

STUDY OF THE CAUSES OF JOB STRESS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHER

ESTUDIO DE LAS CAUSAS DEL ESTRÉS LABORAL EN MAESTROS DE EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL

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Manuscript information:

Recibido/Received: 08/05/2025

Revisado/Reviewed: 27/05/2025

Aceptado/Accepted: 21/07/2025

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

teacher, stress, well-being, educational quality, early childhood education

The study aims to analyse the ideal characteristics of Early Childhood Education teachers and how work stress can affect their pedagogical performance in private and state-subsidised schools. The aim is to identify the main stressors and their influence on the teaching work, as well as to determine if these conditions alter the competencies necessary at this educational stage. The research was carried out with a sample of 30 Early Childhood Education teachers, who shared their level of stress, emotions and sensations through both quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. The instruments used include the Maslach Burnout Inventory scale, composed of 22 items, to measure dissatisfaction, feelings, emotions and work stress. In addition, two questionnaires of our own design were used: one to identify the factors that generate the greatest stress and the other to evaluate the consequences of stress on teachers. The results show the presence of work-related stress in Early Childhood Education teachers, indicating that some stressors have a greater impact than others. It is concluded that a teacher under pressure, unmotivated and stressed has a negative impact on the work environment, which affects their ability to provide quality education and, ultimately, the integral development of students. This underscores the need to intervene in stress management to ensure a positive educational environment.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:

maestro, estrés, bienestar, calidad educativa, Educación Infantil

El estudio tiene como objetivo analizar las características ideales de los maestros de Educación Infantil y cómo el estrés laboral puede afectar a su desempeño pedagógico en centros privados y concertados. Se busca identificar los principales agentes estresores y su influencia en la labor docente, así como determinar si estas condiciones alteran las competencias necesarias en esta etapa educativa. La investigación se llevó a cabo con una muestra de 30 docentes de Educación Infantil, quienes compartieron su

nivel de estrés, emociones y sensaciones a través de cuestionarios tanto cuantitativos como cualitativos. Los instrumentos utilizados incluyen la escala Maslach Burnout Inventory, compuesta por 22 ítems, para medir la insatisfacción, los sentimientos, las emociones y el estrés laboral. Además, se emplearon dos cuestionarios de diseño propio: uno para identificar los factores que generan mayor estrés y otro para evaluar las consecuencias del estrés en los docentes. Los resultados evidencian la presencia de estrés laboral en los maestros de Educación Infantil, señalando que algunos agentes estresores tienen mayor impacto que otros. Se concluye que un docente bajo presión, desmotivado y estresado repercute negativamente en el ambiente laboral, lo que afecta su capacidad para proporcionar una educación de calidad y, en última instancia, el desarrollo integral de los estudiantes. Esto subraya la necesidad de intervenir en la gestión del estrés para garantizar un entorno educativo positivo.

Introduction

We could say that the teaching profession is a job that is socially undervalued, but highly demanding and demanding. All this work pays off thanks to what the teachers receive in return, the satisfaction of a job well done, whose recipients are the children, since they are the motivation for their work.

Private and charter schools, largely because of competition in enrollment, require teachers to give their professional and personal best. This maximum must be maintained for at least one academic year, carrying a sustained workload (mental and physical) over time. This workload, which is sometimes excessive, can lead to work-related stress. We found many studies on stress in teachers working in public, charter and private schools, but linked to primary and especially secondary schools, as argued by Silvero (2007). These studies analyze the negative effects of stress and how it has a direct impact on the classroom, and therefore on the quality of education. But a big gap has been found related to the stress that teachers may suffer in the preschool stage, and there is no mention of the importance of trying, at least, to reduce stress in the Early Childhood Education cycles, nor the justification for doing so. This stage will mark the little ones throughout their lives (Fulghum, 1986), and many professionals such as neuropsychologists, educators and also teachers, share this reflection, being the period from 0 to 6 years of age the basis of the personality of future adults.

The term burnout syndrome or “burned-out professional” is already heard in our society and is closely related to stress, fatigue and job dissatisfaction, and this can only have negative consequences. “A stressed society lacks periods of tranquility and serenity. If there are many constant tensions, states of exhaustion are triggered” (Fueguel and Montoliu, 2005, p. 16). That is to say, if we are working under fast, frenetic rhythms, with little pause, reflection, and without moments of tranquility, we will be irremediably doomed to stress, to work stress, since it takes place at work, and can lead to physical and mental fatigue.

