



# **BACHELOR'S THESIS**

Management of Occupational Stress

Management of Occupational Stress

## **STUDY PROGRAM**

Economics and Management

## **FIELD OF STUDY**

Personnel Management in Industrial Enterprises

## **SUPERVISOR**

PhDr. Lenka Emrová

TRAN

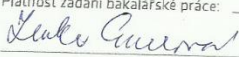

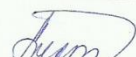
PHUONG TRA

**2018**

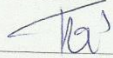
## I. OSOBNÍ A STUDIJNÍ ÚDAJE

Příjmení:	Tran	Jméno:	Phuong Tra	Osobní číslo:	437615
Fakulta/ústav:	Masarykův ústav vyšších studií (MÚVS)				
Zadávací katedra/ústav:	Oddělení pedagogických a psychologických studií				
Studijní program:	Ekonomika a management				
Studijní obor:	Personální management v průmyslových podnicích				

## II. ÚDAJE K BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCI

Název bakalářské práce:	Management of Occupational Stress		
Název bakalářské práce anglicky:	Management of Occupational Stress		
Pokyny pro vypracování:	<p>CÍL: Cílem práce je zjistit stresové faktory, které působí na pracovníky ve společnosti XYZ. PŘÍNOS: Přínosem práce je návrh na zmírnění, případně odstranění stresorů, které působí na pracovníky ve společnosti XYZ. OSNOVA: 1. Úvod; 2. Teoretická část - stres, stres na pracovišti, příčiny stresu na pracovišti, důsledky stresu na pracovišti, zvládání stresu; 3. Praktická část - cíl a hypotéza, představení společnosti, výběrový soubor, analýza dat, návrhy řešení; 4. Závěr</p>		
Seznam doporučené literatury:	<p>ANDERSON, N., a kol. Handbook of industrial, work and organizational psychology. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2001. FONTANA, D. Stres v práci a v životě: jak ho pochopit a zvládat. Přeložila A. ZAVADILOVÁ. Praha: Portál, 2016. KŘIVOHlavý, J. Psychologie zdraví. Praha: Portál, 2001. SVOBODOVÁ, Lenka. Risk of stress and its prevention. Ed. 1st. Praha: Occupational Safety Research Institute, 2009.</p>		
Jméno a pracoviště vedoucí(ho) bakalářské práce:	PhDr. Lenka Emrová, MÚVS ČVUT v Praze, oddělení pedagogických a psychologických studií		
Jméno a pracoviště konzultanta(ky) bakalářské práce:			
Datum zadání bakalářské práce:	5.12.2017	Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:	5.5.2018
Platnost zadání bakalářské práce:	31.8.2019		
 Podpis vedoucí(ho) práce	 Podpis vedoucí(ho) ústavu/katedry	 Podpis děkana(ky)	

## III. PŘEVZETÍ ZADÁNÍ

22-03-2018	
Datum převzetí zadání	Podpis studenta(ky)

TRAN, Phuong Tra. *Management of Occupational Stress*. Prague: CTU 2018. Bachelor's Thesis.  
Czech Technical University in Prague, Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies.



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## **Acknowledgement**

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, PhDr. Lenka Emrová, for her time, patience, and invaluable advices and feedback. Big thanks also belong to the employees of the organization XYZ for taking part in the survey that serves as an important part of my bachelor's thesis. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family, my friends and all the people who have never stopped supporting me and without whom I would not be able to finish this paper.

# Abstract

This bachelor's thesis addresses the most crucial and popular yet commonly neglected topic of stress at workplaces. The theoretical part introduces the general concepts and definitions of stress, then further introduces the concept of occupational stress: the definition, its sources, and potential impacts on employees' health and performance. The theoretical part concludes with a presentation of potential methods to prevent or mitigate occupational stress. The following practical part assesses and analyzes stress factors in the organization XYZ through a medium of a self-created survey. Analysis of the self-created survey and the employee engagement survey created by the organization XYZ revealed several crucial stress factors that require attention and therefore, suggestions on reducing the stressors in the organization XYZ are made based on the research.

## Keywords

Stress, stressors, stress factors, stress at workplace, occupational stress, sources of occupational stress, effects of occupational stress, management of occupational stress

# Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá v současnosti zásadním a velmi populárním tématem, který je však často opomenutým, a to stresem na pracovišti. Teoretická část představuje obecné koncepty a definice stresu, dále představuje koncept pracovního stresu: definici, jeho zdroje a potenciální dopady na zdraví a pracovní výkon zaměstnance. Teoretická část je zakončena prezentací potenciálních metod prevence pracovního stresu. Následuje praktická část, která vyhodnocuje a analyzuje stresové faktory ve společnosti XYZ pomocí vlastního dotazníku. Analýzou vlastního dotazníku a průzkumu spokojenosti zaměstnanců vytvořený společností XYZ jsou odhaleny zásadní stresové faktory, které vyžadují zvýšenou pozornost. Návrhy na snížení stresorů ve společnosti XYZ jsou podány na základě výzkumu.

## Klíčová slova

Stres, stresory, stresové faktory, stres na pracovišti, pracovní stres, příčiny pracovního stresu, důsledky pracovního stresu, řízení stresu na pracovišti

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# Introduction

Human resource is one of the four major organizational resources, and as the economic ecosystem becomes more dynamic and competitive in the modern world, management of human resource has been becoming incrementally crucial and started to demand a significant amount of attention and effort to maintain. Satisfied, well-motivated and high-performing workforce is definitely the most important asset of any organization. Markets nowadays show extremely high resemblance, homogeneity, and interchangeability in products and services, which is exactly the reason why the quality of labor plays a major role in differentiating a firm from its competitors – or a successful company from an unsuccessful one.

Harnessing of highly motivated and productive workforce requires management of several different variables but in modern work environment in which the employees are being demanded higher and higher requirements in precision, speed, requalification, and fast adaptation to changes, organization-level attention and management of employee stress level is becoming more and more crucial in maintaining the overall performance of the firm.

The topic of stress is globally discussed and it concerns every person. Every person encounters at least one occasion of stress and it becomes even more unavoidable when a person enters the workplace. If one starts working at the age of eighteen and will work until the pensionable age of sixty-five, it denotes forty-seven years of paid employment. Considering the fact that average life expectancy of the global population in 2015 was 71.4 years (World Health Organization, 2018), that means an average person spends two-thirds of life being associated with employment. In terms of hours, if full-time employment requires in average 40 hours per week, the total years a person actually spends at the workplace amounts to the equivalent of ten full years. Therefore, it is extremely important to realize the importance of stress and especially occupational stress and to deploy a measurable and reliable system to counteract stress not only with temporary methods but also with preventive methods in organizational level to benefit both the organization and the employees.

The goal of the thesis is to expose the stress factors at a real-life industrial enterprise and suggest the solutions and future preventions for the organization. The company XYZ has an employee turnover rate of 30 % which is two times higher than an average turnover rate within the same industry (Compensation Force, 2015). There is an especially high voluntary turnover in the Human Resources department. Therefore, the research will be focused on the Human Resources employees and their stress management.

This bachelor thesis is separated into two main parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part is divided into four chapters. The first chapter introduces the concept of stress, the second chapter focuses on occupational stress and its possible sources, the following one talks about potential effects of occupational stress and finally, the last chapter proposes methods of stress management and stress intervention, both from an individual's perspective and that of the

organization. The practical part of the thesis presents the company, objectives of the thesis and the research questions that will be assessed by the final results of the research. Based on the analysis of two surveys the final proposals for stress prevention are suggested.

# **THEORETICAL PART**

# 1 STRESS

Surprisingly, considering the fact that the term stress is being so frequently and widely used in modern society, there is no concrete or unanimous academic definition of stress. The phenomenon has been interpreted with different approaches and perspectives by different scholars throughout a wide spectrum of academic fields. In medical perspective, experts describe stress as a physiological phenomenon that induces various known and unknown health hazards; while in social science, psychologists consider stress as a psychological phenomenon in which the subject feels mental strain and pressure. Since stress could be triggered by innumerable diverse causes ranging from a simple sense of deprivation to a complex situational dilemma, the term is commonly used to describe the emotion of experiencing most pressure-inducing situations in daily lives such as an approaching project deadline or low bank account balance.

According to Fontana (2016), the etymological studies on the term **stress** has revealed that the word itself holds its basis in the Latin word *strictus* which denotes the state of tight or closely drawn together. The Latin word became a basis for the Old French word *estresse*, which means narrowness or oppression, with which the Middle English word *destresse* have shortened into the modern term, *stress*.

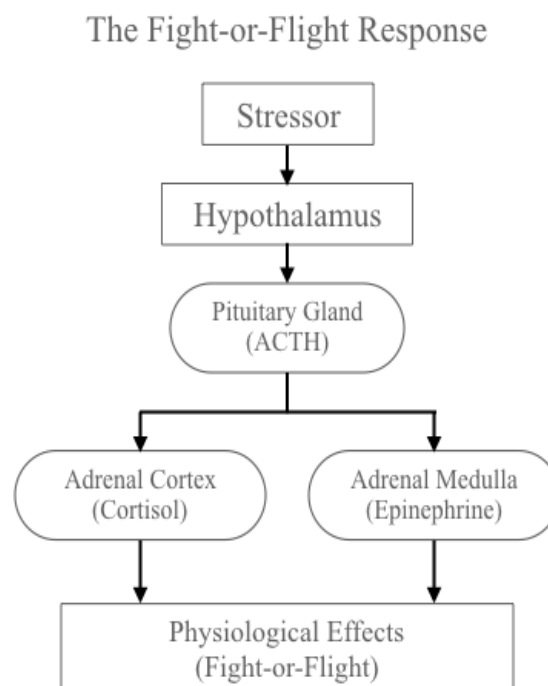
Therefore, as the literal meaning suggests, stress is very often understood in a negative connotation in the academic domain such as an *“unconscious preparation to fight or flee that a person experiences when faced with any demand”* (Nelson, Quick, 2013, p. 220) or *“a relationship with the environment that the person appraises as significant for his or her well-being and in which the demands tax or exceed available coping resources”* (Lazarus, Folkman, 1986 cited in Krohne, 2002, p. 3). However, scholars also emphasize the positive effects that stress, if applied up to certain adequacy, may impose on individuals by surrogating a role of a motivator or an activator of an individual’s growth potential. This yields the attribute of ambivalence to the meaning of stress, as mentioned in Svobodová’s (2009, p. 7) definition of stress: *“a special form of load, when a harmful stimulus initiates defensive effects in an organism, i.e. at a purely biological level of activation level, pain and fatigue, at the level of psychological negative emotion. Stimuli threatening the organism initiate a stress but it also may be positive and initiate development of the qualities of an organism and individual.”*

Such duality in the understanding of the concept of stress stems from the intrinsic ability of the human beings in coping with environmental pressure. The acceptable or adequate level of stress differs between each individual human being, based on his or her hereditary or acquired physical and mental ability to cope or resolve stress. The difference in the stress management capacities among the individuals may play a decisive role in determining the individual’s success or failure in an identical environment. Consequently, some scholars have been devoting the studies in the domain of stress management, such as the effect of physical prosperity - amount of sleep, physical activities, and rich and balanced meals - on the development of positive stress management capabilities (Svobodová, 2009).

## 1.1 Stressor and Salutor

In the meantime, in the domain of physiology, while further researches in the biological mechanism behind the stress responses were being conducted, the ambiguity of the term stress became a significant hindrance to the scientists as documented in the 1951 issue of British Medical Journal, *“Stress, in addition to being itself, was also the cause of itself, and the result of itself.”* As a result, Hans Selye, a Hungarian endocrinologist who first implemented the term stress to describe the nonspecific response syndrome that he discovered, had to create a new term **stressor** to define the set of stimuli that trigger the stress responses. (The American Institute of Stress, 2011)

Such separation of conceptual components of stress allowed more comprehensive understanding of the different stages of stress reaction, for example, the **fight-or-flight response** (see Diagram 1) describes the organism’s initial physiological reaction to stressor or threat. According to the model, the external threat is recognized and processed by the hypothalamus, the brain center of stress, instantaneously triggering the discharge of sympathetic nervous system, which results in a hormonal cascade leading to secretion of adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH) from pituitary gland resulting in secretion of cortisol from adrenal cortex, epinephrine and norepinephrine from adrenal medulla. These hormones directly provoke physical changes such as accelerated cardiovascular activities, inhibited digestive activities and increased level of metabolic energy sources. These survival-oriented physiological changes eventually lead to fatigue and frustration when the body enters the relaxation state, which is commonly understood as the symptoms of stress. (Cannon, 2015)



*Diagram 1 The Fight-or-Flight Response*  
Source: own construction based on Cannon (2015)

A systematic understanding of stress response process, along with the segregation of stressor from stress, was crucial in founding the basis for the understanding of the adversary force in stress response salutor. While stressor is a set of stimuli that imposes an emotion of threat and alert, **salutor** is a set of social or physical stimuli that imposes positive emotions such as courage and hope, triggering physiological changes that counterbalance the effects of stressors. Salutors could be both implicit or explicit social or physical factors such as meaningfulness in a professional career, strong belief in the value of a pursuit, social recognition, compliments, etc. (Křivohlavý, 2001).

## 1.2 Variations of Stress

As stressor and salutor focus on describing the sets of factors affecting the stress response, there also exists the analysis of the stress responses as well. Studies in various domains have revealed several classifications of stress responses based on different dimensions: time, quality and intensity. The significance of these classifications of stress comes from the fact that different types of stress response within these dimensions lead to a unique and distinctive set of psychological experience and physiological consequences.

### A. Time Dimension

According to American Psychological Association (2018), within the time dimension, stress response is classified according to the duration and the patterns of the stress response manifestation. Consequently, within the time dimension, stress response is largely categorized into three types: acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress.

**Acute stress** is the most prevalent type of stress that almost everyone experiences from time to time. It is caused by stressors of present-time or imminent future such as the end of a relationship, car accident or giving a presentation. Because the stressor is limited to a short period of time, the effects of stress response are also not too extensive. Symptoms may range from negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, irritation or temporary depression, along with physiological responses such as acute migraine, myalgia, sweating, and digestive errors, such as diarrhea and constipation. Acute stress is generally managed and cured by the individual without a need for a professional help, mostly through the resolution of the stressor that caused the stress response.

However, if acute stress occurs frequently over time, it can lead to **episodic acute stress**. Under frequent exposure to stress, the sufferer experiences constant pressure and irritation, which further results in impaired interpersonal skills, observed in terms of hostile behaviors, short temperament, and nervousness. As acute stress occurs frequently over a longer term compared to singular acute stress response, the physiological impact is also comparably persistent, such as persistent migraines, chest pain, and cardiovascular disorders. To cure episodic acute stress the

professional help is needed and it can take months. The outcome depends a lot on the patient since the individuals usually see no fault in their lifestyle and often blame others for their stress. The sufferer needs to realize the necessity of the change as it could help them relieve the pain.

**Chronic stress** is a very serious matter. Despite having similar symptoms to acute stress, it can evoke suicide, heart attack or even cancer if not treated on time. The causes are usually long-term and hard to change: financial struggles, unhappy marriage, traumatic experience, etc. People see no way out of these situations, give in to the sadness and depression, let it wear them away day after day, year after year and give up searching for solutions. Chronic stress becomes part of their lives, they get used to it so much that sometimes they forget that it is there. Therefore, it is very difficult to treat, it requires not only an extended medical treatment but also behavioral and stress management.

## B. Quality of Stress Response

Křivohlavý (2001) states that the experience of stress is largely subjective. The individual chooses how to classify stress and respond to it. The same level of stress can be motivating for some but discouraging for others. As stress is defined as a response to a demand, the extent of demand is crucial in determining distress and eustress. The prefix *dis* in distress comes from Latin root as in dissonance or disagreement and it proposes negative stress. *Eu* in eustress means good in Greek, hence eustress literally means good stress.

