

**DIRECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND WORK STRESS OF THE TEACHING STAFF:
A GAZE FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**GESTÃO DIRETIVA E ESTRESSE LABORAL DO PROFISSIONAL DOCENTE: UM
OLHAR A PARTIR DA PANDEMIA COVID-19**

**GESTIÓN DIRECTIVA Y ESTRÉS LABORAL DEL PERSONAL DOCENTE: MIRADA
DESDE LA PANDEMIA COVID-19**

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ABSTRACT: The article aims to describe the directive management with the work stress of teachers since the Covid-19 pandemic at the San Ignacio de Viña del Mar School, Valparaíso Region, Chile. For this, a descriptive and exploratory quantitative approach was used. The participants were 87 educators from the referred institution, taking a census sample for the purpose of the research. The results indicated that teachers do not establish collaborative relationships with their co-workers through connectivity and they need to consider skills and abilities when carrying out educational praxis. The findings found affirm that the school manager does not articulate the necessary resources for the proper functioning of the educational body. The pandemic situation does not have a significant impact on the results of perception of work stress. This can be explained in the effort involved for educators to carry out their pedagogical work.

KEYWORDS: Management. Directive. Stress. Teacher. Pandemic.

RESUMO: O artigo tem como objetivo descrever a gestão diretiva com o estresse laboral dos professores com a pandemia Covid-19 na Escola San Ignacio de Viña del Mar, Região de Valparaíso, Chile. Para tanto, utilizou-se uma abordagem quantitativa, descritiva e exploratória. Os participantes foram atendidos por 87 educadores da referida instituição, submetidos a exame de censo em função da intensificação da investigação. Os resultados indicam que os professores estabelecem relações de colaboração com seus colegas de trabalho por meio da conectividade e ainda há necessidade de considerar competências e habilidades na realização da práxis educacional. Os resultados constataram que o diretor da

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escola não articula os recursos necessários ao bom funcionamento do corpo docente. A situação de pandemia não tem impacto significativo sobre os resultados do estresse no trabalho percebido. Isso pode ser explicado pelo esforço que implica para o educador realizar seu trabalho pedagógico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Gestão. Diretiva. Estresse. Professor. Pandemia.*

RESUMEN: *El artículo tiene como objetivo describir la gestión directiva con el estrés laboral de los docentes desde la pandemia Covid-19 en la Escuela San Ignacio de Viña del Mar, Región Valparaíso, Chile. Para ello se utilizó un enfoque cuantitativo de tipo descriptivo y exploratorio. Los participantes fueron de 87 educadores de la institución referida, tomando una muestra censal por intención de la investigación. Los resultados indicaron que los docentes no establecen relaciones de colaboración con sus compañeros de trabajo mediante la conectividad y les hace falta considerar las habilidades y destrezas al momento de realizar la praxis educativa. Los hallazgos encontrados afirman que el gerente escolar no articula los recursos necesarios para el adecuado funcionamiento del organismo educativo. La situación de pandemia no tiene un impacto significativo en los resultados de percepción del estrés laboral. Esto puede explicarse en el esfuerzo que implica para los educadores realizar su labor pedagógica.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Gestión. Directiva. Estrés. Docente. Pandemia.*

Introduction

In Latin America, a limited number of studies on work stress were found; generating the need to develop more research on this topic. In addition, a large part of the questions are related to the occupational safety of employees regarding safety in their workplaces, infrastructure conditions, among others, leaving aside the situation of psychological, emotional and affective life of workers (MEJIA; CHACON; ENAMORADO; GARNICA; CHACÓN; ANDRÉS; GARCÍA, 2019).

It is relevant to expose the health crisis that is being experienced worldwide, which began in December 2019. This crisis was caused by pneumonia in Wuhan (Hubei, China) and in early 2020 COVID-19 began to spread across China (ETXEBARRIA; SANTAMARIA; GORROCHATEGUI; MONDRAGON, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has caused numerous deaths, people suffering from physical, psychological, mental disorders, anxiety, depression and stress. This pandemic brought with it a set of social isolation measures recommended by health authorities as part of preventive measures, without going into the most basic details (ESPADA *et al.*, 2020).

