

Eustress in higher education teachers: Cognitive evaluation of a situation as a enhancer of well-being

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Higher education around the world experiences has been facing constant and significant changes^[1]. All of these changes have contributed to the alarming increase and dissemination of stress in higher education's professionals^[1]. Occupational stress translates, in a transactional perspective, the imbalance perceived by the person between certain demands of the work and their capacities to respond to them^[2] and incorporates, according to the holistic model of stress^[3], both positive (eustress) and negative (distress) responses to work stressors. The eustress is operationalized as a positive psychological response to a stressor, i.e. as an indicator of the presence of positive psychological states, reflecting to what extent the cognitive assessment of a situation is seen as beneficial to the individual or as enhancing for his or her well-being^[3]. **OBJECTIVES:** The concept of eustress is important in any discussion of stress, especially occupational stress, in this way, the objectives of this study were to describe the level of eustress perceived by higher education professors and to perceive if there are significant differences in the perception of eustress depending on personal and professional variables. **METHODS:** 439 professors from several higher education institutions in Portugal participated in the study. The data was collected through a questionnaire built for this purpose and that included a set of sociodemographic questions and the eustress scale [4; 5]. **RESULTS:** The results suggest that professors experience moderate levels of eustress ($M = 2.42$ and $SD = 1.046$) and that there are significant differences according to the service provision regime II (exclusivity / non-exclusivity) ($t(437) = -3,180$; $p < 0,05$), which point to higher levels of eustress presented by professors on a non-exclusivity regime ($M = 2.67$ and $SD = 1.024$) in relation to professors in an exclusive regime ($M = 2.32$ and $SD = 1.040$). **CONCLUSIONS:** In the future it is important to develop efforts through future research, in order to promote well-being and quality of life and the work of higher education professors and well as other professionals.

Keywords: *eustress, well-being, higher education teachers*

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