

The Stress' Management and Time Budget



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***Abstract.** The present study has as central objective the introduction of a succession of concrete findings, more precisely the spotlight of the relation between the time budget, stress and behaviour (A or B) in a military organization. The study's premise lays on the assertion that military environment, a petitioner environment takes to the growth of stress because of the negative disparity between the weight of time destined discharging job tasks and the weight of time earmarked relaxation and other needs.*

Key words: stress; eustress; distress; stress' management; time budget; behavior A and B.



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Perhaps never before life haven't been as stressing as in the third millennium or perhaps each one of use has the tendency to appreciate his "time" as an apogee of all tasks. In modern life conditions our capacity to adapt is more and more asked for. The quality of adaptive answers is permanently subdued to new exigencies: the growth of intellectual worked up behaviours; the increase of social competition; the necessity of taking important decisions in a very short time; and time elapses in a different way in "speed's century". Before time wasn't that short, the fight for existence that violent, the people that nervous. Time had become a mainspring of everyone. It is present everywhere, starting with economic medium, where it identifies with gain and ending with relaxing moments, it seems time is never enough. Captured between the desire of enjoying our spare time and the desire of fulfilling our professional duties we found ourselves fighting, of course, against time, fighting against us. The tensions that follow from this fight, that has time as common denominator have repercussions on us, causing a succession of psycho-conductor alterations, varying from confusions and depressions to aggressive answers or, on the contrary, to blocking answers.

I . Introduction in stress problems

The stress phenomenon is, nowadays, intensely studied, the beginning been made especially in the inter-war period, when stress was appreciated as a mass phenomenon, as a disease of great extension, generated by the complexity and accelerated rhythm of social life.

The word stress comes from Latin word "stringere" which means to embrace, to injure and that gave birth to French word "detresse" and to English word "stress". The later signifies the notion of compulsion, of force, of solicitation and designates any aggression coming from the environment or any tensional mood created by that.

The stress concept was introduced for the first time in the scientific language by Hans Selye (1907-1982), concept with who he revolutionized the medicine. In his opinion stress means the ensemble of body's non-specific reactions to external actions, determinate the general syndrome of adaptation. Stress, in the same author conception, runs three steps: the alarm reaction (or threat reaction) in which the organism hunts out the stressor and gets ready to confront it; the resistance reaction in which interfere the adaptive mechanisms to reduce the stress' noxious effect; the exhaustion reaction as last stage, which appears when the

stressor hadn't been neutralized due to lassitude of body's resources to fight against stress.

To stress means, generally speaking, "any force that applied to a system causes important changes of its shape, usually with the connotation that change is a deformation. The term is used regarding body, social and psychological shape" (Brate, 2002, p. 86).

In other scientists' conception stress is defined as "the person's reaction at situations or events that ruins or threat to ruin his physiological or mental equilibrium; a physiological or mental mood, as answer to a stressor (person, situation, event from the environment)." (Iluț, Chelcea, coord., 2004, p. 348).

According to other theory, "stress is a discrepancy subjectively perceived between the environment's tasks and self-evaluation of one's own capacities" (Lazarus, Folkman, 1984). To forestall each person ways to adapt in different situations there have to be known both the stressors and the individual resources, looked as expression of personality's efficiency. As it is revealed out of Selye's conception, stress sends not to the situation that caused the tension mood, but to the organism's reaction: "Not what happens is important, but the way you react". The differences between the persons' reactions, as expression of their psychological features, become even more discernible when the persons are in time crisis, when the tasks are even more petitioner and thus trough their ampleness, duration and complexity put to the test the psychological and physiological functional capacities of persons. "The same stressors causes negative stress to some (distress), positive stress to others (eustress) and leave impassive others" (Arădăvoaicei, 1993, p. 16).

The personality's features concretize in certain adaptive styles and the research of correlations between personality's features and the conduct in difficult situations, caused by activities' solicitations made evident the adaptive ways characteristic to certain types of personality. The cardiologists N.D. Friedman and R.H. Rosenman (1974) showed that in a continuum of behaviours at one side lies the A behaviour type and the other side lies the B behaviour type. There are proves that there is a behaviour pattern describes as "A type personality" (Matthews, 1982, pp. 293-332). The major characteristic of A behaviour type is the permanent struggle with time, perception that keeps the person tensed and strained, being predisposed to cardiovascular diseases. The B behaviour type is motivated in work more of certain material advantages, using stress in his benefit, as a biological stimulant. In our study we have had precisely this relation: time budget, behaviour type (A or B) and stress.