Defining the requirements of an early childhood teacher is a complex task, since it involves an infinite number of characteristics and nuances, some of which are not entirely agreed upon. The teacher of the 21st century must combine pedagogy with the human, with the socio-affective, with knowing how to accompany. You cannot be a good teacher if you do not possess socio-affective and attitudinal skills in Early Childhood Education, even if you are good pedagogically speaking. Only a teacher who generates confidence will ensure that his students can learn content and knowledge, as well as social and personal skills and competencies, as pointed out by Mínguez (2016, p. 251): We believe that teacher training should not only focus on its professional dimension (competent in pedagogical knowledge), but also on its relational dimension, to go out to meet the student as a person and help him/her to build his/her identity through a cordial relationality. While the teacher is a generator of trust, he/she will contribute to the student's trust in his/her teachings, serving as an indispensable support to guide him/her in his/her personal construction process.

According to Gervilla (2006, p. 21) this idea is supported by organizations such as UNESCO, which “considers nursery schools as centers for child development and education, since the basic purpose of nursery schools should be to facilitate the development of the child's personality”.

Stressors

According to Couso (2023, p. 143) one might ask, biologically speaking, "what makes the difference between good stress and bad stress? The time of exposure to cortisol amounts, is one of the variables that determine its classification." And the amount of cortisol (a term currently widespread in the field of scientific dissemination) generated by each individual also depends on the individual, not everyone reacts in the same way to stressful situations. Following Couso (2023):

"what for me may be a healthy challenge, for you may even be a cause for illness. We do not have the same brains and, therefore, our perception of the environment around us is not the same either. Toxic stress leads to our immune system not reacting in the best way to potential threats and disease is more likely than if we had not been stressed.

To quantify the degree of stress and diagnose teachers with this syndrome, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (1997) was developed, whose document is a "questionnaire composed of 22 items divided into the three dimensions of work stress: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal fulfillment" (Rodríguez et al., 2017, p. 49), and according to the results, one can speak of low, medium or high level of stress (burnout syndrome).

The following is an analysis of the different agents that stress teachers in Early Childhood Education:

1. High number of students per classroom: the number of students per classroom in Pre-school Education in Spain varies depending on the autonomous communities, but the number usually ranges between 23 and 25 students maximum. Many times having these numbers in the classroom, even though it is within the law, is quite a high number, especially in the first year of the second cycle of kindergarten.
2. Disruptive student behaviors: according to Holmes (2014) many teachers have to deal with persistent misbehavior of their students; it is evidence of the disconnection of many of them from the environment in which they find themselves.
3. Tutoring with parents: tutoring with parents can sometimes generate some tension or stress for the teacher, especially if there are sensitive issues to deal with and the parents do not show a collaborative attitude. Here the teacher may encounter an obstacle when developing his work since the collaboration of families is fundamental (Holmes, 2014, p. 78).
4. Generate resources continuously: sometimes in private and subsidized centers there is a need to create eye-catching activities to advertise as an educational center in social networks and for parental compliance. This forces teachers to create material, increasing their workload and thinking about sometimes complex activities. This would be excellent if the purpose were solely for the children's learning and enjoyment, and not to satisfy the needs of parents and the school as a recruiter of future students.
5. Lack of human (support staff) and material resources: "Sometimes teachers are asked to do things that are impossible to achieve with the resources they have" (Fueguel and Montoliu, 2005, p. 9). These resources may be material or human. The former are tremendously important, but the latter are essential.
"If we are able to balance the demands of the environment with the resources that are available to us, then we will have balanced stressors and responses. Otherwise there would be an imbalance between stressors and resources" (Fueguel and Montoliu, 2005, p. 20).
6. Excessive unnecessary bureaucracy. Administrative work: Holmes (2014)

talks about the fact that in teaching there are peripheral tasks that are not part of pedagogy, in which administrative work is present. It is true that there is mandatory documentation, but there is other documentation that is secondary, and it is added documentation from the private or subsidized center.

The objectives of this research work will be listed below:

1. Verify if there is stress in the Early Childhood Education stages.
2. To detect the factors that most stress early childhood teachers.
3. Identify the consequences of stress on the teacher's pedagogical work and educational quality.

Method

In order to carry out the research study, due to the nature of the data, a quantitative and qualitative study methodology was selected. To detail the quantitative numerical part, it will be shown with graphs and percentage tables.

