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STRESS EXPRESSION AT WORK AND TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE IT: GENDER AND AGE ASPECTS

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Abstract. The article systematically presents the issues of stress at work in the context of scientific literature; the factors that cause stress at work are analysed, and techniques for managing stress are provided. Research objective: after examining the factors that cause stress at work to provide techniques for managing stress. Analytical descriptive, quantitative and statistical research methods were applied. When using a quantitative research strategy and considering respondents' assessment (n=303), the stress situation at work was identified, the reasons causing stress at work were determined, and techniques for managing stress at work were provided. After analysing the stress situation at work, it was found that more than three-thirds of the study participants experienced stress at work often or very often. In contrast, only a few participants experienced it rarely or very rarely. Whereas a comparative data analysis from a gender perspective showed that stress expression at work is more common in women than men, after providing a comparative study in groups of participants of different age groups, it was found that more stress at work experienced a larger portion of the study participants under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age compared to those aged 46 and over. The research results showed that the factors impacting stress at work are these: the lack of training on stress reduction in the organisation, heavy workload, too high demands at work which do not match the knowledge and skills of employees, the lack of time to complete tasks, as well as underestimation of a person's efforts and encouragement for high results, employees are not provided with professional development and career opportunities. According to the research results, it is evident that managing stress at work should be implemented comprehensively by covering the aspect of work organisation planning, ensuring workload and professional development opportunities, improving a motivation system, creating a favourable psychological climate, recognising employees' efforts and training how to cope with stress. On the other hand, while implementing the stress management system at work, it is appropriate to consider gender and age. The research results provided insights into the reasons causing stress at work and the possibilities for its management. The obtained results will have lasting value in scientific discussion, since guidelines for stress reduction at work with particular attention to gender and age peculiarities are provided.

Keywords: stress at work; the reasons causing stress at work; stress management; employees; gender; age

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JEL Classifications: J50, J53

1. Introduction

Changes occurring in the workplace, accelerating pace of life, improving technologies, a rapidly developing service sector, work organisation peculiarities, the increasing workload, task completion speed and the increasing requirements for work performance in a dynamic and constantly changing labour market inevitably affect the health of employees, their life and the quality of work. In this context, stress at work and its management become urgent issues and encourage to consider the signs of stress at work, its sources, dynamics and assessment, as well as techniques preventing stress (Dutta & Mishra, 2024; Gunasekara et al., 2024). It should be noted that the analysis of stress at work and its determining factors is not a new phenomenon, and it is widely discussed. Work quality is perceived as an integral part of the quality of life (Cueva-Pila, Suazo, &

Ortiz, 2023), and attention to studying stress management at work increases (Bushi, 2022; Schwarz, Feldmann & Schmitz, 2022; Lobo et al., 2023).

The relevance of managing stress at work is presented in scientific literature by showing its negative consequences experienced by individuals and organisations. Scientists point out that stress can cause physical and psychosomatic disorders (Leszczynska, 2023). Researchers point out that stress is a factor causing economic and social losses and admit that the inability to identify and manage the effects of stress can be costly to the organisation. Scientists admit that stress at work can reduce employee engagement in work activities and impact employee turnover, what has a negative impact on productivity indicators (Lee, 2018; Imran & Ayub, 2017; Koszela, 2020; Lutfiani Putri Windia, Singh & Rashid, 2021). These facts show that managing stress at work is an integral part of organisation's human resource management, and is causally related to ensuring the physical and mental well-being of employees and operational efficiency, as well as work productivity and the quality of results.

The following questions define the research problem: What are the factors causing stress at work? How does an assessment of stress at work differ in different age and gender groups? What are ways to manage stress at work?

Taking into account the need to implement stress management at work based on the insights of scientific literature, *the research objective is to examine the factors causing stress at work and to determine its management directions.*

Research tasks:

1. To justify theoretically the causes of stress at work and techniques to manage it.
2. To investigate and compare the differences of stress among women and men and different age groups.
3. To identify ways of stress management at work.

The issues of stress management at work are being discussed in various aspects. However, there is a lack of research investigating relationship between of employee age and gender and stress experienced at work. Therefore, it is unclear what causes stress at work to employees of different ages and what impact the expression of stress at work in women and men. In this context, it is necessary to investigate the factors causing stress at work, considering gender and age differences and suggest measures for stress reduction. The research is important since it allowed us to propose ways of managing stress at work taking into account particular work environment characteristics. In future, the study could be extended by more representative or cross-border samples and incorporating the elements of the qualitative method into the survey (e.g., open questions, group discussion (focus group), etc.); regression modelling and factor analysis could provide more insights and supplement quantitative conclusions.

2. Causes of stress at work and its management opportunities: theoretical aspect

To ensure the organisation's competitive advantage, functioning, and development, particular attention has to be paid to human resources; therefore, the issues of managing stress at work in today's labour market are of major importance. The scientific literature describes stress as a mismatch between a person's needs and coping capabilities when faced with unusually demanding requirements and a lack of autonomy (Zeuge et al., 2023).

Stress is associated with protective reactions occurring in the human body as a response to certain stimuli (stressors) and irritants or adverse factors and stressful situations (Rebok et al., 2019), which an individual assesses as aggravating or exceeding his existing resources and opportunities and causing danger to his well-being (Cueva-Pila, Suazo & Ortiz, 2023). Whereas, when stress is experienced in the work environment, the research of this sphere is oriented to the identification of stressors and defining the signs of stressor assessment when relating it to a professional aspect, for example, job specifics of general teachers (Sperati et al., 2024), health professionals (Haemmig, 2024), lawyers (Pierson et al., 2017; Valickas & Vanagaitė, 2019).

When analysing stress effects at work, it was noted that stress impacts an employee, the quality of his work, and work productivity (Kim et al., 2017). On the one hand, experienced stress can positively impact a person, and

the reasons for it could be positive for an organisation and a person. Stress, related to positive consequences, is called eustress, which is described as a positive voltage promoting efficiency and having a positive impact on the physical and mental functioning of the body, which corresponds to the excitement caused by new challenges. Even though stress is a normal reaction to many circumstances, it can also have negative consequences. In contrast, long-lasting stress, which is called distress, is related to negative experiences and impaired cognitive function, which can cause negative consequences to a person and his work results (Vyas & Luk, 2011; Cottini et al., 2022), as well as turnover indicators (Lutfiani Putri Windia, Singh & Rashid, 2021). Usually, negative consequences of stress are related to physical disorders and health problems (Charkhabi et al., 2024). Leszczynska (2023) analysed the negative consequences of stress on a person's health and distinguished the cognitive, physiological, and behavioural manifestations of stress. However, some scientists found out that stress at work can not only cause negative consequences to a person's physical and psychological health, but it could be one of the reasons for employee absenteeism and turnover, increased accidents, poor work performance and work quality. The research carried out by Main, Glozier and Wright (2005) showed that work results of employees who experienced stress at work decreased by seven times compared to those who did not experience stress at work. The latter opinion was supported by some scientists who admit that stress at work is related to decreased operational efficiency and a lack of work productivity. Valickas and Vanagaitė (2019) state that stress at work can cause decreased concentration, hasty irrational decisions and poor performance results. The physical and psychological health of employees impact their work productivity. Some scientists note that stress at work decreases employee motivation and desire to go to work (Goldstein et al., 2017). Stress at work negatively affects job satisfaction. Moreover, constant stress at work suppresses the person's need for self-development and improvement (Vyas & Luk, 2011) or even causes burnout (Žiedelis, 2019). A social aspect states that constant stress at work can impact more frequent conflicts at the workplace, harm relationships with colleagues or even affect relationships with family members. Constant stress at work can influence employee behaviour and mutual relations. Therefore, stress at work not only causes physical and psychological disorders but can also affect employee turnover and absenteeism, decreased work efficiency and quality, and negative consequences, which can cause significant costs to the organisation.