If **distress** is looked at as a response to a demand that is just too much or too little **eustress** can be considered an amount of stress that is right between these two levels. On that account eustress is an optimal amount of stress that individual experiences. It is an amount of stress that is out of one's reach but not too far so that the individual would still believe in the possibility of achieving it. Eustress forces one to stretch his competencies to bring about a greater performance. It is usually occasions when one is doing what he loves but it requires some effort to get the positive results. It could be a performance in front of a big crowd, a pitch for company's new product, a parachute jump, etc. Eustress makes a person more capable than what he or she currently is and helps him or her to personal growth. It gives one a feeling of fulfillment, happiness, and other positive emotions. Distress is used to describe situations when an individual considers himself being in danger and does not think his ability is good enough to handle the situation. Negative emotions are present, such as nervousness, irritation, fear, anger, etc. Distress is persistent stress that can lead to anxiety or withdrawal behavior if not released or treated.

## C. Intensity of Stress Response

An individual evaluates not only the level of the stress he or she can manage but also the amount of it. The amount of stress exceeding one's ability to cope with and to adapt to is called **hyperstress**. The person becomes excessively stressed when undergoing hyperstress. On the other hand, if the amount of stress has not reached one's usual stress tolerance level, it is called

**hypostress.** One feels understressed if there is an absence of stimulation, the tasks are too easy, monotone, and the person feels bored. If accumulated over a long time one can get used to it and it becomes dangerous. (Selye, 1976)



## 2 OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

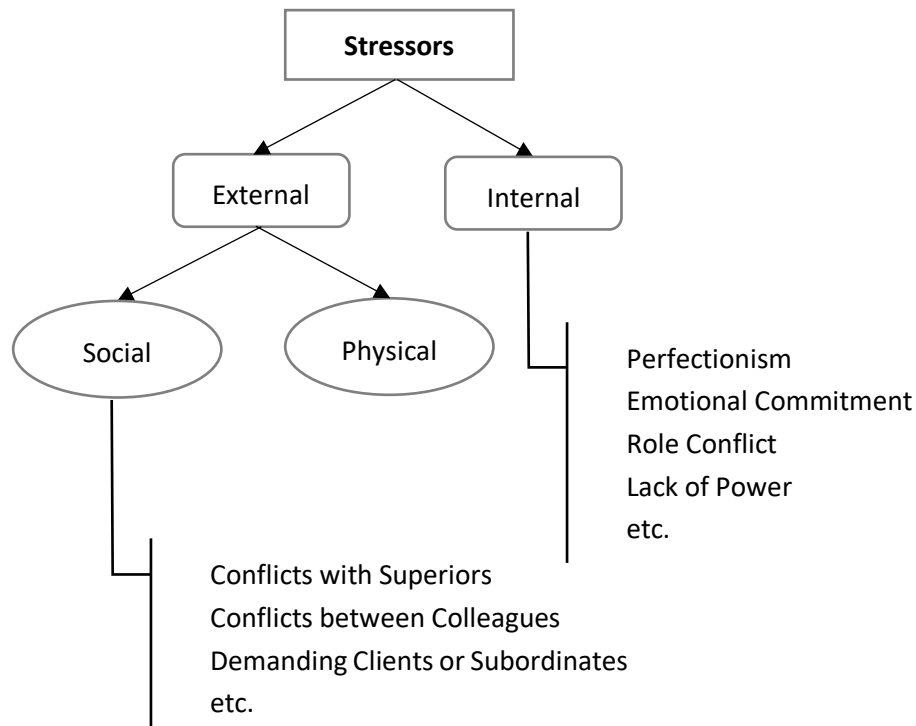
Stress is often present not only in our daily life but also at our workplace. The study conducted by the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in 2014 found out that up to 39 % of working Czechs consider their work as a source of their long-term stress. Most of the time, the amount of stress people undergo at their workplace is large. According to Svobodová (2009, p. 9), *“Work-related stress develops when the demands of work and environment are not in balance with the worker’s abilities and other individual qualities, and they are unable to handle or manage them”*.

People are born with a certain set of genes predetermined by their parents that influence their own stress responses. They do not have an option of choosing those genes but they do have an option of choosing their employment. Despite stress being proven as a critical threat to one’s health and well-being, individuals and organizations are still not taking this matter seriously enough. Many people in management and helping professions confess that to them succumbing to stress means either they do not care about their work or they are not good enough (Fontana, 2016). Not many people are strong enough to accept the fact that it is acceptable to be weak from time to time thus work-related stress is often disregarded as a temporary phase.

According to Veselá and Kanioková Veselá (2011), every ten years an occupation requires two times the amount of necessary information to execute given tasks. That enhances work strain even further and for some individuals, it could be a very stressful factor. It is not only the volume of work that is increasing but also the time pressure and the work pace. And a very up to date issue is a rapid development of technologies which replace the manual work. This process requires a high level of concentration, strategic thinking, and skills to work with information technology and systems.

Every organization should be obligated to take care of its human resources a motivate to their development and increase in performance which ultimately contributes to organization’s own success. Their duty is to provide their employees satisfactory work conditions with the least possible effects of various stress factors that could lead to physical and mental health issues and negatively affect work performance. Preventing stress is oftentimes less costly and more effective than dealing with its consequences later. The employer can inhibit the workload that the colleagues of the stressed and low-performing employee must take care of, and also avoid work injury compensation as stressed individuals tend to sustain an injury or other health issues more easily.

The importance of understanding occupational stress comes not only from the omnipresence of its manifestation but also from the unique set of stressors specifically related to occupational stress. Křivohlavý (1994) classifies stressors as shown in Diagram 2.



*Diagram 2 Classification of Stressors*  
 Source: own construction based on Křivohlavý (1994)

## 2.1 External Stressors

**External stressors** arise due to the presence of factors and conditions in which assignments and activities are performed. If the stress factors are strong enough even people with high endurance will experience difficulties dealing with them. On the other hand, individuals with lower stress tolerance are affected by any amount of stress. External stressors are further divided into two groups: physical and social.

**Physical stressors** are all unfavorable conditions of work environment in which ones have to function. It could be an unpleasant temperature, noise, hazardous machines and technical equipment. Svobodová (2009) states that work environment obstacles are not only physical but also **chemical** and **biological**, such as chemical substances, risk of infection, disease transmission, work underground, work in heights, on the computer, etc.

**Social stressors** are related to interpersonal relationships and communications between family members, colleagues, friends, and others. If these relationships are not well maintained but have a hostile social climate, the individual will experience a grave amount of stress. Harmony at the workplace is beneficial and necessary. Working in stifling atmosphere can significantly decrease the employees' performance. According to Fontana (2016), these are the most frequent conflicts in the workplace:

- conflicts with superiors,
- conflicts between colleagues,
- demanding clients or subordinates.

**Conflicts with superiors** can have a big impact on our lives, especially on our financial status. Superiors can manipulate the work tasks and work conditions, recommend or oppose promotion, alter employee's status in the eyes of the colleagues, give out positive or negative ratings, etc. All of these can significantly change employee's chance in the current or next job. Superiors refraining from giving feedbacks or showing recognition can also decrease joy and motivation in their subordinates.

**Conflicts between colleagues** can arise due to the differences in personality structures, interests, attitudes, experiences, contradictory goals, values, norms, organizational problems, etc. These conflicts can be prevented with improved plans and an outstanding leader.

**Demanding clients or subordinates** is a stressor that often comes first in a business industry or other occupations requiring close contacts with people. Employees agree that unexpected or unfair conflicts with clients are the most hurtful situations. Unforeseen incidents do not give one enough time to come up with a suitable self-defense. Most of the time people feel unhappy about it and this feeling can last days or even weeks.

## 2.2 Internal Stressors

**Internal stressors** determine how one copes and handles external stressors. An internal stressor comes from personal goals, expectations, desires but also from the perception of oneself, other people and the situations around. In other words, internal stressors are self-induced. (True Stress Management, 2018)

Hereby are examples of stressors that come from within the individual:

- perfectionism,
- emotional commitment,
- role conflict,
- lack of power,
- helplessness.

**Perfectionism** is one's own unrealistic expectation which commonly causes a tendency of overworking. This lack of realism causes the individual's dissatisfaction with his or her own performance despite the actual result. The individual cannot accept the fact that everyone has their own limits between which they function. This denial can prevent him or her from performing as well as he or she would have under different circumstances.

**Emotional commitment**, such as sympathy and antipathy, love and hate, cannot be simply put aside. Many workers admit that these emotions could cause much more stress in their professional life than anything else. It is very hard to separate personal and professional emotions. Instead of doing so it is recommended that people try to define the situations when these unprofessional feelings could show up and find ways to deal with them in an early phase when it is easier.

**Role conflict** at workplace occurs when two aspects of work are incompatible. For a teacher, it could be a conflict between a role of an advisor, who helps the students, and an authority, who imposes discipline on the students. In a case of a nurse, his or her responsibility to take good care of the patients could collide with the overloaded schedule resulting in not spending enough time with the patients. A manager can experience a conflict between loyalty to the employer and loyalty to subordinates or clients. This could develop into an internal conflict leading to low self-esteem.

**Lack of power** in a decision-making process is another important stressor coming from the individual's own feelings and emotions. Indecisive and insecure individuals prefer being led by rigid superiors with fixed rules as it is less stressful. However, to the majority a certain level of decision-making is necessary. Otherwise, they would lose a proper perception of their own values. If an individual discovers some shortcomings in the system and comes up with a solution but is still being ignored, it could become very frustrating.

**Helplessness** is a frustrating stressor that not only leads to the feeling of a professional failure but also a personal failure. If one mobilizes all his or her power and capability but still cannot reach the desired effect, he or she could feel incompetent and sometimes it could turn into anger towards others. Unrealistic professional expectations could result in overanalyzing oneself and dissatisfaction.

Unlike Křivohlavý (1994), Fontana (2016) divides sources of occupational stress into three categories: general sources, specific sources, and job task related sources (see Diagram 3).

#### **A. General Sources of Occupational Stress**

General sources of occupational stress are stressors that are not directly related to the specific job requirements or tasks but they are rather related to the organizational culture, strategy and current situation. Therefore, reducing these stressors are hardly possible for employees despite their significant influence on the employees' performance.

It could be **organizational problems** arising from the nature of the organization itself or an ambiguous hierarchical structure that makes it hard to tell who is responsible for the decisions. This stressor is very frustrating for employees as they are often powerless in this matter.

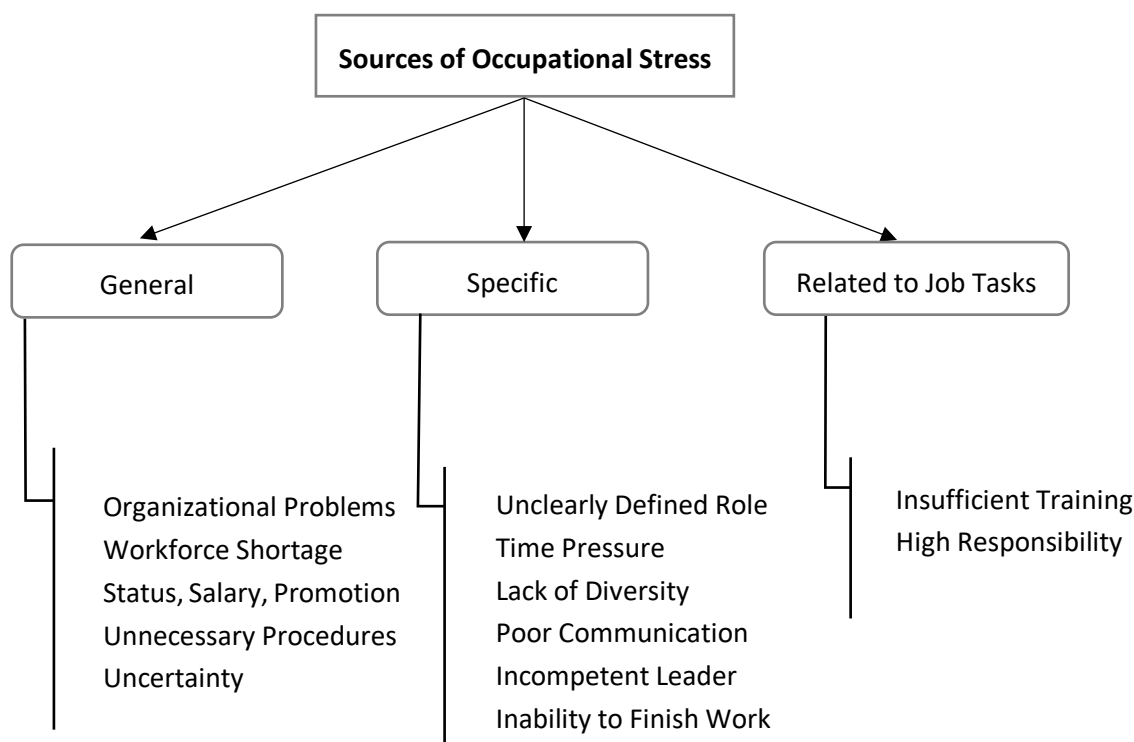


Diagram 3 Sources of Occupational Stress  
 Source: own construction based on Fontana (2016)

Another frequent problem that not only organization but employees have to deal with is **workforce shortage**. The lack of human resources in the organization forces employees to engage themselves in the job tasks that were not supposed to be theirs. Even an addition of simple tasks such as answering emails or phone calls is still enough to hinder the performance of other employees.

**Low status, low salary or low promotion opportunities** at work contradict Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. People are motivated if their needs are fulfilled, from physiological needs to esteem and self-actualization needs. Employees need to be recognized for their work to feel satisfaction from their work. The recognition comes not only from the superiors and colleagues but also from the salary level and promotion. Satisfactory salary is important not only because it eliminates stress from financial struggles but also increases employee performance. An opportunity for promotion raises the feeling of being appreciated at work and acts as a valuable long-term goal.

**Unnecessary procedures** are other frequent sources of stress. Employees often feel like they spend too much time filling in various papers and forms or have to participate in too many unneeded meetings. Meetings can also bring stress due to ill-prepared agendas and poor management wasting time on irrelevant things and result in heated arguments.

A certain level of **uncertainty** is necessary to avoid monotone work environment but if one is constantly under the pressure of being laid off or having to adapt to more and more business changes, he or she will become frustrated and his or her work morale and attitude will decrease.

## B. Specific Sources of Occupational Stress

Specific sources of occupational stress are stressors directly related to the job requirements, commonly triggered by the employee's perception, habits or expectations within the job execution domain.

**Unclearly defined role or responsibilities** refers to a situation in which the information on the responsibility for a specific position is insufficient or missing. Therefore, there is a chance that the employee may be unfairly blamed for requirements that were not clearly stated for the position the employee is holding.

**Overworking and time pressure** also keep people from performing better. Apart from vacation and official working breaks employees also need to take short breaks between finishing one task and starting another. Occasionally employees need lazy and slower days to take a break from incessant deadlines and to increase their stress resistance.

Most people perceive **lack of diversity** in work as lack of freedom. Human brain needs to be stimulated by new experiences to stay focused and creative. Some people admit that on their way to work they feel panicked thinking about how everything is going to occur the same way as the previous days. The monotony of one's work is terrifying as they realize that they have been doing the same thing every day while getting older and older.

**Poor communication** is often a source of stress regardless of how well people cooperate on an individual level. The usual consequence of poor communication is people making decisions without accurate facts, attending meetings poorly informed and unable to present important details to the authority. The blame could be put on the administrator who is not doing his work sufficiently or someone higher in a hierarchy who failed to build an effective communication system. It could also be inadequate internal correspondence or the job itself that sends people to out of reach locations.

