Occupational Stress experienced by doctoral graduates in an Anemployment situation

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, labor activity has been associated with two distinct poles: employment and unemployment. However, with the changes that are happening in the labor market a “gray area” has emerged, characterized by precarious work, which, therefore, has created a new dimension called anemployment that is characterized by the alternation between unemployment and precarious work situations. This study aims to explore and describe the experience of occupational stress in doctorates who are in a situation of anemployment. In this study we adopted the holistic model of occupational stress. The most used method was the semi-structured interview, and the data analysis was carried out through thematic content analysis, using the NVivo 11 software. The results showed a greater experience of distress by the participants in relation to the eustress. The most mentioned sources of distress and eustress were, respectively, economic instability and greater freedom and independence. It was also found that in order to deal with distress situations, doctors mainly use coping strategies focused on problems. Regarding the consequences of occupational stress, the most mentioned were the postponement of future projects and giving up the research activity. This study allowed for a greater understanding of how occupational stress is experienced in doctorates in an anemployment situation, as well as the importance of carrying out further studies on anemployment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The participants experience the situation of anemployment as stressful, with a predominance of just distress (n=6). The situation of anemployment is usually more experienced as a negative experience (Araújo & Jordão, 2011), since most people aspire to job stability. Thus, there is a discrepancy between their expectations and employment policies (Kovács, 2004). The results demonstrate a prevalence of sources of distress (83%) compared to sources of eustress (17%). Economic instability was the one with the highest number of references, a result that is in line with the results of previous studies (Barros, 2017; Araújo & Jordão, 2011; Araújo, Jordão & Castro, 2015) in which it was also found that economic instability was a major source of distress mentioned. Greater freedom and independence emerges as the source of eustress most mentioned by doctors. These results corroborate those of previous studies that highlight that 88% of doctoral graduates feel that they have autonomy in their work (DGEEC, 2017) and that most doctoral graduates feel very satisfied with the degree of their freedom (Gonçalves, Duarte, Saleiro, Lopes & Roldão, 2006).

The results showed that the participants only mentioned negative effects. The postponement of future projects was the most verbalized consequence in this study, a result that corroborates those of previous studies (Barros, 2017; Araújo & Castro, 2015) which indicate that postponing marriage, motherhood, fatherhood, buying a house or car, traveling and starting your own business are consequences of anemployment.

CONCLUSION

The results showed a greater experience of distress by the participants in relation to the eustress. The most mentioned sources of distress and eustress were, respectively, economic instability and greater freedom and independence. It was also found that in order to deal with distress situations, doctors mainly use coping strategies focused on problems. Regarding the consequences of occupational stress, the most mentioned were the postponement of future projects and giving up the research activity.

REFERENCES

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