



International Conference
The Future of Education



TEACHING CHALLENGES: PORTUGUESE TEACHERS' LEVELS AND SOURCES OF PROFESSIONAL STRESS



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INTRODUCTION



- Schools must provide a high-quality service that guarantees excellent opportunities for every student to succeed;
- Teachers play a crucial role in schools;
- Teachers face new demands, beyond technical knowledge;
- Studies have been finding a gradual decline in the wellbeing of teachers;

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ABOUT TEACHERS' STRESS

- Work-related stress among teachers has been increasing, according to several studies;
- Burnout can be described as an outcome of persistent occupational stress;
- Stress experienced by each teacher is unique to that individual, depending on their perception of stressful situations
- When demands are high and resources are scarce stress and burnout can increase;
- Professional stress affects not only teachers' physical and mental health, but also students well-being and academic performance;

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CROSS-SECTIONAL,
QUANTITATIVE DESIGN

Non-probabilistic snowball
sampling method.

METHODS

- 922 teachers working in Portugal;
- 51.4% in the midpoint of their career (7 to 25 years of service);
- Online protocol included a sociodemographic and professional questionnaire and the Teacher Stress Questionnaire;

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Stress Levels and Stressors

	min. – max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Global Stress	0-4	2.54	0.91
Student Indiscipline	0-4	2.58	0.95
Excessive workload	0-4	2.82	0.86
Student Motivation	0-4	2.36	0.89
Teaching Career	0-4	2.95	0.97
Bureaucratic work	0-4	3.13	0.92
Disciplinary Policies	0-4	2.54	0.93

- 52.9% ($n = 488$, with responses rated 3 and 4) of the participants report high to very high stress levels, and 34.6% ($n = 319$, with responses rated 2) indicate moderate stress levels.
- The primary sources of professional stress are associated with Bureaucratic Work with 67.1% of teachers ($n = 712$) selecting the highest levels on the scale;
- The second most reported source of stress is related to the Teaching Career;
- The third significant source of stress is Excessive Workload with 61.2% ($n = 649$) of responses at the maximum levels. Student Motivation had the lowest reported stress level ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 0.89$).
- There is a trend for women to report higher stress levels than men, the difference was statistically significant only on the Excessive Workload, $t(919) = 2.79$, $p = .006$, $d = .27$.

Table 2.**Professional Stress: Change of Usual Residence due to Job Placement**

	Relocated		Not relocated		t(920)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Global Stress	2.65	0.95	2.51	0.90	1.94	.053	0.16
Indiscipline	2.75	0.94	2.54	0.95	2.67**	.008	0.22
Excessive Workload	2.95	0.88	2.79	0.86	2.19*	.029	0.18
Student Motivation	2.51	0.90	2.32	0.89	2.60**	.009	0.22
Carrer	3.19	0.93	2.89	0.97	3.76**	.000	0.31
Bureaucratic work	3.29	0.88	3.09	0.93	2.63**	.009	0.21
Disciplinary Policies	2.70	0.92	2.50	0.93	2.51*	.012	0.20

- Teachers who reported relocation indicated higher stress levels across all QSPEBS subscales compared to those who had not been relocated;
- The level of professional stress differs depending on the teachers' residence. Teachers living in mainland Portugal report significantly higher levels of general stress compared to those living in the Autonomous Region of Madeira;

Table 3.**Professional Stress: Length of Service at Current School**

	0-5		6-15		16-24		25-44		<i>F</i> (3,914)	<i>p</i>	Post-hoc
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Global Stress	2.57	0.88	2.55	0.92	2.49	0.94	2.41	0.96	0.82	.485	
Indiscipline	2.67	0.95	2.51	0.86	2.49	1.04	2.51	1.06	2.30	.076	
Excess Workload	2.86	0.84	2.80	0.80	2.80	0.95	2.65	0.99	1.44	.229	
Student Motivation	2.38	0.89	2.28	0.88	2.34	0.88	2.54	0.96	1.94	.122	
Career	3.07	0.92	2.85	1.11	2.89	0.96	2.75	1.06	4.53**	.004	1 > 2, 4
Bureaucratic work	3.15	0.91	3.15	0.86	3.10	0.95	2.99	1.12	0.72	.541	
Disciplinary Policies	2.62	0.91	2.49	0.93	2.47	0.95	2.42	1.01	2.03	.109	

- There is a tendency for teachers with shorter tenure at the school (up to 5 years) to experience higher stress levels compared to those with longer service.

Table 4.

Professional Stress: Number of Years Away from Home

	0-5		6-15		16-24		+24		<i>F</i> (3,881)	<i>p</i>	<i>Post-hoc</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Gobal Stress	2.46	0.91	2.75	0.82	2.78	0.98	2.45	1.00	6.40**	.000	2, 3 > 1
Indiscipline	2.53	0.97	2.68	0.90	2.79	0.95	2.72	0.94	2.78*	.040	
Excessive workload	2.77	0.88	2.88	0.81	3.18	0.73	2.77	0.95	5.99**	.000	3 > 1
Student Motivation	2.33	0.91	2.37	0.85	2.59	0.87	2.48	0.94	2.12	.096	
Career	2.85	0.97	3.10	0.96	3.40	0.89	3.21	0.98	10.11**	.000	2, 3 > 1
Bureaucratic work	3.07	0.95	3.22	0.89	3.52	0.66	3.09	1.04	6.16**	.000	3 > 1
Disciplinary Policies	2.48	0.93	2.62	0.94	2.93	0.86	2.75	0.93	6.73**	.000	3 > 1

- The more years away from home, the higher are the stress levels;
- The stressor related to teaching career has the most significant differences;
- Between the third group and the fourth group stress levels decrease;
- This change could be attributed to a more permanent restructuring of personal and family dynamics, as roots become more firmly established in the new location and the household's residence potentially shifts closer to the teacher's workplace.




Conclusions

Teachers in Portugal are stressed

- Excessive bureaucratic workloads, long working hours and uncertain career prospects;
- Compared to other countries, Portuguese teachers work more hours;
- Consistent findings of elevated stress and burnout in Portugal;

- Teacher stressors include bureaucratic and administrative tasks, the nature of the teaching profession, heavy workloads, and time constraints.
 - This differs from earlier studies that used the same assessment tool, which highlighted student-related stressors—specifically indiscipline, diversity, and ineffective disciplinary policies—as the main contributors to teacher stress;
 - The current study links stress more closely to organisational problems, aligning with recent global research that identifies similar stressors;
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- Reducing the bureaucratic and administrative workload, which can often be redundant, and offering better career conditions, especially attention and incentives for teachers who are separated from their families, are aspects that could reduce teachers' professional stress;
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- Investing in improving procedures for the placement, retention, and stability of teaching staff is crucial, as ongoing instability caused by teacher mobility can lead to increased dissatisfaction and heightened stress levels, alongside all the adverse consequences this may entail for the education system.

Fonte: Pesquisa de dados 2013



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Thank You



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