Every superior has their own leading style. One could be an authoritative leader, another a democratic one, a "laissez-faire" or a combination of different leading styles. Nevertheless, an **incompetent leader** can create a power vacuum. When that vacuum is formed it could be quickly filled up with harmful things, such as fights for power between colleagues and others. As leaders are also responsible for training new employees, the new subordinates could feel the lack of leading and necessary help, and thus feel frustrated.

There are many causes of one's **inability to finish his or her work**. It could be time pressure, poor organization on higher levels or poor communication. Work satisfaction comes from a job that is well done and has a high possibility of positive results. The satisfaction could be decreased if an employee is transferred to another task before he could finish the previous one. This method leads to frustration and bitterness and keeps one from social networking and improvement. If an individual does not have a chance to be at the work task process from the beginning to the end, it is hard to evaluate the quality of each strategy and to improve them for future tasks.

### C. Sources Related to Job Tasks

Contrary to the other two, sources related to job tasks are stressors that are necessarily associated with the job tasks, which are highly likely to be triggered by performing the specific job tasks and vary widely according to the occupation.

Many occupations encounter increasing job requirements and thus it is not a surprise that oftentimes, employees feel that they have received **insufficient training**. Nowadays the changes in each field are coming at such a high speed that the development of new training methods cannot catch up to them. The amount of knowledge required to stay in the same position, primarily in medical, scientific and technical professions, is also increasing. Workers must spend considerable time to acquire and absorb the newest information to always be ready with the right answers. Such training should be provided by the organization but oftentimes they are completely missing.

**High level of responsibility** often occurs in caring and helping professions or at managerial positions. These people need to constantly make decisions with a high impact on other people. As they must deal with a large number of people, it is impossible for them to treat each person as an individual being, thus they are often criticized by the society. This could eventually lead to burnout, a stage when one cannot think clearly anymore, loses focus and fails.

## 3 EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

*“Any illness that has physical symptoms, but has the mind and emotions as its origin, is defined as **psychosomatic illness**. A psychosomatic illness originates with emotional stress or damaging thought patterns, and progresses with physical symptoms, usually when a person’s immune system is compromised due to stress.”* (Schimelpfening, 2017). Míček (1984) mentioned that the researchers at the International Medical Congress in 1957 has concluded that psychosomatic illnesses primarily account for at least one-third of all somatic diseases.

According to Hnilica, Kroupa, and Vašková (2002), the most frequent work-related health issues are:

- overall fatigue,
- back pain, shoulder pain, neck pain, leg pain, arm pain,
- headache, stomachache,
- insomnia,
- problems with eyesight, hearing,
- heart, breathing problems,
- skin diseases,
- allergy,
- work injuries,
- psychological trauma, anxiety,
- etc.

Nevertheless, not every stress is negative therefore neither its consequences. Moderate level of stress motivates people for better performance, problem-solving, creativity, quality of work, and healthy competition. The problem is that the level stress exceeding individual’s threshold brings destructive results far exceeding the reach of individual’s control, and occupational stress, by the complexity of the nature of its stressors, very often occurs to individuals as an unmanageable force. Furthermore, according to Weiner, Borman, Ilgen, and Klimoski (2003), the destructive manifestation of stress impacts not only the individual but the whole organization, and thus the effects of occupational stress can be interpreted through two levels: **individual** and **organizational**.

### 3.1 Individual Level

First of all, the manifestation of stress at an individual level can be categorized into three types of responses: physiological, affective and behavioral.

**Physiological responses** to stress mainly result in the dysfunction in cardiovascular system and metabolism. Employees in positions associated with high responsibility generally show higher blood pressure, increased heart rate in a stress situation, increased level of cholesterol, and other



metabolic and hemostatic risk factors for cardiovascular disease. If exposed chronically, physiological responses may contribute directly to the development of illnesses, including coronary heart diseases and even musculoskeletal diseases.

**Affective responses** to stress are associated with the experience of stress, which in short-term can be interpreted as the mood disturbances caused by stress, and in long-term may lead to the degeneration of the overall mental health. Longitudinal studies suggest that stressful work situations and environments are associated with an increased level of depressive symptoms, psychosomatic complaints, and other distress symptoms – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout syndrome is also categorized as a long-term affective response to stress.

**Behavioral responses** to stress are triggered by the combination of several physiological and affective responses, leading to overall distortion of individual's behavior. Especially, in stressful situations, psychological attributes such as attention and working memory capacity show sharp decrease, leading to a reduction in an overall performance of an individual. Moreover, it has been observed that excessive exposure to stressors in work are related to violent behaviors such as sabotage, interpersonal aggression, and hostility. (Weiner et al., 2003)

## 3.2 Organizational Level

Effects of stress on an organization is apparent as all the individual effects mentioned above have negative impacts on the performance of an employee. According to Armstrong (2007), there are 4 main reasons why organizations should not take stress lightly:

1. They have a social responsibility to provide a high quality of work life.
2. Excessive stress causes illnesses.
3. Stress can lead to an inability to balance work requirements which leads to more stress.
4. Excessive stress can decrease the efficiency of an employee, therefore, jeopardize the performance of the organization.

Kraska-Lüdecke (2007) thinks that short-term stress can be motivational but long-term stress can cause permanent exhaustion, anxiety, low attentional control, tension, and low performance. If an employee is constantly exposed to stressors, it can lead to occupational burnout, physical illness or mental breakdown. Increase in job requirements not equivalent to the amount of time given to employees could lead to these consequences:

- decrease in job performance,
- increase in missing deadlines,
- increase in absenteeism,
- increase in job resignations,

- increase in occupational injuries,
- increase in conflicts and mobbing.

Organizations employ workers and make them overwork. Employees spend excessive time at work and are unable to balance their work and personal life. As a result, conflicts can occur more frequently, not only between colleagues but also romantic partners. This has a crucial effect on the life quality and employer's profits. (Kocianová, 2012)

## 4 STRESS MANAGEMENT

To maintain healthy lifestyle and productivity, it is crucial to establish methods for both individual and organization to manage stress. In order to avoid manifestation of stress responses, the best way is to implement a system to prevent stress from exceeding the beneficial level. Such stress prevention can be achieved with different sorts of programs in different levels. Weiner and others (2003) differentiate organizational and personal approaches to stressors, strains, and resources by presenting four programs of stress intervention: stressor reduction, resource enhancement, strain reduction and lifestyle enhancement. Although such classification of approaches is convenient, in cases of actual implementation, multiple approaches are combined to maximize the prevention efforts – for example, institutional resource enhancement and individual stressor management programs could be combined.

### A. Stressor Reduction

Stressors can be reduced by individuals, by institutions or combination of both. Individual stress reduction is mainly about self-management, such as time management, stress coping techniques etc. However, in an organization, an individual stressor reduction often presupposes a certain amount of control over work and resources.

Institutional stressor reduction includes decreasing the number of working hours, reducing specific problematic stressors (reduction of noise, time pressure, task ambiguity or task difficulty), ensuring a better flow of material, etc. Despite the usefulness of these approaches problems may arise if such an approach is used singly and not in a combination with other approaches. Sometimes reducing stressors may lead to a reduction of challenges as well and an individual could feel unproductive and demotivated. Therefore, reduction of stressors should be accompanied by an increase in resources.

### B. Resource Increase

Two important resources at work are control and competence or skills. Control at work or participation in decision-making help individuals to have a say in how to do their work and to increase or reduce stressors appropriately. Enhanced participation decreases emotional stress, absence frequency, and turnover intention. Another aspect of resources is increasing individual competence and skills. Without the necessary skills, it is not possible to use control. Increasing competences mean employees learn to use efficient action strategies to work smarter not harder. They develop skills that help them to deal with environmental demands and difficult situations. Employees experience less stress when working smart.

### C. Combination of Stressor Reduction and Resource Increase

Elkin and Rosch (1990, cited in Weiner et al., 2003, p. 476) “suggested that the following interventions can be used to decrease stress:

- *task and work environment redesign,*
- *flexible work schedules,*
- *participation in management,*
- *analysis of work roles,*
- *establishment of goals,*
- *social support,*
- *cohesive teams,*
- *fair employment policies,*
- *and shared rewards.”*

### D. Strain Reduction

Individually oriented strain reduction programs belong to the most frequently used programs in business. Stress management programs attempt to influence employees to interpret a situation not as stressful but as a challenge. They also teach a person to improve one’s coping strategies and to reduce strain using relaxation techniques and cognitive-behavioral techniques.

*“Relaxation techniques aim for the body’s natural relaxation response, characterized by slower breathing, lower blood pressure, and a feeling of increased well-being.”* These techniques can significantly improve anxiety, insomnia, labor pain, chronic headaches and other types of chronic pain. Relaxation techniques include these practices:

- progressive muscle relaxation,
- meditation,
- biofeedback.

Progressive muscle relaxation involves tightening and relaxing various muscle groups. Meditation and practices that include meditation, such as yoga and tai chi, can also promote relaxation. Biofeedback techniques use electronic devices to measure body functions and the outputs are helpful in the process of learning to control them. (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, 2017)

Relaxation techniques are effective especially for psychophysiological outcomes; for other outcomes, the effect of cognitive-behavioral techniques is higher. **Cognitive-behavioral techniques** (CBT) are one of the most used tools in the psychologist’s toolbox. The principle of these techniques is to put a simple idea into practice with an expectation of positive outcomes. One’s patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving have a significant impact on his or her experiences, therefore, altering these patterns can change the experiences. (Positive Psychology Program, 2017)

Cognitive-behavioral techniques include these practices:

- cognitive therapy for depression,
- rational-emotive therapy,
- stress inoculation.

Cognitive therapy has been shown to be highly useful for depressive individuals and working populations. Rational-emotive therapy works by helping the person to use rational self-instructions and learn to reduce a tendency to exaggerate and catastrophize when something goes wrong. Stress inoculation training is *“designed to impart skills to enhance resistance to stress”* and its objective is *“to prepare the individual to respond more favorably to negative stress event”* (Saunders et al., 1996, cited in Weiner et al., 2003, p. 476). Stress inoculation works via three phases:

1. Conceptualization and education teach people to have a more sophisticated view of the nature of stress.
2. Acquisition and rehearsal provide a stronger repertoire of coping skills and rehearses them either in role play or in guided imagery.
3. Application and follow-through work also via role play and guided imagery to deal with the real-life threats and stressors.

Without a help from professionals, individuals may also initiate strain reduction by themselves during vacation and other leisure time periods. Research has shown that during vacation burnout decreases and psychological detachment from work increased this effect furthermore. Similarly, leisure time activities pursued during evenings of working days can reduce strain. However, these activities should be low-effort, physical or social for the positive impact on a person’s well-being. Work-related activities performed during leisure time have a negative impact instead.

An institutional approach to reducing strain is to provide rest periods. It is well-known that the recovery is faster after short periods of work and that the first few minutes of rest period are the most important for recovery. Because rest periods are anticipated, performance is higher if there are rest periods. Therefore, there is usually no decrease in overall performance in spite of the time needed for rest periods. At the same time, stress effects are smaller when rest periods are interspersed in work. Rest periods should be organizationally prescribed and supervised and should not be self-taken because employees tend to take less frequent and too short rest periods or cluster them for the beginning or the end of the workday when left to their own decisions. (Weiner et al., 2003)

#### **E. Lifestyle Enhancement**

Individually oriented lifestyle change programs attempt to improve diet, support healthy living, and to increase physical exercise. Breslow and Enstrom (1980, cited in Weiner et al., 2003)

have shown that men who used seven positive habits have a lower mortality rate across ten years than did those who followed zero to three practices. These practices are:

1. sleeping 7 - 8 hours,
2. eating breakfast almost every day,
3. never or rarely eating between meals,
4. being near height-adjusted weight,
5. never smoking,
6. moderate or no use of alcohol,
7. regular physical activity.

Exercise and health-promoting programs at work have been quite successful in decreasing anxiety, reducing cardiovascular mortality after myocardial infarction, and enhancing general well-being. A dramatic example of this success of a wellness program for cardiovascular fitness is the one used by the New York Telephone Company that saved the organization \$ 2.7 million in reduced absenteeism and treatments costs in one year alone (Cartwright et al.,1995, cited in Weiner et al., 2003).

As for institutional approach to lifestyle changes, building architecture has proved to be an important stress intervention. It is surprising that a relatively small amount of daily physical activities, such as walking stairs, walking to work, doing small errands on foot, or bicycling to work have such an enormously positive effect on mortality ratios. Therefore, it is recommended for organizations to encourage light sports in the office building by building adequate, aesthetically pleasing, and salient staircases and by encouraging employees to use the stairs.

Overall, stress management studies have shown that the combination of different techniques tends to lead to best results. Employees with a high degree of control at work and with higher status jobs showed better success in stress management interventions than did low-control or low-status job employees. For this reason, stress management programs are probably less useful for blue-collar workers than for white-collar workers and managers. Stress management programs are often effective in increasing life expectancy, for example, they significantly reduce cardiac mortality in heart disease patients.

Unlike Weiner and others (2003), Armstrong (2007) suggests more specific methods for an organization to manage stress:

- creating job positions that would allow employees larger autonomy, responsibility, and duty,
- adjusting goals so that they would be challenging but not impossible to reach,
- putting the right people in the right jobs,
- career development programs with regards to employees' competency and skills,

- employees' performance management using manager-subordinate communication about work, problems, and ambition,
- consultation with the organization's doctor or human resource specialist about the employees' problems,
- education for managers with a focus on reducing theirs and the subordinates' stress level,
- balance between work and life that could be achieved by extra vacation or flexible working hours.

McGonial (2013) mentioned that studies have found out that people who experience a lot of stress had 43 % increased risk of dying but that was only true for the people who also believe that stress is harmful to their health. On the other hand, people who experience a lot of stress but do not view stress as harmful had the lowest risk of dying of anyone in the study including the ones who have relatively little stress. So, the best stress prevention technique is to remember that harmful effects of stress on your health are not inevitable. How you think and how you act can transform your experience of stress. When you choose to view your stress response as helpful you create the biology of courage, and when you choose to connect with others under stress you can create resilience.

# **PRACTICAL PART**



## 5 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODS

The second part of the bachelor thesis is pursuing the application of the knowledge obtained in the theoretical part to discover the omnipresent stressors in the real-life company. The organization does not wish to be named so will be referred to as company XYZ. The research will target all employees of the company XYZ with the focus on the employees in the department of Human Resources.

The research questions are formed as follows:

- **What effects do stressors have on the health condition of employees?**
- **What are the most significant stressors for employees of Human Resources department?**
- **What are the stress prevention tools that are still missing in the company XYZ?**

Upon the results of the research, solutions to prevent stress by reducing or even eliminating the stress factors will be suggested to improve the overall employee turnover.

For an overview and understanding of the company XYZ and its operations, organizational structure, and benefits program, documents available to all employees on the Intranet will be studied as well as the reports provided by the Compensation and Benefits Supervisor, Compensation and Reporting Specialist, and Benefits Specialist. Next, a survey will be conducted among the employees and the final results will be analyzed and further compared with the results of the employee engagement survey.

## 6 OVERVIEW OF THE COMPANY

XYZ is a leading corporation in food and beverage industry operating in 28 countries with more than 600 million potential consumers across three continents. The research was conducted in the subsidiary representing two regions: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. As of now, XYZ in Czechia and Slovakia has about 1 000 internal employees, of which 65 % are male and 35 % are female. There are also approximately 750 external employees working for the company through employment agencies, most of whom are manual workers.

Head office and production plant of XYZ Czechia and Slovakia are situated in Prague with more than 580 employees, about 100 of whom are office workers. The **working hours** for office workers are not given but recommended. Employees can arrange the working times by themselves but it is advised that full-time employees are available in the office between 9:00 and 15:00 on working days.

There is also a benefit of **home office**. By taking home office employees are working from their homes instead of going to the office. It is recommended not to use this option for more than 20 % of working days, thus a maximum of one day per week.