For this reason, educational management must take a position in the reconstruction of the human material in schools, appropriating the components in terms of objectives, talent of

teaching professionals, materials and finance in planning, organization, direction and control, from the perspective of the new challenges in the face of the changes that are emerging as a result of the pandemic. At the same time, apply an effective leadership based on the monitoring of the teacher in a virtual or distance way (LÓPEZ; GARCÍA; MARTÍNEZ, 2019).

It is necessary that the administrative team and teachers face the transformations assuming flexible cultures, that are capable to create a mood that guarantees the achievement of the proposed objectives and the strategies related to an effective management in transitory times (LÓPEZ; LÓPEZ; MARTÍNEZ; TOBÓN, 2018). In addition, tools should be used to manage the stress of teachers' work.

Stress represents a response to any physical, biological or psychosocial situation that the individual may experience at any given time as a result of performance at work, in an institution or at home. The stress caused by demanding work activities can cause certain physical and mental disorders and negative responses to the professional performance of employees (PALACIOS; MONTES DE OCA, 2017).

School institutions have been affected by political, environmental and social changes that have influenced teachers in their daily work activities. In turn, Chávez (2017) states that educators have an important role in the progress of a country and, in the practice of teaching, many actions are carried out, such as: academic, administrative, community, social, cultural, artistic, among others.

In Chile, the referred reality did not escape experiencing this problem, since with the confinement of teachers because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to implement a new mode of learning through remote or virtual teaching, without adequate work and connectivity conditions, without preparation in the use of technological tools and with longer working hours than they had done.

According to the study by Zuniga and Pizarro (2018, p. 173, our translation) it is stated that “emotional exhaustion regarding personal fulfillment at work and depersonalization, and personal fulfillment at work with depersonalization”. It means that in research that has been carried out with teaching professionals in Chile, stress stands out through exhaustion and depersonalization in the educator's work.

However, in the region of Valparaíso, at the school San Ignacio de Viña del Mar, through non-formal interviews, carried out by the zoom platform, some teachers from that institution explained that they feel very stressed at work, they are mentally and physically exhausted due to the number of hours they have to dedicate to their work. In addition, they

had to locate spaces in their homes and purchase computer equipment to teach and plan activities for elementary school students.

In this sense, the following question is asked: How does management management relate to the work stress of teachers in the Covid-19 pandemic? This seeks to respond to teaching professionals with a way to mediate stress regarding remote or virtual teaching. The study becomes relevant since it seeks to consolidate the well-being, anxiety and prevention of teaching professionals in order to mediate and strengthen the capacities to improve physical exhaustion, stress in the development of remote classes, the needed social and affective well-being in times of pandemic or transient educational management.

A look at directive management

The word management comes “etymologically from the Latin *gestio, gestionis*, composed of *gestus*” (CRUZATA; RODRÍGUEZ, 2016). The same word translates into actions or facts that are carried out by a group of individuals, in order to achieve proposed objectives, goals and strategies in a given organization. Management is determined by a profound worldview of real possibilities in an institution.

The directive management represents a quality exercise that demands a set of pedagogical-administrative capacities consistent with the changes and actions specific to the educational staff. In view of the application of functions, such as leadership, communication, decision making, organization, control and direction of the processes inherent to education (HERRERA, 2019).

Leadership emerges as one of the most relevant elements that requires an educational organization, becoming crystallized in an indispensable characteristic for those who form the management teams, giving more punctual tasks within the process of managing skills and abilities within their work performance (MIRANDA, 2016).

Teacher work stress

Stress consists of a accommodation device for people to be able to replace in a certain environment, which at times can be opposite to what is expected. The term stress is “derived from the Greek *stringere*: to cause tension, which, from the physical point of view, was defined as a response within the object, inherent to the structure and caused by an external force” (PORTERO, 2019, p. 22, our translation). In other words, the word stress refers to the factual situation that it can cause in a certain person.