Stress is a reality more than present nowadays. The cues frequently used: "I'm overworked", "I'm stressed" are very strong arguments in this sense. In these conditions terms as

stress or neurosis pass from the scientific language to the daily one. Being stressed means to feel overwhelmed of circumstances without knowing what to do. Stress, although seems something regular, inevitable, still when we are stressed we solve harder our problems or make decisions.

In work activity stress appears as a consequence of insufficient psychological resources to face the tasks and professional exigencies. In this case we speak of occupational stress which is often considered to have a good character to employees' performances; this is defined as *eustress* and mobilize the individual resources. It's opposite is called *distress*, it's effects affecting negative the health (Jurcău, Moldovan, 2003).

The psychological stress could be defined as an interaction modality between person and environment, involving the person's confrontation with a situation that threatens his good mood and integrity, concretized in a tensioned disposition generated by the frustration or repress of motivation moods (needs and aspirations) or by the difficulty to solve certain problems.

Thus it is necessary to consider at least two aspects: first of all the stressful condition and second, the stress mood. The stressful condition is the cause of stress, is the sum of stressors and the stress mood represents the emotional shock, the situation mental tensed at individual or group level.

As mood of psychological disposition stress reveals itself as product of the variety of pressures and forces with whom then environment act on person, as body's unorganized answer to the environment's tasks. Being released by factors that act intensely or persistently or perceived as threaten, the psychological stress is characterized by a pregnant affective presence. Even in optimal conditions of emotional equilibrium, the emotional reaction might be un-adequate to stimuli, un-adapted when the body's emotional capacity to resist is outshined by the tasks' intensity or by the violence of affective traumas.

The scale of psycho-conductor unrests specific to psychological stress is large and shaded, determined both by the nature of stressor and personality's possibilities but also by the real conditions in which stress sets.

The image of psycho-conductor modifications of stress presents itself as a diverse scale, from emotional unrests (mania, scare, psychological depression and so on), of cognitive processes (confusion, blanks) to behaviour (gesture and vocal), from the plain disorganization of activities to aggressive answers, or, on the contrary, to blocking.

II. The organisation and stress management

The stress management can be seen as an attempt to vary the subordinates level of stress towards an optimum point to achieve the maximum performance, avoiding the mental traumas associated with excessive stress. In this

process are included: the estimation of self position on stress-performance curb; the constant and active evaluation of person and environment to identify the potential stress sources, selecting and adopting the most adequate strategies to diminish stress' effects; the efficiency's evaluation of those strategies.

Management can be defined as an important social technique, as guidance and control of efforts of a group of persons in order to achieve a common goal. "A good manager is the one that makes it's group to achieve the goals in terms of a minimum expense of resources and efforts" (Mackensie, 1969, after Cornescu, Mihăilescu, Stanciu, 2003, p. 2).

Each person invested with managing responsibility at one level or other showed a specific way in thinking and acting. Style, in the context of psychosocial approach, means behaviour constant and consistency in thoughts and actions. A competent manager reveals his qualities of leader especially in tensed situations. His will stir up the others, his power reverberates in the persons he leads to achieve the organisation's (economic or normative - schools, army) goals.

1. The leader as stress manager

Managing stress differential and nuance, helped by adequate strategies, the leader can help the subordinates to change the perception upon the tasks and to adapt it to their capacities.

People react different in front of same stressors due to different perception of it's nature and also due to their different capacities to confront them. That's why the leader, as stress' manager should introduce the task differentiated, depending on the person's position on the stress-performance curve. When the personal performance is satisfying and there aren't any signs of wrong function the stress' level mustn't be adjusted.

A stress management more active should be applied when the leader plans his activities or when there are bigger or smaller signs of stress. In managing stress it is important the recognition of stress signs and decipher it's significations. Among stress signs we enumerate: incapacity to sleep or sleep without rest; irritability; the growth or the diminution of appetite; suddenly burst into tears; the lack of control and patience; confusion; the feeling that things aren't going well; difficulties in working with others; constant task of perfection for self and others (Vernon, 2006, p. 58).

At the same should understand that the number of signs and their frequencies determine the extent of somebody's stress level; a frequent sign shouldn't worry, but more signs felt frequent and during a long period of time indicate a real problem.

