

Síndrome de Burnout em professores universitários

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated indicative signs of Burnout Syndrome in professors, as well as the coping strategies used to remain in labor activity. Forty-nine professors participated. The Burnout Characterization Scale and a questionnaire to obtain demographic data and identification of coping strategies were applied. Data were analyzed and presented in described statistics and logistic regression was used to verify the association between demographic variables and Burnout. The results show that about a quarter of the participants presented symptoms compatible with Burnout Syndrome. The dehumanization was the item with highest percentage of high level, reported by 30.6% of professors. Given the multifactorial nature of the Burnout Syndrome, it is important to understand labor and psychosocial factors that may be associated with the illness, since this can contribute to the integration of professors in interventions aimed at the welfare and quality of life at work.

KEYWORDS: Burnout, professional/psychology; Burnout, professional/etiology; Faculty; Occupational health; Stress psychological/etiology; Stress psychological/therapy.

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RESUMO: O estudo investigou os sinais indicativos da Síndrome de *Burnout* professores de ensino superior, bem como as estratégias de enfrentamento utilizadas para manter-se na atividade laboral. Participaram 49 professores. Foi aplicada a Escala de Caracterização de *Burnout* e um questionário para obtenção dos dados demográficos e identificação das estratégias de enfrentamento. Os dados foram analisados e apresentados em estatísticas descritas e a regressão logística foi usada para verificar a associação entre as variáveis demográficas e *Burnout*. Os resultados apontam que cerca de um quarto dos participantes apresentou sintomas compatíveis com a Síndrome de *Burnout*. A desumanização foi o item com maior percentual de alto nível, reportada por 30,6% dos professores. Tendo em vista o caráter multifatorial da síndrome de *Burnout*, é importante compreender os fatores laborais e psicossociais que podem estar associados ao adoecimento, pois isso pode contribuir para a inserção dos docentes em intervenções voltadas para o bem-estar e qualidade de vida no trabalho.

DESCRIPTORES: Esgotamento profissional/psicologia; Esgotamento profissional/etiologia; Docentes; Saúde ocupacional; Estresse psicológico/etiologia; Estresse psicológico/terapia.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress, depression and anxiety are the leading cause of labor activities leave and are responsible for 46% of the absenteeism¹. A research conducted in the United Kingdom compared the level of stress experienced by professionals in several professions and concluded that teachers had two times more stress, depression, and anxiety than the average of the other professionals¹. In Brazil, teachers occupy the second place of the occupational categories with occupational diseases². This evaluation can be underestimated, since depression and anxiety can be a result of Burnout and not the main diagnosis³.

Burnout Syndrome is the set of symptoms related to emotional exhaustion, lack of personal fulfillment in work, and depersonalization⁴. Emotional exhaustion – individual dimension of the syndrome – is characterized by the feeling of lack of energy and emotional resources to deal with everyday work situations. The reduction in personal fulfillment at work, or disappointment at work is characterized by the tendency of workers to evaluate themselves in a negative way, feeling unable, insufficient, unmotivated, and with low self-esteem. Consequently, depersonalization or dehumanization presents itself as a result of the development of negative feelings and attitudes in which prevails affective dissembling and distantness in relation to people coming into direct contact with the professional. The individual may also present alienation, anxiety, irritability, and discouragement, which constitute the interpersonal dimensions of Burnout^{2,4,5}.

The understanding of this complex and multifactorial disease among teachers is enabled from the investigation of potentially stressor factors present in work environments, which make the work to be carried out under adverse conditions to the physical and mental health of the workers⁶.

There is a consensus in literature that teachers are very vulnerable to Burnout Syndrome, and there is a lot of research that focus on children's and middle school teachers. On the other hand, there are fewer studies aimed at professors⁷.

From an institutional point of view, professors are expected: to master the content of subjects and integrate them into the political-pedagogic course plan; to use different teaching methodologies; to prepare lessons and to have some hours available for research and extension activities, as well as to perform administrative activities⁶. Stress over space and funding disputes are also present in

the daily life of this worker. The systematic evaluations present in the career plan, submissions of studies in conferences, journals, and other events, in addition to the production of activity and research reports are also verified as potentially stressor activities⁶.

The requirements for teaching performance may lead to positive feelings of satisfaction, enjoyment, creation, and personal and collective fulfillment, but they may also feature a stressful job, done with suffering, associated with impositions⁸.

