The Relationship between Stress and Satisfaction at Work

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce, která se věnuje problematice stresu a spokojenosti na pracovišti, je rozdělena na dvě části. V teoretické části se věnuje problematice stresu, rozvíjí fyzické a psychické důsledky stresu na člověka a důsledky na firmu. Také jsou v ní popsány strategie zvládání stressu a způsoby, jak se stresu vyhýbat. Praktická části se věnuje výzkumu, který má za úkol odpovědět na výzkumné otázky.

Klíčová slova: stres, spokojenost, zvládání, zaměstnání, disfunkce

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis, which deals with the issue of stress and satisfaction at work, is divided into two parts. In the theoretical part are described physical and psychological impacts on the human and the impacts on the company. There are described strategies of coping with stress and ways how to prevent stress. The practical part consists of research which task is to answer on the research question.

Keywords: Stress, Satisfaction, Coping, Employment, Disorders

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Today, many people are not satisfied with their job. When I ask my friends about their job and how are they satisfied in their job, answer is often negative. One of the main reasons may be the occurrence of stressful situations at workplace. The situations may be diverse. One of them may be overloaded by their job. Unpleasant fact is that the job is more and more boring for many people. Most of the complaints were aimed against supervisors and their lack of interest about their employees. Others unpleasant facts may be inappropriate working conditions or environment and bad relationships with colleagues. Many people think that their salary is not appropriate to their work or they are afraid due to uncertainty of their contract. Happiness, satisfaction and enjoyment of their work are for the most people basic a need of life. Many people spend most of their time at their work and it is in their interest to spend this time enjoying their work. The happiness and enjoyment of the work comes when during daily activities are satisfied personal needs and wishes and when personal values are in accordance with values of the company were people work. If for somebody is essential that employees are treat like humans, he will be satisfied only in company which this rule accepts. Unfortunately, the enjoyment is something that tends to increasingly fade due to the stressful situations. Furthermore, long-term stress can cause many psychosomatics disorders. Psychosomatics disorders are those disorders which are caused by negative influence of emotions and psychological factors on the human body. Those disorders are bronchial asthma, lower back pain, migraine headaches, obesity, ulcers and last but not there can be included heart disorders. People facing the stress may have also psychological problem like suffering from nervousness. (Hannelore, 2006, 7, 8)

Very important issue connected with stress is coping. In other words it means dealing or fighting with the stress. Coping may be divided into two parts. The first part is coping aimed on emotions and the second one is coping aimed on the direct problem. Sigmund Freud described defence mechanisms which stressed people may use consciously and even unconsciously. Coping strategies to prevent stress at the workplace includes supervision and for example balint groups introduced by psychoanalytic Michael Balint.

Stress does not have influence on the human only. Today lots of companies suffer from stress. It means that stressed employees are not beneficial to the company because companies try to eliminate the amount of the stress what costs considerable amount of money. From this point of view it is desirable to have non stressed employees.

I. THEORY

1 STRESS

1.1 History of Stress

The first meanings of the word stress might be *"hardship, straits, adversity or affliction"*. It was used this way in the 14th century. In the 17th century it was used in connection with science. The word stress has been used systematically since the 19th century. *"'Load' was defined as an external force; 'stress' was the ration of an internal force (created by load)."* (Lazarus and Folkman 1984, 2)

1.2 Definition of Stress

It is possible to find many definitions of stress on the Internet or in books. Paulík says that *"Stress can be perceived as a specific case of general burden. It is a situation when rate of the burden is higher than acceptable limit in terms of adaptation options of the organism under the given conditions."* (Paulík 2010, 41)

Subodh Gupta in his book says that the stress is *"the kind of disharmony which develops when you not achieve what you want."* Stress is an action which takes place in human body and it is connected how human interprets external situation. If the interpretation is unfavourable then the result is building negative feelings or power in body of people. (Gupta 2008, 11)

According to Hindle, *"Stress in individuals is defined as any interference that disturbs a person's healthy mental and physical wellbeing. It occurs when the body is required to perform beyond its normal range of capabilities. The results of stress are harmful to individuals, families, society, and organizations, which can suffer from 'organizational stress'"* (Hindle 1999, 6)

Organizational *"stress affects organizations as well as the individuals within them. An organization with a high level of absenteeism, rapid staff turnover, deteriorating industrial and customer relations, a worsening safety record, or poor quality control is suffering from organizational stress. The causes may range from unclear or overlapping job descriptions, to lack of communication, to poor working conditions, including 'sick building syndrome'. This is when a lack of ventilation, insufficient lightning, and inadequate insulation in a building contribute to high levels of illness and absenteeism."* (Hindle 1999, 10)

1.3   Characteristics of Stressful Situations

For better imagination, here are written some stressful situations according to Vágnerová

Imperviousness of situations: – A man perceives a situation as stressful when considering that the situation cannot be affected from his side. For example can be used some incurable disease. When the man is convinced that the situation can be affected by him, the amount of stress can be reduced.

Unpredictability of situations: – The amount of stress during stressful situation can be increased by unpredictability or by inexperience with the situation. A person who already experienced certain stressful situation can perceive this situation less stressful than the person who has not experienced this situation yet. As example it can be used job of fire-fighter. There is high amount of imperviousness.

Unreasonable demands – When a person experiences a stressful situation he might be close to the edge. Vágnerová uses example where an old woman takes care about her demented, seriously ill husband who is completely dependent on her. This woman might live in permanent stress because taking care of her husband, doing it all on her own might be very exhausting for her.

Change in life – Crucial change in life might be considered as a stressful situation because it disturbs life habits. Vágnerová uses as an example a death of husband or divorce. (Vágnerová 2002, 33 - 34)

The stressful situations are caused by stressors.

1.4   Stressors

1.5   Response to Stressful Situations

Vágnerová divided the reactions to the stressful situations into six phases.

1)   <u>Awareness of load</u> – Considering and experiencing a situation as stressful one. The way of experiencing a stressful situation depends on previous experience, skills, actual situation and personal character and also on social support.

2)   <u>Activation of psychological defence</u> – This reaction might be for example denial of stress.

3)   <u>Activation of physical reactions</u> – Physical reactions are caused by psychological ones. These three stages are followed very quickly.

4) <u>Coping</u> – Looking for strategies which would reduce stress.

5) <u>Occurrence of disease symptoms</u> – Awareness that trouble is serious and long-term.

6) <u>Diagnosing conditions caused by stress</u> (Vágnerová 2002, 34 - 35)

1.5.1 Psychological Reactions

One of the most common reactions to the stressful situations is a change in emotional experiences especially when the situation lasts for a longer time. These reactions might be:

- <u>Anxiety</u> – A person reacts on the stressful situation by this way when he is afraid of some uncertain threat

- <u>Rage and aggression</u> – When the person is facing stress he can behave more aggressive than in a normal situation.

- <u>Depression</u> – It occurs when the person feels that the situation has no solution.

- <u>Apathy</u> – Resignation which reason may be the inability to find a solution.

Another physical reaction might be weakening of cognitive functions according to Vágnerová. Significant change in emotional feelings can put more of load on processing of information. Disruptive consequences can have also intrusive thoughts caused by stress experience. When the person realizes that he is facing a stressful situation, he activates a psychological defence. The way of the psychological defence can be different for everybody. The purpose of this defence is to keep psychological balance. As the result of these psychical reactions might be start of physical reactions. (Vágnerová 2002, 35)

It depends on how people perceive and deal with such situations.

These uncomfortable stress situations are caused by stressors. (Gupta 2008, 11)

1.5.2 Types of Stressors According Time

According to Paulík, there are two types of stressors. The first ones are "real stressors" and the second ones are "possible stressors" (Paulík 2010, 42)

1.5.2.1 Real Stressors

These stressors are currently present in a person's life and are affecting the person's life.

1.5.2.2 Possible Stressors

These are situational aspects, which can cause stress when they reach certain limits, frequency, accumulation or the time they last. It could be a noise, coldness, stream of air, accumulation of duties during lack of time. (Paulík 2010, 42)

1.5.2.3 Past Stressors

Another type of stressors might be those stressors which are not actual anymore, but they affected the person in the past. (Hollý)

1.5.3 Separation of Stressors According to Modality

According to psychiatrist Martin Hollý, there are five types of stress according to modality:

1) Physical Stressors – warmth, coldness, noise, too much/ lack of light, dryness, bad smell, lack of space, untidiness

2) Biological Stressors – starvation, thirst, tiredness, pain, illness, lack of sleep

3) Psychological Stressors – fear, anxiety, anger, negative thinking, poor self-evaluation, helplessness, apathy, distraction, chaos

4) Social Stressors – conflicts, tension in interpersonal relationships, a large number of people

5) Spiritual Stressor – loss of sense (Hollý)

1.5.4 Positive Impacts of Stressors

Occasional occurrence of the stressors may also have positive reaction on an organism because from the physiological side, the resistance of the organism might be increasing. According to Atkinson, there was research when young rats were taken out of a cage by people with bare hands every day. This situation is a stressor for those taken rats. When the rats became older, they were not scared so much when they were facing to other stressors in comparing with those rats that have not experience with taking out from the cage. Rats that had to swim for a fortnight in cold water attained better results in swimming than rats that did not have to. (Atkinson 2003, 498 – 499)

1.5.5 Physical Reactions

Human bodies react to stressful situations by starting complex congenital reactions to a perceived threat. When the human body is under the stress the most typical reactions are increase of heartbeat rate and increase of blood pressure. Furthermore there is increase of breath frequency. But these are not only physical reactions. There are also reactions like drying saliva which results in more air in the lungs. Dry mouth is the initial sign of the stress. Also mucosa excludes adrenalin to blood. (Atkinson 2003, 498)

1.5.6 General Adaptation Syndrome

This syndrome was introduced by Hans Selye and he defines it as a package of responses manifested during the reaction to a stressful situation in all organisms. According to Hans Selye the reaction on stress takes place in three phases.

1) Warning – In this phase an organism mobilizes itself to be able to deal with a threat.

2) Resistance – The organism tries to actively deal with the threat.

3) Exhausting – This phase takes place when the threat is still present. The organism is not able to "attack or escape" in the sense of dealing with the stressful situation and with the threat. Because of that, the body depletes its physical sources.

