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Published in the Slovak Republic

European Journal of Contemporary Education

ISSN 2304-9650

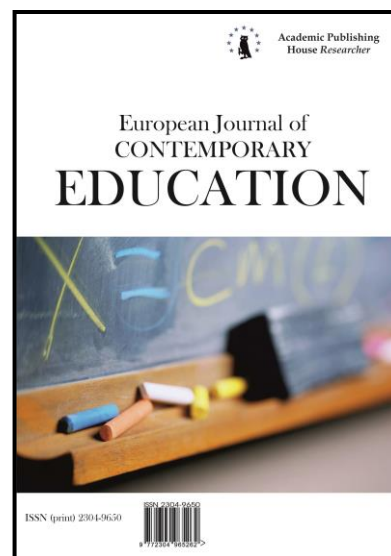
E-ISSN 2305-6746

2017, 6(4): 787-796

DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2017.4.787

www.ejournal1.com

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Social Factors of Mental Well-Being Violation Among High School Teachers

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Abstract

Social factors are considered which affect the mental well-being of high school teachers. The impact of such factors as the organization of scientific and research activity, working conditions, career and professional growth opportunities, the wage system, and the organization of a workplace are analyzed. The survey was conducted among the professors and teachers of leading Russian universities (N = 295). The study used an adapted questionnaire of subjective assessment concerning the social-psychological context of a high school teacher work, developed by A. Mayer on the basis of the organizational condition study methods, work satisfaction and professional development. The received materials were supplemented and concretized in the course of the focus group study, which allowed to identify psychologically vulnerable groups of teachers. Confirmatory factor analysis of social conditions, in which the professional activity of pedagogical personnel was carried out, showed that the confidence in the long-term guarantees of labor activity and the stability of scientific research work indicators are the strongest predictors of the mental well-being among pedagogical personnel. The results of the study made it possible to identify the following factors among the social factors that have a special weight in the processes of a mental well-being disturbance among teachers: the transfer of scientific and pedagogical workers to an effective contract; the increase of their scientific and teaching activity pace, burdened by the unpredictability of management requests; the disadvantages of a training schedule drawing up, etc. They determined that a significant influence of the motivational profile shortcomings, singled out as the part of social factors, provokes the following violations of the mental well-being among teachers: the violation of the value unity in a team; a stable domination of negative emotions; alienation, hiding uncertainty in their abilities; the deformation of mutual assistance systemic nature; increased anxiety and proneness to a conflict among university teachers. These studies

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support the hypothesis that a high degree of teaching work intensity, a high emotional, psychological and sensory loads, which are the consequence of a number of social factors negative influence, make a significant impact on the psychological-emotional state of high school teachers, including professional burnout.

Keywords: mental well-being, social factors, higher education institutions, teachers.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, modern high school is in the center of social and economic reforms aimed at intellectual and human potential development. The leading role of a modern high school is in the course of these processes. It actualizes the need to find new approaches in order to ensure the mental well-being of teachers.

The professional activity of higher education teachers has its own specifics, which allows to assign it to a group of occupations with a large number of stress factors and persistently high risks of psychological and emotional health disruption among workers. This is accompanied by a number of professional and personal deformations (Mariychuk, 2016; Vinichenko et al., 2016; Pirincci et al., 2008). The scholars engaged in the study of professional health among university teachers pay attention to the fact that "the frequency of stress conditions, low stress-resistance and frustration tolerance of pedagogical personnel is much higher in comparison with the experts of other social groups" (Nikiforov et al., 2015).

The results of emotional and psychological health study among high school teachers show that teachers, as a professional group, are characterized by extremely low rates of physical and mental health, with a tendency of their decrease with the growth of pedagogical experience (Lisnyak et al., 2012; Petanova, 2011). Besides, a significant part of the teaching staff at Russian universities has a high level of emotional tension, caused by a low degree of satisfaction with the set of conditions in which their professional activities are carried out (Rogach et al., 2016). This circumstance is manifested in the reduction of teacher mental functions stability, their poor emotional well-being and in a significant decrease of working capacity.