The symptoms of the disease and the presence of other conditions associated with the professional exhaustion cause impacts on the educational system and the quality of students' learning as well as generate social and family problems⁸. A review study conducted by Andrade and Cardoso⁸ related the extensive workload, the demand of students daily attended, the discipline problems of students, and the number of classes for which the professor is responsible as the factors potentially triggers of Burnout Syndrome. On the other hand, the high level of education and the time available for leisure activities are mentioned as factors of less vulnerability to the manifestation of the disease.

The study of Sousa and Mendonça⁹ mentions that the likelihood of developing Burnout is inversely proportional to the affective commitment of the professor; on the other hand, the insufficient reward and the lack of justice are causes for the development of the disease. In meta-analysis done by Faragher et al.¹⁰, dissatisfaction at work was the factor most strongly associated with mental/psychological problems, with higher ratios for Burnout, depression, anxiety, and self-esteem.

The research of Gonçalves et al.¹¹ identified the prevalence of Burnout and high depersonalization index by more than 50% of respondents. Costa et al.¹² showed the prevalence of 11.2% of professors of the São Paulo state countryside with moderate symptoms of Burnout Syndrome and 3% with severe symptoms, being the dimensions disappointment at work and emotional exhaustion the most present.

The chronic experience of stress in the workplace leads professionals to react and seek strategies to develop activities under their responsibility. Coping strategies refer to "cognitive and behavioral efforts aimed at the management of internal or external requirements or demands that are evaluated as an overload on the individual's personal resources", which aim to maintain balance, easing the effects of stressful situations^{6,13,14}. These strategies are diversified and range from healthy lifestyle habits, leisure and enjoyable practices, and/or restoring sleep time¹⁵.

Literature points out that collective interventions may act as protective factors and be associated with the strategies adopted by workers¹⁵.

The understanding and recognition of this reality can help to point the variables able to prevent or cause Burnout Syndrome, act on labor and psychosocial variables that influence its development^{2,14}. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate indicative signs of the Burnout Syndrome in professors and the coping strategies used for them to remain in labor activity.

METHOD

This is a cross-sectional quantitative and descriptive study performed with professors in a federal institute.

Participants

Through a survey, we identified 72 professors active in a federal public institution offering the courses of Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, and Occupational Therapy. Were excluded professors who exercised only administrative activity and those who had less than six months of work at the institution. The other professors (67 participants) were contacted and invited to participate in the research.

The participation was voluntary and the professors signed an informed consent form after being informed of the objectives of the research. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Federal Institution of Education, Science and Technology of Rio de Janeiro on July 15, 2011, opinion no. 037/11.

To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of information, all participants received an identification number.

Instruments

The research instrument used in the characterization of the participants was built applying the questionnaire containing sociodemographic (gender, age, marital status, number of children, and education) and labor (employment situation, weekly hours of work, length of service) variables.

To assess the signs and symptoms of Burnout Syndrome, the Burnout Characterization Scale (ECB) was applied, from the authors Tamayo and Tróccoli⁵, built and validated in Brazil. The scale is composed of 35 statements related to factors: emotional exhaustion, dehumanization, and disappointment at work. The "Emotional exhaustion" factor refers to sentences which

seek to assess the fatigue at work, wearing, and exhaustion ideas. The "Dehumanization" factor is characterized by statements related to indifference, negative attitudes when dealing with others, and emotional toughness. The "Disappointment at work" factor gathers items related to hopelessness for the professional future, loss of confidence in their own professional capacity, decreased interest, and dissatisfaction with the work. It is a Likert-type scale of five points, where 1 (one) represents that respondents never identify themselves with the sentence declared in the scale and 5 (five) is equivalent to always experience the statement⁵. For applying the questionnaire, the word "victim", present in some questions, was replaced by "coworkers/student" in order to contextualize the statements for the professors.

In the end, the participants responded to a non-structured question to assess the coping strategies adopted by those who pass through moments of stress at work and still remain in the activity.

Procedures

Data were collected through a self-applied questionnaire during the period from June 2012 to February 2013. The study was conducted in the workplace of the participants. The professors were given questionnaires and could choose to immediately respond or return the questionnaires later.

During the encoding phase to data categorization, were recorded individual characteristics such as gender, age group, level of education, marital status, and number of children. Data on length of service, positions held, and coping strategies adopted in stressful situations were collected.

Data analysis

For the selection of the analysis categories from the Burnout Characterization Scale (ECB), the answers were recorded in databases of the software SPSS version 17.0 (Statistical Package of Social Science). All variables contained in the database were transformed into numeric variables and categorized. Graduation was categorized according to knowledge area. It was verified the existence of omissions and outliers in the distribution.