This pattern, as Selye says, is caused by physical and psychological stressors. He says that long-standing or recurring exhausting of physical resources can turn into many physiological adaptation disorders. Hans Selye conducted research using animals as test subjects. The animals were faced to whatever type of stressors and Selye discovered that in every case there were some repercussions. Some animals had diminished lymph nodes and some of them had gastric ulcers. These changes had impacts on resisting to other stressors and diseases. (Atkinson 2003, 497 - 498)

1.5.6.1 Attack

Attack is defined as active defence. Furthermore it is perceived as a tendency to fight with the endangering unpleasant situation actively. Human can attack the direct source of the threat or he can attack an alternative object. Aggressive reactions may have turned into verbal self-blame. In extreme cases it can result in suicidal actions. An aggressive type of defence is connected with heightened and excessive activity which is unrelated to the original problem. (Vágnerová 2002, 19)

1.5.6.2 Escape

An individual who cannot deal with a stressful situation on his own might choose the second type of defence which is an escape reaction. Among the escape responses may be included changes in approach to the certain situation, looking for support, or resignation to the satisfaction. The escape reactions may have also factual nature, for example when someone has problem in a family, he can leave the family.

1.6 Impacts of Stress

The stress has negative impacts on many fields. These fields are for example human health and psychology but it has also impacts on the companies.

1.6.1 Impacts of Stress on Human Health

Trying to eliminate permanent stress might exhaust human body and the body might become more inclined to get disease. Chronic stress can result in physical disorders. Stress can weaken the immune system and due to this fact human are less resistant to viruses and bacteria. Stress can lead to psychosomatic problems. (Atkinson 2003, 499)

Psychosomatic problems are those problems for which it is assumed that emotions play the crucial role. Symptoms of psychosomatic problems reflect physical defects linked with damaged tissue and pain. The example of disease which can ensue from the stress is the ulcer. In psychosomatic medicines they examine in the most cases diseases like asthma, hypertension, ulcers, colitis and rheumatic arthritis. All of those diseases might result from the stress. (Atkinson 2003, 499 - 500)

When a stressor collides with a physiological reaction there can be direct negative impact on human health if this collision is long-term. This collision can escalate into damaged arteries and organ systems. Stress may have a direct impact on immunity to diseases. There is a possibility that the stress will turn into Ischemic Heart Disease. (Atkinson 2003, 500)

1.6.1.1 Ischemic Heart Disease

Ischemic heart Disease occurs when coronary arteries are blocked or closed due to depositing fatty substances therefore there is an interruption of the supply of oxygen and nutrients to the heart. Narrowed arteries can lead to angina pectoris. Furthermore, a completely discontinued supply of oxygen may cause myocardial infarction.

It is believed that the people who have very stressful job may inclined more to get Ischemic heart Disease than people who have not such stressful job. Those stressful jobs are mostly defined by a high workload and responsibility but there is not a big chance to influence the nature, speed and conditions of the job. (Atkinson 2003, 500 – 501)

1.6.1.2 Ulcerative Colitis

Danzer says that this disease may be understand as heavy suffering in area of small intestine and large intestine in which the body loses blood, nutrients and water. It is manifested by diarrhoeas which have chronic or periodical nature and they are accompanied by strong pain. During this disease there is a disintegration of the tissue layers furthermore there can be perforation of the large intestine. This can lead in rare cases to death. Ulcerative colitis may attack mostly people under 50 years but appearance of this disease is not excluded at people who are older. Ulcerative Colitis may occur when something has changed in the region of love, friendships or work. (Danzer 2001, 99 – 100; Faleide, Lian, and Faleide 2010, 133)

1.6.1.3 Bronchial Asthma

Bronchial asthma is a shining example of psychosomatic disease. Asthma has complex reactions and is shaped by many factors so it cannot be said that the asthma is only somatic or physical phenomenon. Asthma is described by hyperactivity and inflammation of air passages. It is characterized by seizure breathing, wheezing and subjectively by feeling aftermath. (Faleide, Lian, and Faleide 2010, 151)

Danzer says that according to Franz Alexander emotional factors are important in order to develop asthma. Alexander described these emotions like sexual excitement, fear, jealousy and anger. (Danzer 2001, 88)

1.6.1.4 Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis affects the knuckles. The causes of this disease may be stress, infection or immunity disorder. Typical symptoms of the rheumatic arthritis are swollen and aching knuckles in area of hand fingers and foot toes, knees and elbow. In an advanced state of arthritis fingers and toes may change their shape. Connected with that is occurrence of knots on elbows and fingers. These are called rheumatic knots. Rheumatic arthritis can be accompanied by rheumatic fever and tiredness. (Slívová 2008)

1.6.1.5 Obesity

Obesity is a weight disease which promotes with development of other diseases like hypertension, sugar beet and intestinal obstruction and these may lead to shortening of human life. One reason for the obesity might be an enormous production of certain hormones. But the main reason is not keeping of daily allowance of food. People who suffer from obesity did not have only physical problems but the obesity is touching the psychological side of life as well. Human who has problem with obesity feels repulsive despised which may result into source of depression. People with such problems are socially inexperienced and have limited ability to deal with emotional strain. Other characteristics besides impatience and sentimentality are fear, distrust, envy and jealousy. (Danzer 2001, 141 - 142)

1.6.1.6 Stress and alcohol

Stress can make from human without experience with alcohol an alcoholic and also it can result in the usage of drugs in extreme cases. Excessive drinking may lead in liver disease, cardiovascular disease and also in development of certain type of cancer. Excessive consumption of alcohol may result in lethargy, tiredness, depressions, and lower ability to deal with stressful situations, too. (Hindle 1999, 7; Atkinson 2003, 504)

People under the stress cease to practice and sedentary way of life prevails. Stress indirectly affects human health by reducing behaviour which has positive effect on health and by increased occurrence of unprofitable behaviour. (Atkinson 2003, 504)

1.6.2 Impacts of Stress on Human Behaviour

The human might behave in different ways when he is facing the stress. *"Typical symptoms such as mood swings and erratic behaviour may alienate colleagues as well as friends and family. This can start a vicious circle of decreasing confidence, leading to serious emotional problems, such as depression."* The stress also has some impact on decision making. If it happens in work it can result arguments, accidents, financial loss and loss of employment. (Hindle 1999, 9)

1.6.3 Impacts of Stress on a Company

The stress is not a matter of people only. According to Hindle, *"the stress costs industry over $150 billion a year in the US alone."* If the company is places under the stress, there might be a problem with absenteeism. *"In the UK, as much as 60 percent of*

absenteeism is believed to be caused by the stress-related disorders." Lots of companies are searching for the solution to reduce stress levels, because it makes company more profitable. However, this is not an only problem. The next are high staff turnover so companies have to pay for training new people; low quality of service that leads to complaints from customers and it also costs money. And the last but not least the problem caused by stress is poor reputation. An Interesting fact is that in the Japan they have special word for death which is caused when people are stressed from too much work. That term is "karoshi" (Hindle 1999, 7; 9; 10)

1.7   Symptoms of Stress on Individuals

"There is no single symptom that can identify stress." People may react to stress in different ways. But *"a common factor in stressed individuals is the presence of a number of symptoms."* According to Hindle, these symptoms can be divided into two groups. (Hindle 1999, 12)

1.7.1   Physical Symptoms

The human being who is stressed can have some typical physical signs. *"The less life-threating signs include insomnia, fatigue, headaches, skin rashes, ulcers, overeating and on the other hand loss of appetite."* More serious problems could be heart disease. It is not only about health, but stressed people can be recognized by the clothes they are wearing, too. Possible sign of this case is dishevelled clothing. (Hindle 1999, 12)

1.7.2   Emotional Symptoms

In this category of the symptoms can be included *"general irritability, acute anxiety attacks, depression, lack of libido, the loss of a sense of humour, and an inability to concentrate on the simplest of the routine tasks."* (Hindle 1999, 13)

1.8   Coping

1.8.1   Origin of the Word

According to Křivohlavý, the word coping is synonymous with adaptation. Adaptation is an essential condition of human existence. (Křivohlavý 1994, 41)

The word coping itself means to deal with difficult situations. Etymologically, the word coping is derived from Greek word "cophos" which means a direct hit to the ear. In other words it means fighting or dealing with some problem. (Křivohlavý 1994, 42)

1.8.2   Definition of Coping

In the literature coping is defined as an effort to manage, tolerate, and reduce the external requirement which the person is facing and collisions between those restrictions. Those restrictions are extraordinarily high, which causes considerable strain to human or it excesses the border of human's sources which the person has available. (Křivohlavý 1994, 43)

1.8.3   Strategies of Coping with Stress

Vágnerová says that according to Lazarus and Folkman there are two types of coping:

1) Coping which aims to solve the certain problem. Furthermore there is an effort to evade the same problem in the future.

2) Coping aimed on improvement of emotional balance. It means reducing the stressful experience. This type of coping does not solve the problem which causes the stress. (Vágnerová 2002, 36, Atkinson 2003, 510)

Choosing the strategy how to cope with stress is affected by character of the person which is involved into this problem. Also the essentials issues are its beliefs, what the person perceives as more or less important. (Křivohlavý, 1994, 52)

1.8.3.1   Coping Aimed at a Problem

This type of strategy covers delimitation of the problem, looking for alternative solutions and realization of an alternative option. The success of this strategy depends on individual experience and his ability of self-control. Furthermore this type of strategy reduces the severity of a depression. (Atkinson 2003, 510)

1.8.3.2   Coping Aimed on Emotions

People tend to use this type to prevent themselves from the being flooded by negative emotions. Also they tend to use it when the problem seems to be unaffected. There are two types of this strategy − Behavioural and Cognitive. To the behavioural strategy can be engaged physical exercising, alcohol drinking, usage of drugs, looking for support from friends. Cognitive strategy means temporary displacement of the problem or moderation of threat caused by a stressful situation by shift of value. (Atkinson 2003, 510)

1.8.3.3 Overview of Strategies

1) <u>Increasing of Awareness</u> – It means to gain more information what is happening with a person or around the person and trying to reverse the course of events or at least to reduce them.

2) <u>Direct Action</u> – Every action which leads to deal with a stressor.

3) <u>Deadening</u> – Deadening of certain action which would make the unfavourable situation even worse.

4) <u>Soliloquy</u> – The action when a person tries to convince himself to change the hierarchy of his values more precisely trying to find another solution.

5) <u>Request</u> - for a help or expert advice (Křivohlavý 1994, 53)

1.8.4   Ways to Prevent Stress

1) <u>Relaxation</u> – is very important part of preventing stress. Relaxations exercises positively affect human nerves and reduce negative feelings. Sleeping is also an essential part of relaxation. Recommended average sleep length is 8 hours.

2) <u>Hobbies</u> – are great way how to prevent the stress because when people are doing something which gives them pleasure, they are not thinking of the stressful situations. Choice of hobbies is an individual matter.