The health of pedagogical staff at high schools in its psychological and physiological aspects is the topic of a research that has a long history, and the interest to it is heated periodically by publications in which a critically high level of professional burnout is revealed among university teachers. However, a high relevance of this work is conditioned by the fact that most of the studies focus the attention on the influence of psychological factors, on the processes of mental well-being disruption among pedagogical staff, while the dependence of the psychological-emotional states on the organizational features of a working environment among university teachers was studied poorly. In such a situation, the issue of all social factors identification in the mental well-being of university teachers is particularly acute: its solution is important for the development of a long-term personnel policy aimed at the selection and retaining of scientific and pedagogical personnel at higher education institutions, as well as at Russian high school world status raising.

Our study was carried out on the basis of Russian Federation higher educational institutions. The aim of the work is to study the dependence of the mental well-being among university teachers on the organizational features of a working environment. We studied the social context of pedagogical staff work, based on the study of organizational conditions, job satisfaction and the professional development of a high school teacher. A particular emphasis in the work is on the determination of the dominant psychological emotional states of university teachers, depending on the social conditions of a working environment, including the analysis of the relationship between the mental well-being of university teachers and the degree of their subjective satisfaction with the organizational characteristics of the working environment. The performance of confirmatory factor analysis made it possible to establish a set of social conditions and the groups of social factors that have a special weight in the processes of the mental well-being disruption among university teachers.

The problem of mental well-being among teachers

The issues of a person mental well-being are at the center of scholar research attention since the second half of the 20-th century, which made it possible to determine several approaches to this phenomenon understanding. A hedonistic approach involves the study of surrounding reality perception by a person from the standpoint of personal benefit and pleasant experiences (Bradburn, 2014). Within the framework of this approach, the "mental well-being" of a person is

understood as his positive experiences, conditioned mainly by external influence factors (Kahneman, 1999; Diener et al., 2012). The structural reflection of mental well-being rests on the structure represented by the meaning of life, the satisfaction with life conditions and social interaction. It was determined that these three trends stipulate the dominance of positive emotions, which is determined by the very existence of subjective well-being (Chan, 2009).

The eudemonistic approach is based on the consideration of mental well-being as the result of personal development (Waterman, 2008; Ryan et al., 2001). Noting the limitations of the hedonistic approach in the study of psychological well-being phenomenon in this case, the researchers shift the emphasis to a person positive functioning. A person transforms the surrounding world transforming himself and thereby achieves harmony. In particular, C. Ryff identifies six main components in his theory of mental well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental management, purpose in life, personal growth (Ryff, 1995).

Today one can state a great variety in the definition of a person mental well-being concept and structure, as well as the factors that cause his possible deviations (Tarabrina et al., 2012; Shamionov, 2014; Shevelenkova, 2005; Artyukhov et al., 2015). At that, the category of "attitude" is the basis to consider the concept of "mental well-being" for most researchers.

According to this provision, the mental well-being of a high school teacher personality is viewed as an intrapsychic phenomenon, the components of which are: the attitudes toward oneself (the assessment of personal and career growth), the attitudes towards others (the evaluation of interpersonal communication character and quality) and the attitude to the conditions of their professional activity (satisfaction with working conditions).

The quality of university education depends to a large extent on the key figure of the educational process – a university teacher, and not only on his professional competence, but also on physical and psychological health (Fitzmaurice, 2010). The profession of a teacher is associated by itself with the intensity of interpersonal communications and a high emotional involvement in these communications. In this regard, the probability of professional-personal deformation and emotional burnout is very high (Zausenko, 2012). The thesis of "emotional labor" is introduced in a number of studies, which made it possible to bring the analysis of legitimization process to the forefront concerning the emotions of teachers and their consolidation in the work cycle. It is argued that emotional picturing creates a kind of space for a teacher that determines the recognition of ambivalence in relation to a profession (Kitching, 2009).

Developed countries are characterized by the studies that examine the well-being of teachers in a social-political context, which makes it possible to establish the relations between education and well-being, as well as between poverty and education (Winter et al., 2016). However, the concentration of research attention on the "role of demand for jobs and resources to work in the field of pedagogical well-being" does not allow to reflect specific situational requirements (Bermejo-Toro et al., 2016). The need to balance the individual and institutional well-being through innovation and sustainable partnerships is highlighted separately (Margolis et al., 2014).

