

# STRESS IN RELATIONSHIP WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF PERSONALITY

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## Abstract:

*To efficiently manage human resources, we need to understand the factors that influence how employees behave in the work environment. For this we must take into account the fundamental characteristics of human beings. Personality refers to the individual's behavior and the way it is coordinated and organized in the interaction of human beings with the environment. Personality traits are moderators of the relationship between stress factors and stress reactions. Well-being, employee behavior and performance are strongly influenced by the work environment, being related to a new concept of organizational health. The research carried out in the organizational area also concerns the occupational stress, the individual differences being especially important in the relationship stress factors / constraints of stress.*

**Keywords:** *Stress, behavior, human resources, personality*

**JEL Classification:** *I15, J24, O15*

## Introduction

A syndrome of the new millennium, the word "stress" has become one of the most pronounced words, as an American study places it as the second most frequent in human language after „communication”.

Seldomly seen as something positive (eustress), the stress has become an usual culprit for all ailments, being used more and more often for most diverse cases.

Different types of personalities can turn, in some cases, in stress-generating sources. Unfortunately, according to the latest statistics, personality disorder tends to grow even larger, society today seeking to develop and maintain a collective neurosis through the values and principles it promotes [<http://www.consultanta-psihologica.com/influenta-factorilor-de-personalitate-asupra-stresului/>] (Accessed on September 16, 2018, 11:13)]

Vulnerability to stress is not only an algebraic sum of personality data that facilitates, more or less, the "stress entry" or amplitude of an individual's reaction to stress. It is constituted by a dynamic, interactive pattern of these stable personality traits but often required as part of a relatively stereotyped behavior [<http://www.umfcv.ro/files/c/u/Curs%205%20Psihologie%20Medicala%20-%20Vulnerabilitatea%20psihica%20la%20stres.pdf>] (Accessed on September 16, 2018, at 11:16)].

## Methodology

As I have studied and I have based my studies on various sources of information (specialized literature, case studies, media articles, various organization reports and so on).

In this paper I have attempted to summarize the relationship between types of personality and stress, how the personality of the employees influences workplace behavior, the implications for human resources specialists and for the management of the company, implications resulting from the stress approach as being closely related to the personality of the individuals.

## 1. The notion of personality

The notion of personality has a broad meaning and refers to the behavior of the individual and the way this behavior is coordinated and organized in human interaction with the environment. Personality can be described in terms of personality types or traits [Amstrong, 2003]

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Authors such as Kobasa (1979), Cronkite, Moos (1984), Lazarus, Folkman, Goldberger (1986) consider that individual differences are the result not only of environmental factors but also of personality factors in their struggle with stress sources.

The main mediators in determining potential activators or stress factors are: the character, defense mechanisms, personality predispositions, conflicts, cognitive style.

**Personality factors** that help maintain health under pressure at work:

1. *awareness of its own value*, which is a buffer between stress and its impact, reducing workplace stress factors, especially role conflict and labor overload..

Awareness of one's own value is "*persuading a person of his / her capacities to mobilize the cognitive and motivational resources necessary for the successful accomplishment of the given tasks*" [Stoica, 2007]. It therefore refers to the individual's confidence to have skills that enable him to achieve performance in a certain behavior.

A correct perception of its own value leads to the expectation of success, which generates perseverance in the face of stressful situations. It is associated with focus on the problem and increased motivation.

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2. *locus of control* is the individual's perception of the forces that determine the rewards / punishments associated with the behavior he approached. The locus of control is the extent to which the individual thinks he can control the events that influence his life [[https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Locus\\_de\\_control](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Locus_de_control) (Accessed on August 9, 2017; at 12:50)].

The place of control, depending on how we perceive the causality of events in our lives, can be:

- <sup>1</sup> *internal locus of control (LCI)* – the belief that the merit of success / responsibility for failure lies in the qualities, abilities / errors, faults of the person, not related to pressure factors or external events.

Power and control of the person have the ability to influence life's events and work results.

- <sup>2</sup> *external locus of control (LCE)* – refers to the idea that the source of positive / negative events is the power of others, destiny, fate.

Most people are between the two LCI and LCE situations.