After estimating the negative consequences of stress experienced by employees and the organisation, it is necessary to determine the factors causing stress at work and find ways to reduce stress. Scientists who analysed usually were focused on the factors occurring within the organisation (Didbalytė, Mikaliūkštienė & Fatkulina, 2022). Some scientists point out the relationship between stress at work, high requirements and demands placed on employees, and strained relationships among employees (Cueva-Pila, Suazo & Ortiz, 2023). According to Leszczynska (2023), too heavy or too low workload, complicated work that does not match the employees' competencies, monotonous activities, contradictory or unclear requirements, as well as unfavourable or harmful working conditions and physically demanding work could be one of the reasons causing stress at work. Moreover, the researcher notices that stress at work can be caused by a low salary, poor career opportunities, job instability or a temporary employment contract, inappropriate leadership methods, a lack of social support, scarce opportunities to participate in decision-making processes, cases of discrimination and unfavourable microclimate. At the same time, Cottini et al. (2022) found that increased responsibility, improper distribution of duties, poor relationships with colleagues and the boss, unclear work goals and the lack of support and assistance from the manager are the main reasons causing stress at work. A limited (short) deadline for work, the abundance of tasks, inappropriate environment, the lack of necessary tools and equipment to perform work and the lack of instructions for completing tasks could be the reasons causing stress at work.

On the other hand, stress at work could be increased by excessive commitments related to the profession, the shortage of resources for implementing requirements and limited career opportunities. In contrast, job instability and the lack of job guarantees are linked to increased anxiety (Haider, Fatima & de Pablos-Heredero, 2020). In the meantime, other scientists notify that non-recognition of an employee as a specialist and underestimation of his efforts, limited opportunities to participate in decision-making processes, as well as the uncertainty of the employee's role and functions and contradictory requirements not only reduce the employee's motivation (Koszela, 2020) and his involvement into activities but also increase stress at work, while Cottini et al. (2022) distinguish the aspect of the nature of work and state that stress at work could be caused by boring activities, long-lasting unchanging nature of work and monotonous activities with little tension. Thus, according to scientists, the application of limited motivational techniques, the lack of balance between the efforts made and

the reward for work, respect and recognition of employees, an inflexible work schedule, heavy workload and other aspects occurring within the organisation could be one of the reasons causing stress at work. However, it should be noted that the reasons for stress at work and the reactions evoked depend on the individual characteristics of a person, situational awareness, and the ability to solve problems (Roohafza et al., 2016). In contrast, a person's reaction to a stressful situation and the ability to cope with it depends on the strategies for stress reduction used in that situation and how specific stressors are assessed by an individual based on his personal experience.

Bearing in mind that in modern organisations, stress is a common phenomenon that hurts employees' physical and mental health, searching for stress management techniques is becoming a subject of significant importance to analysts and researchers. Based on the theory of stress at work management, scientists propose to cope with stress in three ways and discern individual (covering the aspects of didactics, promoting a healthy lifestyle and training on stress management), individual and organisational (covering time management, the development of communication skills and the balance between work and personal life, increasing employee resistance to specific stressors) and organisational (covering changes in the current situation, eliminating the source of the problem, improving the work content and the working environment, career management and leadership development). The latter opinion is supported by many researchers who point out the activities that help employees cope with stress at work (Roohafza et al., 2016). Based on this theory, it is evident that an organisation should participate in the process of stress at work management. The scientists who analysed the aspects of stress at work management notify that it is important to identify the conditions that cause stress (Khanna et al., 2019). The latter opinion is supported by Arsalan, Majid, Butt and Anwar (2019), who admit that to reduce stress at work, it is necessary to find out the specific nature of stress and the sources that cause it, as well as the reasons of stressful tension and foresee a potential crisis when there is no reaction to stress signals for a long time. At the same time, other scientists state that providing employees with access to professional advice is necessary. Alvi, Kayani & Mir (2020) point out the aspect of didactics at the organisational level. The importance of implementation of training provides the conclusion that social support, ensuring employee satisfaction, stress management training and the reaction to stressful situations, the implementation of wellness programmes and relaxation techniques applied at work, and the assistance of professional psychologist could be one of the factors that contribute to job satisfaction and one of the techniques for managing stress at work. Some researchers emphasise the importance of an employer in managing stress at work and focus on applying appropriate measures for stress reduction (Imran & Ayub, 2017; Xie et al., 2024; Iredahl et al., 2025).

Other researchers' insights related to managing stress at work are also significant. Alvi, Kayani and Mir (2020), Haider, Fatima and de Pablos-Heredero (2020) relate a good mood and rarely experienced stress at work to the conditions enabling employees to have professional development and career opportunities, while other scientists (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020; Lutfiani Putri Windia, Singh & Rashid, 2021) state that a flexible work schedule in terms of time and place, the opportunities to plan employees' activities, consistent work and time planning involve employees into work activities and reduce stress at work. Some other researchers stress a social aspect and highlight the importance of communication with colleagues and the management based on reliability and openness. Goldstein, Pulakos, Semedo and Passmore (2017) admit that relationships based on help and support are the main factors affecting employees' mood at work. Published works present detailed characteristics of work in an organisation, when stress at work is understood as a phenomenon that is inseparable from job dissatisfaction. Scientists state that high work requirements (Fletcher, Carter & Lyubovnikova, 2018), a heavy workload and the lack of support for task completion (de la Torre-Ruiz, Vidal-Salazar & Cordon-Pozo, 2019), the lack of employee recognition (Čuček & Kač, 2020) and other processes within an organisation could increase work dissatisfaction, and could be one of the factors evoking stress at work. At the same time, Toniolo-Barrios and ten Brummelhuis (2023) notify that properly planned workload and mindfulness could cause job satisfaction and reduce stress. According to (Krywalski-Santiago, 2020), ensuring the sense of certainty of employees in terms of their roles at work is related to greater job satisfaction and leads to less stress at work.

In summary, it could be stated that to reduce stress at work, it is necessary to find out stress specificity, the reasons and factors causing stress at work and to foresee its management techniques considering the specifics of work organisation and the aspects of human resource management, didactics and professional development, as well as motivation strategies and ensuring favourable microclimate.

3. Research methodology

Samples of research participants and organisation of the study. The research array consisted of 303 respondents (persons working in Lithuanian organisations), 204 of which (67.3%) were women and 99 (32.7%) were men. When assessing respondents according to age, it is seen that most respondents were from 26 years of age to 45 years of age ($n = 115$; 38%) and an older age group from 46 years of age and over ($n = 112$; 37%), while a smaller part of participants ($n = 76$; 25%) were up to 25 years of age. Research sample convenient. The method of the questionnaire was applied - an online survey using an electronic system. Based on the quality control principle, an internal audit of the research was performed (completeness of the questionnaire, consistency and duration of the survey execution), whereas the questionnaires which were filled out incompletely or carelessly (e.g., all the columns of the questionnaire had the same numbers marked, etc.) were not included into the further database analysis. The research participants were introduced to the research objective and carried out anonymously; while the obtained results were processed and provided for generalisation, data confidentiality was ensured. The principles of voluntariness and self-determination for participation in the survey were observed during the research performance. Respondents were free to decide whether to participate in the survey or not; therefore, filling out the questionnaire was treated as consent to participate in the survey.