For the categorization of Burnout levels in each scale factor, first, scores in the factors were calculated using arithmetic mean of the points attributed by the individuals interviewed to items in each factor. Were calculated 25 and 75 percentiles of the distribution, having as reference the standard response from the sample itself, in order to

establish cut-off points for each category (mild, moderate, or high). These procedures were adopted according to what the author of scale recommends and are traditionally used in research in this area⁵.

In regression analysis, the categorization of the continuous variables was based on the mean of the distribution. According to the definition of statistical significance, the larger the sample size, the smaller will be the significance level used to analyze the results, for the more the sample size approaches the population size, the more confidence you have in the estimation of its parameters. Since the sample of this study had only 49 comments, considered small for reliable estimation of population parameters, the statistical significance was set at 10% in order to reflect the reduction in the capacity of generalization of the results.

Since there is no consensus on the diagnosis of the Burnout Syndrome and its concept is still under construction, this study considers that the terms adopted for each of the three factors present in pathology are based on studies of Tamayo and Tróccoli⁵, authors of the Burnout Characterization Scale (ECB). The professor was still considered to be in professional exhaustion when there is high level in emotional exhaustion, dehumanization, or disappointment at work, as proposed in the study of Grunfeld et al.¹⁵.

The responses obtained through non-structured question regarding the coping processes were categorized into: Physical Activity, Leisure Activity (Reading, Music, Tours), Contact with Friends and Family, Religious Activities, Therapies, and Reflections on the Working Environment, being analyzed through descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Forty-nine professors of a campus of the Federal Institute (IFRJ) participated in this study. Of these, 73.5% were female. The age of professors ranged from 27 to 60 years, with a mean age of 37.6 years (SD = 7.9). On average, professors began working at the age of 21 years, exerted teaching activity for 8.8 years (SD = 6.7), and worked as professors of the IFRJ for about 3 years. Most professors claimed to be married and have family income between 11 and 21 minimum wages. The most common work regime is of 40 hours a week and most professors do not have other employment relationship. Regarding education, 65% of professors holds a Bachelor's degree in Biological and Health Sciences, followed by 29% in the area of Exact Sciences, and 6% in Humanities, considering that most (40.8%) had a PhD (Table 1).

Table 1 – Distribution of socioeconomic and sociodemographic characteristics of individuals in the sample (n=49)

Variables	Distribution	
	Mean (Standard Deviation); in years	
Age	37.6 (7.9)	
Age when they started working	20.7 (4.1)	
Time working as a professor	8.8 (6.7)	
Time working at the Federal Institution	3.2 (3.7)	
Gender	n	%
Male	13	26.5
Female	36	73.5
Marital status	n	%
Married	26	53.1
Divorced	5	10.2
Single	18	36.7
Household income	n	%
1 to 5 minimum wages	2	4.1
6 to 10 minimum wages	11	22.4
11 to 21 minimum wages	32	65.3
More than 21 minimum wages	4	8.2
Work regime	n	%
20 hours	1	2.0
40 hours	32	65.3
40 hours / Exclusive commitment	16	32.7
Have another employment relationship	n	%
Yes	14	28.6
No	35	71.4
Undergraduate education	n	%
Exact Sciences	14	28.6
Biological and Health Sciences	32	65.3
Humanities	3	6.1
Graduate studies	n	%
Specialist	12	24.5
Master's degree	17	34.7
PhD	20	40.8

The cut-off points for Burnout levels are described in Table 2. The cut-off point for the mild level (a quarter of the cases – 25%) was 1.30 in dehumanization factor, 1.75 in emotional exhaustion factor, and 2.00 in disappointment at work factor. The extent of the moderate level (two quarters of the cases – 50%) varied greatly between the factors, 0.83 in emotional exhaustion factor, 0.60 in dehumanization factor, and 0.27 in disappointment at work factor. On the other hand, at the high level (a quarter of the cases – 25%), the single cut-off point below 2.00 was in the dehumanization factor, in which the point was of 1.90.

Regarding the distribution of individuals in each Burnout level, it was observed that in the emotional exhaustion factor, 24.5% fit in the mild level, 49% in the moderate level, and 26.5% in the high level. In dehumanization factor, 28.6% fit in the mild level, 40.8% in the moderate level, and 30.6% in the high level, and in disappointment at work factor, 36.7% fit in the mild level, 38.8% in the moderate level, and 24.5% the high level (Table 3).