- <sup>3</sup> *the sense of coherence* that on a higher level leads to a less threatening assessment of stress factors, a reduction in emotional and physiological reactivity, the adoption of coping mechanisms appropriate to the situation, etc.

The sense of coherence is defined as a global cognitive orientation that expresses the degree to which a person is convinced that:

- <sup>4</sup> has sufficient resources to cope with stimuli;
- <sup>5</sup> requests have purpose and meaning;
- <sup>6</sup> internal and external stimuli are predictable and explainable.

The way we interpret workplace stress factors is influenced by the feeling of consistency, which has a protective effect in interacting with labor pressures. But in the absence of features such as skills and abilities, this feature is not a useful tool in stress management.

3. *robustness*, allows to overcome unfavorable circumstances through a transformative and active adjustment style.

Robustness is defined by: locus of internal control (LCI), persistence for the intended purpose, addressing change in a positive manner.

4. *extraversion* is the ability of the person to orientate himself towards the outside, an individual's preference for the outside world of things and people, the need to share



- managerial behaviors.

When the stress level is high or very high, there are changes in the behavioral area:

**Table no. 1**

**Behavioral area under conditions of high stress**

<b>Behavioral area (behaviors and attitudes)</b>	
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Effects</b>
Language	Stuttering, reducing speech fluency, reducing the ability to respond satisfactorily to others
Interests	Reduce / lose of interest in passions, hobbies
Absence	Increases the number of absences at work
Stimulus	Increasing consumption of tobacco, alcohol, various substances
Energy	The energy level fluctuates, but the trend is decreasing
Sleep	The phenomenon of insomnia appears / intensifies
Relationships	There is a tendency to suspect, to find a guilty
Behavioral changes	There are unexpected or even strange reactions, tics
Suicide	Suicidal ideas appear, sometimes put into practice

*Source: Melgosa J. 2000 : 45*

**3. Type A and B personalities and their behavior at work**

In principle, there are categories of people:

- who feel good when they have a stressful lifestyle;
- who can only handle a quiet, calm lifestyle;
- who adapt to both stressful and stress-free situations.

The Type A and Type B personality theory dates back to the late 1950s. Then it was developed by cardiologists Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman, having as a starting point the observation of a connection between the different types of behavior and the incidence of heart disease. They noticed that the seats in the waiting room showed signs of uneven wear, only visible on the arms of the seats and on the front edge. This suggests a nervous behavior from the patients who were folding in the chair and were actually only standing on the edge of the chair [<http://www.amcor.ro/menu/Comisii-profesionale/Professional-Corner/Personalitate-de-tip-A-i-de-tip-B-i-comportamentul-lor-la-locul-de-munc.html> (Accessed on August 9, 2017; at 13:20)].

**Table no. 2**

**The features of the A and B personality types**

<b>Type A personality</b>	<b>Type B personality</b>
They live in a constant state of stress and have a false sense of urgency	Relaxing lifestyle
Projects and objectives must be met as urgently, the notion of dead time being non-existent	Have more patience and attention to detail, focus more time on the project they are developing; are more flexible and creative
Anxious and often hostile to their colleagues	Have a good attitude towards those around him or her
Exaggerated, independent, ambitious, eager for rapid promotion	Pleased with what they do
Competitive, eager to be first	Avoid competition, go with the wave
Unaffected	Influenced by others
They plan his day rigorously, noting everything on the agenda	They do not have activity planning
They become nervous when they have no activity	They can sit for several hours uninterrupted
They work even when relaxing	They respect the rest program, they like to relax
They speak loudly, have no patience to listen to others	Listen patiently, do not get too involved in conversations

*Source: Friedman and Rosenman, 1974*

Individuals with A-type behavior experience a permanent time crunch, carry out several activities at the same time, and try to achieve results in short periods of time. The toxic component of the pattern is impatience. Type A respondents consider that they are operating in a very demanding environment, and they do not have the resources to deal with. They can become cynical and apathetic during the occupational track. These people are most vulnerable to stress, identifying themselves with the neurotic outburst. Stress affects to a greater extent the physical, mental or physical health of people who correspond to Type A of behavior than other people, and they have increased irritability.