Research methodology. Analytical descriptive. Systematic analysis of scientific literature and research on the topic under consideration is based on comparative and generalisation methods. *Quantitative method.* When analysing the phenomena of stress at work, quantitative data collection and analysis were applied, which enabled the disclosure of the situation covering stress at work and identifying the factors causing it. The questionnaire consisted of questions aimed at collecting demographic and social data about respondents and finding out the attitude of the respondents to the situation of stress at work; based on theoretical insights and criteria distinguished in scientific literature, the questionnaire covers 20 statements for identifying the reasons causing stress at work, was created which was aimed at defining techniques for managing stress at work. Such factors as flexible work schedule in terms of time and place enabling a person to work independently and make decisions (Haider, Fatima & de Pablos-Heredero, 2020) that represent organisational trust in employees (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020; Lutfiani Putri Windia, Singh & Rashid, 2021; Demircioglu, 2021) are considered as the factors positively affecting the employee's mood and causing zero stress at work; based on this discovery statements included into the questionnaire enabled to assess the aspects of a flexible attitude to work organisation and to create favourable working conditions. Creation of favourable working conditions and providing with all necessary tools for work are distinguished as the factors ensuring employees' good mood and causing zero stress at work (Imran & Ayub, 2017); the research covers such spheres as peculiarities of work organisation (workload, assignment of tasks, work content, introduction of employees to the specifics of work and its main functions, establishing working conditions, ensuring necessary tools for work, etc.). On the other hand, a favourable psychological microclimate at work, good social relations with colleagues and the manager (Roohafza et al., 2016; Goldstein et al., 2017), as well as ensuring the efficiency of internal communication (Krywalski-Santiago, 2020), are related to employees' satisfaction and zero stress at work; based on this the assessment of microclimate at work and maintaining communication with the manager and colleagues were highlighted as the object of analysis. Moreover, employees' satisfaction and zero stress at work are related to the recognition of employees as specialists and acknowledging their efforts (Čuček & Kač, 2020), as well as establishing opportunities for professional and career development (Alvi, Kayani & Mir, 2020; Haider, Fatima & de Pablos-Heredero, 2020) and applying motivation methods with regard to employee needs (Fletcher, Carter & Lyubovnikova, 2018; Koszela, 2020) the research covers the assessment of the spheres of personal and professional development creation and a motivation system. It is considered that identification of the highlighted factors could be assessed as one of the techniques of managing stress at work, which would enable the reduction of stress at work. The questionnaire consists of 20 statements; possible answers were assessed using the Likert scale, where the highest score (5) means the strongest support of the statement (completely agree), while one score - the strongest disagreement (completely disagree). The results were obtained after summing up the answers of the statements - numerical values. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were determined by calculating the meanings of *Cronbach's alpha*, which enabled us to determine whether all statements reflected the test quantity and allowed us to specify the number of questions required. The results of statistical data analysis show that the internal degree of compatibility of the questionnaire statements ($n=20$) about the factors causing stress at work is relatively high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.8357$) and varies from 0.8191

to 0.8421. Based on the fact that internal compatibility should be from 0 to 1, and the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient - 0.60, the research is considered proper, which shows that the questionnaire is highly reliable. The value of Cronbach's alpha shows that variables included in the questionnaire are oriented toward analysing the factors causing stress at work. *Methods of statistical data analysis.* The obtained data was processed using statistical data analysis. The quantitative research instrument consisted of ordinal and nominal scales; therefore, absolute and percentage frequencies and scale averages were calculated. The average (M) and its standard deviation (SD) were used to describe the values of the Likert scale. In contrast, Student's t-test was used to compare the averages of variables of the Likert scale in two independent samples. To compare the averages of more than two groups under normal distribution, the analysis of variance - (ANOVA) was used. When the significance level was less than 0.05, the difference in characteristics is considered statistically significant. Statistical data analysis was performed using the software data package SPSS, which has 17 versions, and the MS Excel 2016 computer program.

4. Reasons causing stress at work and the opportunities to manage it: analysis of empirical research results

The increasing workload, the intensive pace of task completion and the increasing requirements are the factors causing stress at work. Therefore, managing stress at work is becoming more relevant and is raising new discussions for scientists trying to find out possible ways to manage the causes of stress at work. The survey was performed to find possible ways to manage stress at work. The frequency of stress at work experienced by employees over the past six months was identified. The research results in the general sample showed (see Table 1), that over the past six months, almost three-thirds (87.4%) of respondents experienced stress at work very often (39.6%) or often (47.8%) and according to the assessment results of only a small part of respondents experienced stress seldom (8.1%) or very seldom (4.5%). The research results revealed that over the past six months, none of the research participants experienced stress at work. Thus, the research results highlighted the stress problem at work and its management's relevance.

The research indicators obtained after data analysis demonstrated the need to reduce stress at work in groups of respondents of different ages and genders. The comparative data analysis showed (see Table 1) that men participating in the study more seldom experienced stress at work than women. The research results showed that almost half (48.3%) of women who participated in the study very often (22.1%) or often (26.2%) experienced stress at work over the past six months. Based on the research results it is evident that more than a third (39.1%) of men participating in the study experienced stress at work very often (17.5%) or often (21.6%) over the past six months. The results show that a larger part of men participating in the study seldom (5.3%) or very seldom (2.6%) experienced stress at work over the past six months. In contrast, only a small part of women experienced stress at work seldom (2.8%) or very seldom (1.9%).

A comparative analysis in groups of the research participants groups of different ages showed (see Table 1) that a bigger part of respondents up to 25 years of age (35.1%) and from 26 to 45 years of age (29.7%) experienced stress at work very often (up to 25 years of age (16.9%), from 26 to 45 years of age (13.6%)) or often (up to 25 years of age (18.2%), from 26 to 45 years of age (16.1%)) and only less than a quarter (22.6%) of the research participants from 46 years of age and older very often (9.1%) or often (13.5%) experienced stress at work over the past six months, while a bigger part of respondents of this age (5.6%) experienced stress at work seldom (3.8%) or very seldom (1.8%) up to 25 years of age (3%) and from 26 to 45 years of age (4%). The tendencies revealed during the research performance foster the identification of the reasons for stress at work and the implementation of the system for managing stress at work with regard to the aspects of gender and age.

Table 1. The assessment of stress at work experienced in groups of men and women of different ages over the past six months presented in the general sample (%)

	Very often	Often	Seldom	Very seldom	Never experienced stress at work
General sample	39.6	47.8	8.1	4.5	0
Men's group	17.5	21.6	5.3	2.6	0
Women's group	22.1	26.2	2.8	1.9	0
Under 25 age group	16.9	18.2	1.9	1.1	0
From 26 to 45 age group	13.6	16.1	2.4	1.6	0
From 46 and over age group	9.1	13.5	3.8	1.8	0

Creating favourable working conditions, ensuring career and professional development opportunities, establishing favourable microcats, employee recognition and assessment, and involving and motivating activities fostering job satisfaction and employees' satisfaction are the factors which reduce stress at work. On the other hand, requirements that are too high do not match the employees' competencies, the lack of time for task completion, and the heavy and excessive workload increase stress at work. Therefore, to find effective techniques for managing stress at work, the focus was laid on the factors reducing stress, such as reviewing the peculiarities of work organisation, creating a favourable microclimate, establishing opportunities for professional development and career, etc.