3) <u>Social Support</u> - People with higher social standards are less prone to be under the stress. It is believed that man need to have some friends to be more satisfied with their life. Positive social feedback may have favourable consequence on better emotional adaptation to stress. (Atkinson 2003, 512)

4) <u>Avoiding Stress</u> – The best way to prevent stress is to not meet it. To learn it is quite important to learn how to distance from the stress. It means imagination of unfavourable situation in life and attempt to avoid them. It is also important to not bring the stress from work to the home environment.

5) <u>Healthy Diet</u> – It is essential to have a balanced diet. Diet affects the psychological part of life too. An unhealthy diet can lead to stress.

6) <u>Planning of Difficult Situations</u> – People should have some plan "B" if the ideal solution does not work at all. When creating this crisis plan it should be considered all of the possible difficulties which can occur. It is quite normal that the ideal

solution does not work and when in happen people should not panic. Essential is to know that the failure can lead to advice for a future.

7) <u>Time Management</u> – Burgetová says that Křivohlavý defines ten essentials of time management

- Time is a rare gift – It is important to use wisely

- One should delegate its time itself – Man has to decide what time will use for what.

- Recognition of more and less important – It means to learn evaluation.

- More important things need deserve more time

- The most important things deserve most of time

- Less important things deserve minimum of the time

- Learning to say "No" – If one will always say yes to everyone, the load of the issues which have to be done would be higher than level of ones resources

- When working in group firstly determine the duration of the action

- Learn to see every action from the perspective of value

- Periodic reviewing of the time management – Evaluation and reviewing of delivery of the time. From the reviewing it should be possible to state what might be done in better way.

8) <u>Changes in Everyday Life</u> – Some people tend to plan too much load of work on their shoulders. It can lead to a stressful situation because they might be afraid that will miss a deadline. It is important to bear a "healthy" amount of work. It might help to organize the work into three stages. Firstly do what is really necessary, and then continue with important things which can be postponed and in the end one should do the rest of the work. Furthermore, people should do something they like or gives them a pleasure every day. For example to devote time to their hobbies. Very useful and anti-stressful consequences may be to keep good relations with colleagues at work. Quarrels at workplace may lead to very stressful situations and that can lead to reluctance to go to work. Human should think also about his achievement and not only about his failure or duties. Furthermore he should praise himself for his successes. (Burgetová 2007, p. 14 – 16)

1.8.5 Supervision

Another way how to prevent stress is supervision. In other words supervision is control, monitoring or consultation. Supervision may be perceived as prevention of burnout syndrome. Also it can lead to improvement of work performance and protects a client. Supervision is systematic help in solving professional problems from the emotional point of view. It is also technology which helps to increase work quality and delegating work.

Goals of supervision:

1) <u>Administrative function</u> – The purpose of this function is to deal with the amount of work and with its delegating.

2) <u>Educational function</u> – A goal of this function is to provide employees new skills and abilities to do their work properly and to develop the skills they already have.

3) <u>Supporting function</u> – An aim of the supporting function is to help employees with dealing with stress linked with work. Furthermore it should protect from burnout syndrome, overwork and should serve as instrument to deal with dealing with feelings of helplessness and guilt. (Macáková 2001)

1.8.5.1 Balint Groups

One of the supervision techniques is technique called balint groups. This technique was introduced by Hungarian psycho-analyst Michael Balint. Balint groups consist of a meeting of eight to fifteen people of different professions who are discussing certain problems. The structure of the meeting is:

1) Problem clarification

2) Supplementary questions – People ask for further information about the case

3) Fantasy – Submitter of the certain problem does not say anything. The group tells its feelings and opinions.

4) Possible solutions – People in group think of possible solutions.

5) Submitter statement – Submitter gives feedback to the people. (Macáková 2001)

1.8.6 Defence Mechanisms according to Freud

The typical example of coping aimed at emotions, what is mentioned in chapter 1.8.3.2 is Freud's defence mechanisms. These mechanisms help to deal with unpleasant situations when humans are not able to deal with it directly. These mechanisms protect human from negative emotions, anxiety and efforts to deal with conflict situation. They are a routine part of human life because it is natural that a human protects. (Hanzlovský 2012)

Those mechanisms are:

1) Displacement – Freud has believed that the displacement is the most essential defence mechanism. During the displacement threatening impulses or painful memories are expelled out of the mind. According to Freud the displacement is not often successful. In many cases expelled memories come into consciousness again and a person may feel anxiety. There exists effect of reflection. During this effect the expelled memories come into consciousness more powerful which leads in stronger nervousness. This occurs once watchfulness of human recedes. This mechanism requires a lot of physical strength. It means that permanent elimination of memories is physically demanding and may result in damage of organism. It is more beneficial for a person is to talk with somebody. (Atkinson 2003, 514)

2) Rationalization – It is perceived as allocation of logical and socially desirable features to what a person does, so it looks like the person behaves in a sensible way. During the rationalization, a person tends to invent excuses which are acceptable but often they do not represent the real reasons of failure. (Atkinson 2003, 515)

3) Reactive Formation - Freud has defined it as hiding of motives before itself apart by strong declaration of the opposite theme. Bigoted fighting against declension of morale, alcohol and hazard might be the form of reactive formation. People who tend to do that often had problems with some of these situations and this may be their tool to avoid the option of returning back to these. (Atkinson 2003, 515)

4) Projection – Freud has stated that everybody has unpleasant characteristics. People do not want to other people know about those characteristics. If somebody is unfriendly or cruel to another person which behaves in the same way the person may assure itself that it is acting like this is based on the unpleasant characteristics of the another person not on its characteristics. (Atkinson 2003, 515)

5) Intellectualization – Intellectualization is defined as the effort to get emotional distance from a stressful situation. A person tries to deal with such situation by using an intellectual terminology. This type of defence is necessary for people who have the job where they meet such situations almost every day such as a doctor. Intellectualization may be problem when it becomes a habit that isolates a person from emotional feeling. (Atkinson 2003, 515 – 516)

6) Denial – When some fact is vexing the tool for coping with it may be disavowal. This method is used when the pain that would bring an admission would be very strong.

Denial has positive and negative impacts as well. Positive aspect is that it can provide more time to deal with unkind situation. On the other hand the negative impact may be postponing doctor visit. (Atkinson 2003, 516)

7) <u>Sublimation</u> – Sublimation means transposition of attention which is focused on need that cannot be satisfied on alternative object. Freud supposed that sublimation is the most effective practice how to cope with aggressive sexual impulses. Sexual impulses which cannot be expressed directly may be expressed in art like music and poetry. The sublimation does not eliminate frustration completely but it is a good way to reduce tension when the basic instinct is not gratified. (Atkinson 2003, 516)

8) <u>Repression</u> – According to Hanzlovský, repression is one of the most important defence mechanisms. During the repression the defending person tries to forget some unpleasant situation. Repression is conducted unconsciously. (Hanzlovský 2012)

9) <u>Suppression</u> – It is very similar to the repression, the only difference is that the suppression is conducted consciously.

2 JOB SATISFACTION

This term is used in connection with feelings and attitudes which people have in relationship with their work. The positive attitudes symbolize satisfaction with work. Oppositely, negatives attitudes symbolize dissatisfaction with job. Armstrong says that the equivalent of the satisfaction is motivation to work. (Armstrong 2007, 228)

2.1 Definition of Employee Satisfaction

"Employee satisfaction is the terminology used to describe whether employees are happy and contented and fulfilling their desires and needs at work. Many measures purport that employee satisfaction is a factor in employee motivation, employee goal achievement, and positive employee morale in the workplace." (Heathfield)

2.2 Circumstances Linked with Job Satisfaction

The level of work satisfaction is affected by internal and external motivational factors, quality of leadership, workplace relationships, and by the level of success or failure. According to Armstrong, a company is mostly successful when its employees are well motivated, have a sense of commitment to the company, and the work brings them high level of pleasure. The main factors which have impacts on job satisfaction are probably opportunity for career development, options to make decisions about one's own work, team working and meaningful work. (Armstrong 2007, 228)

2.3 Work Performance and Satisfaction

It is generally believed that the work performance increases with satisfaction of each individual employee. But Armstrong says that Brayfield and Crockett conducted a survey which shows that there are only few proofs which are demonstrating that the satisfaction is related with the job performance. It may be said that the satisfaction with work is not what results in high work performance. Rather the high work performance leads to the satisfaction with the employment. (Armstrong 2007, 229)

II. ANALYSIS

3   RESEARCH

3.1   The Preparation of Research

This bachelor's thesis deals with the issue of stress in the workplace. Stress in the workplace is an essential factor that can affect work performance, workplace relations and also satisfaction at work. According to Colligan, people are in stress when they realize that the requirements they are faced are not equal to resources they have to meet the goals. Although the stress is a question mostly of the psyche, it is touching also the physical health. Stress can change feelings, mind and behaviour.

Symptoms of the stress at work are:

At the level of individual:

- Emotive reactions (irritability, anxiety, sleep disorders, depression, hypochondria, alienation, burnout syndrome, problems with family relations)
- Cognitive reactions (low concentration, poor memory, problems with learning new things and decisions)
- Behavioural reaction (usage of drugs, consuming of alcohols and tobacco, destructive behaviour
- Physical reactions (back pain, weakened immunity, peptic ulcers, heart disease, and high blood pressure). (Colligan et al. 2006, 89-97)

Due to the fact that my degree course indirectly determines the job of the manager, this topic is interesting. Information from the people with experience is often priceless for the future.

This practical part deals with my research. The research finds the answers for the set questions.

3.2   Aim of the Research

The task of the research is to find the answers for the main research problem and its sub-questions. The main goals of the research are:

1) **To find out appearance and frequency of some of the stress situation at the workplace.**

2) **To find out how often are employees stressed and if it affects their satisfaction at work.**

3) **To find out if people are satisfied with their amount of saved money and if they are stressed or satisfied with this fact.**

For the practical purposes the stress situations might be:

1) Failure to comply with deadlines
2) Expressing doubts about the expertise of yours by colleague
3) Quarrels at the workplace
4) Physical harassment
5) Disturbances during the work (frequent ringing phones, unwanted visits)
6) Lack of interest of management, poor communication
7) The feeling of helplessness – The employee does not know how to deal with a task
8) Uncertainty regarding the length of contract
9) Competitive relationships with colleagues

3.3 Collection of Data for Research

Quantitative research is the research „which works with numerical data. It determines the amount, extent or frequency of occurrence of phenomena or their degree. The numerical data can be mathematically processed. It is possible to add them up, expressed as percentage, statistically processed. (Výzkum 2006)

Partial Research Questions:

All partial research questions should be viewed of the employee's perspective. Numbers in brackets refer to the number of question.