Therefore, the term stress has become a common word today, which is why it is a relevant phenomenon, every day, in the modern life of citizens and the accelerated advance of information technologies and communication and globalization it is more present on the people day to day (VIDAL, 2018).

Stress is a functional reaction of the organism to a situation that is perceived as threatening or with excessive force, that is, it intervenes in the context, both internally and externally and in the conduct of individuals. In addition, it represents a protective device by which the body tries to adequately manifest each situation in which a person is. Rodríguez, Guevara and Viramontes (2017), stress is a process that is at stake in different elements, such as: the precise characteristics of the event, the cognitive appreciation and the tactics that the individual uses to face it.

Thus, occupational stress, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO *apud* CUBA, 2019), is related to the type of work activity and professional relationships with other co-workers. In addition, it corresponds with the demands of abundant work and when the interests or satisfactions of the jobs are not covered by the institution.

The stress on the teacher has been occurring due to the lack of tranquility that does not dissipate and that originates in unfavorable reactions in his body in which it attracts organic, psychological and behavioral mechanisms related to tiredness, confusions, excess of cigarettes and alcoholic drinks, among others; causing in the educator disorders of exhaustion and physical wear and tear, leading to diseases at the level of nerves, cardiovascular and mental (HERNÁNDEZ, 2018).

Likewise, it reflects on the conditions of the workplace, which is why, in the opportunities, they are not ideal for developing the teaching and learning process, the excessive workload, the elaboration of administrative procedures, the salary that does not cover the needs and interests according to the expectations that the teaching professional of Castrejón y Castrejón (2012). All of this contributes to higher levels of stress and, therefore, to health and effectiveness exhaustion of the teaching work (FERNÁNDEZ-PUIG *et al.*, 2015).

According to Oramas (2013), who exposes that teacher stress is associated with a process of discomfort, boredom, tiredness in teaching activities, represented by dissatisfaction with work, low self-esteem, absence from work, intention of their companions in abandonment education, despair, anguish, depression, illness, among other factors that affect the behavior of educators. All this gear of malaise and illnesses of the teacher is known as the burnout or exhaustion syndrome.

The burnout syndrome has been questioned by many scholars and researchers for a long time worldwide and each day the interest in furthering its study is increasing, which is why it is linked to the characteristics and symptoms that affect individuals, workers, mainly affecting those in the educational field (MÁRQUEZ; SEGOVIA, 2018).

The burnout syndrome, “known as burnt worker syndrome, is documented for the first time, within the scientific literature, in the United States in the initial works carried out by the American Herbert Freudenberger (1974)” (HERNÁNDEZ, 2018a, p. 35, our translation). It means that the studies carried out by Freudenberger related to the behavior of individuals is centered on the excessive effort of doing a work for continuous hours, which reaches a point where the person has access to the syndrome of running out or burning.

The syndrome is determined by the stage of extensive exhaustion accompanied by actions of irritation, boredom and demotivation that can affect the individual at work, family and personal contexts. (CARDENAS; MÉNDEZ; GONZÁLEZ, 2014). Burnout syndrome can be evidenced by the following symptoms: (a) Low personal fulfillment at work: a decrease in the expected results of work based on a negative self-assessment by the teacher; (b): Emotional exhaustion: Corresponds to the affective aspect, physical and mental exhaustion by the daily actions performed by the teacher and; (c) Depersonalization: Review the development of qualities and actions that are not very human for the performance of their work (CÁRDENAS; MÉNDEZ; GONZÁLEZ, 2014a).

Methodology

This work is a descriptive study, in attention to the search for specifying the important properties of people, groups or any other phenomenon that is submitted to analysis and measures or evaluates several aspects, dimensions or components of the phenomenon to be investigated and its purpose is to analyze the reality of the facts, based on the application, mainly, of a quantitative methodology, complementing with an instrument for the collection of data in order to know the complexity of the object of study.