When analysing the data in the general sample, the highest averages of estimates show (see Figure 1) that the most important factors causing stress at work are these: too high requirements that are not in compliance with employees' knowledge and skills when the tasks provided to employees are too complicated due to the lack of competences (M=4.61) and when there is too little time to complete tasks (M=4.45). On the other hand, according to the results of the research participants, underestimation of work results and the lack of encouragement for high results of employees (M=4.51), as well as scarce opportunities for self-realisation and revealing one's own personal abilities and skills (M=4.49) are the factors causing stress at work. Moreover, after analysing the factors causing stress at work, the obtained highest average of estimates shows the need for training on how to cope with stress at work; according to the assessment of the research participants, in an organisation, employees lack training on coping with stress at work. (M=4.66). However, the obtained lowest average estimates (see Figure 1) show that an organisation does not provide employees with proper working conditions (not a comfortable workplace, poor lighting and ventilation of premises, noise, temperature, etc.) (M=3.45) the lack of necessary work tools (M=3.47) and also the shortage of clarity when the employee's responsibilities and functions are vaguely defined (M=3.39); they are not the only factors causing stress at work. Harassment with unpleasant words and actions (M=3.4) and the manifestation of conflicts and tense relations among colleagues (M=3.53) are the factors that cause the least stress at work.

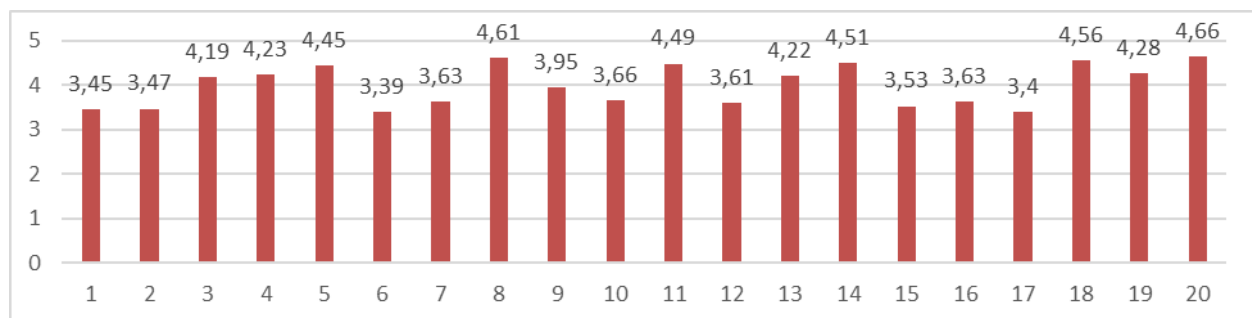


Figure 1. The assessment of the subjective attitude towards stress at work (n=303; average value (M), Max=5)

Note:

1. My working conditions are unsuitable for the job (uncomfortable workplace, poor lighting and ventilation of premises, noise, temperature, etc.)
2. The lack of necessary tools and equipment to do the job
3. Flexible working conditions are not provided (inflexible work schedule, etc.)
4. I have an excessive workload; I work much and very intensely

11. Organisation does not provide me with the opportunities for self-realisation, revealing my abilities and skills to do what I do best
12. I cannot develop myself professionally, acquire new knowledge and skills, or improve my qualification
13. The lack of professional career opportunities
14. My work results are not acknowledged; I am not encouraged to achieve good work results

5. Too little time for task completion; deadlines for work completion are unreasonable
6. It is not clear what is expected from me; the lack of defined duties and functions
7. Tasks are not clearly defined, and there is a lack of precise instructions for task completion (I have not been introduced to how to perform the tasks, and there is no discussion on how to achieve goals)
8. Requirements placed on me exceed my knowledge and skills / too complicated tasks, and I have no competencies to complete them
9. I am not informed about the processes and changes taking place in the organisation
10. Tiring work routine
15. There is friction and conflicts between me and my colleagues, prevailing strained relationships
16. I am on bad terms with the manager; I can not openly and freely express my attitude, opinion and beliefs on the issues of ongoing activities, make suggestions, communicate freely
17. I am being harassed with unpleasant words and actions
18. The salary does not match the results of my work
19. The organisation does not care how I feel at work
20. The organisation does not provide training on how to manage stress

A comparative analysis of the factors causing stress at work in groups of men and women showed statistically significant differences in five categories consisting of twenty answers (see Table 2). After calculating t-test results, it was found statistically significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) averages of estimates in the group of women, which shows that women believe that there is a lack of information about processes and changes occurring within the organisation that ensures the quality ($M=4.03$, $SD=1.06$) and provides employees with the opportunities for professional development, acquiring new knowledge and skills ($M=3.74$, $SD=0.75$), which cause stress at work, compared to the men group the average estimates of which are significantly lower (respectively: ($M=3.77$, $SD=0.92$) and ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.89$)). Women who participated in the research assessed ($p < 0.05$) conflicts and strained relationships with colleagues ($M=3.83$, $SD=0.83$) with significantly higher average estimates. At the same time, they considered harassment with words and actions ($M=3.53$, $SD=1.17$) as one of the reasons causing stress at work compared to men who participated in the survey (respectively: ($M=2.92$, $SD=0.89$) and ($M=3.13$, $SD=1.33$)). After calculating the t-test, it was found that statistically higher average estimates ($t=2.511$, $p=0.013$) of women show ($M=4.74$, $SD=0.61$) that they relate the lack of training on managing stress at work to the factor causing stress compared to the men participating in the survey ($M=4.48$, $SD=0.92$). When assessing other reasons causing stress at work, statistically significant differences in terms of gender were not detected (see Table 2), which suggests that the latter factors causing stress at work are assessed similarly by men and women.

Table 2. A subjective assessment of men participating in the survey ($n=99$) and women ($n=204$) with regard to the factors causing stress at work (average value (M), standard deviation (SD) and the significance level of differences; $Max=5$)

	Women's group		Men's group		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
My working conditions are unsuitable for the job (uncomfortable workplace, poor lighting and ventilation of premises, noise, temperature, etc.)	3.42	0.89	3.51	0.76	-0.851	0.395
The lack of necessary tools and equipment to do the job	3.46	0.78	3.48	0.88	-0.241	0.809
Flexible working conditions are not provided (inflexible work schedule, etc.)	4.18	0.78	4.20	0.86	-0.21	0.834
I have an excessive workload; I work much and very intensely	4.25	0.86	4.21	0.77	0.322	0.748
Too little time for task completion, deadlines for work completion are unreasonable	4.50	0.85	4.36	0.87	1.256	0.21
It is not clear what is expected from me; the lack of defined duties and functions	3.41	0.72	3.35	0.75	0.652	0.515
Tasks are not clearly defined; there is a lack of precise instructions for task completion (I have not been introduced to how to perform the tasks, and there is no discussion on how to achieve goals)	3.61	0.94	3.68	0.79	-0.667	0.505
Requirements placed on me exceed my knowledge and skills / too complicated tasks, and I have no competencies to complete them	4.63	0.69	4.58	0.72	0.66	0.51
I am not informed about the processes and changes taking place in the organisation	4.03	1.06	3.77	0.92	2.137	0.033
Tiring work routine	3.63	1.04	3.73	0.93	-0.77	0.442
The organisation does not provide me with the opportunities for self-realisation, revealing my abilities and skills to do what I do best	4.49	0.67	4.47	0.77	0.179	0.858
I can not develop myself professionally, acquire new knowledge and skills, or improve my qualification	3.74	0.75	3.33	0.89	3.911	0.001
The lack of professional career opportunities	4.24	0.98	4.19	0.82	0.451	0.652