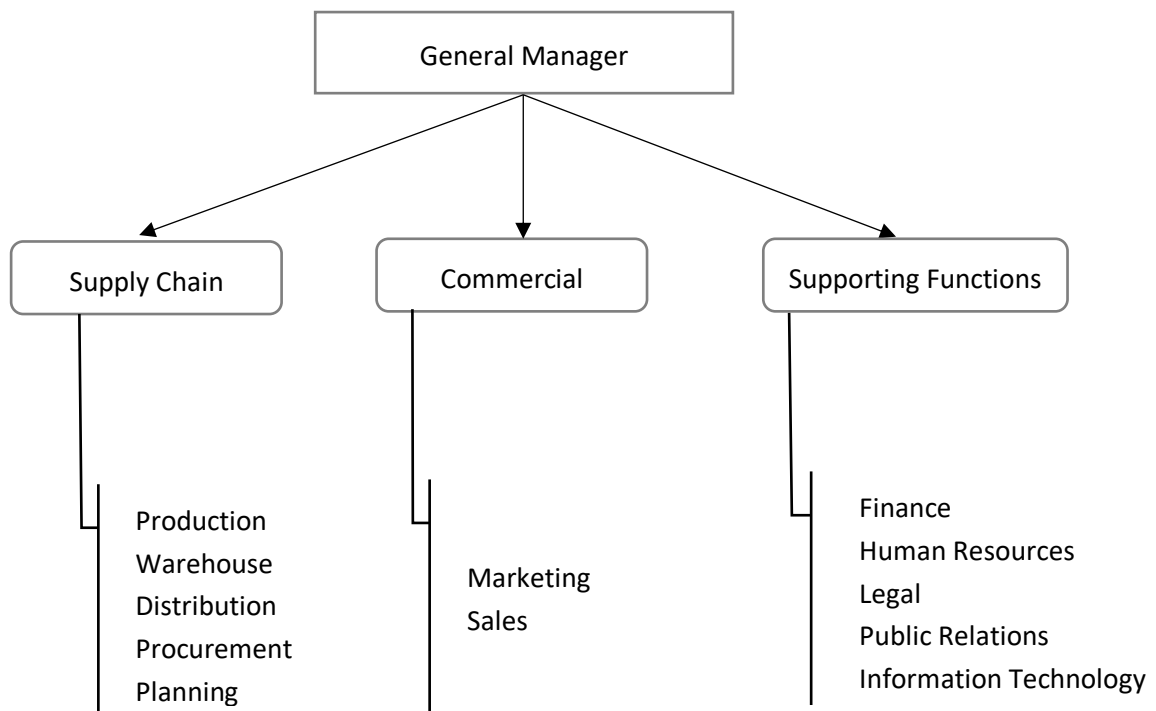
Another benefit that the company XYZ offers their employees is an extra week of **vacation** making it five weeks of vacation per year in total. In case of sicknesses, employees can use up to two **sick days** that are covered by the company.

At work, employees can take a 30-minute **lunch break** between 11:00 and 15:30 in the cafeteria situated right on the company grounds. The price of each meal varies according to the type of meal selected but overall, the average meal at the cafeteria is around CZK 70. The employer contributes 55 % of the average meal price, which accounts to CZK 38.5, to each employee for each working day that is longer than four hours. Apart from lunch breaks there are no organizationally prescribed rest periods.

The head office of the company is a four-store **building** located right across the cafeteria. Except for the second floor, there are beverage refrigerators, coffee machines and snack machines on every floor. Snacks are charged for the average market price but all the drinks are free of charge. On the third floor, there is a couch corner with a football table available for employees to rest while on a break.

The company XYZ is also collaborating with multiple non-profit institutions and organizes **charity** events encouraging the employees to participate in not only to help people in need but also to promote **health and wellness**. The most recent event is the campaign “Bike to Work” calling out employees to form teams and compete in the total number of kilometers biked or walked to get from home to work and from work home. Another event to encourage the healthier lifestyle is a medical check-up day for employees that takes place once a year. Employees can sign up for a dermatological examination, massage, eye check-up or even stress management seminar.

The functional **organizational structure** of XYZ is shown in Diagram 4. There are 3 main departments: Supply Chain, Commercial and Supporting Functions.



*Diagram 4 Organizational Structure of the Corporation XYZ  
Source: own construction*

According to job grades, there is a predetermined **salary** range for each position in the organizational structure. By meeting conditions of the company’s salary regulations employees can receive **bonuses** on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, and annually basis. For working overtime during weekdays, there is a bonus of 25 % of average salary, 50 % for working overtime during weekends and 100 % for working during holidays. There are also special bonuses for loyalty (every five years), retirement, diamond jubilee, and other special contributions. After six months of working for XYZ, each employee will receive 500 points that equals to CZK 500 for each additional month with the company. The points can be used for various purposes, such as traveling, pharmacy, sports, culture, etc.

Another way that company XYZ encourages health and wellness is offering the employees an opportunity to obtain a multisport card with free entrances to various sports and wellness centers. The price of the card is CZK 590 for the employee, CZK 790 for an additional adult card, and CZK 290 for a children card. There is no employer’s contribution but it is still considered benefit as multisport cards cannot be purchased by a natural person.

## 7 DATA AND DISTRIBUTION

The first part of the research was conducted as an anonymous survey. The survey was available in both English and Czech and it is attached at the end of the thesis. In the survey, there were twelve compulsory close-ended questions and the last one was optional for any other inputs (questions, comments, etc.). There was one demographical question regarding the gender of the respondent, four questions related to their job classification, and other seven questions were related to occupational stress. Some questions used a five-level Likert scale, others used multiple choice with the “other” answer option in case respondents did not find their preferred answer.

The survey was first shared in a secret group of XYZ on the social site Facebook with 140 members, which accounts for 14 % of all employees, on the 17. 4. 2018. To ensure that the survey is filled in by as many Human Resources (HR) employees as possible it was also sent by email to seventeen HR employees as a reminder on the 18. 4. 2018. The data collection was closed on the 21. 4. 2018. In total there were 41 respondents who participated in the research, thus the response rate is 29 %. As for the HR department, the response rate is 94 % as sixteen out of seventeen targeted filled in the survey.

The demographical question about the respondent’s gender provided three options: female, male and prefer not to say as an option of keeping the gender a secret as it could be a sensitive topic for some individuals. Out of all respondents (see Figure 1), 51 % confirmed to be female and 44 % male. Two people decided not to enclose their respective gender.

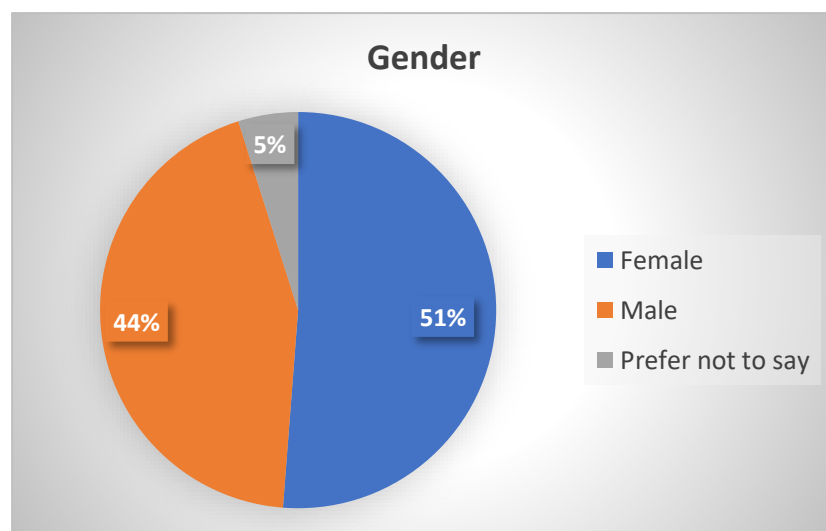
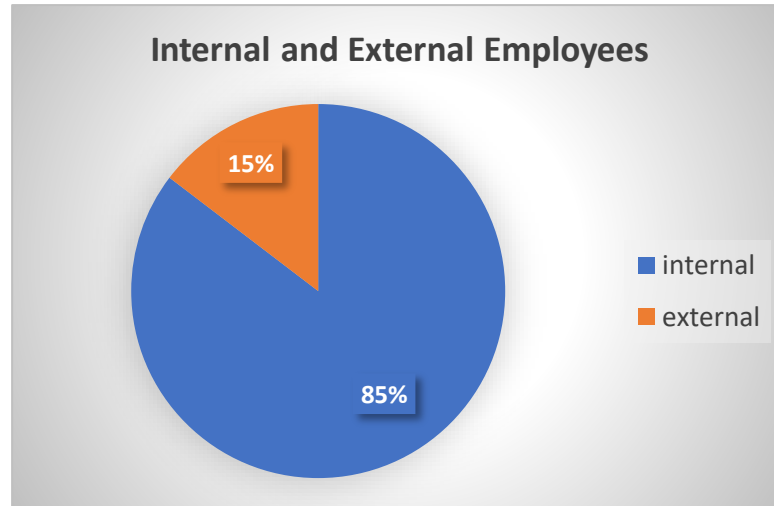


Figure 1 Gender  
Source: own construction

## 8 ANALYSIS OF THE STRESS SURVEY

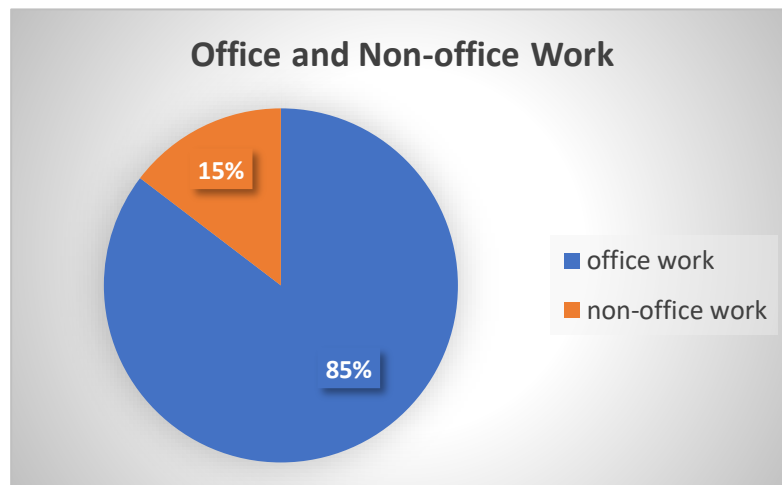
**Question 1: Are you an internal or external employee?**



*Figure 2 Internal and External Employees  
Source: own construction*

Out of 41 respondents, 35 are internal employees which equal to 85 % of total respondents, and 15 % are external employees (see Figure 2).

**Question 2: What type of work do you do?**



*Figure 3 Office and Non-Office Work  
Source: own construction*

As the company XYZ is a manufacturing and distribution organization there are not only office workers but also manual workers and business developers that work in the field. As the focus of the research is the administrative line of workers the question offers only two choices: office work or non-office work. There were 85 % of office workers and 15 % of non-office workers who participated in the survey (see Figure 3).

**Question 3: What department do you work for?**

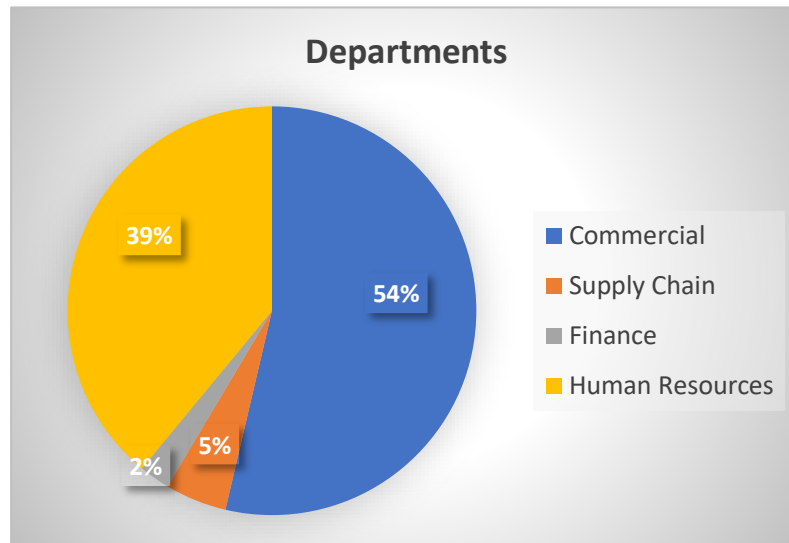


Figure 4 Departments  
Source: own construction

The division of people according to their departments (see Figure 4) will be used to show the differences in responses between HR workers and those of other departments. 54 % of respondents are from Commercial (Marketing, Sales) department which is more than half of the total respondents. The reason might lie in the method of data collection. The survey was distributed on a social site which is the main domain for most commercial employees. 39 % of respondents are from HR department as the survey was sent to them by email as a reminder in case they did not encounter the survey on the XYZ page. As for other departments, there are 5 % from Supply Chain, 2 % from Finance and no one else from other departments, such as Information Technology, Public Relations, and others.

**Question 4: How long have you worked in this company?**

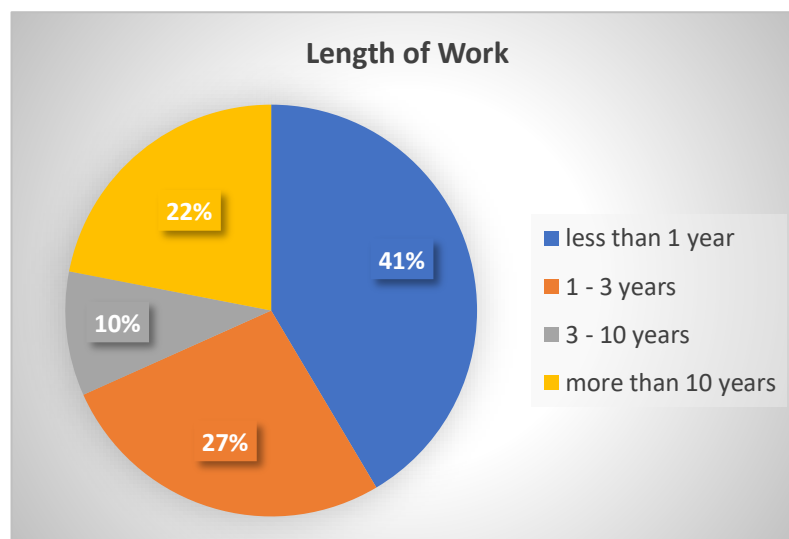


Figure 5 Length of Work  
Source: own construction

As the company has relatively high employee turnover two fifths of all the respondents (41 %) have worked for XYZ for less than a year (see Figure 5). 27 % has been there for about 1 - 3 years, 10 % for 3 - 10 years, and 22 % have worked there for over 10 years.