The study was part of the quantitative approach of the descriptive and exploratory type in relation to its general objective (HERNÁNDEZ; MENDOZA, 2018). In this sense, this research aimed to describe the directive management and work stress of the teaching professional, from a look at the Covid-19 pandemic, at the San Ignacio School of Viña del Mar, Valparaíso Region, Chile, with a population of 87 teachers who work at the institution, with a sample of 87 teachers.

Regarding directive management, the dimensions analyzed were: planning, indicator: Integration of resources. Organization with its indicators: Work distribution and work coordination. Skills, indicators: Ability to manage and leadership. As for the variable: work stress, two indicators are placed: Emotional indicator: Emotional exhaustion, dehumanization; while the dimension: Quality of work indicator: Low personal performance of work.

Thus, the results of the quantitative analysis were evidenced and are presented with tables, seeking a better inference and interpretation of reality, as well as indicating the recommendations formulated by carrying out the respective research. Data analysis is organized according to the variables: Directive management and work stress. Regarding the treatment of analyzes the work is based on quantitative data on the Likert scale for the assessment of the fifteen items present in the structured questionnaire for the research, the following techniques were adopted: Cronbach's alpha (α), corrected item-total correlation and exploratory factor analysis.

Results

When applying the survey to teachers at the San Ignacio School of Viña del Mar, Valparaíso Region, Chile, we reached the following results: As can be seen in Table 1, the absolute frequencies and the relative percentages (%) of each one of the alternatives of responses present in the evaluation of the indicators are shown. The distribution of data is, in turn, denoted by item and indicator. The latter being the integration of the teaching professional.

Table 1 – Variable: Directive management, dimension: Planning, indicator: Integration of the teaching professional

Alternatives	Absolute Frequencies			Percent Relative Frequencies (%)		
	Item 1	Item 2	Integration of the teaching professional	Item 1	Item 2	Integration of the teaching professional
Fully agree	0	0	0	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Agree	6	4	6	6,67%	0,00%	6,67%
Neither agree nor disagree	46	16	41	53,33%	20,00%	46,67%
Disagree	11	51	28	13,33%	60,00%	33,33%

Fully disagree	24	16	12	26,67%	20,00%	13,33%
Totals	87	87	87	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
Item N° 1	<i>Are the main strategies implemented in order to produce improvements in current educational practices?</i>					
Item N° 2	<i>Does the manager carry out actions that allow school staff to make sense of the change on their own?</i>					

Source: Devised by the authors

The percentage distribution (%) of the results that showed the items is clear, whose purpose was to evaluate the indicator Integration of the teaching professional. It is worth mentioning that the answer alternatives available in the instrument were five (05), Fully agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, fully disagree. Additionally, the assessed indicator responds to the Planning level, which in turn derives from the directive management variable.

In the light of the data obtained, it is observed that 46.66% of the subjects that are part of the sample, responded negatively to the items that evaluated the indicator Integration of resources. An increasingly less alarming reality, since, the educational institution, as a source that generates criteria and learning, it should be pioneering in this regard.

In addition, 46.67% of the subjects marked the intermediate or neutral option on the instrument, which means that in this representation of the sample they did not lean towards one of the options that evaluated positively and negatively on the indicator. Within this context, what is clear is that 6.67% of the subjects believe that the directive management applies elements that allow the professional to integrate, dynamizing the work that is carried out daily in the institution, a minimal representation that however, without a doubt, gives scope to make many readings, all of them questioning the work of the principal and affirming that, from the school administration, integration is not promoted. Finally, the alternatives of agreement or fully agreement had no representation whatsoever, a fact that highlights the little initiative that exists since school management when integrating the different resources, all of which are indispensable for the proper exercise of the educational center.