1) Does stress have its role when considering change of jobs? (15, 16, 17)
2) Which stressful situation is dominant? (9, 10, 11)
3) How do employees cope with stress? (18, 21, 22)
4) Is there efficient support from the side of a supervisor, boss or manager? (19, 20)

3.4 Research Group of People

In the research group of people were employees of the following companies – ZŠ Komenského Kyjov; Centrum služeb pro seniory Kyjov. Also there were some people with random field of the job. The research was conducted the both ways – on a paper form and online form.

3.5 Research Timeline

Research was conducted since September 2012 to April 2013

September 2012 – Determining the research questions

October 2012 – Decision about selection of the research tactic

December 2012 – Creation of the questionnaire

February 2013 – Disclosure of the questionnaire

April 2013 – Closure of the questionnaire

April 2013 – Analysis of the questionnaire

3.6 Data Analysis

Numbers in brackets refer to the amount of people who ticket particular option.

1) What is your gender?
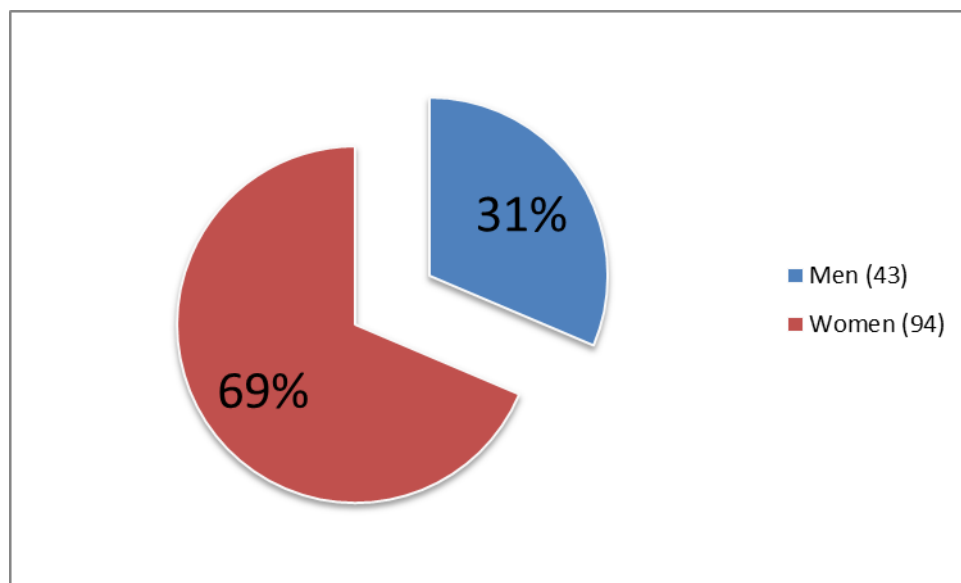
Figure 1 - Gender

There have been involved 137 respondents to the research. The 69% percent which means 94 have been women and 31% which means 43 have been men.

2)   What is your age?
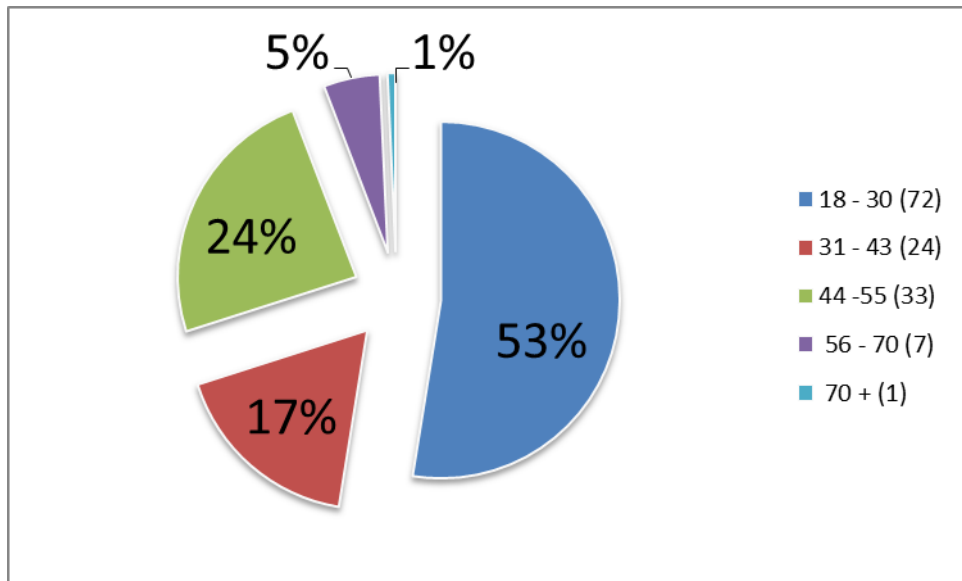
Figure 2 - Age

In the research group have been mostly young people from 18 to 30 years (53%). People who belong to age group 31 – 43 have been 17%. The age group 44 – 55 has been represented by 24% of people. Only 5% of people have been 56 – 70 years old and just one person has already more than 70 years.

3)   What is your monthly net income?
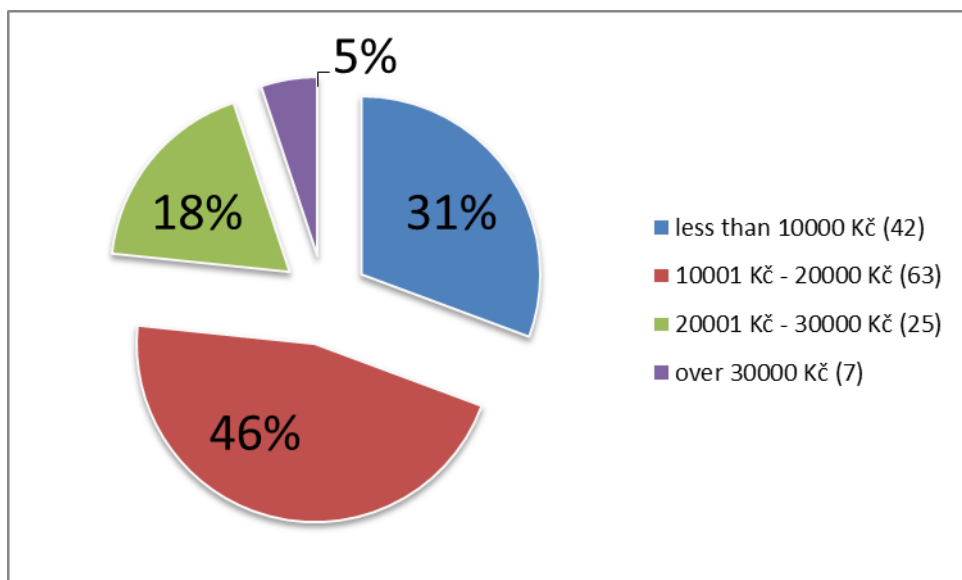
Figure 3 – Monthly net income

For the practical purpose of the research there is stated question about monthly income. As the result it can be seen that that the dominant income group is from 10001 Kč

to 20000 Kč. After that on the second place is group with salary less than 10000 Kč. Eighteen percent of people have selected the option 20001 Kč – 30000 Kč and just seven people earn over than 30000 Kč.

4) Does your income affect your satisfaction at work?
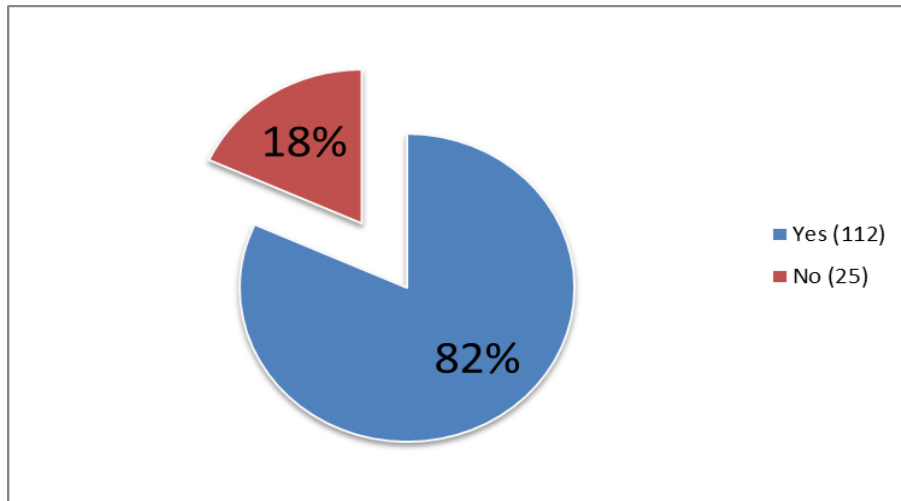
Figure 4 – Effect of a salary on satisfaction at work

From the responds on this question it is obvious that salary affects the satisfaction at work because 82% people have said that for them it is essential. Just 18% have said that their income does not have any connection with the satisfaction with the work.

5) Do you save some money from your salary periodically?
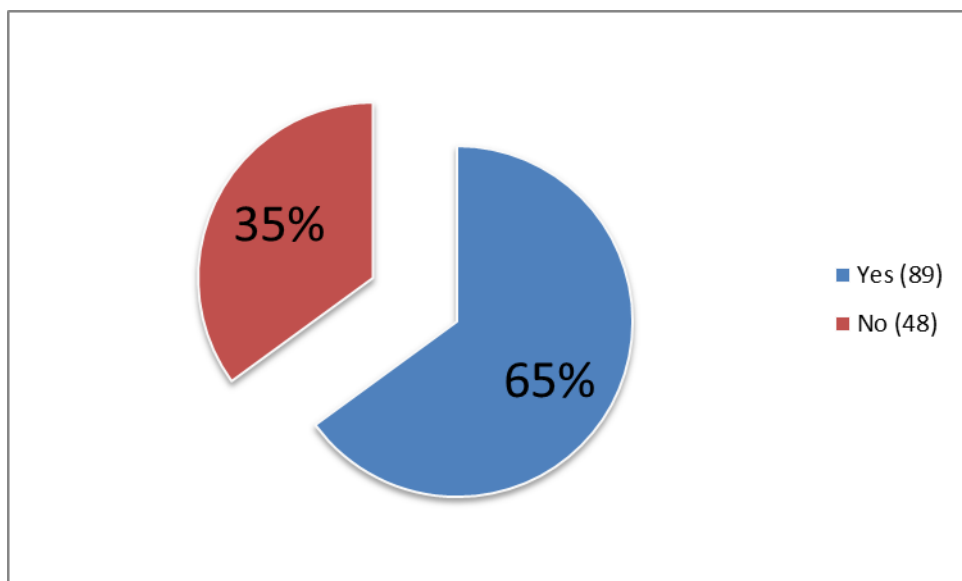
Figure 5 – Saving of money

Sixty five percent of people respond that they are able to save some money from their monthly salary and 35% respond that they cannot. The following questions - number six and seven answered people who answered yes on the question number five. Those who have ticked "No" are moving directly to question eight.