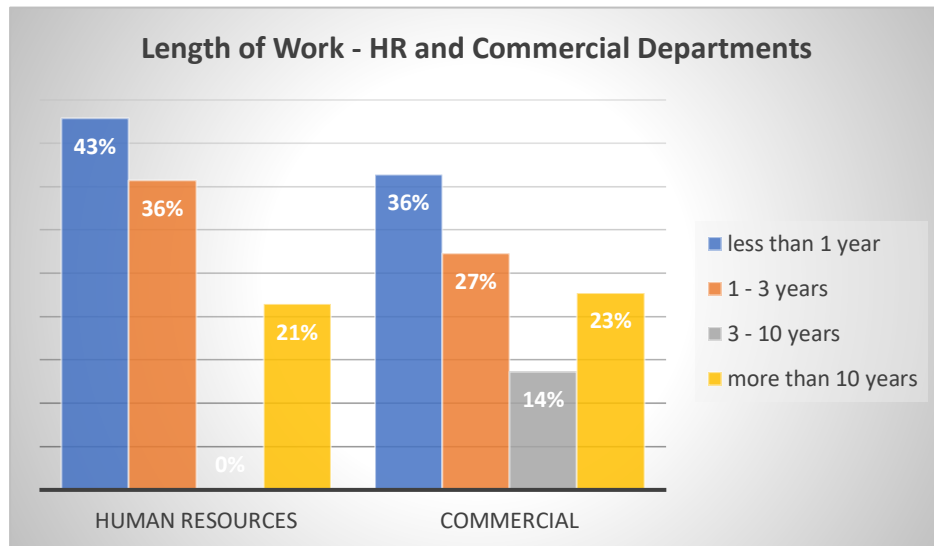


Figure 6 Length of Work - HR Department in Comparison to Commercial Department  
Source: own construction

Looking at Figure 6 it is obvious that there are more employees with shorter work duration in XYZ from HR department than from Commercial department. If compared the number of people who have worked for XYZ for less than 1 year, there are 7 % more people in HR than in Commercial. If compared the total number of people who have worked there for less than 3 years it is a 16 % difference. In HR department, there is nobody who has worked for XYZ for the period of 3 - 10 years. This could mean that if the employees of this department are not satisfied with the job they would give it a maximum of 3 years and if it does not work out they would eventually leave the company. 21 % of total HR respondents have worked there for more than 10 years which is exactly all the employees of the payroll sub-department. It seems that payroll accountants are satisfied with the company unlike the other sub-departments of Human Resources. As for Commercial department, there is 14 % of respondents who have worked in the company for a period of 3 - 10 years and 23 % who have worked there for more than 10 years.

#### Question 5: How might you evaluate your satisfaction with your current job?

As Figure 7 shows 12 % respondent are very satisfied with their current job, 29 % are somewhat satisfied, 39 % are neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 17 % are dissatisfied and 2 % feel very dissatisfied. The results show that over two-fifths of the respondents feel satisfied working in XYZ. The average score for employee satisfaction is 3.31 out of 5, so overall the employees are more satisfied than dissatisfied.

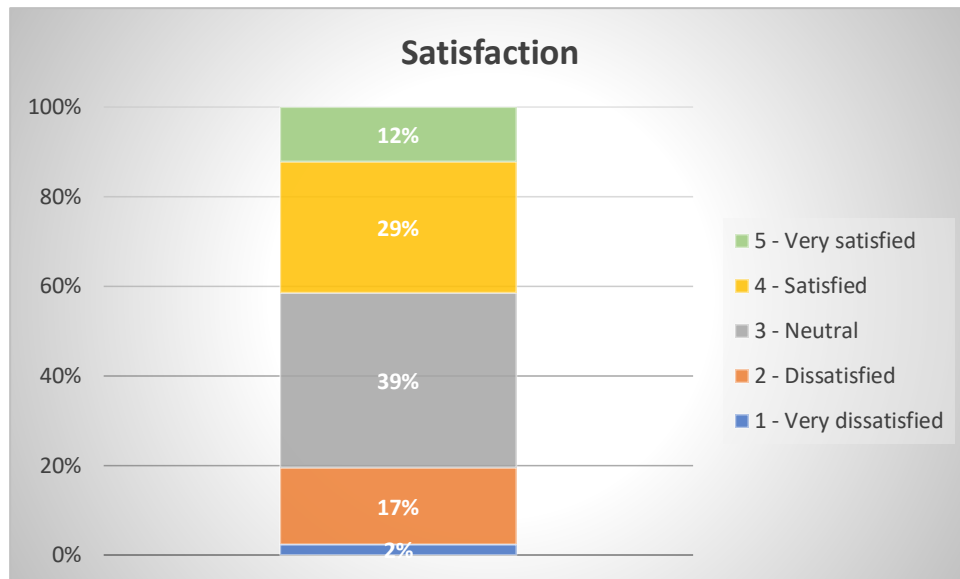


Figure 7 Satisfaction  
Source: own construction

Figure 8 shows the level of satisfaction with work based on the different length of work of each employee in the company on the scale from 1 to 5. Blue bars show the average level of satisfaction and orange bars the median. The average score of each category shows that the most satisfied are employees who have worked in the company for more than 10 years. This fact was predictable since dissatisfied employees would have not lasted this long in a company. The second most satisfied employees are the ones who have worked in the company for less than 1 year and the least satisfied are employees of 1 - 3 years. The explanation for this could be that at first, new employees are satisfied with their new job and the company, with time the initial passion drops and so does the satisfaction. If the employees manage to stay in the company for over 3 years the satisfaction rises again. Median shows a more logical explanation of the occurrence. The longer the person stays in the company the more satisfied he is with his job and the organization.



Figure 8 Average and Median of Satisfaction - Comparison of Different Lengths of Work  
Source: own construction



**Question 6: Do you feel stressed at your current position?**

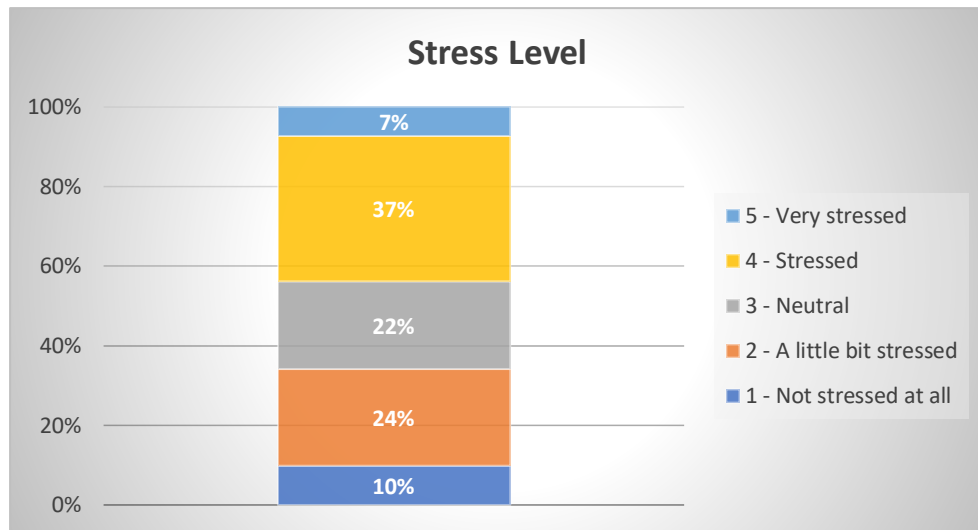


Figure 9 Stress Level  
Source: own construction

Figure 9 shows how stressed the employees feel at their current position. 7 % said that they feel extremely stressed and other 37 % feel less stressed than the first group but still quite stressed. For 22 % respondents, it is neither too stressful or not stressful. 24 % feel only a little bit stressed and 10 % does not feel stressed at all. The average stress level of the respondents is 3.07 out of 5 which is not alarming yet and it is still at a manageable level.

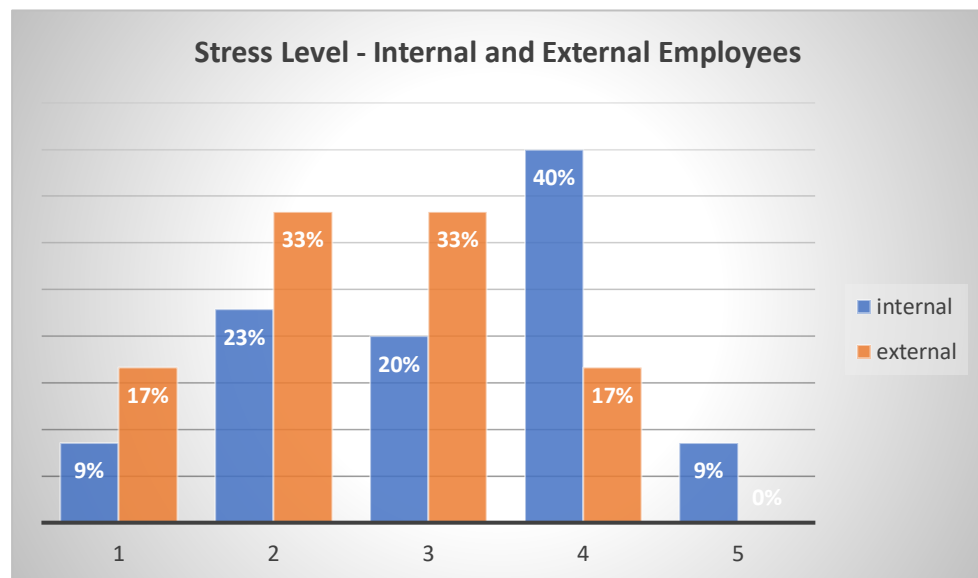


Figure 10 Stress Level - Internal Employees in Comparison to External Employees  
Source: own construction

The benefits and rewards programs do not apply to the external employees along with the strict attendance requirements so there is a possibility that this could have had a different impact on their stress level. The question six used five-level Likert scale with 1 marking low-stress level and

5 high-stress level (see Figure 10). Almost half of the internal employees (49 %) marked 4 and 5 which means that they think that they are relatively stressed at their current position. On the other hand, only 17 % of external employees marked 4 and no one marked 5 meaning that external employees feel less stressed than internal employees. The percentage of employees feeling less stressed is also higher for the external hires compared to internal employees. On average the stress level of internal employees is approximately 3.17 out of 5 whereas external employees' stress level is at 2.50. This shows a clear difference in stress level between internal and external hires.

**Question 7: How often do these stressors affect you at work?**

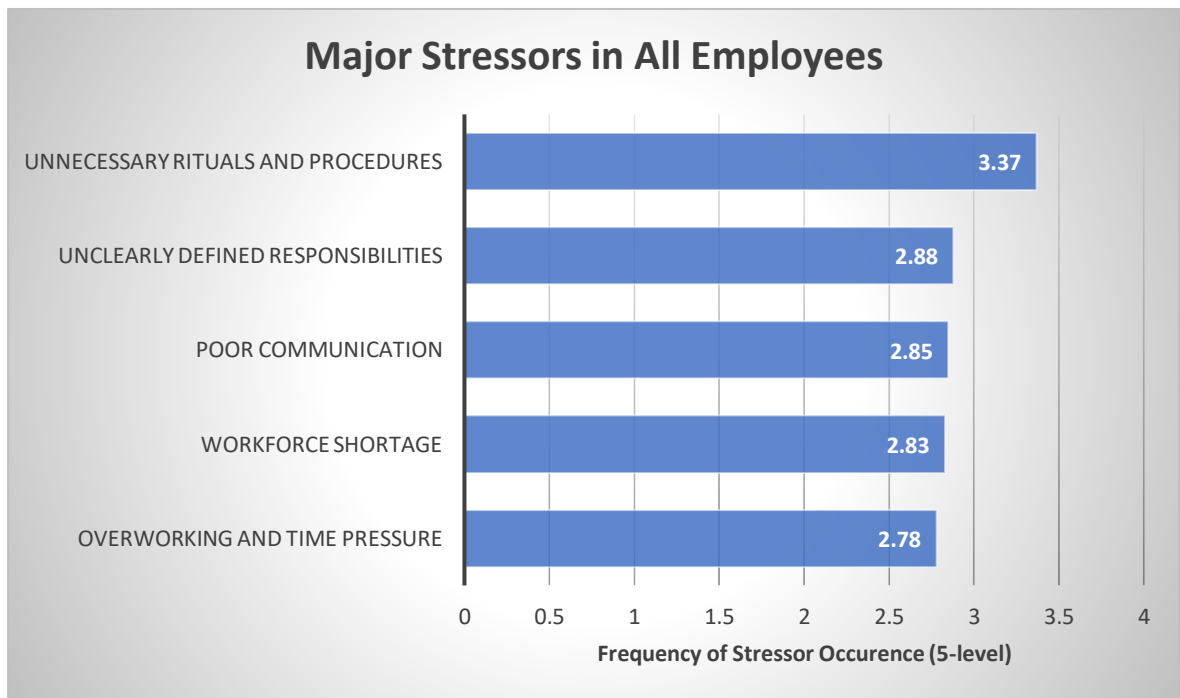


Figure 11 Major Stressors in All Employees  
Source: own construction

This question offered fifteen possible occupational sources of stress and an “other” option for any other inputs. Figure 11 presents the top five stressors with the highest average score in the survey. All the stressors with high scores are the ones that are not caused by an individual alone and cannot be changed by one person either. The most frequent occupational stressor is unnecessary rituals and procedures with 3.37 points out of 5 points. There is an overwhelming gap between the first and the second place which proves that employees do find some procedures a waste of time while that time could have been spent on more useful aspects of their work.

Figure 12 also presents the top five stressors of all employees but in comparison to the top five stressors in Human Resources department. This figure shows the main problem that may have caused the HR department's high employee turnover rate. The first four stressors are identical, in HR department the fourth place is shared between workforce shortage and incompetent leader. It seems that incompetent leader plays a major role in HR department. This stressor could also be the

source of all the other stressors as their occurrence was marked with much more weight in comparison to all employees. Even the most major stressor in all employees, unnecessary rituals and procedures, with 3.37 points has a lower average than the fourth-placed in HR department with 3.44 which proves that stressors in HR department have a more alarming character.

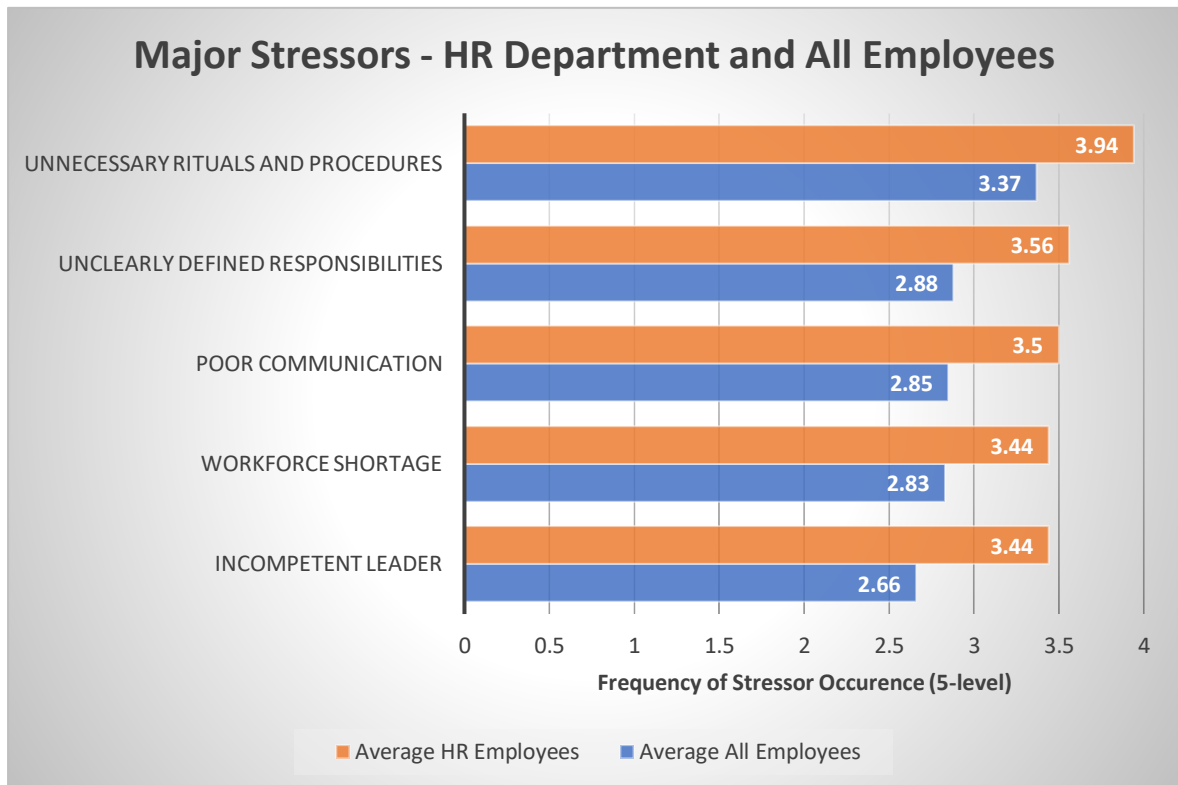


Figure 12 Major Stressors - HR Department in Comparison to All Employees  
Source: own construction

On the other hand, Figure 13 shows the five sources of stress that respondents find the least important. Conflicts scored very low with the average score of 1.93 points. With demanding clients or subordinates scoring low as well (2.29 points) it seems that employees in XYZ do not have to worry about social stressors. They do not suffer from conflicts or their consequences much and are satisfied with the social environment that is present at their workplace. Other four stressors seem to indicate that XYZ employees are responsible and competent so they do not complain about their level of responsibility (2.22 points) and are able to finish their work on time (2.12 points). Lack of diversity at work also scored low (2.24 points) implicating that employees think that their job tasks are diverse enough and employees do not feel bored at work.