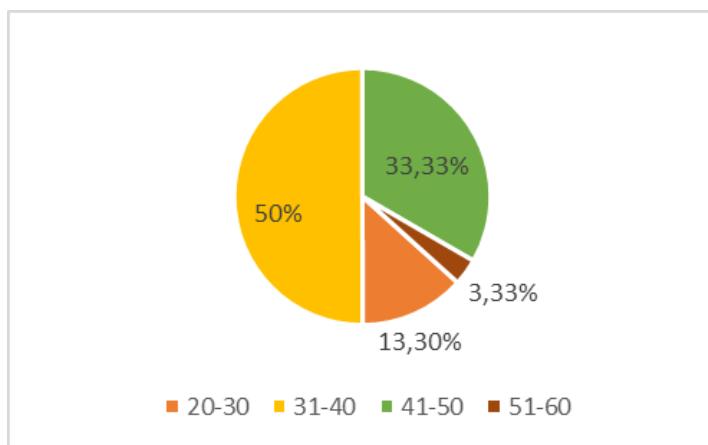
Questionnaire 1, corresponding to the age and sex of the participants, will be visualized with pie charts and their corresponding percentages. In questionnaire 2, corresponding to the Maslach Inventory test for detecting work-related stress linked to Burnout syndrome, the results have been extracted from the quantitative table stipulated in the test itself by adding up all the answers corresponding to the three subscales: fatigue/emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal fulfillment. In questionnaires 3 and 4, corresponding to stressors and the impact of stress on teachers and on educational quality. The qualitative part details more precisely, according to the lexicon used, the emotions and feelings of teachers in first-person work stress situations. For this purpose, an analysis was made at the semantic level, and the different adjectives with a negative charge of teaching stress were mainly analyzed.

The research, according to its orientation, is mainly focused on conclusions and decision making, under the socio-critical paradigm, whose objective is reflection and identification of key points to promote change.

Sample

This is an educational participatory field research, whose participants have collaborated on a voluntary basis and whose anonymity has been completely preserved. In total there are 30 Early Childhood Education teachers, belonging to 8 private and subsidized centers in Asturias.

Figure 1
Percentage by age



As we can see in Figure 1 regarding age, teaching staff between 31 and 40 years of age predominates with 50% of the participants, 33.3% corresponding to ages between 41 and 50, 13.3% between 20 and 30 years, and 3.4% between 51 and 60 years, with the range of over 61 years being absent.

In terms of gender, we observed a striking 100% of female early childhood education teachers, with a complete absence of the male gender in the participating sample.

Instrument

The instrument chosen was a questionnaire consisting of 5 blocks:

- In the first block, questions of a personal nature about the respondents' sex and age.
- The second block is a quantitative Likert-type questionnaire with scale 6, corresponding to the Maslach Burnout Inventory scale, with 22 items, to calculate the degree of dissatisfaction, feelings, emotions and stress in Early Childhood Education teachers.
- The third block is a quantitative Likert-type questionnaire with a scale of 5 with 13 items on the degree of stressors, the objective being to detect which stressors generate the most stress. This questionnaire is of our own creation since we have observed a gap in the cataloguing of stressors in the stage we are dealing with.
- The fourth block is a quantitative Likert-type questionnaire with a scale of 3 with 14 items, to measure the consequences of stress on the teacher and on educational quality, the latter also of our own creation.

To these quantitative blocks, a qualitative open-ended question has been added, in the form of an interview, whose objective is to allow teachers to freely express their emotions, explain their daily work reality, and thus analyze the vocabulary used in their answers. Therefore, a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques was used.

Procedure

To initiate the study, each of the selected centers was contacted directly to inform the person in charge (director or coordinator of infant education) of the objectives of the research. To complete the questionnaire, they were provided with a link to the *Google Forms* questionnaire for early childhood teachers (google.com), which explained the procedure, its voluntary and strictly anonymous nature, and that the data would be used

exclusively for work on stress and educational quality.

Results

The results of the quantitative and qualitative research will be presented below. The following table corresponds to the reference values of the Maslach test (1997) corresponding to questionnaire 2, to measure the degree of stress in each of the subscales.