According to what is presented in Table 4, when grouping individuals located at similar levels, respectively in the three Burnout factors, were verified 12.2% (six individuals) in the mild level, other 12.2% (six individuals) in the moderate level, and 6.1% (three individuals) in the high level of the syndrome.

After adjustment by logistic regression, two variables were statistically significant in the association of high score in the emotional exhaustion factor: “being female”, which worked as a protective factor for the risk of Burnout and “not being married”, which contributed to the increased risk. In other factors, no variable proved to be statistically significant. To the overall risk of Burnout, the only statistically significant variable in the association of the high score was to have a Bachelor’s degree in the field of Humanities (Table 5).

Table 2 – Cut-off points for Burnout levels, according the scale factors

Factors	Levels		
	Mild	Moderate	High
Emotional exhaustion	≤ 1.75	1.75–2.58	≥ 2.58
Dehumanization	≤ 1.30	1.30–1.90	≥ 1.90
Disappointment at work	≤ 2.00	2.00–2.27	≥ 2.27

Table 3 – Distribution of individuals in each Burnout level, according to the scale factors

Level	Emotional exhaustion		Dehumanization		Disappointment at work	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mild	12	24.5	14	28.6	18	36.7
Moderate	24	49.0	20	40.8	19	38.8
High	13	26.5	15	30.6	12	24.5
Total	49	100.0	49	100.0	49	100.0

Table 4 – Simultaneous distribution of individuals in the scale factors, according to Burnout levels

Disappointment at work	Emotional exhaustion	Dehumanization			Total
		Mild	Moderate	High	
Mild	Mild	6	2	0	8
	Moderate	2	4	1	7
	High	1	2	0	3
	Total	9	8	1	18
	Moderate	3	6	3	12
	High	0	0	5	5
	Total	4	7	8	19
High	Mild	0	1	1	2
	Moderate	1	2	2	5
	High	0	2	3	5
	Total	1	5	6	12

Table 5 – Logistic regression results, considering the high level of Burnout scale factors

Variables	OR (90%CI)			
	Emotional exhaustion	Dehumanization	Disappointment at work	Risk of Burnout
To be over 38 years of age	0.78 (0.22-2.71)	0.60 (0.18-2.05)	0.90 (0.26-3.16)	**
Start working with more than 21 years of age	0.62 (0.20-1.93)	0.71 (0.25-2.08)	1.85 (0.61-5.58)	3.41 (0.43-27.21)
Working as a professor for over nine years	0.53 (0.16-1.81)	0.67 (0.22-2.06)	2.70 (0.87-8.34)	**
Working in IFRJ for over three years	0.89 (0.28-2.80)	1.04 (0.35-3.09)	0.62 (0.18-2.11)	**

Continues...

Table 5 – Logistic regression results, considering the high level of Burnout scale factors

Variables	OR (90%CI)			
	Emotional exhaustion	Dehumanization	Disappointment at work	Risk of Burnout
Being female	0.28* (0.09-0.89)	0.62 (0.20-1.89)	5.28 (0.86-32.34)	0.71 (0.09-5.70)
Not being married	3.54* (1.13-11.02)	0.67 (0.24-1.88)	0.75 (0.25-2.28)	2.38 (0.30-18.92)
To have family income less than 11 minimum wages	1.28 (0.37-4.45)	1.67 (0.49-5.70)	**	**
To have work regime of 40 h with exclusive commitment	0.89 (0.28-2.80)	1.04 (0.35-3.09)	2.70 (0.87-8.34)	1.03 (0.13-8.27)
To have another employment relationship	1.16 (0.36-3.70)	0.87 (0.28-2.74)	0.79 (0.23-2.74)	**
To hold a Bachelor's degree in the area of Exact Sciences	1.16 (0.36-3.70)	0.87 (0.28-2.74)	0.79 (0.23-2.74)	**
To hold a Bachelor's degree in the area of Biological Sciences	0.80 (0.26-2.41)	1.09 (0.37-3.20)	1.08 (0.34-3.44)	1.07 (0.13-8.52)
To hold a Bachelor's degree in the area of Humanities	1.42 (0.18-11.44)	1.14 (0.14-9.17)	1.59 (0.20-12.90)	11.00* (1.06-114.12)
To hold a PhD	0.56 (0.18-1.72)	1.41 (0.50-3.96)	1.64 (0.55-4.94)	3.11 (0.39-24.78)

*Statistical significance (p<0.1)

**No cases with high level in the category of reference

Each professor has presented various strategies to relieve feelings of stress related to work. Among them, the practice of physical activity stands out, described by 56% of respondents; leisure activities, among 30% of professors, and contact with friends and family in 42% of the respondents. Only 4% of respondents reported not having strategies and a small portion of the search report actions aimed at religion, therapies, or reflections on the working environment (2%).