Opposite type A behavior is type B behavior. Type B people are less confrontational and relaxed, they do things slower, their stress-fighting is less frenetic.

Although job requirements are the same, the way Type A and Type B individuals perceive it is different. These differences of perception make A-type more out-of-control than those of type B.

Both types of personalities have strengths and weaknesses, both of which can be as productive. The ideal job is where there is a proportional combination of A and B type people, because both types can learn from others, the diversity of perspectives being a stimulating factor of creativity. The type A perfectionist can be complemented by Type B Flexible. Type A individuals can teach B-type to become more prompt when needed, B-type giving calm and support in tense situations.

Type A or B personalities represent behavioral tendencies, not absolute data of the human personality. Each of them can build on their positive foundation and improve their performance at work. A mixed team of both Type A and Type B individuals is beneficial to the organization, although creating a pleasant atmosphere and managing individual differences is a challenge. But with investment in training and professional development of employees, as well as promoting the need for stress management and time management courses, the team can become a team with outstanding performance.

#### **4. C-type personality**

Unfortunately, in the face of stress, we are all vulnerable. We can become C type personality if we do not master the way our body reacts to stress-generating factors. The letter C defining behavior type C refers to Cortisol, the main stress hormone, and its level increases in stressful periods. When we face a stressful situation, the level of cortisol increases. If we are constantly stressed and unable to remove stress-generating factors, then the cortisol level will always be high, going beyond the normal limits.

It seems that individuals with type C personality are more likely to get cancer than others. Studies show that the disease is associated with anxiety, depression, introversion, hostility [\[http://psihoterapieintegrativadiana.blogspot.ro/2015/01/tipul-de-personalitate-ne-influenteaza.html\]](http://psihoterapieintegrativadiana.blogspot.ro/2015/01/tipul-de-personalitate-ne-influenteaza.html) (Accessed on September 5, 2017, at 10:10).

Characteristics of individuals with type of personality C: overly cooperating, always want to fulfill their promises, insecure, very patient, avoid conflicts, does not express negative emotions, feel inferior, anxious, adapts quickly.

#### **5. Personality psychodiagnostic**

In order to determine the personalities of the employees, psychological evaluation, now called psychodiagnostic, can be used and encouraged. Psycho-diagnostics is a precious tool for human resource managers within companies, especially when it comes to employee selection processes.

*Personality psychodagnosis* involves psychometric testing for the purpose of hiring staff, career guidance, facilitating performance at work, and obtaining certifications. Practitioners can use a large number of personality questionnaires, their number being huge, but it is worth mentioning the most important [Iliescu & Sulea 2015]:

**Classic Personality Inventory of the "Golden Age":** California Psychological Inventory (CPI), 16PF (16 Personality Factors), Eysenck Adult Quizzes (EPQ-R and IVE), FPI (Freiburger Persönlichkeitinventar).

**Big Five Inventory:** NEO PI-R (NEO Personality, Revised), NEO Five-Factor Inventory, Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ), BFA (Big Five Adjectives).

**Nonverbal personality inventories:** NPV (Nonverbal Personality Inventory), FFNPQ (Five-Factor Nonverbal Personality Inventory), SL-TDI (Singer-Loomis Type Deployment Inventory).

**Domestic questionnaires of personality:** ABCD-M (Mihaela Minulescu - Bucharest), Big Five Plus (Ticu Constantin - Iasi), DECAS (Florin Alin Sava – Timisoara).

### Conclusion

What's stressful to one person may be all in a day's work for another. The difference appears to lie in our perceptions of various events. Mental health professionals believe personality plays a significant role in how we perceive stress.

In their work, management and those in charge of the organization's human resource must take into account *individual differences* (in the definition of posts, staff assessment, counseling, training programs, it is necessary to keep in mind that people are different). We do not have to judge the personalities simplistically, people are complex, we do not have to rely on clichés. Leaders need to understand that the pressure they exert on employees creates stress, so they will become counterproductive. Our assumptions about the reasons and causes of other people's behavior are seldom true. Employees need to know what behavior is expected of them, and there should be no incompatibilities in the definition of jobs. In order to minimize workplace stress, we also need to be aware of the potential of conflict between roles.

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