2. Stress sources in organizations

Identifying situations and irrational beliefs that contribute to stress emergence, in other words localizing excessive stress sources is another important stage in stress management.

The stressors are, virtually, everywhere in environment. The leader's problem is to identify the stress sources which are relevant to a strategy of stress management. Also the leader should examine systematically the environment to determine the most noteworthy stressors for particular cases. It shouldn't be forgotten that the leader, through his conduct, is always the first candidate to stress sources.

The group members can be a source of social support, but, at the same time, a source of sensible stress. Also the competition with equals for allowances, favours, promotions may generate a significant stress, especially when them, in usual situations, are looked upon as social support (they are friends, colleagues). The relation with superior may become a stressor particularly when the superior establishes the performance's standards and tasks and evaluates the achieved performance. Also the social events may represent an active stress source within the organization; in such situations the effect is rather indirect and complex.

3. Strategies of stress management

Stress management involves using "healthy" techniques and "unhealthy" techniques. The healthy techniques demand for using reason in behaviour, acting by anticipating a problem and achieving steps to impede the development of event or minimizing it's effects by taking on preventive measures. The rational thinking might be a good way to reduce the intensity of a stressor. "If we use time to think and establish priorities, some things would be unavoidable postponed and other even eliminated" (Wood, Tolley, 2003, p. 43).

The majority of techniques to adapt to stress accentuate especially the the cognitive dimension of behaviour: on one hand the situation's evaluation, on the other hand the behaviour register, which the varied it is, the more growth the chances of an efficient adaptation. The cognitive training to adapt stress has as goal to eliminate or to minimize the stress sensation by teaching the person to call, any time he needs, a pattern of rational analysis. In difficult situations we needn't to react which involves not to anticipate the problem and as a consequence to react after it had occurred. The "unhealthy" techniques (cigarettes, alcohol, drugs) aren't so useful because they often brought an increase of stress level causing a series of negative effects.

The leader can use three ways to accomplish stress management: 1. the manipulation of perception and present tasks on subordinates (strategies regarding the requirements); 2. the evaluation and, subsequent, the improvement of present perception on subordinates' capacities (strategies regarding the capacities); 3. the attenuation of dysfunctional answers of subordinates (physiological, mental and conductor answers – strategies of moulding).

The stress management general procedure starts when the leader, through varied evaluation methods, establishes that the level of individual stress is not at the optimum of performance. Generally speaking, if the leader notices the stress level is too reduced, he can increase the tasks to such a point that demands overcome the capacities. On the other hand, if the demands excess is dysfunctional, the leader should investigate the probable causes and to reduce the demands to a tolerable level or he could improve the subordinates self perception about their capacities. A third option is to try to relief the stress effects, focusing even on the demands, even on capacities or answers or any other combination.

The stress management strategies can focus on subordinates' capacities, on observing and stimulating/accelerating subordinates' abilities to accomplish their tasks. This strategies are usually focused either on adopting/amending subordinates' abilities through training, or on attempt to improve self-confidence to accomplish the task.

In most cases the leader may influence the requirements to discharge the employees' duties either by specifying the ways to accomplish the requirements either by imposing the performance's standards, but the growth of requirements' level is more tolerable if it is made gradually. A relevant example about the effect of changing the performance's standards is the preparation for an athletic competition. The performance's levels growth progressively to the optimal physical condition, corresponding to capacities and demands.

Another source of manipulating by requirements that leader may use is to negotiate resources' assignment to execute the tasks. It is not a custom leader to hold back deliberately the resources to produce stress; anyway time constrains can be used to manipulate the demands' level. If the leader ignores comments such as: "I can do that, but I need more time!" there is the possibility of dysfunctional stress. Sometimes a demand like: "We must do this report immediately!", may diminish subordinates' lethargy/inertia, improving their performance.

Changing the demand or the procedures to achieve the demand could be major sources of stress, controllable by leader. The subordinates tend to see the change as overwhelming their abilities, especially if the current procedure was installed for a long time.

Modifying subordinates' abilities by preparation can be done either through a simple correction, either by training or in school. To achieve that leader should be conscious of the essential condition that of existing the needed skills and of the difference between the existing skills and the asked dexterities.

The leader's role is not only to administer the subordinates' stress by communicative and supportive

behaviour, but also to control his own stress to maintain his capacity to action. The social support is an important process in maintaining the psychical and physical health of person, in it's accommodation, in the growth of self-esteem and in helping the person to trust people and to feel comfortable.