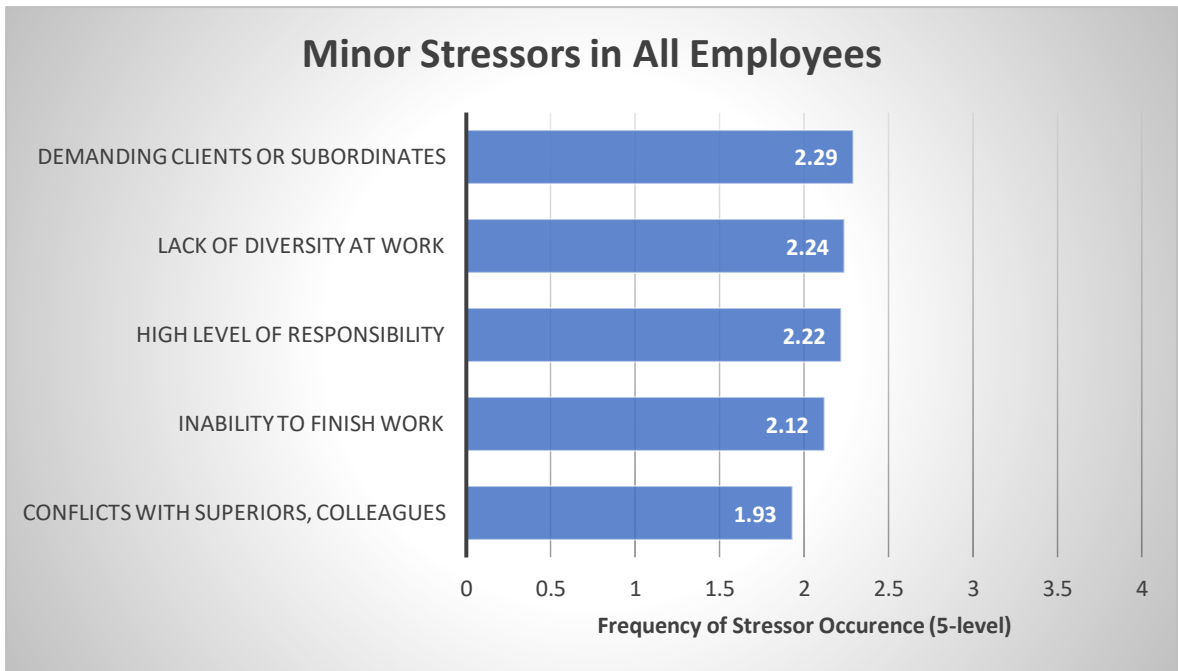


Figure 13 Minor Stressors in All Employees

Source: own construction

Figure 14 is again showing the five lowest scoring stressors of HR department in comparison to all employees. Once more there are four sources that are identical to each other although in a slightly different order. Except for one stressor, all the other ones scored higher in HR department

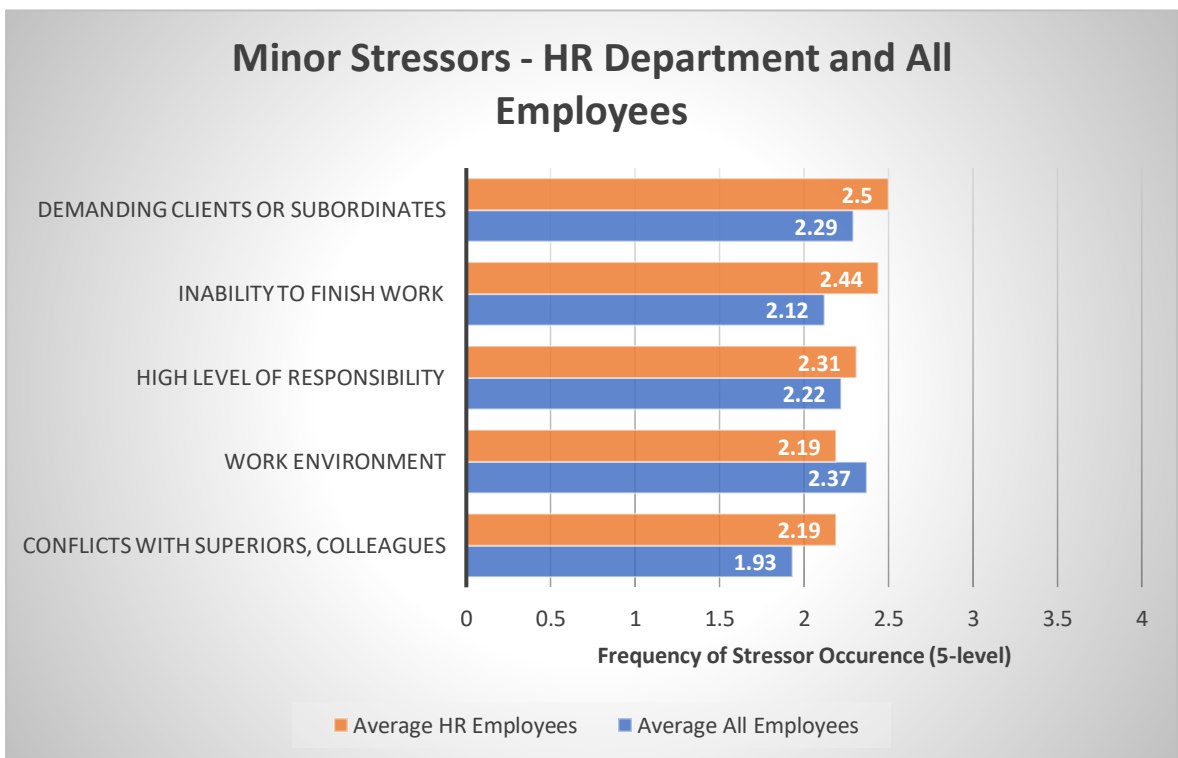


Figure 14 Minor Stressors - HR Department in Comparison to All Employees

Source: own construction

compared to all employees. The stressor that scored lower in Human Resources is work environment. HR employees are satisfied with their work environment and do not think that there are physical stressors limiting them in their work. The other employees consider work environment more important and stressful to them possibly because not all the respondents are office workers or their offices could be closer to some other physically stressing obstacles.

**Question 8: Do you think you have a healthy lifestyle?**

Question 8 uses a five-level Likert scale with 1 marking a very unhealthy lifestyle and 5 a very healthy lifestyle. Figure 15 shows that over half of the respondents (51 %) answered that they think they have neither healthy nor unhealthy lifestyle. 32 % respondents think that their lifestyle inclines towards the healthy side more. 17 % of respondents think that their lifestyle is rather unhealthy.

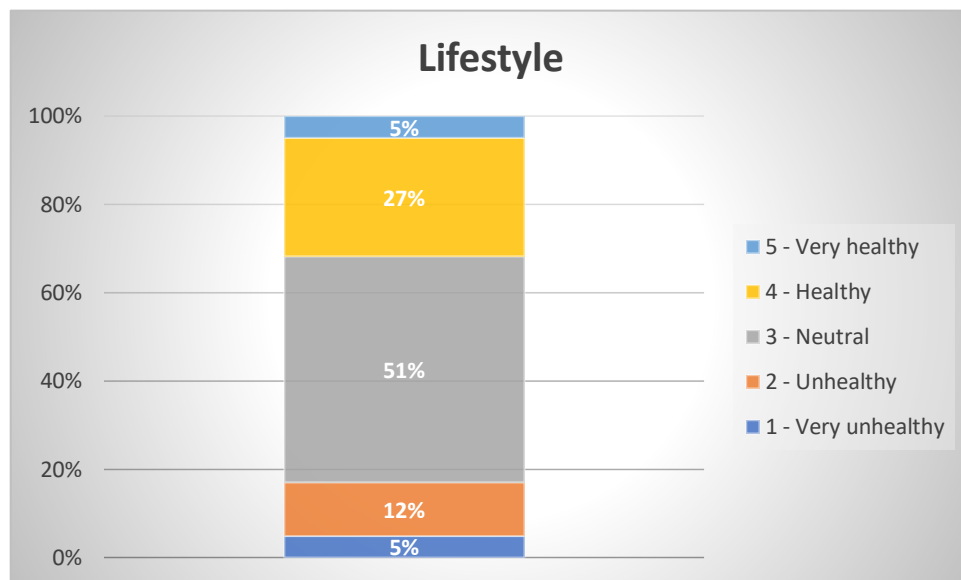
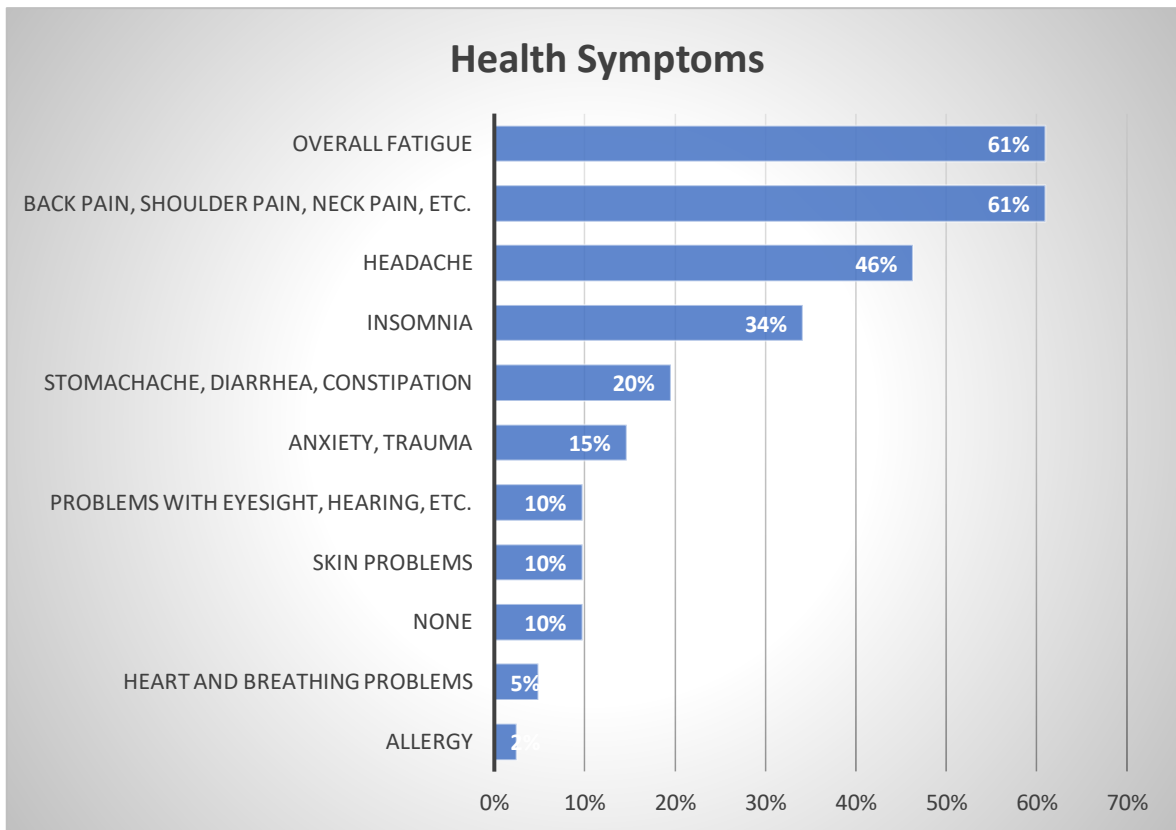


Figure 15 Lifestyle  
Source: own construction

**Question 9: Have you had any of these symptoms that you think may be caused by your job? (Multiple answers possible)**

In this question respondents could mark as many answers as they found true out of ten suggested health symptoms and one “other” option. The most frequent health issues are overall fatigue, back pain, shoulder pain and other muscle pain with an equal amount of 61 % of respondents each (see Figure 16). The second most serious health symptom is headache as it occurs to almost half of the respondents (46 %). The quite frequent issue is insomnia and other sleeping disorders with 34 % respondents suffering it. 20 % of respondents sometimes fight with stomachache, diarrhea, and other digestive disorders. 15 % of respondents deal with anxiety and possible trauma from their job. Other symptoms do not occur as often as the ones named above. 10 % of respondents stated that they do not have any health issues related to their job.



*Figure 16 Health Symptoms  
Source: own construction*

All non-office workers that filled in the survey are from Commercial department meaning that all of them are working as business developers - field agents of the company. Different work environment could lead to differences in health issues related to them. As office workers spend most of the time sitting in front of the computer their most frequent health problems are back pain, shoulder pain and neck pain with 63 % of respondents, overall fatigue with 57 %, and headache with 51 % (see Figure 17). Anxiety and trauma was the sixth most frequent health issue out of ten for office workers which is significantly high considering how big the impact is on one's mental health. None of the non-office workers have had problems with this health symptom. For non-office workers, overall fatigue is a bigger problem than muscle pain with 83 % of total respondents. It could be caused by their job duty as they spend most of the time driving and traveling. The second most serious health problems for non-office workers are muscle pain and insomnia with 50 % of respondents each.