A special attention was paid to the interconnection of social conditions and health among the workers of an educational organization (Miglioretti et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2003). Part of the works is devoted to the education quality improvement through the optimization of working conditions (Waterson, 1946; Feigenbaum, 1994; Li, 1991). Recently, the studies concerning the creation of favorable working conditions during a part-time work (Wharton and Blair-Loy, 2002) and the struggle against stress during work (Barck-Holst et al., 2015; Kyriacou, 2001) are the relevant ones.

According to the studies of South Africa teacher mental well-being, the conclusion was made on the presence of protective factors that mediate the impact related to stress-factors operation. According to the study results, it is concluded that, in spite of the high level of stress among teachers, those who have a high restorative capacity, demonstrate a high level of mental health more than others (Boshoff et al., 2014).

At the same time, despite a considerable interest in this issue, there is no comprehensive study nowadays concerning the dependence of psychological-emotional states of university teachers on the organizational characteristics of a working environment. Besides, the vast majority of such studies were conducted using the data from North America, Europe and Asia. We were not able to find any studies using Russian material.

2. Methodology

The aim of the study is to determine the social factors affecting the mental well-being of university teachers, as well as their value in the processes of psychological-emotional state disruption. The impact of such factors as the organization of research and training activities, working conditions, career and professional growth opportunities, the wage system, and the organization of a workplace are analyzed.

The starting point is the hypothesis that the high degree of teaching work intensity, a high emotional, psychological and sensory loads that arise as the result of a number of social factors (the organizational features of a working environment) negative influence have a significant impact on the mental well-being of university teachers. The implementation of training activities in the conditions of non-compliance with safety requirements and sanitary and hygienic standards of a workplace organization, an inappropriate planning of a training load, and also the active influence of other social factors contributes to the emergence of stress, which ultimately leads to a teacher's performance decrease and "professional burnout".

The empirical results of the study are based on the data collected at Russian higher education institutions in 2016. The sample includes the representatives of professors and teachers from leading Russian universities (N = 295) of various specialties, aged from 22 to 70 (an average age is 47.80 years, median is 47 years, standard deviation makes 3.70), including 132 men (44.7 %) and 163 women (55.3 %), which is adequate for the gender composition of people involved in pedagogical activities at universities. 13.2 % among them are without a degree, 58.3 % are the candidates of sciences, 28.5 % are the doctors of sciences, which allows to study the mental well-being of various categories of university teachers. The participants filled-in the questionnaire as the part of an online survey.

An adapted questionnaire was used as the part of the research toolkit to assess the social-psychological context of a high school teacher work, which was compiled on the basis of the "Methodology for organizational condition study, the satisfaction with work and the professional development by A. Mayer". The questionnaire serves to diagnose organizational conditions, the satisfaction of teachers with work and their professional development by the evaluation of the objective characteristics of all social conditions and the subjective perception of a working environment characteristics. The units included in the questionnaire were adapted according to the purpose and the objectives of the study. The following units are used in the questionnaire: colleagues/head, research and training activity, working conditions, career growth and professional development, wage, the organization of a workplace, etc.

The task of this tool validation as a whole was set, for which the materials were supplemented and concretized during the focus group study.

The results of the study were analyzed by the conduction of the dependence analysis concerning the mental well-being of high school teachers on their subjective satisfaction with the organizational characteristics of a working environment and the use of the counting method for the Pearson's criterion X^2 .

3. Results and discussion

The modern trends of higher education development presuppose the identification and the consolidation of key areas to increase the effectiveness of the university teaching staff by the transfer of scientific and pedagogical workers to an effective contract the period of which makes 1 – 5 years. At the same time, according to the received results, 87.1 % of the respondents concluded a one-year contract. In the opinion of 26.8 % of teachers, the introduction of an effective contract motivates them to increase the pace of personal and professional development, and 13.6 % of respondents talk about the possibility of a more precise trajectory development for their career growth.

At the same time, according to 54.6 % of teachers, the introduction of an effective contract provides a psychological tension increase among teachers. In connection with the innovations, there is a competition increase between teachers for vacant jobs, which was noted by 64.7 % of respondents. 56.3 % of teachers note the development of an anxious state in connection with the need for an annual competition concerning their position (the fear of being fired); 39 % note a growing distrust in the actions of the heads. In the opinion of almost half of the teachers, the annual term of the contract does not allow to ensure an organizational commitment of employees

in the long-term, which causes the emergence of a chronic stressful work environment, and also contributes to a psychological destabilization and increased tension in the relations of teachers and university management.