The group's cohesion, developed even in hard conditions, the accent on the group's role to support in the socialisation process was the factor that determined the German soldiers to keep fighting even if their defeat was almost a certitude. The same cohesion determined the Vietnamese soldiers to fight in very hard conditions during their confrontation with USA.

Exercises to built the team, controlling the socialisation process help soldiers to achieve the desired performances and to overcome the stress. Many authors suggest that fight itself causes the string of social contacts at micro-group's level.

The opened and direct communication between officer and soldier may reduce the ambiguity of the situation; in addition, asking the soldiers to talk one each other during the war reduce the psychical isolation frequently associated with stress on the battle field.

Among the important psychological factors in preventing and combating stress an essential role is hold by the high perception of personal efficiency, a person's belief that he or she can accomplish a specific task. Such beliefs influence the person's behaviour, generating more perseverance in front of obstacles and frustrations and, implicit, more chances to reach success. Exposure to stressors has diverse effects: at he negative pole, when there is a consciousness of a reduced efficiency as depressives have, there is a fast decompensation in confronting the stressors that feels up to the immune system in sense of system's reduction; at the same time, exposure to stressors, in circumstances of trust in self efficiency, doesn't lead to adverse physiological effects (Bandura, 1989, p. 420).

The self image doesn't remain a simple epiphenomena; it is associated with changes on the entire scale of bio-psycho-social system of a person. The level of self-esteem affects strongly the performances in all activities, the mechanism of causal circularity functioning uncommonly striking: the ones with a higher self appreciation have more trust, mobilize more and succeed better, which consolidate the positive appreciation about himself/herself. On the contrary, a reduced self-esteem increases the risks of failure and determinates an even sombre vision on himself/herself (Constantinescu, 2004, p. 205). The persons with grown self-esteem believe that can overcome the obstacles, stress being perceived in a reduced manner. These beliefs can be learned in time, being a very efficient possibility to combat stress.

The control place out of assigning theory distinguish two categories of subjects; those with an internal control, who considered responsible of what happened, and those with external control, considering that what happened is due to hazard or others. From these two categories the persons most affected by stress are those that felt they didn't have control on the way the events occurred (Jurcau, Moldovan, 2003). Through therapies based on the assigning theory these beliefs can be modified in order to obtain a higher internal control to reduce stress.

All psychological factors of preventing or controlling stress may impose "a series of interventions at personal level; out of these we can mention the cognitive-behaviour therapies, the relaxation techniques, the bio-feedback techniques or training programs aiming stress or time management or improving the social skills" (Bogathy, 2004, p. 184).

There are, as well, a multitude of psycho-sociological factors that may influence the stress level, such as A or B personality type, the time budget (as we have shown above and that constituted the variables of research), the self-esteem level, the optimism level and so on.

III. The empirical research regarding the relation between time budget and stress management in military organization

The methodological background of undertaken research

The research's purpose concerns the investigation on how the military use their time budget, more precisely how they use their time within a working day and a rest day (24 hours).

Research objects

The present study has as central object exhibiting a succession of findings made up from real investigation. The present research's objects are multiple and various. As main objects we found: clearing up machineries of growing up stress level against the restriction of spare time; grasping aspects of relation between the spare time volume and the volume of time spent to solve job's tasks; the analysis of time budget's structure; proving that individual differences from subject's answers are signs of their personality's particularities.

The research assumptions

The work assumptions:

- 1) if the subjects perceive the environment as been very petitioner, then the score obtained at life events scale will be high.
- 2) if the subjects are officers, then the responsibility for fulfilling their tasks will be higher and the stress level will grow.
- 3) if the time assigned to cultural-educative activities is reduced, then the stress level will grow.

The sampling

The sample is made up of 60 militaries. From 120 militaries, we selected 60, calculating a statistic step ($p=2$). In order to respect sampling's rules, it was calculated the same statistic step both for selection of officers, and for the selection of non-commissioned officers. The sample thus obtained is representative for the investigated population.

The main characteristics of studied population reveal that the population is relative homogeneous, the only particularity is the dichotomy depending on rank variable.

The sample characteristics

Sample	No.	Environment		Sex		Legal status		
		Urban	Rural	Mail	Fem.	Not-married	Married	Divorced
Officers	40	92.5	7.5	85	15	7.5	90	2.5
NCO	20	85	15	80	20	20	80	0
Total	60	88.75	11.25	82.5	17.5	13.75	85	1.25

Methods and techniques of research

The main methods and techniques we operated with are:

1. *the investigation*: the investigation based on questionnaire; the investigation based on interview;
2. *the psychological tests method*: the scale of life events; the identification of conductor type;
3. *the observation*;
4. *the conversation*.