6)   Are you satisfied with the amount of saved money?
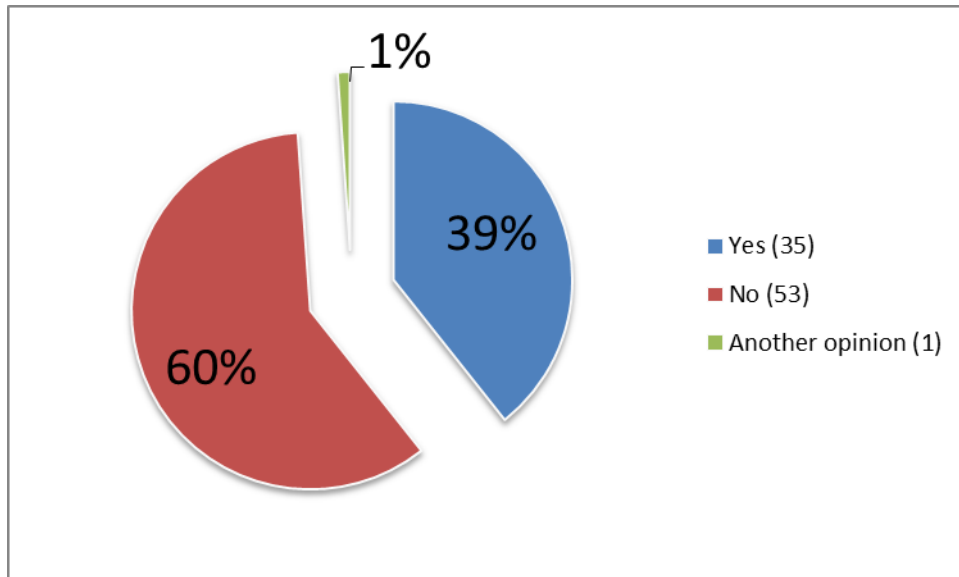
Figure 6 – Satisfaction with the amount of saved money

From the 89 people who have answered "Yes" on the question five, 35 people, which is 39%, answered "Yes" on this question, too It means that they are satisfied with the amount of saved money. More than a half (60%) are not satisfied with the amount of saved money. One person says: *"It is different and depends how much I have to pay in particular month."*

7)   Does it affect your satisfaction at work? (refers to question no.5)
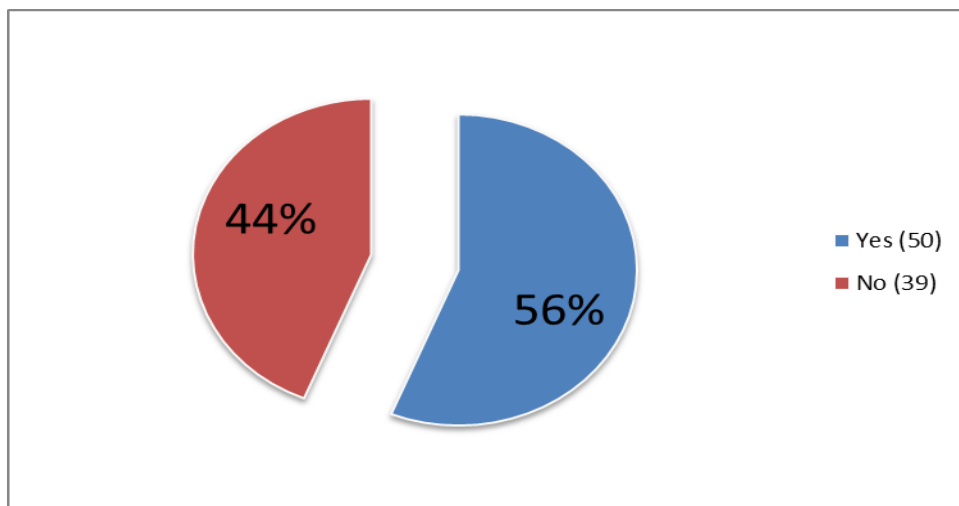
Figure 7 – Impact of saved money on satisfaction at work

The answers on this question are quite in balance, but still the option "Yes" prevails because 56% of people answered like that. The option no has been selected by 44% of people.

8) Does this fact make you stressed?
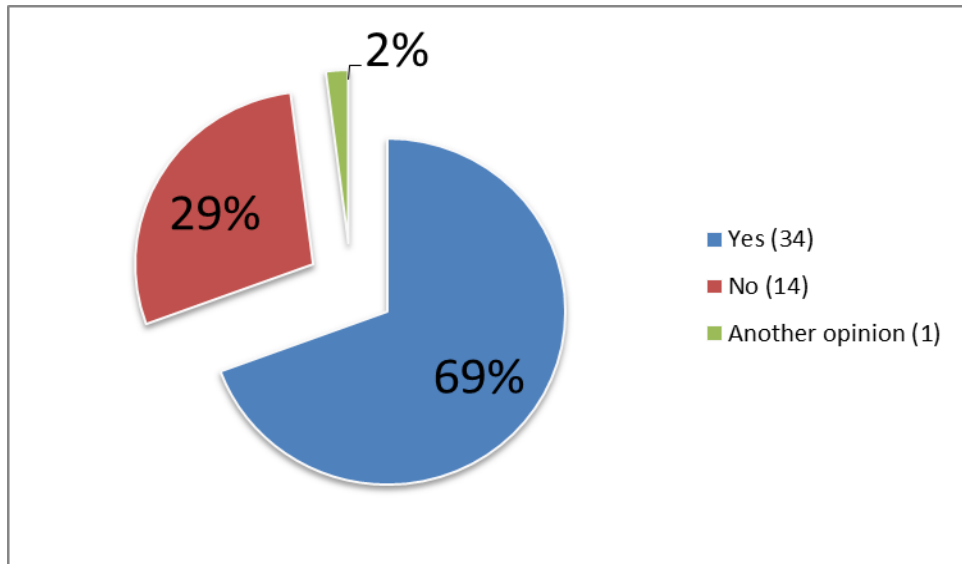
Figure 8 – Stressed connected with no saved money

Those who answered „No" to the question number five moved directly to the question eight. And the result is that 69% are stressed by the fact that they are not able to save money from their salary. On the other hand 29% people says that it does not matter and they are not stressed by this fact. One person express his opinion individually. The answer is: „slightly".

9) Have you faced any of these stressful situations?
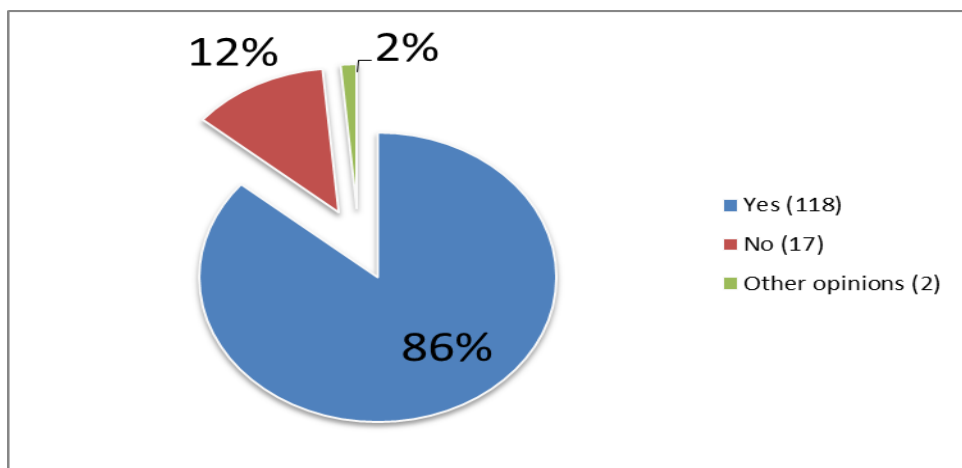
Figure 9 – Facing some of the stressful situations

From this graph it is obvious that occurence of stressful situations are very common issue. Only seventeen people out of 137 answered that they have not met with stress in their work. The option "Yes" predominates with 118 answers. Two people have written their opinions individually. Both of them says: *"Yes, but not with every of these."*. It should be mentioned, that people who answer "*No*" are moved directly to the question number twelve.

10) Are some of them dominating?
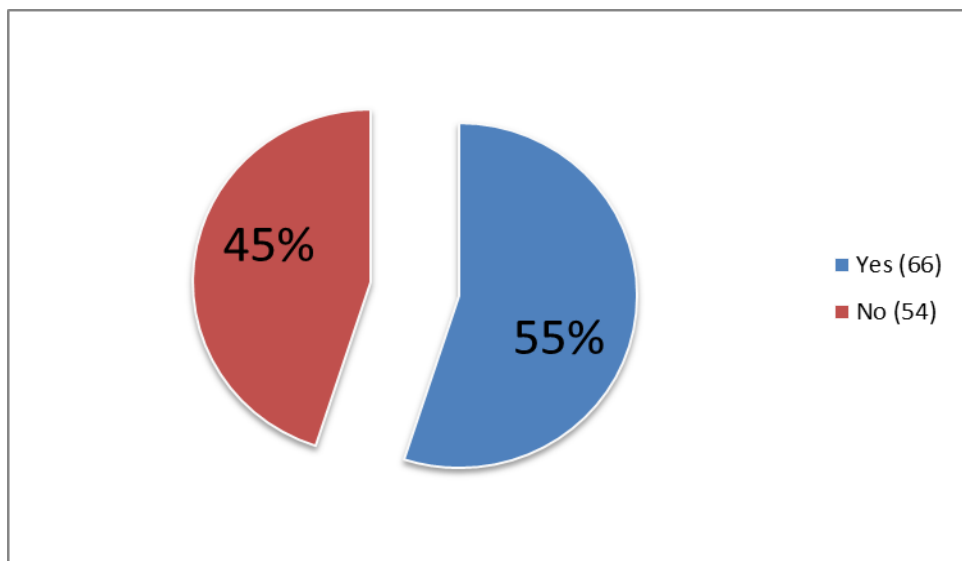
Figure 10 – Dominance of a stressful situations

The task of this question is to find out whether some of the stressful situations are likely to appear more than the others. The result is balanced with the 55% of votes for yes and 45% of votes for no.

