exhaustive.

INTRODUCTION

The conclusions of the studies on higher education professionals stress show that, highest levels of stress are experienced (Winifield et al., 2003) and that work-related stress result in costs to the organization and the community. However, several studies, have shown that, during a stressful event, people rather than experience distress, they may also experience eustress (Nelson & Simmons, 2003). Consistent with the Holistic Stress Response Model (Nelson & Simmons, 2003), eustress is defined as “a positive psychological response to a stressor, as indicated by the presence of positive psychological states” (p. 104).

This authors introduced, in their Holistic Stress Response Model, the concept of savoring. The concept was later conceptualized by Bryant and Veroff (2007), who present savoring as the process through which people actively get pleasure with satisfaction with the positive experience. Savoring works as a moderator of the impact of positive events on positive emotions in order to amplify or dampen its intensity and reduce or extend the duration of a positive feeling (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). In this study we intend to explore the relationship between eustress, sources of stress and strategies of savoring among higher education teachers in Portugal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our results suggest associations between eustress and behavioral expression (p=.018) and sharing with others (p=.013) strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

We can conclude that institutions of higher education in Portugal should allow sharing, improve the conditions and characteristics of the work and careers of its teachers, fostering high levels of eustress. This study is a further contribution to the limited research on eustress, factors that cause stress and strategies of savoring among higher education teachers.

REFERENCES