DISCUSSION

The study corroborates data of national¹⁶ and international¹⁸ research showing that professors are an essentially female category. The working time working in the institution is small, of three years on average. This is attributed to the time of creation of the courses being offered at the campus that have emerged in the reform of higher education from 2003, with the expansion in the offer of vacancies for existing courses and the creation of new ones¹⁹. Professors with working time exceeding five years

are alumni of other existing courses in this institution²⁰. The predominance of professors with a Bachelor's degree in Biological and Health Sciences is justified by the characteristic of the existing courses.

The high level of education of participants may be attributed to the specificity of the selection processes for the hiring of professors, which requires professionals with PhD or master's degree. This variable is pointed to as a condition that contributes to the reduction of the risk of having the Burnout syndrome¹⁴.

In addition, data report that most of the professors do not have another employment relationship, since they work in exclusive commitment, what can be considered a protective factor. Researches developed in elementary and high schools indicate that low remuneration attributed to this category raises the demand for more than one workplace and, consequently, leads to an extensive journey to work (over 60 hours), in stressful and precarious conditions for the teaching development²¹. These factors appear as constraints of the precarious health of professors, with higher propensity to the emergence of disorders that

impair physical and mental health, such as the Burnout Syndrome, and other health conditions such as depression and anxiety disorders⁵.

The survey respondents are, mostly, young adults. Increasing age is considered a variable that decreases the likelihood of development of professional exhaustion⁶. Surveys indicate the highest rate of the disease at the beginning of careers because professionals often become frustrated, since the university education does not provide enough experience to deal with different adverse situations that can happen and in labor organizations⁶. Starting from this premise, the group of professors analyzed would be a group of greater risk for the development of Burnout Syndrome.

By analyzing separately the factors that compose the Burnout Syndrome, we verified that, regarding the “Disappointment at work” factor, most professors are at the mild Burnout level, followed by the moderate level, that is, there are few reports related to feelings of dissatisfaction or incompetence on the job. On the other hand, most of professors present moderate level in the “Emotional exhaustion” and in the “Dehumanization” factors, followed by high Burnout level for these factors. This demonstrates that professors declared feeling physical and mental fatigue, feeling of being required to the fullest, or adopting distant attitudes in relation to work²². The “Emotional exhaustion” is considered the preceding characteristic and central factor of the syndrome, often being the gateway to the other dimensions²³.

These feelings can be attributed to the fact that the three courses studied are not with the complete faculty board, whether by the delay in hirings or by the insufficient number of vacancies aimed at the courses. It is necessary for full professors to take a longer workload than the stipulated in the institutional regulations, as well as needing to work in several administrative activities that would not be of their competencies, such as participation in procedures for purchases of materials or books for courses that are still under construction. Araújo et al.²⁴ highlight the large number of students and courses offered at universities without the corresponding number of professors, infrastructure, and material resources as factors contributing to the increase in the responsibilities of professors, with repercussions on mental health. The literature also points out that, since the activities are not finished in the working environment, professors are obliged to develop tasks – correcting tests, preparing lessons, and doing research – in shifts beyond those already stipulated²⁵, contributing to greater burden of work.

At least 24.5% of participants reported presenting high level of emotional exhaustion, dehumanization, or disappointment with the work. In a study performed in Holland with 437 professors of the medicine course, 23.4% of participants presented emotional exhaustion²⁶. In a study carried out on Paraíba with elementary school teachers, 33.6% of teachers showed high level of emotional exhaustion, 8.3% showed high level of dehumanization, and 43.4% showed low level of professional satisfaction².

The variables “being female” and “not being married” presented statistically significant correlation to the high score in the “Emotional exhaustion” factor. Different from this study, in which being female was a protective factor, the results of Guido et al.²⁷ show that women are more vulnerable to illness by the workload they assume. Many women, besides working, have as their responsibility the household chores and the care of the children, occupational roles traditionally intended for this gender²⁷.