11) If the answer is "*Yes*", which of these is dominant? (refers to question nine)
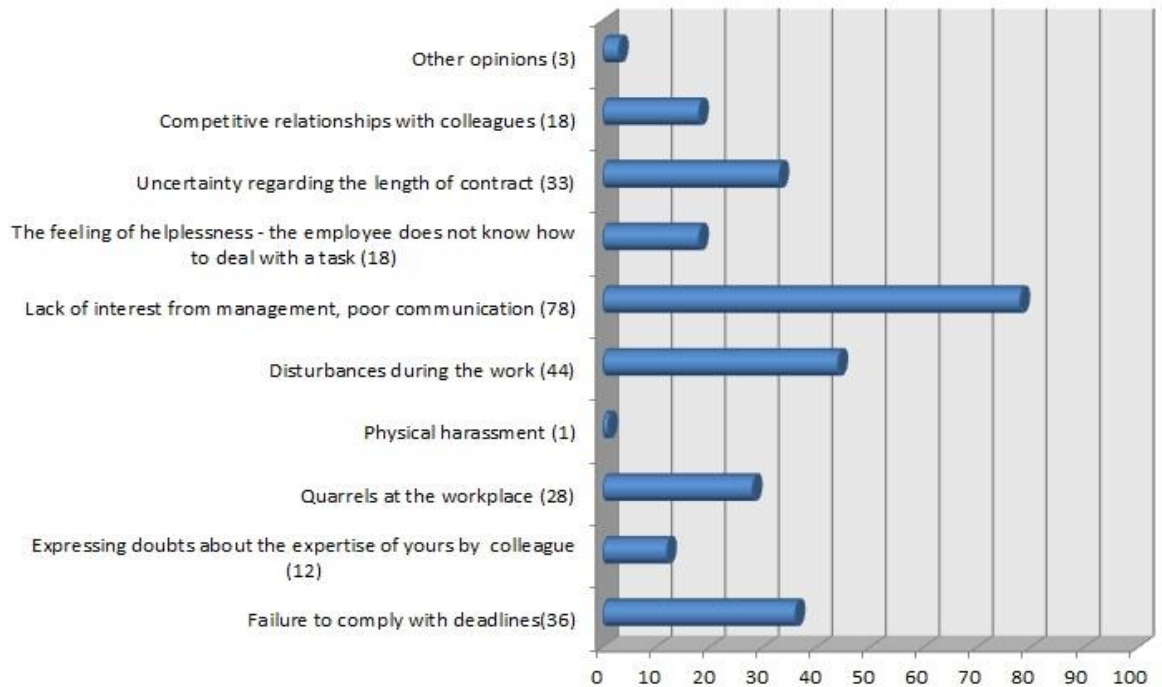
Figure 11 – Dominance of concrete stressful situation

This is a specific question because every respondent could choose even 3 options from the list. The winner is the option *"Lack of interest from management, poor communication"* which gained 78 votes. The second most common difficulty at work was named *"Disturbances at the workplace"* which was marked by 44 votes. On the third position it can be found option *"Failure to comply with deadlines"* with 36 people voting for this option and just three people less chose the option *"Uncertainty regarding the length of contract."* For me, it is surprising that *"Quarrels at the workplace"* are on the fifth place, because it was my favorite to end at 2nd place after lack of interest. A positive fact is that the *"Physical harassment"* was chosen only in one case.

12) Does the occurrence of those situations affect your satisfaction at work?
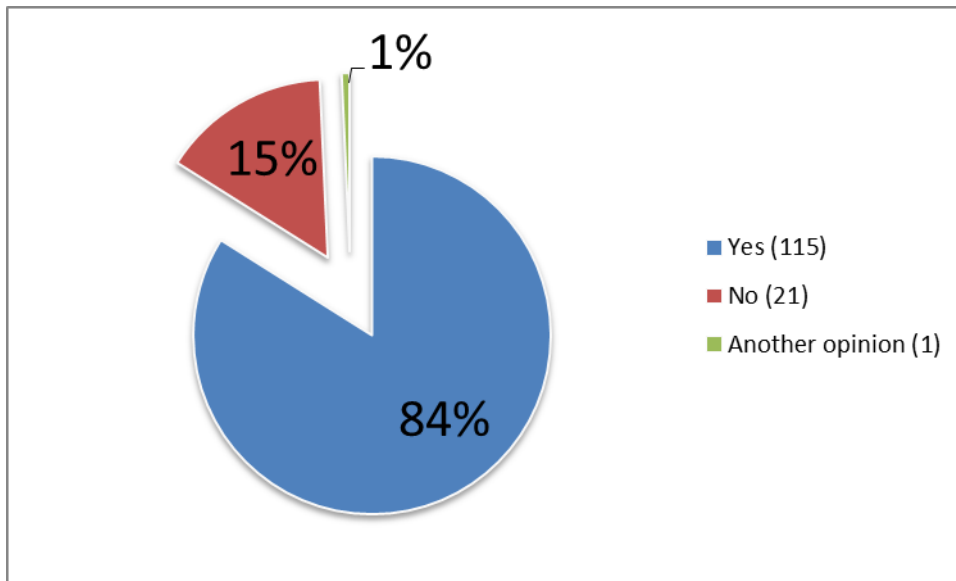
Figure 12 – Connection with those stressful situations and satisfaction at work

The purpose of this question is to find out whether the occurrence of the stressful situations at workplace has an impact on an employee's satisfaction at work. Lots of the respondents answer that yes, more precisely the group of those who ticked yes is composed by 115 people out of 137.
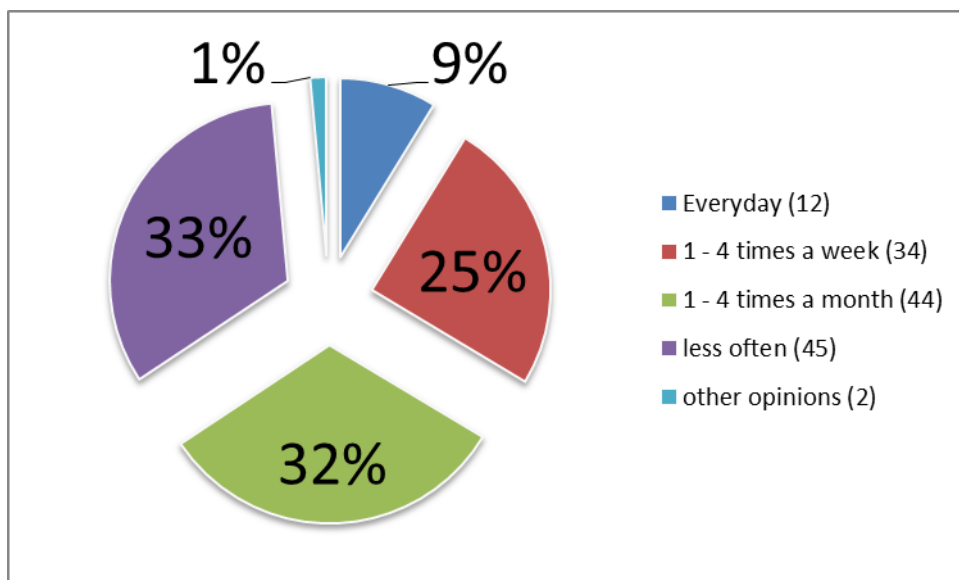
13) How often do you feel stressed at workplace?

Figure 13 – Frequency of stress at workplace

From this figure can be seen that the frequency of the stress is an individual issue and it might depends on the many factors like the type of job and human characteristics. So the

conclusion for this question is that 9% people from the research group are stressed every day in their job, 25% of people is stressed at least one time at week but no more often than four times a week. Thirty two percent of people are stressed from one time to four times a month. Almost half of the responses are that people from the research group are stressed less than 1 time a month, which is quite positive fact. There two individual responses on this question. Their wordings are *"It cannot be counted."* and *"It depends on how much I work."*

14) Does frequency of the stress affect your satisfaction at work?
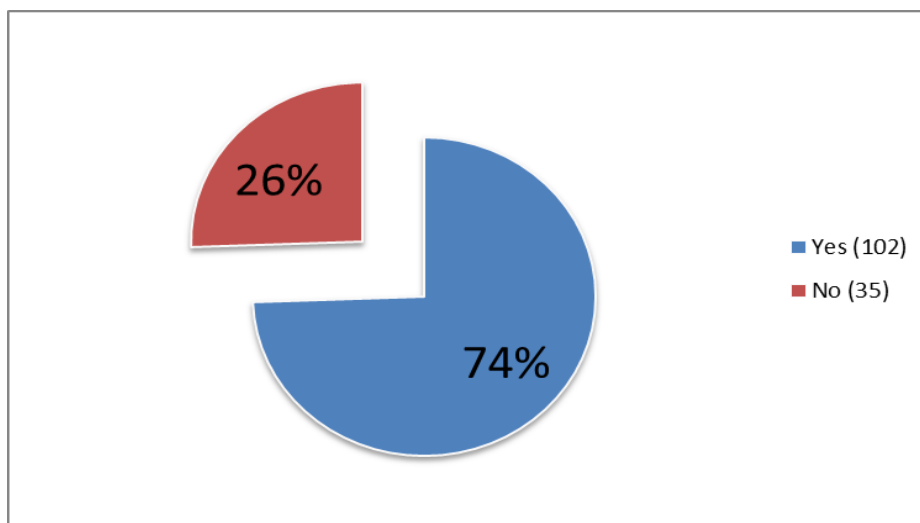
Figure 14 – Frequency of the stress and its impact on satisfaction at work

In order to ascertain if a frequency of the stress influences the employee's satisfaction at work there is stated question number 14. The outcome of this part of the survey is that 102 people answered that the frequency of the stress has influence on their satisfaction at work. On the other hand, 35 people answered the very opposite.