1. The investigation

The investigation based on questionnaire

The questionnaire was built on time budget dimension.

To operate the concept it was elaborated a list with the main activities carried on in an ordinary day by a military, the activities being grouped in: I. Activities regarding to work and II. Activities regarding spending the spare time

The investigation based on interview

Method alike the investigation based on questionnaire, *the investigation based on interview* involves spoken relations between participants, the interview being conceived as personal interview, with free answers, focused on "time budget" variable.

2. The psychological tests method

The scale of life events

This scale have been projected by T.H. Holmes and R.H. Rahe (after H.Pitaru, 1988, 61). They based on the idea that a stimulus category able to product stress are those that can interfere in a moment or other of our daily life, marking it in a certain direction (life events). Holmes and Rahe conceived a list of events through which it is possible to evaluate and accumulate some incidents that may happen during a year and may influence the health due to their stressing character.

The identification of behaviour type

The studies undertook by Friedman and Rosenman (1974, after Pitaru, 1988, p. 65), and also those that followed circumscribed the possibility of dichotomy

persons after a conductorial scheme or behaviour syndrome into persons of A type and persons of B type, not being a typical variable of personality as in Hippocrate, Sheldon or Cattell's case. Thus the persons associated with A type are characterized through a powerful desire of affirmation, competitiveness, impatience, they are always in time crisis, their gestures and language are straight and present an excessive hostility. They involve always in multiple activities, obstacles and harassing. The persons associated to B type of behaviour are the reverse of A type, being more relaxed and fight against stress in a manner less phrenetic, having a reduced level of hostility.

3. The observation

The observation, a method used in research, consisted in selective pursuit of subjects' behaviours, of their behaviour during the investigation, their reactions at some

questions, their aspect at work. For research the method was useful because it allowed to catch unaware natural behaviour in usual conditions at work.

4. The conversation

The conversation included the talk with officers and NCOs, situational conversations, depending on the particularities in which they occurred. The conversations were free and spontaneous. The advantage of this method consists in allowing getting a significant number of information in a short period of time.

The statistic transformation of research data

One of the problems the research went way to was the identification of share of each chapter in the total of time budget in a working day and in a rest day. In consideration of our purpose, the statistic transformation of research data involved especially the analysis of data obtained through the investigation based on questionnaire.

Activity weight in time budget (%)

Table 2

day activities	Programme activities	Activities outside the unit	Cultural-educative activities	Sportive activities	House keeping active.	Shifting	Diverse activ.	Physio logical needs
Working day	36.61	2.65	11.82	1.78	4.66	4.10	2.47	35.91
Rest day	3.57	3	22.82	4.79	10.97	3.98	6.15	44.70

Legend:

- 1 - programme activities, going on in the unit;
- 2 - programme activities, outside the unit;
- 3 - cultural-educative activities;
- 4 - sportive activities;
- 5 - housekeeping activities;
- 6 - shifting;
- 7 - diverse activities;
- 8 - physiological needs.

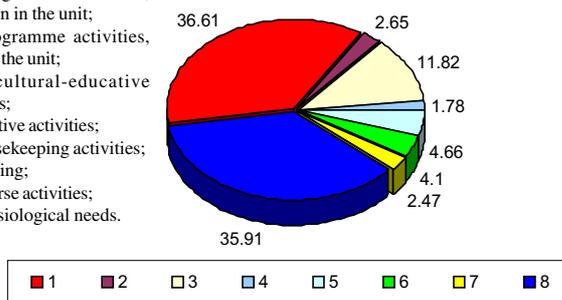


Figure 1. Activity share in a working day

The global distribution of time during the week of work reveals the conclusion that the biggest share in time budget is held by the programme activities inside the unit. Adding 2.65% that represents the time assigned to programme activities outside the unit, it notice that almost 40% of time budget is dedicated to programme activities.

After the programme activities (inside and outside the unit) it follows, as naturally, the activities regarding the physiological needs. Afterwards, arrange gradually the cultural-educative activities, the housekeeping activities,

the shifting, the diverse activities. On the last position there are the sportive activities.