Table 2 – Variable: Work stress, Dimension: Emotional, Indicator: Emotional exhaustion

Alternatives	Absolute Frequencies			Percent Relative Frequencies (%)		
	Item 3	Item 4	Emotional exhaustion	Item 3	Item 4	Emotional exhaustion
Fully agree	0	0	0	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Agree	6	12	6	6,67%	13,30%	6,67%

Neither agree nor disagree	29	58	52	33,33%	66,67%	60,00%
Disagree	35	17	29	40,00%	20,00%	33,33%
Fully disagree	17	0	0	20,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Totals	87	87	87	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
Item 3	<i>Based on school management, an effective educational system is provided that provides students with the right framework to develop their potential.</i>					
Item 4	<i>The principal integrates the student's family nucleus in the various activities carried out by the school organization.</i>					

Source: Devised by the authors

The results obtained undoubtedly offer a wide catalog of readings, among them, 6.67% of the sample positively affirms that the directive management provides an effective educational system capable of providing students with the ideal framework in which to develop their emotions, besides that, this small percentage affirms that the director urges to integrate the family in the various activities developed in the educational institution. Given the minimum percentage that supports these statements, it cannot be considered as absolute.

Additionally, 60.00% of the subjects chose to mark the option that corresponds to the intermediate one, that is, neither in agreement nor in disagreement. It is worth noting the wide acceptance that this alternative response had, largely overcoming the options that positively and negatively evaluate the indicator. Finally, thirty-three point thirty-three percent (33.33%), which remained in the sample, expressed disagreement with the assessed indicator.

Table 3 – Variable: Work stress, Dimension: Emotional, Indicator: Depersonalization

Alternatives	Absolute Frequencies			Percent Relative Frequencies (%)		
	Item 5	Item 6	Depersonalization	Item 5	Item 6	Depersonalization
Fully agree	0	12	12	0,00%	13,33%	13,33%
Agree	28	63	34	33,33%	73,33%	40,00%
Neither agree nor disagree	6	12	41	6,67%	13,33%	46,67%
Disagree	41	0	0	46,67%	0,00%	0,00%
Fully disagree	12	0	0	13,33%	0,00%	0,00%
Totals	87	87	87	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
Item 5	<i>The teacher establishes collaborative relationships with his co-workers through connectivity.</i>					
Item 6	<i>In the school institution, the essential functions of the teacher are guaranteed in order to strengthen the work within the institution.</i>					

Source: Devised by the authors

Table 3 shows that 53.33% of the sample positively evaluates the depersonalization indicator. In other words, a large percentage of teachers do not establish collaborative relationships with their co-workers through connectivity, that is, they do not help each other in the development of tasks that must be established during educational activities. Data that offers endless readings, since, as is well observed, the management of the teacher in the face of the tasks he must develop with his colleagues was not positive, except for this indicator.

It is speculated that this is because some of the guarantees that they should offer to the teaching professional are not strictly related to the work of their colleagues. Furthermore, it can be interpreted from the point of view of dehumanization, that management is not the best, it is not a hundred percent determining factor, since it can guarantee an optimum collaborative work adapted to the needs of the surroundings by the staff teacher.

In turn, 46.67% of the selected sample marked the option corresponding to the intermediate scale. This translates into not establishing a position in a negative or positive way in relation to the assessed indicator. Finally, the disagreed and totally disagreed alternatives had no representation in this assessment.

Table 4 – Variable: Work stress, Dimension: Quality of work, Indicator: low personal fulfillment in work

Alternatives	Absolute Frequencies			Percent Relative Frequencies (%)		
	Item 7	Item 8	Low personal fulfillment in work	Item 7	Item 8	Low personal fulfillment in work
Fully Agree	0	6	6	0,00%	6,67%	6,67%
Agree	12	6	6	13,33%	6,67%	6,67%
Neither agree nor disagree	6	29	6	6,67%	33,33%	6,67%
Disagree	23	34	57	26,67%	40,00%	66,67%
Fully disagree	46	12	12	53,33%	13,33%	13,33%
Totals	87	87	87	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
Item 7	<i>The teacher considers his skills and abilities when carrying out educational praxis.</i>					
Item 8	<i>The teacher feels satisfied when evaluating his skills with the results obtained.</i>					

Source: Devised by the authors

It is observed that 80% percent of the sample negatively evaluates the low indicator of personal fulfillment at work. In other words, the percentage mentioned states that the teacher does not consider his skills and abilities when carrying out educational practice, does not generate confidence, nor allow himself to participate in different decisions. In addition, teachers claim that their results are not satisfactory from their point of view. In addition,

6.67% percent of respondents chose the neutral or intermediate category, which implies that they did not specify their position in this regard. Also, 13.34% percent of subjects evaluate as positive the actions promoted by the school management in favor of optimizing teamwork within the educational institution.