15) Have you considered changing jobs because of some of the stressful situations?
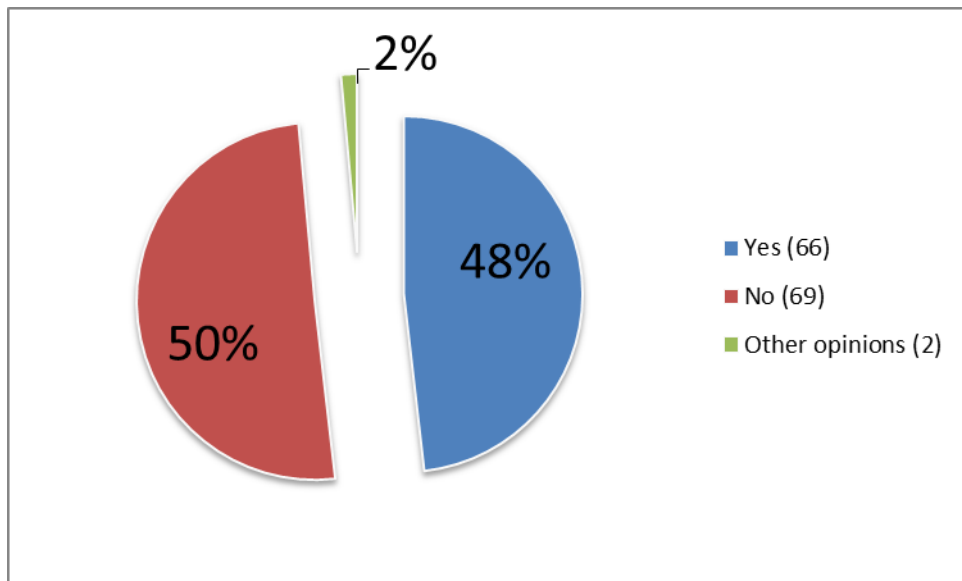

Figure 15 – Changing jobs because of occurrence of the stressful situation

Question number 15 deals with changing jobs due to stress. Sixty-six had already considered the possibility of changing jobs due to the occurrence of stress. But three more people say that, they had not considered this situation. Individual answers appeared, too. Both of them have same meaning which is that if the intensity of the stress gains more power, they would think seriously about leaving their current jobs.

16) Did you face the stress also in your previous job?
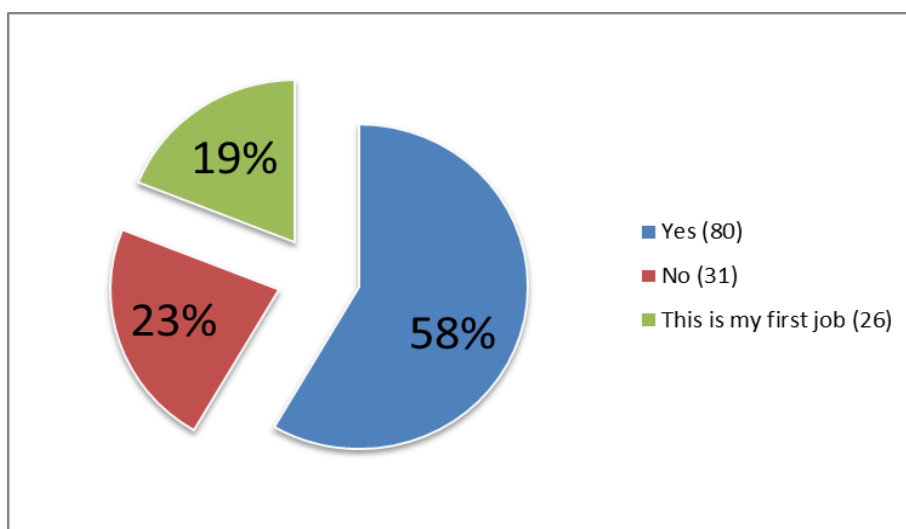
Figure 16 – Facing the stress in previous job

From this result it can be read that more than half of the people out from 137, more precisely 80 people, believe that in their previous job there was occurrence of the stressful situations, too. Thirty-one of them are sure about they were not exposed to the stress in their previous job. There is the third possible answer to this question which is "This is my first job" and it was ticked by 26 people.
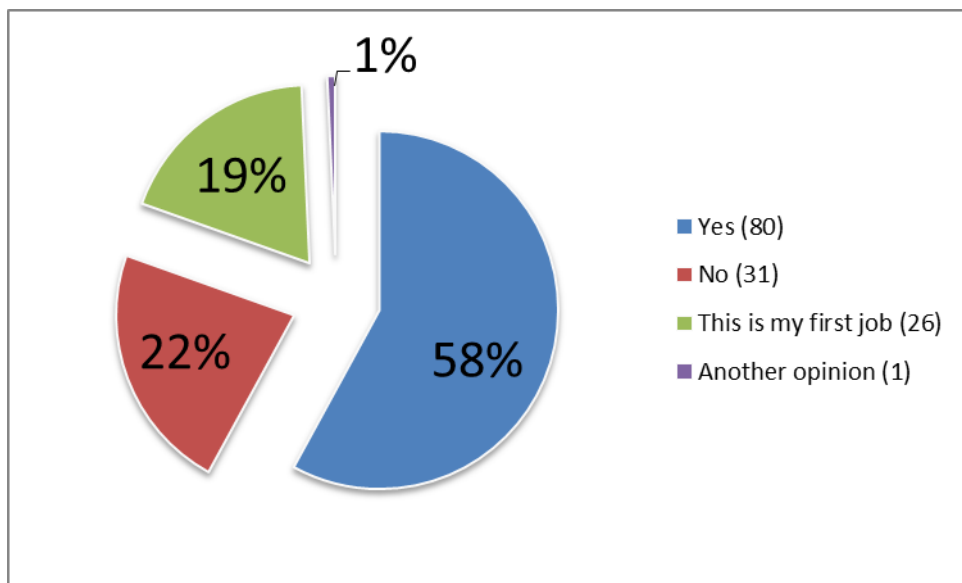
17) Did you leave your previous job due to the stress?

Figure 17 – Leaving of previous job due to the stress

This question has found out that 80 people out of 137 left their previous job due to the stress. Thirty-one of them say that the reason of leaving their previous job was not stress. For twenty six people their current job is also the first one. And one person answers that the reason for leaving their previous job was not only stress but there were also other factors.
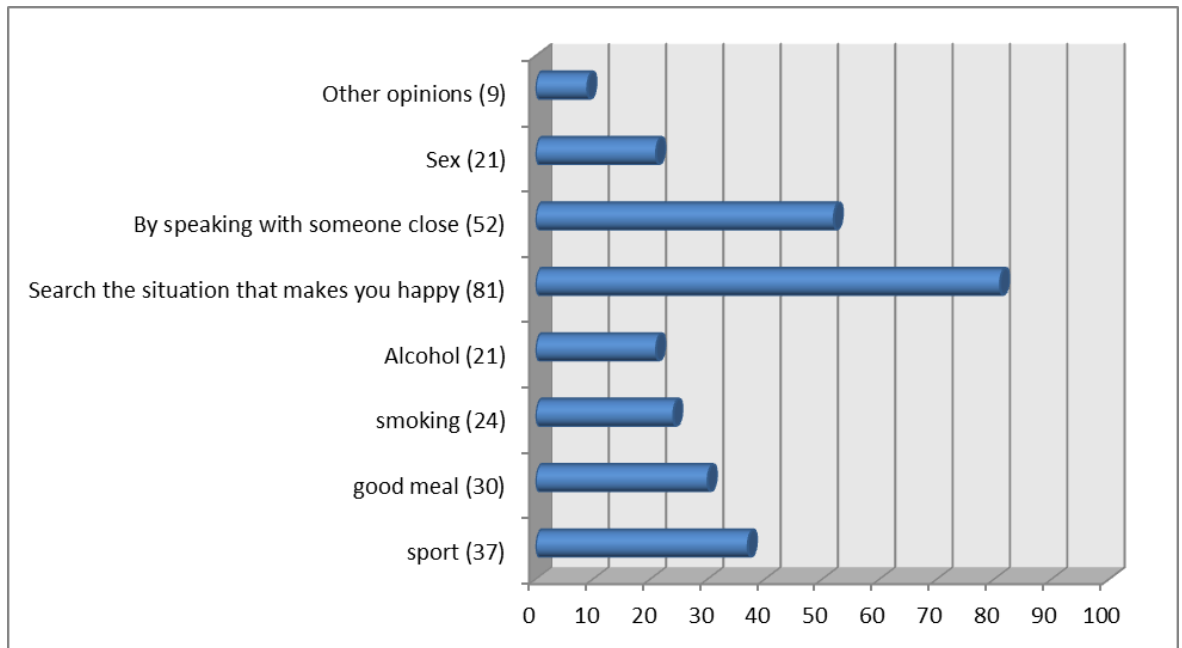
18) How do you cope with the stress?

Figure 18 – Coping with stress

First of all, it should be mentioned that every person has two votes. The purpose of this question is to find out in which way people cope with the stress. The winning option is *"By searching the situation that makes you happy"* with 81 votes. The second most frequent answer is *"By speaking to someone close".* This option has 52 votes. On the third position there is option *"With sport"* following by option *"With a good meal".* Other options gained less than 30 votes. Nine votes were given to the option *"others opinions"* which are music, reading books, hobbies, and gardening.

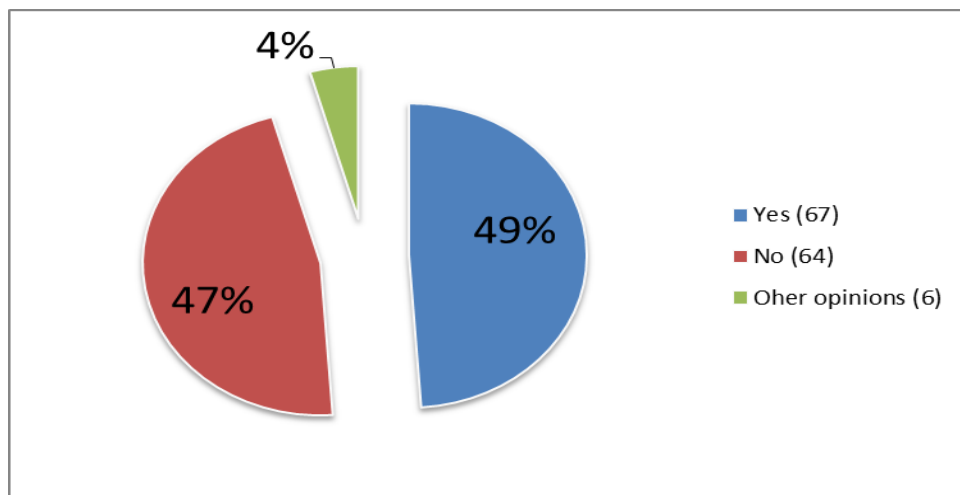### 19) Do you talk about your problems with your supervisors?