My work results are not acknowledged, and I am not encouraged to achieve good work results	4.52	0.9	4.48	0.77	0.376	0.707
There is friction and conflicts between me and my colleagues, prevailing strained relationships	3.83	0.83	2.92	0.89	8.776	0.001
I am on bad terms with the manager; I cannot openly and freely express my attitude, opinion and beliefs on the issues of ongoing activities, make suggestions, communicate freely	3.71	1.56	3.45	1.53	1.348	0.179
I am being harassed with unpleasant words and actions	3.53	1.17	3.13	1.33	2.691	0.008
The salary does not match the results of my work	4.62	0.87	4.44	0.82	1.659	0.098
The organisation does not care how I feel at work	4.31	1.01	4.21	0.91	0.807	0.42
The organisation does not provide training on how to manage stress	4.74	0.61	4.48	0.92	2.511	0.013

Bearing in mind that scientific literature usually emphasises the aspect of age differences, it would be reasonable to investigate how assessing the factors causing stress at work impacts the age of respondents. When discussing the factors causing stress at work with regard to age, the data was analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Comparative data analysis showed that the average stress estimates at work assessment are statistically significantly related to the age of respondents even in fourteen out of twenty answers (see Table 3-8). Student's t-test was applied to find out the differences in the assessment of respondents of different age groups, whereas statistically significant differences in average estimates were discussed in the data analysis.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that the assessment of all factors causing stress at work is statistically significantly related to the age of respondents (see Table 3). After completing calculations, it became evident that the lack of favourable working conditions (e.g., inflexible work schedule, etc.) ($F=9.468$, $p=0.001$), a heavy workload when the employee must work hard ($F=47.596$, $p=0.001$), the lack of time for task completion or unreasonable deadlines for work completion ($F=3.703$, $p=0.026$) and unsuitable working conditions (uncomfortable place to work, lighting, poor ventilation of premises, noise, temperature, etc.) ($F=4.527$, $p=0.012$) and the lack of necessary tools and equipment for working ($F=17.182$, $p=0.001$) are considered as the factors causing stress at work and are assessed differently in different age groups. According to the research results, it could be stated that the lack of favourable working conditions and an inflexible work schedule are the factors causing stress at work in the group of respondents under 25 years of age ($M=4.49$, $SD=0.6$), compared to those from 26 to 45 years of age ($M=4.19$, $SD=0.79$), while in the group of respondents from 46 years of age and over ($M=3.98$, $SD=0.87$) significantly lower average estimates ($p<0.05$) were found out. After calculating t-test, statistically significant differences in the assessment in groups from 26 to 45 years of age and from 46 and over were not detected ($t=1.894$, $p=0.06$), which shows that the lack of favourable working conditions, which is one of the factors causing stress at work was assessed similarly in this age group. After performing Student's t-test the assessment results in groups of respondents under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age are significantly higher ($p<0.05$); a heavy workload, when a person works hard and intensely (respectively: ($M=4.63$, $SD=0.51$) and ($M=4.49$, $SD=0.71$)) is considered as the factor causing stress at work and was assessed by respondents from 46 years of age and over ($M=3.71$, $SD=0.87$), while the assessment of this phenomenon of respondents under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age was almost of the same level and did not differ significantly ($t=1.64$, $p=0.103$). Moreover, the assessment with regard to the shortage of time for task completion, when the deadline for work completion is unreasonable, was assessed by significantly higher average estimates ($t=2.86$, $p=0.005$) of respondents under 25 years of age ($M=4.64$, $SD=0.69$), compared to those from 46 years of age and older ($M=4.3$, $SD=0.95$). However, no statistically significant differences in assessing the factors causing stress at work of respondents under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age ($t=1.575$, $p=0.117$) and from 26 to 45 years of age and from 46 years of age and older ($t=1.397$, $p=0.164$) were obtained, which shows that the lack of time for task completion and unreasonable deadlines for work completion causing stress at work were assessed similarly. Whereas, in the group of respondents from 46 years of age and older, the average estimates of factors causing stress at work were significantly higher ($p<0.05$), which shows that stress is caused by unfavourable working conditions (uncomfortable workplace, poor lighting and ventilation of premises, noise, temperature, etc.) ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.81$) and the lack of tools and equipment for task performance ($M=3.78$, $SD=0.76$), compared to those under 25 years of age (respectively: ($M=3.32$, $SD=0.79$) and ($M=3.12$, $SD=0.83$)), and from 26 to 45 years of age (respectively: ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.9$) and ($M=3.4$, $SD=0.75$)) research participants. However, after calculating t-test statistical analysis showed that the assessment of unfavourable working conditions (uncomfortable workplace, poor lighting and ventilation of premise, noise,

temperature, etc.) in participants under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age was of the same level and did not differ significantly ($t=-0.253$, $p=0.8$).

Table 3. The subjective attitude towards the factors causing stress at work assessed in groups of respondents of different ages (average value (M), standard deviation (SD) and significance level of differences; Max=5)

	Under 25 years of age (n=76)	From 26 to 45 years of age (n=115)	From 46 years of age and over (n=112)	F	p
My working conditions are unsuitable for the job (uncomfortable workplace, poor lighting and ventilation of premises, noise, temperature, etc.)	3.32 (0.79)	3.35 (0.9)	3.63 (0.81)	4.527	0.012
The lack of necessary tools and equipment to do the job	3.12 (0.83)	3.4 (0.75)	3.78 (0.76)	17.182	0.001
Flexible working conditions are not provided (inflexible work schedule, etc.)	4.49 (0.6)	4.19 (0.79)	3.98 (0.87)	9.468	0.001
I have an excessive workload; I work much and very intensely	4.63 (0.51)	4.49 (0.71)	3.71 (0.87)	47.596	0.001
Too little time for task completion, deadlines for work completion are unreasonable	4.64 (0.69)	4.47 (0.84)	4.3 (0.95)	3.703	0.026

When analysing the techniques for managing stress at work, the scientific literature focuses on the importance of internal communication quality assurance, covering the provision of information on the roles performed, functions and duties and clearly defined tasks and instructions for their completion, etc. According to the data of analysis of variance, it is evident (see Table 4) that the research participants under 25 years of age believe that the lack of clarity of task performance, when there are no clearly defined roles and duties ($M=3.71$, $SD=0.69$), as well as the lack of defined tasks and objectives when employees are not provided with the tools necessary for their task performance ($M=4.41$, $SD=0.55$), were the factors causing stress at work compared to those from 26 to 45 years of age (respectively: ($M=3.3$, $SD=0.66$) or ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.7$)), and respondents from 46 years of age and over (respectively: ($M=3.28$, $SD=0.76$) and ($M=3.4$, $SD=0.95$)), in the groups of which statistically lower average estimates were found out; these variables are statistically related to the respondent's age (respectively: ($F=10.265$, $p=0.001$) and ($F=51.566$, $p=0.001$)). When assessing these variables,, attention was paid to the fact that after calculating t-test and performing a comparative analysis in groups of respondents from 26 to 45 years of age and over, statistically significant average variables were not detected (respectively, ($t=0.199$, $p=0.842$) and ($t=-0.563$, $p=0.574$)), which shows that the factors causing stress at work are assessed similarly by participants of these age groups.