This situation correlates with the studies of other authors who, on the basis of similar data, conclude the following: the presence of an affective commitment to an organization makes a positive influence on the mental well-being of teachers, while its absence becomes the factor in its destabilization (Inerney et al., 2015).

It is established that 64.7 % of university teachers talk about the pace of their research activities increase, which results in emotional fatigue increase, reinforced by the uncertainty in their ability to achieve specified indicators. At the same time, the assessment of an emotional state among teachers also proves the presence of a number of positive aspects. So 26.8 % of teachers feel a sense of recovery from the opportunity to improve their professional level; 38.6 % note the growth of their intellectual and social activity; 35.7 % of teachers talk about the emergence of new professional interests.

Almost 29.8 % of teachers feel full satisfaction from the quality and the effectiveness of their professional activities. It is noteworthy that the feeling of satisfaction and interest arises in them not because of a qualified audit work (the work with students), but due to the achievement of planned scientometric indicators, their high publication activity, etc. At that, 64.7 % of respondents noted the occurrence of a cognitive dissonance between their identification as a teacher and the requirements of the current system of the work evaluation among professors and teachers by the results of scientific activity. "The disregard for the development of professional identity causes damage, even for those who conduct scientific work, because the landscape of modern science transformed" (Hancock, Walsh, 2016).

Most teachers note the existence of a relationship between the quality of classroom activities and the orientation to the research component of their professional activity. In the course of the focus groups, the following provisions were established: "the lack of time for the preparation of classes", "the discomfort during the conduct of classes due to insufficient study of educational material", "the fear of additional questions from students", etc. Thus, the teachers noted their vulnerable position on this issue.

According to the obtained results, young teachers without a degree are at the greatest risk zone in terms of the mental well-being. They have difficulty in with the entering a research team and/or do not have a base to develop their research capacity. As well as teachers of the older age group (60 years and older), most of them are not able to support the set high rates of scientific and research work any longer ($X^2 = 7,679$, $f = 2$, $p < 0,05$).

Table 1. Psychological tension of teachers among different age groups (N=295)

	Teachers experience psychological tension			Teachers do not experience psychological tension		
	men	women	total	men	women	total
Young teachers under 30 without a degree	20	41	61	7	8	15
Teachers at the age from 30 to 60 years with a candidate of sciences degree, Ph.D.	41	67	108	36	25	61
Teachers over the age of 60 with a candidate of sciences degree, Ph.D.	23	15	38	5	7	12

According to the assessments of teachers who do not have an academic degree and who are at the beginning of their careers, the lack of a systematic support for "young experts" becomes a significant factor of their mental well-being disruption, who feel excluded due to this circumstance from the "context" of developed small groups. It is noteworthy that this provision is typical for university teachers and other developed countries. Despite the fact that there are practically no studies concerning the social component of a teacher's activity, nevertheless, a high correlation is established between the availability of information and the emotional support for young teachers by their colleagues and the emergence of various burdens in psychological well-being (Väisänen et al., 2017).

During the focus group study this category of respondents noted: "the sense of detachment", "uselessness", "too much workload", "confusion from the discrepancy between their expectations and the real situation", "you feel tired from the fact that you need to prepare for classes, write a dissertation, publish articles, participate in educational work and much more". Young experts pay a special attention to the presence of barriers on the way to their career growth, which is seen as a significant factor in psychological and emotional state destabilization. In the course of the focus group they noted that "the scientific team does not perceive a recent student as a real colleague, seeing in them those who still need to study more and more", "a young expert is a future competitor for old workers", "there is no real support during a thesis discussion, rather an aggressive rejection", "an unequal treatment of newcomers".

In its turn, due to a number of psychological-physiological features aged teachers have a low adaptive capacity for changes which a high school experienced: the assessment by scientific and metric indicators, electronic training systems, the development of electronic content, etc. Most of the interviewed teachers (78.4 %) noted the caste nature of teachers within this age category, describing them as "old-timers" for whom general rules are not applied, and 70.3 % of respondents noted their reluctance to accept the objective changes in the attitudes of national higher education.