Discussion

In the results of the variable management in the planning and integration of the teaching staff dimension, we can say that school managers do not articulate the necessary resources for the proper functioning of the educational agency, nor are socially integrated into the administration's working group, to increase their willingness to create.

The data, presented above, are far from the approach performed by Sepulveda and Valdebenito (2019), which suggest how the management professional articulates the material and human elements within the organization to adequately respond to the needs and interests of the educational institution. If there is not a harmonious integration process within the school, its proper functioning will be compromised, since the integration process as a solidification mechanism of the parts allows the fluid to enter the system. In addition, the results obtained differ from Reyes *et al.* (2017), who explain that management represents an indispensable competitiveness strategy for carrying out actions and administrative and academic resources are necessary for effective management; leadership being the primary element to guide educational processes, ethical principles and to undertake changes and transformations in times of crisis.

After knowing the results, we can say that the teachers surveyed preferred, in a large percentage, to choose the intermediate scale, since it seems that teachers have their level of responsibility within this indicator. This is supported by Parihuaman (2017), who states that high levels of emotional exhaustion end up having a negative influence on expectations in the educational context when successfully facing the incorporation into professional life with adequate preparation.

Therefore, it is necessary to establish measures that, at the educational level, help to avoid the appearance of emotional exhaustion in the teaching professional, as this would have greater repercussions on well-being and psychological adjustment. This, in turn, would make it possible to face the incorporation into the labor reality with greater maturity and expectations of success.

There is speculation that this result is a product of this approach. However, if the administration does not have the necessary conditions to develop a harmonious educational process according to the student's requirements, it will be impossible to achieve the expected academic performance, leading to emotional distress for the teacher, due to the failure to complete school tasks.

In the variable work stress, dimension: emotional, indicator: depersonalization, it is appreciated that teachers do not establish some collaborative relationships with their work colleagues through connectivity, that is, they do not help in the development with their partners, it was not positive, except this indicator (ALVITES-HUAMANÍ, 2019). There is speculation that this is because some of the compromises that must be made, because teachers are not closely related to the work of their fellow teachers.

The above is supported by the points raised by Abad (2018) in which he indicates the approach of guarantees that the educational institution must provide to maximize the essential functions of students, given that part of these guarantees are provided by the teacher in the classroom. The school manager is the one who assumes the highest level of responsibility, since he or she is the guarantor that the processes are carried out according to the established guidelines.

The variable: work stress, dimension: quality of work, indicator: low personal fulfillment at work, the teacher does not take advantage of his skills and is negatively assessed so that this negative assessment affects his ability to do the job and the type of relationship they establish with the people they serve, producing dissatisfaction with themselves and with the results of their work. This reality is far from the approach proposed by Osorio and Cárdenas (2017), who propose that this incurs in the decrease in personal self-esteem, the frustration of expectations and the manifestations of stress at the physiological, cognitive and behavioral levels.

Likewise, the data are supported by Villarruel *et al.* (2018). Low personal fulfillment, when prolonged, can cause or decrease the efforts and capacities of teachers to focus on their work, leaving aside the responsibilities of the teaching-learning process, poor professional development and the fact that they are conceived as exhausted.

Finally, the results achieved here are of interest to both school principals and teachers, as well as to public education authorities. The regular application of this type of study in the different educational establishments should allow the detection of symptoms of acute stress and, then, corrective actions to be taken by the authorities and the administrative team to improve the teachers' stress.

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