Table 4. The assessment of the subjective attitude towards the factors causing stress at work in the level of internal communication, the quality assurance in groups of different ages of the research participants (average value (M), standard deviation (SD) and the level of significance of differences; Max=5)

	Under 25 years of age (n=76)	From 26 to 45 years of age (n=115)	From 46 years of age and over (n=112)	F	p
It is not clear what is expected from me; the lack of defined duties and functions	3.71 (0.69)	3.30 (0.66)	3.28 (0.76)	10.265	0.001
Tasks are not clearly defined; there is a lack of precise instructions for task completion (I have not been introduced to how to perform the tasks, and there is no discussion on how to achieve goals)	4.41 (0.55)	3.34 (0.7)	3.4 (0.95)	51.566	0.001

According to scientists, employee recognition and the acknowledgement of their efforts, adequate financial compensation corresponding to work results, introduction of employees to processes and changes occurring in the organisation, the ability to be part of the organisation and distribution of tasks with regard to the abilities and competencies of employees could be the factors reducing stress at work and evoking positive emotions. Whereas, when employees feel unimportant and disrespected, and their efforts are not acknowledged, when there is no balance between the work performed, efforts made, and the reward received, this could cause stress. When analysing the research data in the level of personal recognition analysis of variance showed (see Table 5), that respondents under 25 years of age experience stress when they feel the lack of information about the processes and changes occurring in the organisation ($M=4.45$, $SD=0.64$) compared to those from 26 to 45 years of age ($M=3.86$, $SD=0.97$) and from 46 years of age and over ($M=3.7$, $SD=1.17$); the average estimates in these

groups are statistically significant (respectively: ($t=5.025$, $p=0.001$) and ($t=5.66$, $p=0.001$)) lower average estimates; this variable is statistically significantly related to the age of respondents ($F=13.909$, $p=0.001$). However, in assessing this variable, the focus is laid on the fact that after a comparative analysis in the groups of respondents from 26 to 45 years of age and from 46 years of age and over, a statistically significant difference was not found ($t=1.153$, $p=0.25$), it shows that the assessment of factors causing stress at work is rated at a similar level. After applying analysis of variance (ANOVA), it was found that underestimation of work results and the lack of encouragement for work results are the factors causing stress at work; it is statistically significant and related to the age of respondents ($F=4.16$ $p=0.017$). Thus, the research participants under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age underestimation of work results and the lack of encouragement for good work results (respectively under 25 years of age ($M=4.66$, $SD=0.74$) and from 26 to 45 years of age ($M=4.59$, $SD=0.74$)) assessed as the factors causing stress at work by statistically higher averages of estimates (respectively ($t=2.554$, $p=0.011$) and ($t=2.21$, $p=0.028$)) compared to those respondents of 46 years of age and over ($M=4.33$ $SD=1.02$). Whereas a comparative data analysis showed that underestimation of work results and the lack of encouragement for good work as the factors causing stress at work were assessed by the research participants under 25 years of age and from 26 years of age to 45 years of age and over and their assessment did not differ statistically significantly ($t=0.61$, $p=0.542$). Moreover, a comparative analysis in terms of age showed that according to the assessment of the younger research participants (under 25 years of age) the requirements for employees do not match their knowledge and skills. At the same time, the tasks provided are too complex and need more competencies to perform them ($M=4.78$, $SD=0.56$) and they are considered as the factors causing stress at work; they assessed the factors with significantly higher average estimates ($p<0.05$) compared to the participants from 26 to 45 years of age and over ($M=4.58$, $SD=0.71$) ($M=4.54$, $SD=0.76$) (respectively ($t=2.102$, $p=0.037$) and ($t=2.508$, $p=0.013$)).

Table 5. A subjective assessment of the attitude towards the factors causing stress at work with regard to a person's recognition and acknowledgement in groups of participants of different ages (average value (M), standard deviation (SD) and a significance level of differences; Max=5)

	Under 25 years of age (n=76)	From 26 to 45 years of age (n=115)	From 46 years of age and over (n=112)	F	p
I am not informed about the processes and changes taking place in the organisation	4.45 (0.64)	3.86 (0.97)	3.7 (1.17)	13.909	0.001
My work results are not acknowledged, and I am not encouraged to achieve good work results	4.66 (0.74)	4.59 (0.74)	4.33 (1.02)	4.16	0.017
The salary does not match the results of my work	4.66 (0.72)	4.57 (0.86)	4.49 (0.93)	0.864	0.423
Requirements placed on me exceed my knowledge and skills / too complicated tasks, and I have no competencies to complete them	4.78 (0.56)	4.58 (0.71)	4.54 (0.76)	2.898	0.057

Based on the insights of researchers, work content matching employees' expectations and needs, as well as the opportunities for their professional development and career promotion, evoke a higher degree of satisfaction, which could lead to experiencing less stress at work. Comparative data analysis showed that the attitude when assessing the factors causing stress is related to the established opportunities for professional development and is statistically significantly associated with respondents' age in three out of four categories of answers (see Table 6). According to the research results, it is evident that tiring work routine, monotonous and boring work ($M=4.25$, $SD=0.57$), as well as limited opportunities for professional development in the organisation, acquiring new knowledge and skills for improving one's qualification ($M=4.17$, $SD=0.72$) are the factors causing stress for younger employees (under 25 years of age) compared to those from 26 to 45 years of age (respectively: ($M=3.71$, $SD=1.04$) and ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.77$)) and from 46 years of age and over (respectively: ($M=3.21$, $SD=0.99$) and ($M=3.5$, $SD=0.76$)) research participants who assessed the factors causing stress at work by statistically significantly lower average estimates, (respectively: under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age ($t=5.025$, $p=0.001$) and ($t=7.495$, $p=0.001$); under 25 years of age and from 46 years of age and over ($t=9.08$, $p=0.001$) and ($t=6.074$, $p=0.001$)); these variables are statistically significantly related to the age of respondents (respectively: ($F=28.655$, $p=0.001$) and ($F=29.651$, $p=0.001$)), after calculating t-test the revealed statistically insignificant differences in averages ($t=-1.583$, $p=0.115$) show that participants from 26 to 45 years of age ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.77$) and from 46 years of age and over ($M=3.5$, $SD=0.76$) considered that the lack of opportunities for professional development and acquiring new knowledge and skills are the factors causing

stress at work and they rated them similarly. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that the lack of self-realisation and revealing one's abilities and skills cause stress at work and is statistically significantly related to the age of participants ($F=43.84$, $p=0.001$). Therefore, the research participants under 25 years of age ($M=4.82$, $SD=0.45$) and from 26 to 45 years of age ($M=4.69$, $SD=0.58$) assessed the lack of the opportunities for self-realisation and revealing one's one personal abilities and skills causing stress at work with significantly higher average estimates (respectively, under 25 years of age and from 46 years of age and over ($t=8.705$, $p=0.001$); in the groups from 26 to 45 years of age and from 46 years of age ($t=7.142$, $p=0.001$)) average estimates compared to participants from 46 years of age and over ($M=4.05$, $SD=0.75$). A comparative analysis showed that the lack of opportunities for self-realisation and revealing one's abilities and skills cause stress at work for participants under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age and did not differ statistically significantly ($t=1.712$, $p=0.088$). The lack of opportunities for professional development is considered as the factor causing stress at work, and it is not statistically significantly related to the age of participants ($F=1.886$, $p=0.153$) and this suggests that the research participants of different ages believe that limited opportunities for professional development are equal to stress at work. After calculating the t-test, a significant difference in variables ($t=1.995$, $p=0.05$) shows that for the research participants under 25 years of age, the lack of opportunities for professional development ($M=4.36$, $SD=0.8$) is considered the factor causing stress at work. In contrast, older participants 46 years of age and over-assessed it in lower average estimates ($M=4.1$, $SD=0.98$).