Due to the developed situation, the comments made by age teachers during the focus groups are of particular interest. In particular, they noted "a sense of authority loss" and "the loss of personal and professional positions". The transition to a quantitative assessment of labor contributes to "the development of complexes", "feelings of insecurity" and "the loss of soil underfoot" among them. Often the following saying goes in one interpretation or another: "Nowadays everything is measured by Hirsch index and the number of Scopus publications..., which nullifies all my pedagogical and scientific experience at once". According to the assessments of teachers of the older age group, the greatest threats to their mental well-being disruption are represented in the following areas: the increase of scientific and methodological burden (78.6 %), the introduction of labor efficiency evaluation by scientific and metric indicators (85.5 %), a high amount of work in an electronic medium (79.3 %).

It is noteworthy that this situation was not typical for the aged teachers of the developed countries 15-20 years ago. According to the studies, the level of well-being among elderly teachers was quite high, although 36 % of teachers had a number of health-related disorders. However, according to the efficiency index, only 4 % of 45-49-year old and 12 % of 55-59-year old teachers were classified as those who have low working capacity (Kinnunen et al., 1994).

Undoubtedly, the approach of the leadership to the evaluation of scientific and pedagogical work is a significant social factor that has a significant impact on the mental well-being of all teachers. As it was already mentioned above, the transparency of teachers' labor evaluation according to scientific-metric indicators is ensured at the current moment. Despite the fact that 87.3 % of respondents evaluate the "the timeliness and the amount of wage payment", 38.7% of teachers note the shortcomings of the most quantitative approach to their work evaluation. In their opinion, the qualitative content of teacher research activities is lost due to the desire to achieve high scientometric indicators (which is represented by international practice). The relevance of these problems is also emphasized in other studies. Ranking systems and the stimulation of publication activity lead to "distorted" pseudoscientific activity, without taking into account the social value of this activity.

Nevertheless, the study found an increase of teachers' interest for additional payment receiving in comparison with the previous period. As a negative point, one can note that every second respondent lacks the confidence in the stability of a set co-payment system, its invariability in the direction of indicator increase during the achievement of specified indicators.

At the same time, the general assessment of "my boss" unit by the teachers according to A. Mayer's methods some positive characteristics prevail. Almost 47.8 % of respondents note the satisfaction with the actions of the current leadership. In their description, they relied on the following adjectives: "active", "attentive to trifles" and "initiative". However, during the performed study they also found that pedagogical staff has some vigilance to the actions of their management: the respondents are particularly displeased with the leveling of their professional achievements by their superiors; There is the absence of obligations to follow the "verbal" arrangements of the management with the teachers; Some of the teachers noted the unpredictability of management requests and the fragmentary growth of an unplanned load. In the opinion of the respondents this circumstance contributes to the collision of interests among teachers in the process of their professional function implementation. The result of such a collision is the violation of the value unity in the collective and the deformation of mutual assistance systemic nature.

The planning of a schedule ($p < 0.05$) is also referred to significant organizational features of the working environment. According to the study results, a significant number of teachers (33.2 %) experiences a high level of anxiety before a semester start because of a training schedule planning, as they worry that their wishes will not be taken into account. The level of stress is much higher among young teachers (80.1 %). A high "intensity of work" to some extent marked by each teacher acts as a weighty factor that has a negative impact on the mental well-being of teachers. In the opinion of the respondents, this circumstance is conditioned by the significant volume and uneven distribution of the pedagogical load during an academic year.

A desired "working condition" for each teacher is a "convenient" schedule, which would allow him not only to minimize possible loads (emotional, psychological and physical ones), but also to carry out his professional activities at a higher level, including through the participation in scientific projects, grants, scientific conferences, the management of student circles, etc. However, the overwhelming majority of respondents (51.2 %) are not satisfied with their work schedule or are partially satisfied, which makes the schedule of class optimization issue as the most relevant one for many teachers. A part of the teachers (20.1 %) drew attention to the fact that several disciplines can be scheduled within the same day, "making it difficult to prepare for a lesson, dissipating a teacher's attention and increasing his fatigue".