Another instrument used in our research was the scale of evaluating the life events. Further on it is presented the table with position indicators (mean, median and mode), but also the maximum and minimum values obtained after testing the subjects.

Position indexes and results for stress level

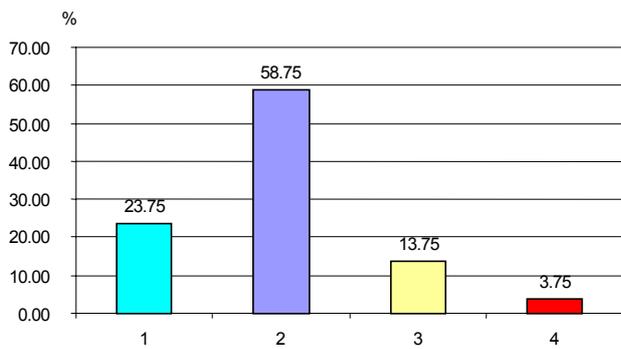
Table 3

	N		Mean	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
	Valid	Missing					
Stres coef.	60	0	166.77	168.00	168.00	36	351

In the following we present, the scores obtained at life events scale.

Out of the total of 60 subjects:

- 23,75% have obtained scores under 150;
- 58,75% have suffered a slight life crisis, their scores integrated themselves between 151-194;
- 13,75% have suffered a moderated life crisis with scores between 210 and 297;
- 3,75% have suffered a major life crisis. Thus 76,25% of investigated subjects had a life crisis.



Legend: 1- score under 150; 2- slight life crisis; 3- moderate life crisis; 4- major life crisis.

Figure 2. The scores for the life event test

The third instrument applied was the test to establish the subjects' behaviour. After transformation of data, we reached the following results (table 6):

Results for subject behaviour test

Table 4

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	36	60.0	60.0	60.0
Type A	24	40.0	40.0	100.0
Type B	60	100.0	100.0	
Total	60	100.0		
Total				

60% of subjects possess the A conduct and 40% - the B type of conduct.

The statistic transformation of obtained data included the calculus of Pearson correlation coefficients between the instruments used in the research. The correlation tables are presented further:

Correlation between test instruments

Table 5

		Sex	Rank	Behaviour	Physiological needs
The score obtained at life events scale	Pearson Correlation	.278*	.056	.625**	-.323*

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The score obtained at life events scale correlates significant positive with sex ($r = 0,278$ and $p = 0,05$). At the same time it correlates strongly significant with type of behaviour ($r = 0,625$ and $p = 0,01$). The score correlates significantly negative with the activities of satisfying the physiological needs ($r = 0,323$, and $p = 0,05$). The score obtained at life events scale does not correlate with rank.

Out of correlations results that the score from life events is tightly tied with type of behaviour. Thus, the two variables correlate strongly significant, conforming the hypothesis according to the subjects that belong to A type of behaviour gather a higher score at life events scale, having a higher level of stress.

The fact that the score correlated significant positive with sex variable means that the masculine gender subjects are more stressed; consequently, the military of masculine gender have a higher level of stress.

The physiological needs correlated with the score from life events scale, but they correlated negatively, pointing out the fact that the reduced time conferred to satisfying the physiological needs during the working week has a strong implication upon the stress level.

Between the score and rank there is no correlation. Thus the hypothesis according to the tasks of an officer are more stressing than an NCO's is refuted. The stress level doesn't depend on rank or the hours spent at programme. Also, the stress level didn't correlate either with the number of hours spent by militaries at the programme.

In working days the variable time for cultural-educative activities correlates significant ($r = -0,426$ and $p = 0,01$) with the variable time assigned the programme hours, because, as it was expected, the numerous number of hours spent at programme restricts the time of the others activities.

In the correlation's tables there had been other activities that correlated, but we considered them unimportant to the undertaken research and, at the same time, logical consequences of the alteration of each daily activity weight day (working or rest) and of the interference between the chapters of time budget.

IV. Conclusions

The World Organization of Health placed, as far back as in last years, at forehead on the list of diseases with growing spread coefficient, the psychical affections. Stress lies at the ground of many such diseases, often incurable. One of the areas in which stress may appear, showing itself, is the professional area.

At work stress appears when the professional exigencies overcame the resources the human being dispose it. The professional stress is determined by the person's impact with physical and intellectual work process.

Stress is not only the result of major events, but also of daily tensions and pressures. The later, through their frequencies, have an important part in professional environment and affects more the person than the rarely major negative events.

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