Table 6. The assessment of a subjective attitude towards the factors causing stress in the level of professional development in groups of participants of different ages (average value (M), standard deviation (SD) and the significance level of differences; Max=5)

	Under 25 years of age (n=76)	From 26 to 45 years of age (n=115)	From 46 years of age and over (n=112)	F	p
Tiring work routine	4.25 (0.57)	3.71 (1.04)	3.21 (0.99)	28.655	0.001
The organisation does not provide me with the opportunities for self-realisation, revealing my abilities and skills to do what I do best	4.82 (0.45)	4.69 (0.58)	4.05 (0.75)	43.84	0.001
I cannot develop myself professionally, acquire new knowledge and skills, or improve my qualification	4.17 (0.72)	3.34 (0.77)	3.5 (0.76)	29.651	0.001
The lack of professional career opportunities	4.36 (0.8)	4.26 (0.96)	4.1 (0.98)	1.886	0.153

When analysing the reasons for stress at work and searching for techniques for managing stress, attention is usually paid to a social aspect when relating it to a favourable microclimate in the organisation, ensuring relationships with colleagues and the manager based on team unity and good relationships among employees and ensuring support of employees, which could reduce stress at work. After calculating t-test and performing statistical data analysis, significantly higher average estimates ($p<0.05$) were found in the assessment of participants under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age, which shows that strained relationships and conflicts with colleagues (respectively: ($M=3.88$, $SD=0.82$) and ($M=3.67$, $SD=0.93$)) and harassment with unpleasant words and actions (respectively: ($M=3.66$, $SD=1.18$) and ($M=3.48$, $SD=1.28$)) are the factors causing stress at work, whereas in the group of older participants (from 46 years of age and over) the average estimates were significantly lower, which suggests that older participants less attribute these factors to the ones that cause stress at work (respectively: ($M=3.16$, $SD=0.94$) and ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.19$)); these variables are statistically significantly related to (see Table 7) the age of the research participants (respectively: ($F=16.371$, $p=0.001$) and ($F=4.236$, $p=0.015$)). However, after calculating t-test, comparative data analysis showed that prevailing strained relationships and conflicts with colleagues ($t=1.658$, $p=0.099$) as well as verbal and physical harassment ($t=0.978$, $p=0.329$) are the factors causing stress at work, both for participants under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age and are assessed with similar average estimates and did not differ statistically significantly. On the other hand, statistical data analysis showed that respondents under 25 years of age conflict with the manager when an employee can't express his attitude, opinion and beliefs on the topics of his activities, provide proposals and communicate freely ($M=3.96$, $SD=1.52$) are the factors causing stress at work, whereas for participants from 46 years of age and over these factors were assessed by lower average estimates ($M=3.42$, $SD=1.56$); and statistically significant average of estimates was obtained ($t=2.355$, $p=0.02$). Whereas in the groups of respondents under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age ($t=1.552$, $p=0.122$), from 26 to 45 years of age and from 46 years of age and over ($t=0.971$, $p=0.36$) this variable as the factor causing stress at work was assessed similarly.

Table 7. The assessment of a subjective attitude towards the factors causing stress in the level of microclimate in the groups of participants of different ages (average value (M), standard deviation (SD) and a significance level of differences; Max=5)

	Under 25 years of age (n=76)	From 26 to 45 years of age (n=115)	From 46 years of age and over (n=112)	F	p
There is friction and conflicts between me and my colleagues, prevailing strained relationships	3.88 (0.82)	3.67 (0.93)	3.16 (0.94)	16.371	0.001
I am on bad terms with the manager; I cannot openly and freely express my attitude, opinion and beliefs on the issues of ongoing activities, make suggestions, communicate freely	3.96 (1.52)	3.61 (1.54)	3.42 (1.56)	2.79	0.063
I am being harassed with unpleasant words and actions	3.66 (1.18)	3.48 (1.28)	3.15 (1.19)	4.236	0.015

Caring for employees' satisfaction when providing not only mandatory social guarantees but also additional support and employee training by providing not only professional but also general competencies are the factors affecting the satisfaction of employees, which should reduce stress at work. After performing statistical data analysis, the obtained higher average of estimates in groups of participants under 25 years of age (M=4.42, SD=0.88) show that for younger employees, the lack of job satisfaction causes stress, compared to the assessment of participants from 26 to 45 years of age (M=4.31, SD=0.98) and from 46 years of age and over (M=4.14, SD=1.03). Moreover, participants from 26 to 45 years of age assessed the lack of training on how to manage stress at work as the factor causing stress and evaluated it with higher average estimates (M=4.7, SD=0.7) compared to participants under 25 years of age (M=4.66, SD=0.72) and from 46 years of age and over (M=4.62, SD=0.77) and they less relate it to the experienced stress. However, after applying analysis of variance (ANOVA) (see Table 8), it became clear that the assessment of factors causing stress in groups of respondents of different ages according to the latter variables was similar and slightly differed regardless of age (respectively: (F=197, p=0.141) and (F=033, p=0.717)).

Table 8. The assessment of a subjective attitude towards the factors causing stress at work in the level of ensuing job satisfaction of employees in groups of respondents of different ages (average value (M), standard deviation (SD) and a significance level of differences; Max=5)

	Under 25 years of age (n=76)	From 26 to 45 years of age (n=115)	From 46 years of age and over (n=112)	F	p
The organisation does not care how I feel at work	4.42 (0.88)	4.31 (0.98)	4.14 (1.03)	1.97	0.141
The organisation does not provide training on how to manage stress	4.66 (0.72)	4.7 (0.7)	4.62 (0.77)	0.33	0.717

After summarising the research results, it is evident that the assessment of the factors evoking stress at work is statistically significantly related to the age of respondents. As seen from the data analysis, the research participants under 25 years of age relate the factors causing stress at work to a heavy workload and the lack of time for task completion, inflexible working conditions and limited opportunities for professional development and self-realisation, as well as tiring work routine and monotonous and boring work compared to those respondents over 46 years of age and older. The research participants under 25 years of age assessed strained relationships and conflicts among colleagues and verbal and psychological harassment with higher average estimates and considered them as the factors causing stress at work compared to those respondents from 46 years of age and over. On the other hand, respondents under 25 years of age were assessed with higher average estimates of the lack of balance between the provided requirements and the competencies of employees, defined duties and functions and precise instructions for completing tasks, information about the processes and changes occurring within the organisation and underestimation of employees' efforts and incentives for the achieved results and considered them as the factors causing stress at work compared to those respondents from 26 to 45 years of age and from 46 years of age and over who considered those factors as causing less stress at work. However, respondents from 46 years of age and over-assessed the lack of tools and equipment to perform work and unsuitable working conditions (uncomfortable workplace, poor lighting and ventilation of premises, noise, temperature, etc.) as the factors causing stress at work compared to those respondents under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age.