Figure 19 – Talking about problem with supervisors

According to this figure 49 percent of people do not speak with their supervisors about their problems in work. On the other hand 47 percent of people do speak with them about these things. And 4 percent of people have written their answers individually and these are *"sometime", "Due to the fact, that my supervisors are problem I do not talk about that with them because it would bring others problems.", "if the problem is long-term, I do.", "Supervisor does not care at all." "I do, but not about every problem."*
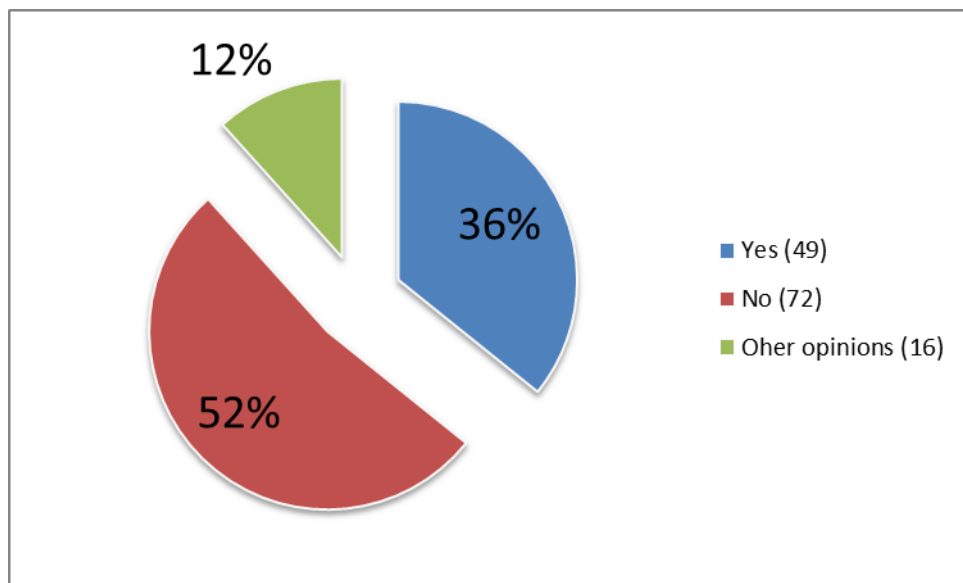
20) Do your supervisors try to help you?

Figure 20 – Help from the supervisor's side

This is interesting because for example employees who have worked in Centrum Služeb pro Seniory Kyjov answered differently. They have the same supervisor but some of them consider the supervisor's trying to help them as sufficient and on the other hand some of them do not. It can be said that this is individual issue and it might depends on the relation with supervisor and maybe on the personal characteristics as well. To sum up this figure, more than a half think that their supervisor could do more to help them with the employee's troubles and only 36% think that they are trying enough. A relatively large amount of people have written their ideas more specifically. Three people say that their supervisors try to help them only sometimes. Another answer is: *"I do not have a direct supervisor."* Also there occur answers like: *"The level of stress is so low that I do not speak about that with my leader."* Also there is answer that it depends on the specific supervisor because one of them tries to help and another one does not. It has to be said that the question has general meaning. It covers every problem that employee has.
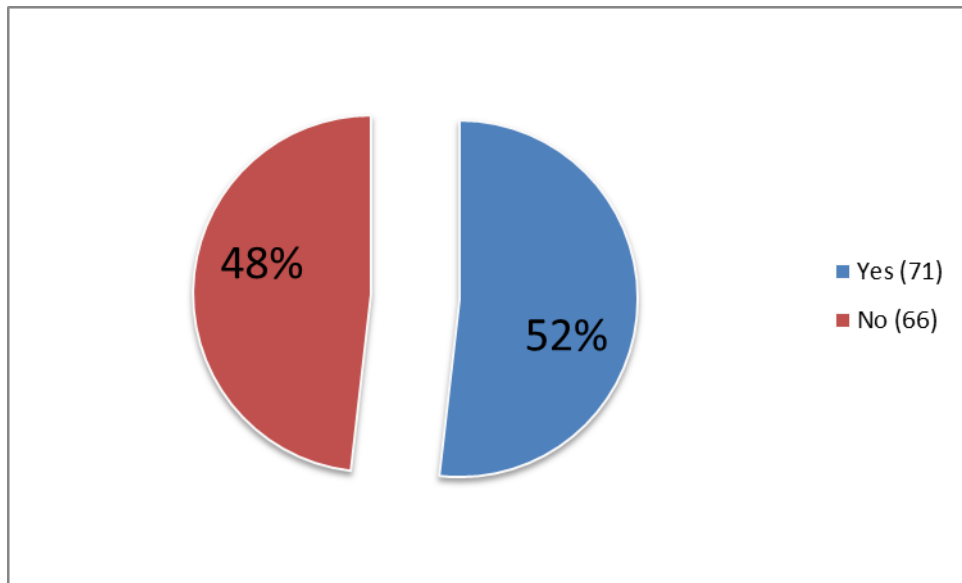
21) Do you try to actively address the causes of the stressful situations?

Figure 21 – Preventing of the stressful situations

Answers on this question are more or less balanced. Seventy-one people say that they try to prevent the stressful situations actively and sixty-six people say that they do not.

22) If the answer is "Yes" please write how do you do so.

Unfortunately not everyone has answered, out of the 71 people who answered positively on the previous question, this question. Answers to this question were not given by ticking options. Respondents had to write their own opinion. I have tried to organize them to the groups of answers with similar meaning. Most of the people answered in sense that they try to prevent stress by "*communication with colleagues or with their supervisors*". Others answers are "*education and personal growth*", "*better timing of task I have to do*", "*hobbies*", "*physical resistance*" "*delegating work to subordinates*", and "*rest*"

CONCLUSION

To conclude the research of this thesis, the research questions have to be answered.

Main Research Questions:

   1)   <u>To find out appearance and frequency of some of the stress situation at the workplace.</u>

The research shows, that some of the stressful situations are more common than the others. As the most frequent stressful situations, according to my research, are perceived the *"Lack of interest from management, poor communication"* followed by *"Disturbances at work"* and *"Failure to comply with deadline"*.

   2)   <u>To find out how often are employees stressed and if it affects their satisfaction at work.</u>

  According to my research the frequency, when people are stressed, varies. Only twelve people out of 137 has answered that they are under the stress every day. Thirty-four people ticked that they are stressed 1 - 4 times a week. Forty-four people ticked the option 1 – 4 a month. And 45 people has answered, that they are stressed less than 1 time a month. Despite the fact, that this option was marked by the most of people in the research group, it should be stated that *"Frequency of stress at work is an individual matter"*. But what can be stated, according to question number 14, is that *"Frequency of stress has effect on the satisfaction at work"*. The ratio between option *"Yes"* and *"No"* is 2, 91 (102/35 = 2, 91).

   3)   <u>To find out if people are satisfied with their amount of saved money and if they are stressed or satisfied with this fact.</u>

The research shows that *"Mostly, people are not satisfied with the amount of the saved money"*. In many cases, according to research, saved money is circumstance which affects satisfaction at work. On the other hand, 39 people has answered that it does not have influence on their work satisfaction. The ratio between those two options is 1,28. It might be said that **"Saved money are one of the circumstances which may have effect on work satisfaction"**.

  It is stated due to the fact that 60% of people say so in the research. Thirty-four out of 49 people, who has answered that the question number 8, say that the fact they do not save

any money stresses them. The answer on this part of the research goal is *"People are stressed when they do not save any money"*.

Partial Research Questions:

    1)   <u>Does stress have its role when considering change of jobs? (15, 16, 17)</u>

Responds on the question 15 are very in the balance – 66 times *"Yes"*, 71 times *"No"*. The ratio of the responds on question 16 is 2, 58 for the respond *"Yes"*. In fact, there are 2, 58 times more people, who faced the stress also in their previous job, in the research group. Furthermore, 80 people out of 137 answered (58%), that they left their previous job due to the stress. To sum up these facts it can be stated, that *"Stress plays one of the key roles during considering change of jobs"*.

    2)   <u>Which stressful situation is dominant? (9, 10, 11)</u>

To answer this question we must take a look at the questions 9, 10 and 11.

From the figure number 9 it can be seen that the ration between options "Yes" and "No" is 6, 94. It means that there are almost 7 times more people who have collided with stressful situations than people who have not.

Figure number 10 shows that 45% of 118 people say that in their work no stressful situation is dominant. For the purpose of this question, those 45% are not useful anymore.

Finally, sixty-six people who answered "Yes" to question number 10 have participated in question number 11, too. From their responds it can be seen that the most dominant stressful situation is *"Lack of interest from management, poor communication"*.

    3)   <u>How do employees cope with stress? (18, 21, 22)</u>

The figure number 21 shows that the ratio between people who address and do not address stress actively is 1,07 for those, who do. Forty-seven people out of 71 who answered "Yes" on the question number 21 have replied to the question 22, too (The question 22 is voluntary). The most common answer is that they try to address the stress with *"communication with colleagues or with their supervisors"*.

The result of the question 18 is that the people cope with the stress mostly by *"By searching the situation that makes you happy"*.

4) <u>Is there efficient support from the side of a supervisor, boss or manager? (20)</u>

More than a half of the people say that their supervisor does not support them sufficiently. The ratio between options *"No"* and *"Yes"* is 1,46 for the option *"No."* The result of this question is: ***"In most cases, there is not efficient support from the side of a supervisor, boss or manage"***.

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LIST OF FIGURES

APPENDICES

Appendix P1 – The questionnaire

APPENDIX P I: The Questionnaire

1) What is your gender?

2) What is your age?

3) What is your net monthly income?

4) Does your income affect your satisfaction at work?

5) Do you save some money from your salary periodically? (Options "Yes" or "No"; if the answer on the question no. 5 is "Yes", a respondent continues with questions no. 6 and 7. If the answer is "No", the respondent continues with question No. 8)

6) Are you satisfied with the amount of saved money?

7) Does it affect your satisfaction at work? (refers to question no. 5)

8) Does this fact make you stressed? (refers to question no. 5)

9) Have you faced any of these stressful situations? (They are described in the paragraph 3.1)

10) Do some of them dominate?

11) If the answer is "Yes", which of these is dominant? (The options are described in the paragraph 3.1)

12) Does the occurrence of those situations affect your satisfaction at work?

13) How often do you feel stressed at work?

14) Does frequency of the stress affect your satisfaction at work?

15) Have you considered changing jobs because of some of the stressful situations? (They are described in the paragraph 3.1)

16) Did you face the stress also in your previous job?

17) Did you leave your previous job due to stress?

18) How do you cope with the stress?

19) Do you talk about your problems with your supervisors?

20) Do your supervisors try to help you?

21) Do you try to actively address the causes of the stressful situations?

22) If the answer is "Yes" please write how do you do so. (refers to question no. 21)