As practice shows, one of psychological destabilization zones for university teachers is represented by their "workplace". According to the obtained results, this characteristic of social conditions was appreciated highly for the most part. 56.6 % of respondents are satisfied with the organization of a recreation area for teachers, which fully meets the need of employees to "keep educational documents in a workplace" (47.5 %), "to keep personal belongings" (46.2 %), "in a favorable atmosphere for rest and for an academic lesson preparation" (44.8 %). Based on the obtained results one can conclude that teachers pay a special importance to the technical equipment of a workplace, which would allow to maintain a high level of their professional activity ($p < 0.05$).

So, 67.6 % of teachers note the satisfactory provision of resources concerning their workplace, emphasizing their attention on the possibility to use computer and office equipment fully for purposes related to the educational process.

At that, 36.4 % of respondents pay attention to the need of their "working needs" harmonization concerning the use of various technical and multimedia means with colleagues, which exacerbates sometimes the teachers' already encountered contradictions and provokes them into an open conflict in an attempt to defend their interests. According to the results of the study, it was established that most often conflict situations between teachers are developed due to the following conditions: "personal dislike" – 12.5 %; "In the course of organizational issues solution" – 13.9 %; "Because of a high training load, an uncomfortable schedule, etc." – 11.2 %. Annual competitive procedures and the reduction of rates at the departments contribute to the emergence of tension in interpersonal and professional relations of teachers ($p < 0.05$). For example, 37 % of respondents noted that they began to notice "a sense of rivalry" when they communicate with colleagues, 9.2 % experience "envy", 5 % feel "irritability" and 13 % have the sense of "injustice". A high competition, which develops the disunity of the collective, the fulfillment of the set tasks not through a close cooperation, assistance, help, but through competition, and thus the collective is transformed into a group of people consciously leveling interpersonal social contacts.

The evaluation of a social context motivational profile within the professional activity of pedagogical staff testifies to the actualization of the following needs of teachers at Russian universities:

- the need of their merits recognition;
- the need for a sense of relevance as a high-class specialist;
- the need for a clear organization of working time;
- the need for long-term guarantees concerning a workplace stability;
- the need for the fair payment of their labor;
- the need for personal and career growth.

4. Conclusion

In the course of the performed study, the dependence of psychologic emotional states among university teachers on organizational characteristics of a working environment was determined. Confirmatory factor analysis of social conditions in which the professional activity of pedagogical personnel is carried out showed that the confidence in the long-term guarantees of labor activity and the stability of scientific research work indicators are the strongest predictors of the mental well-being among pedagogical personnel. The most psychologically vulnerable groups of teachers (teachers without a degree and aged teachers) who have a low adaptive capacity for changes to which a higher school has been subjected are the most influenced ones by social factors.

Almost half of university teachers talk about the pace of their research activity increase, which results in an emotional fatigue increase, reinforced by the uncertainty in their ability to reach the set indicators. In the course of the performed study, it was found that pedagogical staff has some vigilance to the actions of their management, caused by the unpredictability of inquiries from their superiors and the fragmentary increase of an unplanned load.

The results of the empirical study showed a high degree of some teachers' dependence, who negatively assess the level of their mental well-being, on the degree of their subjective satisfaction with the organizational characteristics of a working environment. According to the information received, the social factors that have a special weight in the processes of the mental well-being disruption among teachers include the following ones: the transfer of scientific and pedagogical workers to an effective contract; the increase of their scientific and teaching activity pace, burdened by the unpredictability of management requests; the shortcomings in a training schedule planning, etc. It was determined that the introduction of an effective contract provides a psychological tension increase among the teaching staff of universities, initiating the emergence of a chronic stressful work environment, the development of anxiety, psychological destabilization, the feelings of frustration and uncertainty in the future among teachers. The conclusion is drawn that the significant influence of the motivational profile shortcomings identified in the composition of social factors provokes the following violations of the mental well-being among teachers: the violation of value unity in a team; a stable domination of negative emotions; alienation, hiding the uncertainty in their abilities; the deformation of mutual assistance systematic nature; an increased anxiety and disposition to a conflict among university teachers.

These studies support the hypothesis that a high degree of teaching work intensity, a high emotional, psychological and sensory loads, which are the consequence of a number of social factors negative influence, make a significant impact on the psychologic emotional state of university teachers up to a professional burnout.

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