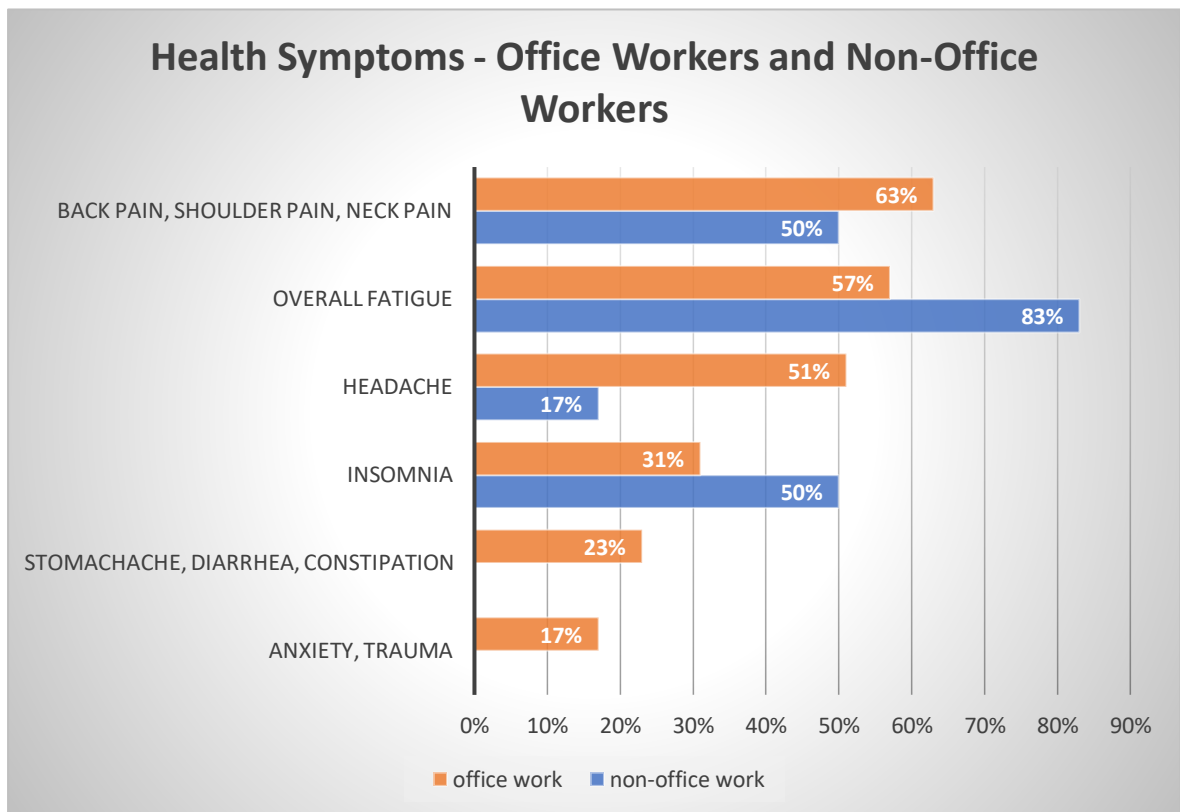


Figure 17 Health Symptoms - Office Workers in Comparison to Non-Office Workers

Source: own construction

**Question 10: Which change do you think would help increase your satisfaction at work? (Multiple answers possible)**

This question also offers ten possible improvements at work and one “other” option for other inputs. Most people (61 %) would appreciate the increase of their salary (see Figure 18). Compared to the benchmark average within the industry, the company XYZ offers lower salaries and that is also one of the reasons why it fails to retain its best people. Over half of the respondents (54 %) also think that their satisfaction would increase if the communication was handled better. As of now, communication at XYZ seems to be very poor as it was proven by employees’ perception in both questions 7 and 10. Another factor that employees are missing is relaxation facilities at work. Except for one football table in the administrative building, there are no other facilities for relaxation. Leadership style is the fourth most frequent change that employees seek with 41 % of respondents. Again, this area needs a lot of improvement as it also proved necessary in question 7. 39 % of respondents would also appreciate task and work environment redesign. Other five changes that were suggested also scored relatively high in the survey.

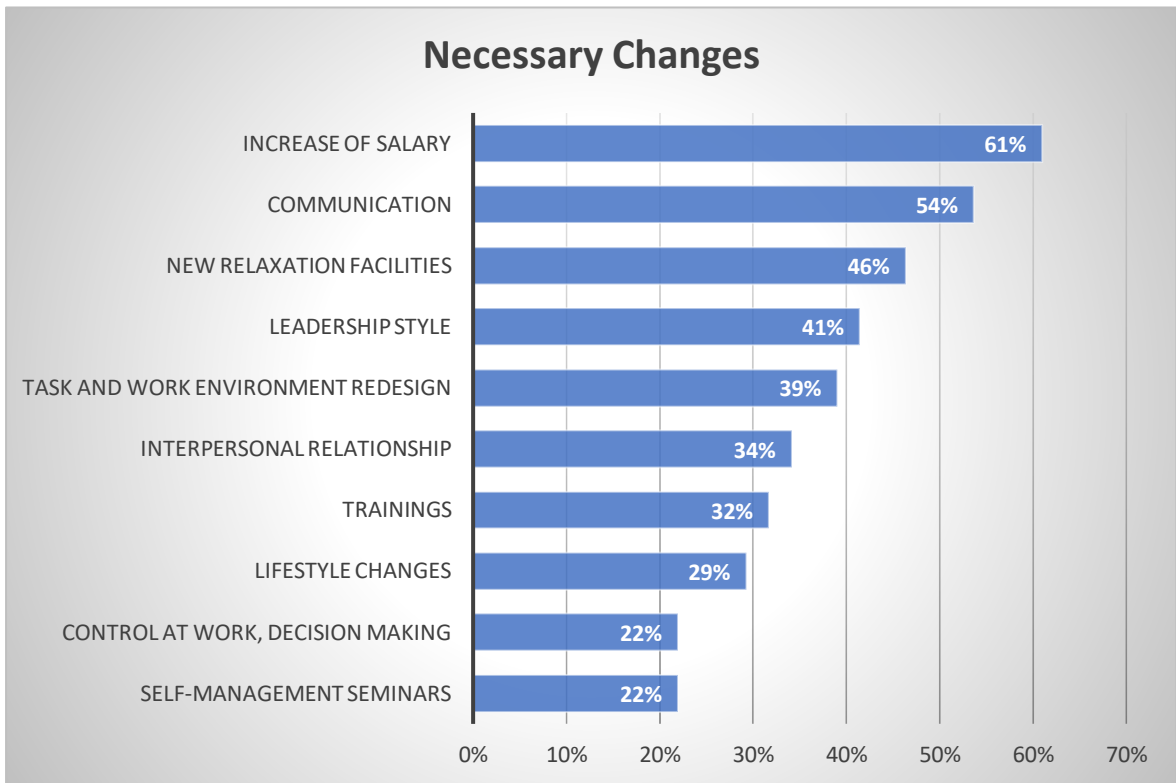


Figure 18 Necessary Changes

Source: own construction

**Question 11: Which one of these would you prefer when you encounter an excessive stress at workplace?**

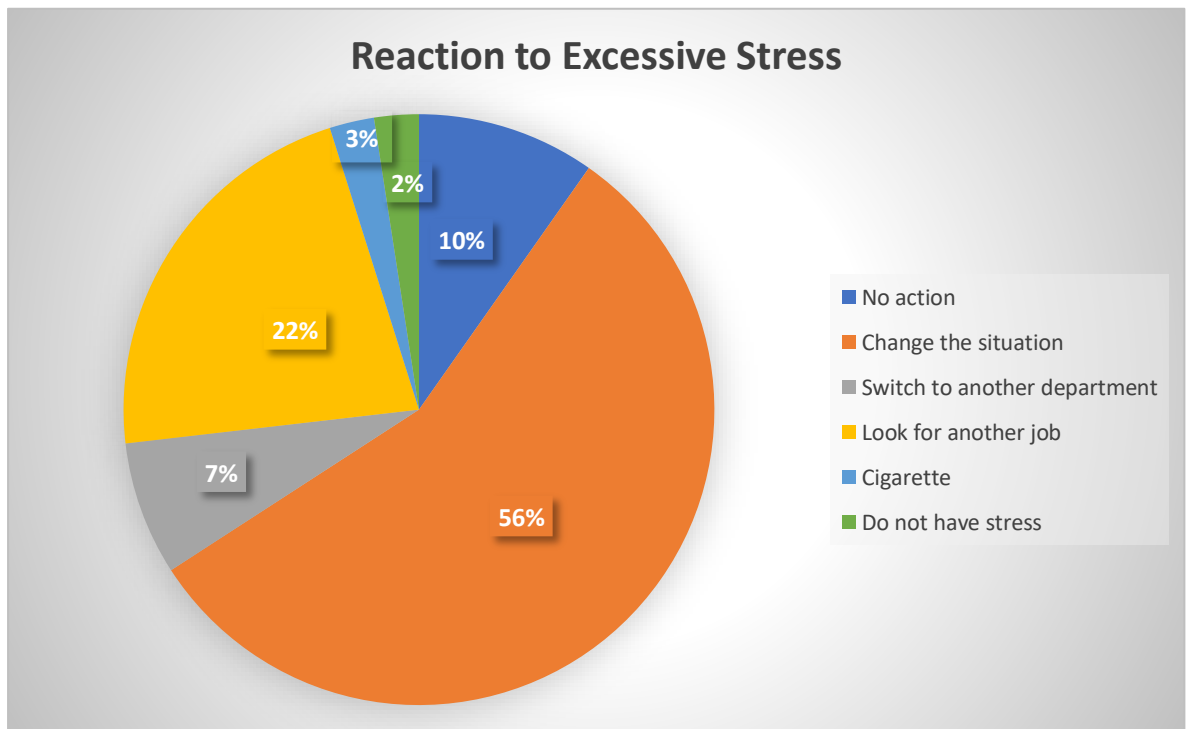


Figure 19 Reaction to Excessive Stress

Source: own construction



Figure 19 shows that over half of the respondents (56 %) would try to change the situation by taking appropriate actions within the organization if they encountered an excessive stress at work. 22 % of respondents are more radical and they would rather look for a new job. 10 % would just give up and leave the situation as it is. 7 % of respondents would try to escape the excessive stress by switching to another department. 5 % of respondents used the “other” option, out of which 3 % stated that they would relieve the stress by having a cigarette, and 2 % do not encounter stress at work, therefore, would not choose any of the offered options.

Overall, employees are quite satisfied working in XYZ. The average score for employee satisfaction is 3.31 on the five-level scale which is approximately 66 %. The stress level is only slightly over average with 3.07 points which account for about 61 %. Although the results are not completely negative, the numbers are not high enough to say that employees are very satisfied at their current job.

At the beginning of the practical part, three research questions were formed. After the analysis of the stress survey the following facts were discovered:

- **What effects do stressors have on the health condition of employees?**  
Stressors have a considerable impact on the physical health of the employees as over two-fifths of the respondents frequently feel overall fatigue, muscle pain in the back, shoulders and the like, and almost half of the respondents suffer frequent headaches. Other significant health symptoms are stomachaches and other digestive disorders, insomnia, and sometimes even anxiety and trauma.
- **What are the most significant stressors for employees of Human Resources department?**  
In Human Resources department the most significant stressor is undeniably unnecessary rituals and procedures. Other frequent stressors are unclearly defined responsibilities, poor communication, workforce shortage and incompetent leader.
- **What are the stress prevention tools that are still missing in the company XYZ?**  
Most of the stress prevention tool offered in the survey scored quite high hinting that overall, the organization XYZ has not done a sufficient job in the area of stress prevention for their employees. The change that employees would welcome the most is an increase in their salary. As poor communication is often mentioned as a fundamental problem, employees would also like to see an improvement in this area. Other significant changes that could possibly increase employees’ satisfaction are new relaxation facilities, improved leadership style, and task and work environment redesign.

# 9 ANALYSIS OF THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The results of the stress survey are further confirmed by the results of the annual employee engagement survey that took place in September 2017. Table 1 contains only the categories in which the Human Resources department has done the best and the worst. Overall the results were not very positive. Even the areas where Human Resources have performed their best are below the average of both the company XYZ and the food and beverage industry.

Table 1 Employee Engagement Survey Results

Category	HR This Year	HR Last Year	XYZ This Year	Norm
Sustainable Engagement Index	76%	+ 2%	- 13%	- 12%
Values Index	84%	+ 1%	- 6%	N/A
Leadership	47%	+ 2%	- 30%	- 21%
Immediate Manager	73%	+ 2%	- 14%	- 7%
Rewards & Recognition	88%	+ 13%	+ 10%	+ 16%
Safety & Work Environment	83%	+ 14%	- 4%	- 3%
Learning & Development	47%	- 1%	- 29%	- 24%
Efficiency & Collaboration	59%	- 1%	- 32%	- 23%
Values - Authenticity	43%	- 9%	- 43%	N/A

Source: own construction

**Sustainable engagement index** is an indicator that shows “both the rational and the emotional connection an employee has to the organization, combined with his or her willingness to exert discretionary effort. Research has consistently found that more engaged employees produce better financial returns for their businesses.” (Willis Towers Watson, 2011). The sustainable engagement index for HR department is 76 % which is a 2 % increase compared to last year but it is still 13 % less compared to the whole company, and 12 % less compared to the benchmark average within the industry.

**Values index** is an indicator of drive, motivation, and inspiration of an individual that is vital for motivating employees, making hiring and selection decisions, and understanding performance issues (Innermetrix, 2018). The values index of HR department is 84 % with 1 % increase from last year but is still 6 % behind the XYZ results. There is no information on the industry average of values index.

**Leadership** category reflects the employees' perception of the senior leading team (SLT). Although the average score has 2 % of increase since the previous year the overall score is still very low compared to all employees and the average within the industry. Leadership has a very low score of 47 % which is 30 % lower than the company's average and 21 % below the norm. This is a category that needs more attention and reflection of the SLT as it is not in the power of the subordinates to improve it.

Compared to the senior management, the **immediate managers** have achieved a much higher score. In HR department immediate managers got 73 % which is slightly more (2 %) than last year. Despite the improvement, the score is still 14 % behind the whole company and 7 % lower than the average in the industry.

The best score HR department has received was in the category **rewards and recognition**. It has a score of 88 % which is 13 % increase from last year, 10 % higher than the company average and even 16 % higher than the industry average. In HR department of XYZ people do not feel that they are not appreciated enough. Employees are well recognized for their hard work and high achievements are rewarded accordingly.

HR department has also improved in **safety and work environment** with 13 % increase compared to the previous year. It is only 4 % less than the company and 3 % less than the industry average. Both surveys have shown that employees of XYZ are satisfied with the work environment and they do feel safe while working there.

**Learning and development** is an area that certainly needs a lot of improvement. It has scored only 47 % which is 1 % lower than last year. The gap between HR employees and all employees is 29 %. The company is 5 % higher than the benchmark average. HR employees have been asked about the reasons why they are not satisfied with learning and development in XYZ and they have stated that most of the time business priorities and needs take over the time to learn and develop and as most of the priorities are determined by the managers, employees cannot oppose it. Employees also find the process of application for learning and development unclear, therefore, they do not try to undergo more training.

Another weak area of Human Resources department is **efficiency and collaboration**. This category has decreased 1 % to 59 % which is 32 % lower than the company average and 23 % lower than the benchmark average within the industry. The biggest problem lies in the knowledge transfer. In HR the employee turnover is high and oftentimes the positions are left vacant without on-time replacements. When the newly hired employees arrive, they do not receive proper training necessary for the position and so their roles and responsibilities are often unclear. Another important obstacle is poor communication between HR employees. The problem may lie in the

building limitation forcing HR employees to be separated into two floors, three offices. Therefore, news and information are discussed over emails or other communication tools and miscommunication often occurs.

The last category that will be mentioned here is related to values and that is **authenticity**. An authentic organization gives employees enough freedom to speak, to operate in their roles and to actualize themselves. The average score for authenticity in HR department is 43 % which is the area that has dropped the most over the past year (9 %). It has scored only half of the XYZ average. This shows that HR workers do not think that they have enough freedom and flexibility in their work.

In conclusion, the four areas that are the biggest weaknesses of the HR department are: leadership, learning and development, efficiency and collaboration, values - authenticity. Compared to the previous year, HR department has not improved much. The scores for both years are at 45 - 60 %. This certainly needs attention and suggestions for improvements.

# 10 PROPOSALS

Table 2 sums up the areas that turned up to be the most problematic in the Human Resources department. Areas from both columns will be covered altogether as they are related to each other and items from the first column are subcategories of the second column.

*Table 2 Problematic Areas Defined in the Stress Survey and Employee Engagement Survey*

STRESS SURVEY	EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY
1. Unnecessary rituals and procedures	A. Values - authenticity
2. Unclearly defined responsibilities	B. Learning and development
3. Poor communication	C. Leadership
4. Workforce shortage	D. Efficiency and collaboration
5. Incompetent leader	

*Source: own construction*

## A. Values - Authenticity

Out of all the values, authenticity has proved to be the one that is the most lacking. Employees think that they are not given enough flexibility to perform their job and balance their professional and personal life. After the discussion with HR employees, it turned out that employees are most bothered by their colleagues' lack of time management skills and thus not respecting time of others. It is evident especially when it comes to scheduling meetings too early or too late or showing up late to the meeting. To improve this area, it is recommended to set strict meeting rules. The most reasonable time period for **meetings are between 9:00 and 15:00**, respecting the fact that working hours are flexible so some people start working at 7:00 and go home at 15:00 but some others prefer to start working later and finish later. Another helpful rule would be **no emails at weekends and after 19:00 on weekdays**. This does not prevent employees from working at night but rather protects those who chose not to work at night from being disturbed because of others' choices. Late workers can set the time for the emails to be sent so this rule should not be a hindrance for them. In case of urgency, it is recommended to use phone calls instead of emails. Also, to reduce the number of unnecessary rituals and procedures, employees must thoroughly consider if scheduling a meeting is absolutely necessary and if yes, come up fully prepared without dragging the meeting and wasting others' time.