Opportunities for managing stress at work. After analysing the scientific literature, it is evident that the stress problem at work is relevant and is of increasing concern. The latter fact is confirmed by the results of this research, which show that most of the research participants often or very often experience stress at work. To ensure employees' physical and mental health and avoid negative economic (financial) and social consequences in the organisation, it is necessary to look for techniques and methods for managing stress at work and implement them when taking into account the processes occurring within the organisation. After defining the reasons causing stress at work, it could be stated that it is a complex phenomenon covering the aspects of work organisation, providing employees with working conditions, applying the motivation system, considering micro-climate within the organisation, ensuring the quality of internal communication, providing the opportunities for professional and personal development and conducting training on the topics related to managing stress at work. On the basis of the problems found out in the course of the research performance, the following categories were distinguished: 1) the features of work organisation are related to providing favourable working conditions adapted to the task performed, providing employees with tools and equipment to perform work, a flexible schedule, evenly distributed workload, distribution of activities with regard to individual abilities and the acquired competences, etc.; 2) the development of active internal communication which would ensure the clarity of information for performing tasks, defining the exact time for completing tasks, defining the duties and functions of employees, etc.; 3) providing the opportunities for professional development, self-realisation and professional career, etc.; 4) employee recognition and appreciation covering the implementation of the system related to employees' appreciation for their efforts and results using a motivation strategy, involving employees into decision-making processes related to their activities, ensuring the opportunities to plan and coordinate work processes together, determining the salary that corresponds to their work performed, etc.; 5) improving micro climate within the organisation which covers such aspects as respectful and open communication with the manager, providing assistance in case of difficulties, eliminating verbal and psychological harassment, etc.; 6) ensuring employees' satisfaction in the work environment and educational aspect related to the implementation of training on stress management, providing consultations of psychologists who could give advice on stress at work management during work (within the organisation), recognising and nurturing stress at work managing techniques, responding to stressful situations and searching for solutions. It should be noted that the distinguished components of the organisational level would contribute to ensuring employees' physical and mental health. Moreover, it would also guarantee the achievement of the organisation's goals and their implementation, as well as operational efficiency, work productivity and competitive advantage in labour market conditions. On the other hand, after performing calculations in the groups of women and men of different ages participating in the research, it is evident that when implementing the system for reducing stress at work and forecasting the techniques for managing stress at work, an important aspect becomes the need to consider the gender aspect and the characteristics of employees of different ages. For example, encouraging active involvement in the processes and changes occurring within the organisation, ensuring opportunities for professional development, acquiring new knowledge and skills and improving one's qualifications for gaining valuable experience could be one of the ways to reduce stress at work experienced by women. On the other hand, after assessing that ensuring a favourable microclimate at work and good social relationships with colleagues are some of the classical factors affecting employees' satisfaction, it is necessary to provide employees (especially women) with the opportunity to feel themselves part of the organisation and create and establish relationships based on respect and recognition when eliminating verbal and physical harassment. Moreover, implementing techniques for managing stress that employees (especially women) experience at work, providing employees with knowledge, and orienting and transforming employees' (especially women's) attitudes towards managing and coping with it is becoming relevant. According to the findings of a comparative data analysis with regard to the age of participants, it is likely that an evenly distributed workload, providing enough time for task completion and adequately distributed duties and responsibilities with regard to the employees' abilities and competencies, improving the opportunities for professional development and career and motivating employees for the achieved results could be the factors reducing stress at work in the group of younger respondents (under 25 years of age). On the other hand, a person usually associates his work with self-realisation in professional activities. Therefore, recognising a person and acknowledging his work results, ensuring opportunities for professional development and revealing one's abilities and skills could be one of the ways to reduce stress at work (especially for respondents under 45 years of age). Moreover, in the process of managing stress at work, it is important to ensure internal communication to reduce the feeling of uncertainty of employees (especially employees under 25 years of age) due to their roles in the organisation, provide them

with information about their functions and duties while clearly defining tasks and providing them with precise instructions on how to complete them.

Conclusions

1. Theoretical analysis of scientific literature revealed that the complex nature of stress phenomenon is determined by the processes occurring within the organisation, improper work organisation and planning, a heavy workload, high demands raised, strained relationships and limited opportunities for professional development and the autonomy to act independently and make decisions, the lack of recognition and acknowledgement of a person and the lack of a motivation system. Therefore, stress management at work should be implemented comprehensively while covering the specifics of work organisation, ensuring the opportunities for professional development and self-realisation, ensuring a favourable micro-climate within the organisation and internal communication, as well as acknowledging employees' efforts and considering the aspects of didactics.

2. The research defined the current situation of stress experienced at work and the factors causing it:

2.1. Almost three-thirds of the research participants admit that over the past six months, they experienced stress at work very often (39.6%) or often (47.8), while only a small part of the research participants over the past six months experienced stress at work seldom (8.1%) or very seldom (4.5%). A comparative analysis with regard to gender showed that the expression of stress at work experienced to a fantastic extent is more common in women participating in the research (48.3%) than men (39.1%). In contrast, a comparative data analysis in the groups of respondents of different ages showed that over the past six months, the research participants under 25 years of age (35.1%) and from 26 to 45 years of age (29.7%) very often or often experienced stress at work compared to those participants from 46 years of age and over (22.6%).

2.2. The highest average scores provided in the study in a general sample show that there is a lack of training on managing stress at work, a heavy workload, too high requirements that do not match the knowledge, skills and competencies of employees to perform tasks, unreasonable deadlines for completing tasks, the salary does not match the results obtained, underestimation of a person's efforts, the lack of encouragement for work results and the lack of the opportunities for professional development, career and self-realisation could be the factors causing stress at work which are related to the processes occurring within the organisation.

2.3. The results showed that the assessment of the factors causing stress at work with regard to gender differs. A comparative analysis showed that women participating in the research admitted that the lack of information about the processes and changes occurring within the organisation, limited opportunities for professional development, acquiring new knowledge and skills and improving one's qualification, existing conflicts and strained relationships among colleagues, harassment with unpleasant words and actions and the lack of training on stress management are the reasons causing stress at work and assessed them with statistically significantly higher average estimates compared to men participating in the research.

2.4. The results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that the assessment of the factors causing stress at work is statistically significantly related to the age of respondents even in fourteen cases out of twenty:

- Respondents under 25 years of age and from 26 to 45 years of age considered that the lack of flexible work conditions, a heavy workload and the lack of time for completing tasks when unreasonable time for completing tasks is set are the factors causing stress at work and assessed them with statistically significantly higher average estimates compared to those participants from 46 years of age and over who believed that unsuitable working conditions and the lack of tools and equipment to do work cause stress at work.
- Younger research participants (under 25 years of age) considered that the lack of clarity on the duties and functions of employees, clearly defined tasks and instructions for performing tasks, as well as raising too high demands which do not match the knowledge, skills and competences of employees are the factors causing stress at work and assessed them with significantly higher average estimates compared to older research participants.
- Respondents under 25 years of age believe that the lack of information about the processes and changes occurring within the organisation, underestimation of efforts of employees, the lack of encouragement for the achieved results, prevailing work routine and monotonous work, limited opportunities for professional development and acquiring new knowledge and skills and the lack of opportunities for

self-realisation and revealing one's skills and abilities are the factors causing stress at work compared to those respondents from 46 years of age and over.

- The research participants under 25 years of age consider that the prevailing strained relationships and conflicts with colleagues and harassment with unpleasant words and actions are the factors causing stress at work compared to those respondents from 46 years of age and over who believe that the latter factors are less stressful.

3. The situation of stress experienced at work at the organisational level requires a complex decision-making process covering work organisation, ensuring the opportunities for effective internal communication and personal and professional development and self-realisation in the work environment, providing career opportunities, improving a motivation system, creating favourable psychological micro-climate, recognition of employees, acknowledging the efforts of employees and ensuring employees' satisfaction in the work environment and considering the aspects of didactics. On the other hand, when implementing the system to reduce stress experienced by employees at work, it would be reasonable to consider the aspects of gender and age.

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