The variable “not being married” also presented significant correlation with high score on “Emotional exhaustion” factor, corroborating the study of Nabergoi and Bottinelli²⁸, which attributes to the affective stability in the family environment the protection factor for Burnout Syndrome. On the other hand, the study of Gonçalves et al.¹¹ points out the single group as those with lesser worries with family and marital issues, being more suited to the professional achievement and with less risk of illness. In the study of Carlotto⁶ with professors, the variables “gender” and “marital status” did not show relation with the evidenced Burnout levels, but correlations of “Emotional exhaustion” with the workload and the time for which they are teaching were found.

The “Dehumanization” and “Disappointment at work” factors do not present, in this research, statistically significant correlation with sociodemographic variables. In other studies, such as that of Carlotto⁶, “Dehumanization” was related to low age and the high amount of hours aimed at research and in the classroom; on the other hand, the “Disappointment at work” factor was related to the number of activities that professors need to develop in teaching.

Although the majority of teachers do not present the high level in “Emotional exhaustion” and/or “Dehumanization” factors to characterize them “at risk of being with Burnout”, this level contains the second highest number of professors, with a prevalence of 26.5% and 30.6% in each factor respectively. The development of Burnout occurs gradually and insidiously, and it may take years or decades for the individual to be aware of

the illness⁶. Thus, these findings deserve attention to the monitoring of psychosocial and organizational factors of the work that may interfere with the quality of life at the work environment¹, in addition to being essential to consider the other dimensions that are inherent in the teaching activities – political, historical, social, and economic – and that can interfere with the health conditions of these professionals²⁸. Only by means of surveillance problems can be recognized and new possibilities to promote/maintain health and prevent the onset of diseases in this professional category can be pointed out.

When combining the three factors that compose the professional exhaustion, only 6.1% of participants present high level of Burnout, but the criterion established in the research does not necessarily require the presence of the three factors at high level. To this overall risk, only holding a Bachelor's degree in Humanities was significantly statistically correlated to attribute a high score. This group of professors consists of sociologists and psychologists. Their university education is specifically aimed at the analysis of personal and/or social behaviors, which may have contributed to an increased awareness about their working environment and the factors that may potentially make them ill, increasing the score to high levels of Burnout.

We verify that, in almost its entirety, the survey respondents reported engaging in at least one activity to reduce daily stress, highlighting physical and cultural activities and social participation as the most mentioned. Participation in occupations outside the workplace is normally chosen by their own interests and according to the pleasure and satisfaction that they bring to them²⁹. With this, the restorative rest and sufficient energy to perform the required activities to come are obtained. To participate in other activities that have no relationship with the labor context potentially contributes to the reduction of tensions and suffering in the work environment²⁸ and directly influences the way professors think, feel, and act with/in their work.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study derive from the own methodological strategy adopted and from the selection

within the object of study. This is a cross-sectional study, without possibilities of monitoring of factors that can contribute to the onset of Burnout over the years. In addition, the study population was restricted to a group of professors of a campus of the federal institute and by the size of the sample; thus, the authors suggest caution for the generalization of the results observed.

The results, however, are important for consideration of the factors already potentially stressors and to decision-making within preventive measures and of health promotion that can be adopted in this labor context. In addition, the study supports other research on this theme of such important social repercussion, as well as it serves as a basis for other projects aimed at humanization of the working conditions of teachers. Studies with larger sample number and with teachers from several institutions and with different working times are needed to better understand the phenomenon in the country. A qualitative analysis of the phenomenon may contribute to the better understanding of the stressors and health promoters, favoring the intervention process and the organization of the work environment in such a way that this can be a source of health and welfare.

CONCLUSION

About a quarter of the participants presented symptoms compatible with Burnout Syndrome. "Being female" was characterized as a protective factor, whereas "not being married" presented a significant association with Burnout. The dehumanization of the labor activity was the item with highest percentage of high level, reported by 30.6% of participants. The presence of mental and emotional exhaustion, fatigue and depression, are often work-related, directly impacting on their performance and leading to decreased effectiveness, health, and welfare of teachers.

Given the multifactorial nature of the Burnout Syndrome, the reflection on the teaching working process and organization must encompass not only micro-social intervention measures of personal relationships, but especially the macro-social and organizational spheres, aiming at the construction of a space able to generate health and welfare.

Authors' Contribution: LDB Massa - participated in the conception, data collection, methodology, and final writing; TSS Silva - participated in data collection, and final writing; ISVB Sá - participated in data collection, and final writing; BCS Barreto - participated in data collection, and final writing; PHTQ Almeida - participated in the conception, methodology, and final writing; TB Pontes - participated in the conception, methodology, and final writing.

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