## **B. Learning and Development**

To improve the area of learning and development, it is recommended to use the individual development plans (IDPs). According to Office of Personnel Management (2018), IDP *“is a tool to assist employees in their career and personal development. Its primary purpose is to help employees reach short and long-term career goals, as well as improve current job performance.”* This tool has always been available in XYZ but it has never been promoted enough. To increase the use of the tool, all employees are obliged to **set up their IDPs two times per year**, one by the end of June and one by the end of December. It is also a responsibility of their immediate managers to oversee the process of meeting the IDPs and create opportunities and room for learning and development. **Career path workshops are to be held every two months** targeting new employees but also welcoming any other employees that want to brush up the information about their possible opportunities.

## **C. Leadership**

Leadership is a category that proved to be weak in both surveys. Although immediate managers have scored higher than the senior management, the result is still lower than the norm so this proposal will be applied to all levels of management to ensure improvement and progress. Employees mostly criticize the management for not doing a good job when it comes to communication with employees which also touches the topic of poor communication in the company XYZ. Employees often find out about a new policy, approach or strategy accidentally while talking to someone else which makes them feel left out. For employees to receive up-to-date information and news, the HR manager is to **share weekly minutes** with all employees of the HR department after each regular weekly SLT meeting. To raise employees' awareness, it is recommended to create **a shared folder with all HR sub-teams where key highlights of the week** will be shared and communicated by the heads of each sub-team. It is also recommended to have **a teambuilding activity once in two months** to strengthen relationships between employees of the HR department.

## **D. Efficiency and Collaboration**

Efficiency and collaboration are weak mainly because of the workforce shortage, unclearly defined responsibilities and again, poor communication. To prevent these problems from reoccurring, employees are obliged to **map one important process in their position every three months** together with their immediate manager. The process mapping will help to create an accurate analysis of work roles and that will reduce unclarity of roles and responsibilities and will help target the right candidates in the recruitment process. Mapping of the processes will also serve as manuals to newly hired employees and it will also be beneficial for managers as they will be more

aware of their subordinates' responsibilities and the importance of their position. This would certainly help with the decision-making of whether to fill the vacancy or not, and thus avoid the long-term workforce shortage. In most cases, the notice period is two months so it is necessary to **make a hiring decision and start the recruitment process in the first week of the notice period. By the end of the month, the new employee should be hired** and will then have one month for knowledge transfer. As already mentioned above the possible cause of poor communication between HR employees may be due to the building limitation. The best solution to this obstacle would be **building redesign** so that all HR employees could work together in one office. However, this option would cost the company approximately € 600 000, thus it is not feasible at this moment. But it should be set as a long-term goal as it has been proven that having all Human Resources sub-teams working in one office significantly increases the efficiency and collaboration. For the short-term goal, the shared folder was suggested in the previous problematic area.

#### E. Other Proposals

Question 10 in the stress survey asked respondents for changes that they would welcome in XYZ. The most frequent answers were increase of salary, improved communication, new relaxation facilities, improved leadership style, task and work environment redesign. Three of these changes were already covered above. As for the increase of salary, the execution is a long-term process that involves many people. Momentarily, the average base salary in XYZ is below the benchmark average within the industry which should give the functional heads and especially compensation and benefits manager some food for thought. Long-term employees often complain about not being compensated adequately compared to newer younger employees that are less experienced and competent. For XYZ to decrease their employee turnover and retain their best people **increase of salary should be considered to at least match the industry average** and raise the company's competitiveness with their human resources.

New relaxation facilities are another stress prevention tool that employees of XYZ are missing. At the moment, XYZ does not possess a broad range of relaxation tools for their employees. One football table for 100 employees in the building is certainly not a way to go. XYZ also offers their employees various exercise and health-promoting programs but these programs take place only once or two times per year and only for a few days. Employees lack a place, facility that would be available for them anytime. Therefore, it is recommended to have **two rooms designed just for employees' relaxation**. Rooms that are currently not utilized much often could be cleared out and redesigned. One room would be a slow-paced room with bean bags, Swiss balls and exercise mats for stretching, muscle relaxation, meditation or just simple quiet relaxation. The other room would have equipment that offers employees more interaction with each other, such as football table, darts, billiard or even a TV. Table 3 shows an approximate cost of the equipment needed for these

two rooms. Football table is already available so it is not included in the budget. Prices are set based on the average market price of these products. The total budget is roughly CZK 30 000 which is completely affordable for XYZ and would certainly cut on company's other costs, such as absenteeism, treatment costs, hiring costs etc.

*Table 3 Relaxation Equipment Cost*

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Amount (pcs)</b>	<b>Price (CZK)</b>
Bean bag	4	8 000
Swiss ball	2	2 000
Exercise mat	5	1 000
Darts	1	3 000
Billiard	1	5 600
TV	1	10 000
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>29 600</b>

*Source: own construction*



# Conclusion

Occupational stress is a very frequent phenomenon present in every organization. Organizations should understand the importance of this topic, analyze and solve problems in their own interest. The best is to start with stress prevention and elimination of stress factors that would have negative effects on employees, employer and thus the whole organization.

The bachelor thesis started first with the introduction and definition of stress. Afterwards, the fight-or-flight response was explained for a better understanding of human physiological reaction to stressors. Variations of stress were classified by three dimensions: time, quality and intensity of stress response. The topic of stress was necessary for a greater comprehension of the occupational stress which is the main topic of the thesis. There are different types of stressors related to occupational stress. Stressors could be external or internal, social or physical. The other classification of stressors would be based on the source of the stress at work: general sources come from the organization, specific sources are related to job requirements and the last ones are sources related to job tasks. Overall, stress has a very big impact on the individual and the organization. At an individual level stress deteriorates physical and mental health and triggers negative physiological, affective and behavioral responses. At an organizational level stress influences job performance, absenteeism, occupational injuries and this all affects the organization overall performance and profitability. To manage occupational stress, it is recommended to use different stress intervention techniques, such as stressor reduction, resource enhancement, strain reduction and lifestyle enhancement.

Moving on the second part of the thesis, the practical part, the company XYZ, where the research took place, was introduced. The research questions were specified with the objective of identifying main stressors at the company XYZ, primarily in the Human Resources department. Using the analysis of the self-created stress survey the effects of stress on employees' health were discovered. Employees often suffer from an overall fatigue, muscle pain, headache, stomachache and other digestive disorders, insomnia and sometimes even anxiety. With the results from both the stress survey and the employee engagement survey the most significant stressors in Human Resources department were discovered: weak authenticity, insufficient learning and development opportunities, incompetent leadership, poor efficiency and collaboration which include unnecessary rituals and procedures, unclearly defined responsibilities, workforce shortage, and most importantly poor communication. These stressors were further proved significant as employees think that they would be more satisfied if the communication and leadership style were improved and task and work environment were redesigned. Employees believe that increased salary and expanded relaxation facilities would also increase their satisfaction. To put these tools into practice new rules, adjustments and transformations were suggested. For a multinational organization it is important to respect cultural differences with regards to company's benefit of flexible working hours, therefore meetings should be planned only between 9 am and 3 pm of working days and no emails at weekends and after 7 pm on weekdays. Employees can learn about their options for learning and development by participating in career path workshops that are held once in two months and also by setting up their individual development plans at least two times

per year. To improve communication not only between colleagues but also superiors and subordinates, it is recommended to organize one teambuilding activity every two months, create a shared folder for Human Resources department's highlights of the week, and also HR manager is encouraged to share the weekly minutes after every senior leading team meetings. In XYZ knowledge transfer process is very poor. This can be improved by motivating employees to map the most important processes in their positions, at least one process per three months. Hiring decision and recruitment process should be done in the first week of the employee's notice period so that a new employee could be hired by the end of the month and would have one more month for knowledge transfer. As HR team is split up into three offices merging them into one would help by redesigning the building but for now, the estimated cost of this measure is too high and further analysis of costs and profits should be conducted. A very important benefit that employees have been missing is a proper relaxation facility. For that, there is no need to have a costly building redesign but just two rooms redesigned and equipped with a TV, bean bags, Swiss balls, exercise mats, darts and billiard table. The estimated cost for the equipment is lower than the costs that could be cut down by decreasing stressors in employees.

The results of the bachelor thesis could become a motive for a more detailed analysis of occupational stressors in large-sized organizations and implementation of more effective stress intervention tools.

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# Attachments

## Attachment 1 Stress Survey in English

Dear Colleagues,

I am a student of Czech Technical University in Prague majored in Personnel Management in Industrial Enterprises and I would like to ask your cooperation for my bachelor thesis's research on the topic "Management of Occupational Stress".

Stress has become a phenomenon and its negative effects have an enormous impact on company's overall performance. The goal of this research is to discover the main stress factors affecting employees' productivity and performance and suggest solutions on how to reduce or eventually eliminate them.

There are 12 closed-ended questions so the survey should take about 3-5 minutes to complete. Be assured that all answers you provide will be kept in the strictest confidentiality.

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,  
Tran Phuong Tra

**1 Are you an internal or external employee?**

- Internal  External

**2 What type of work do you do?**

- Office work  Non-office work

**3 What department do you work for?**

- Commercial (Marketing and Sales)  Supply Chain (Production, Distribution, Planning, etc.)  
 Finance  Human Resources  
 Others: (Please specify)

**4 How long have you worked in this company?**

- Less than 1 year  1 – 3 years  
 3 – 10 years  More than 10 years

**5 How might you evaluate your satisfaction with your current job?**

	1		2	3	4	5	
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>

**6 Do you feel stressed at your current position?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Not at all</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Very Stressed</b>

**7 How often do these stressors affect you at work?**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Workforce shortage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low status, salary or promotion opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unnecessary rituals and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unclearly defined responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of power	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conflicts with superiors or colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overworking and time pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of diversity at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incompetent leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inability to finish work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demanding clients or subordinates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insufficient training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High level of responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work environment (noise, temperature, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**8 Do you think you have a healthy lifestyle?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Not at all</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Absolutely</b>

**9 Have you had any of these symptoms that you think may be caused by your job? (Multiple answers possible)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overall fatigue           | <input type="checkbox"/> Back pain, shoulder pain, neck pain, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headache                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Stomachache, diarrhea, constipation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Problems with eyesight, hearing, etc.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart, breathing problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Skin problems                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allergy                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety, trauma                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others: (Please Specify)  |  |

**10 Which change do you think would help increase your satisfaction at work? (Multiple answers possible)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase of salary  | <input type="checkbox"/> Task and work environment redesign                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved communication  | <input type="checkbox"/> Improved leadership style   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved interpersonal relationships                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase of control at work, participation in decision making, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More trainings to increase competencies and skills                  | <input type="checkbox"/> New relaxation facilities (gym, massage, meditation, etc.)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-management seminars (time management, stress management, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle changes   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others: (Please Specify)  |  |

**11 Which one of these would you prefer when you encounter an excessive stress at workplace?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No action                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Change the situation by taking appropriate actions within the organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch to another department | <input type="checkbox"/> Look for another job   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others: (Please specify)     |   |

**12 What is your gender?**

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female            | <input type="checkbox"/> Male |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |                               |

**13 Please leave any other comments on suggestions here. Thank you for your time.  
(Optional)**

## Attachment 2 Stress Survey in Czech

Milí kolegové a milé kolegyně,

jsem studentkou Českého vysokého učení technického v Praze, bakalářského oboru Personální management v průmyslových podnicích. Chtěla bych Vás poprosit o spolupráci na výzkumu pro účely mé bakalářské práce na téma "Zvládání stresu na pracovišti".

Stres je dnes velkým fenoménem a jeho negativní efekt má ohromný dopad na celkový výkon organizace. Cílem tohoto výzkumu je odhalit stresové faktory působící na zaměstnance, jejich produktivitu, výkon, a přijít s návrhy na zmírnění, případně odstranění těchto stresorů.

Dotazník má 12 uzavřených otázek, takže Vám jeho vyplnění zabere maximálně 3-5 minut. Dotazník je anonymní a výsledky budou sloužit výhradně studijním účelům.

Děkuji moc za Váš čas.

S pozdravem,

Tran Phuong Tra

**1 Jste interní nebo externí zaměstnanec?**

- Interní  Externí

**2 Jaká je Vaše práce?**

- Kancelářská  Ne kancelářská

**3 V jakém oddělení pracujete?**

- Commercial (Marketing, Sales)  Supply Chain (výroba, distribuce, plánování atd.)  
 Finance  Lidské zdroje  
 Jiné: (Prosím upřesnit)

**4 Jak dlouho pracujete v této společnosti?**

- Méně než 1 rok  1–3 roky  
 3–10 let  Více než 10 let

**5 Jak byste ohodnotil/a svoji spokojenost se současnou prací?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Velmi nespokojený/á</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Velmi spokojený/á</b>

**6 Cítíte se stresován/a v současné práci?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Vůbec ne</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Velmi stresován/a</b>

**7 Jak často na Vás působí tyto stresory v práci?**

	Nikdy	Málokdy	Někdy	Často	Vždycky
Nedostatek personálu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nízká prestiž, malý plat a mizivá šance na povýšení	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zbytečné rituály a procedury	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nejasně definované role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nedostatek pravomocí	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Konflikty s nadřízenými či kolegy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Přepracování a časová tíseň	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Malá pestrost v práci	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Špatná komunikace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nedostatečné vedení	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neschopnost dokončit práci	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nároční klienti či podřízení	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nedostatečná školení	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Velká odpovědnost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pracovní prostředí (hluk, teplota apod.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8 Myslíte si, že máte zdravý životní styl?**

	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Vůbec ne</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rozhodně ano</b>

**9 Měl/a jste někdy následující symptomy, o kterých si myslíte, že byly způsobené Vaší prací? (Je možné označit více odpovědí)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celková únava                | <input type="checkbox"/> Bolest zad, ramen, krku apod.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bolest hlavy                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Bolest žaludku, průjem, zácpa     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Problémy se spánkem          | <input type="checkbox"/> Problémy se zrakem, sluchem apod. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potíže s dýcháním, se srdcem | <input type="checkbox"/> Kožní problémy                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alergie                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Úzkost, trauma                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jiné: (Prosím upřesnit)      |  |

**10 Jaké z těchto změn si myslíte, že by pomohla zvýšit Vaši spokojenost v práci? (Je možné označit více odpovědí)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zvýšení platu   | <input type="checkbox"/> Vylepšení designu pracovních úkolů a pracovního prostředí  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vylepšení komunikace  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vylepšení stylu vedení                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vylepšení mezilidských vztahů   | <input type="checkbox"/> Větší pravomoc a účast v rozhodovacích procesech           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Více školení pro zvýšení schopností a dovedností                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Nová relaxační zařízení (posilovna, masáž, meditace apod.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Semináře pro self-management (time management, zvládání stresu apod.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Změna životního stylu                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jiné: (Prosím upřesnit)   |   |

**11 Kterou z těchto možností preferujete v případě, že jste pod nadměrným stresem v práci?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nečinnost                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Snaha o změnu vhodnými kroky v rámci společnosti |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Přeřazení do jiného oddělení | <input type="checkbox"/> Hledat si novou práci                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jiné: (Prosím upřesnit)      |   |

**12 Jaké je Vaše pohlaví?**

- |                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Žena         | <input type="checkbox"/> Muž |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nechci říkat |                              |

**13 Jakékoliv otázky a připomínky můžete nechat zde. Děkuji za Váš čas. (nepovinné)**

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