Table 1

Maslach Burnout Inventory Subscales Reference Values

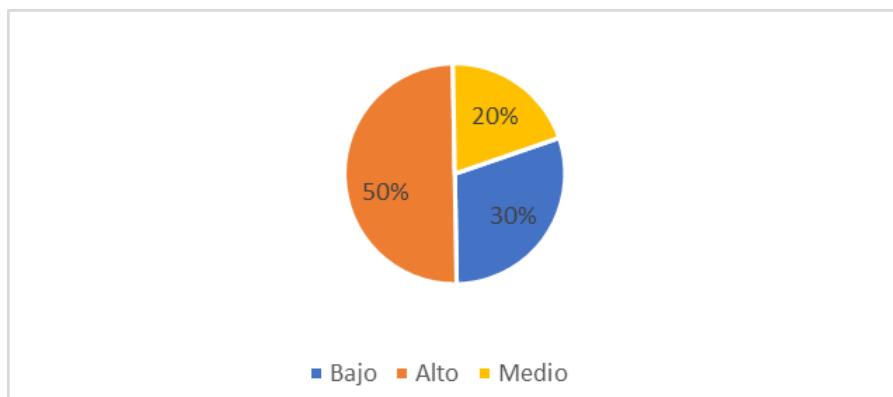
	Low	Medium	High
<i>Emotional fatigue: Appreciates the experience of being exhausted emotionally due to the demands of the job</i> 0-18 19-26 27-54*			
<i>Depersonalization: Assesses the degree to which each recognizes attitudes of coldness and aloofness</i> 0-5 6-9 10-30* 0-5 6-9 10-30* 0-5 6-9 10-30* 0-5 6-9 10-30* 0-5 6-9 10-30*			
<i>Personal realization: Evaluates the feelings of self-efficiency and self-fulfillment at work.</i>	0-33*	34-39	40-56

Note. () Burnout Syndrome Symptoms*

The questions in the Maslach Burnout Inventory test of the emotional exhaustion subscale correspond to numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20. As can be seen in Figure 4, 50% of the participants suffer from high emotional fatigue, 20% from medium and 30% from low.

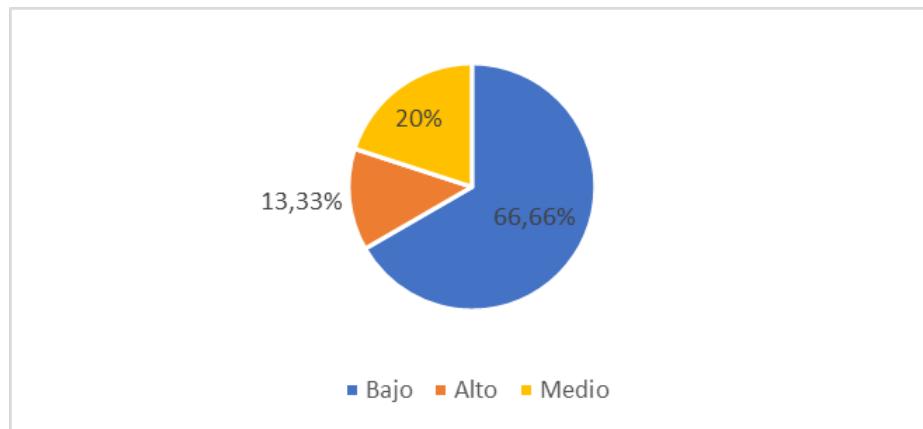
Figure 2

Emotional exhaustion subscale



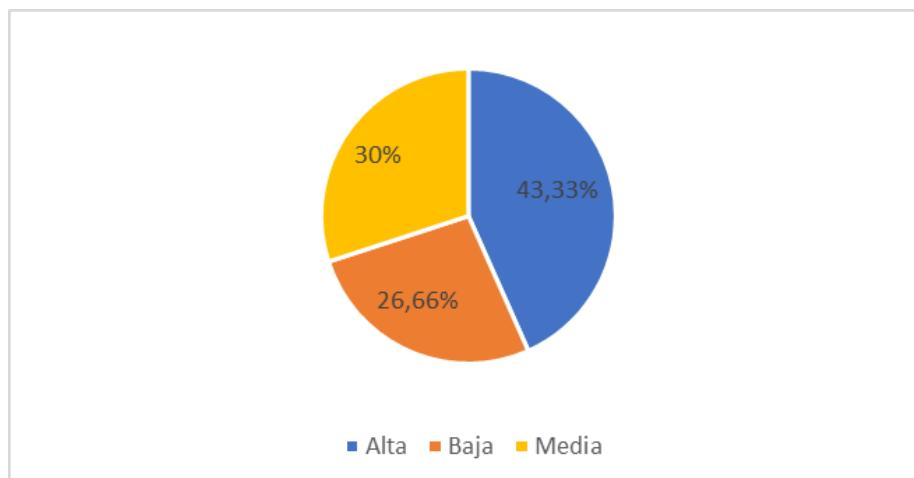
The questions in the Maslach Burnout Inventory test of the depersonalization subscale correspond to numbers 5, 10, 11, 15, 22. According to Figure 5 we observe that 66.66% feel a low level of depersonalization, 20% medium and 13.33% high.

Figure 3
Depersonalization subscale



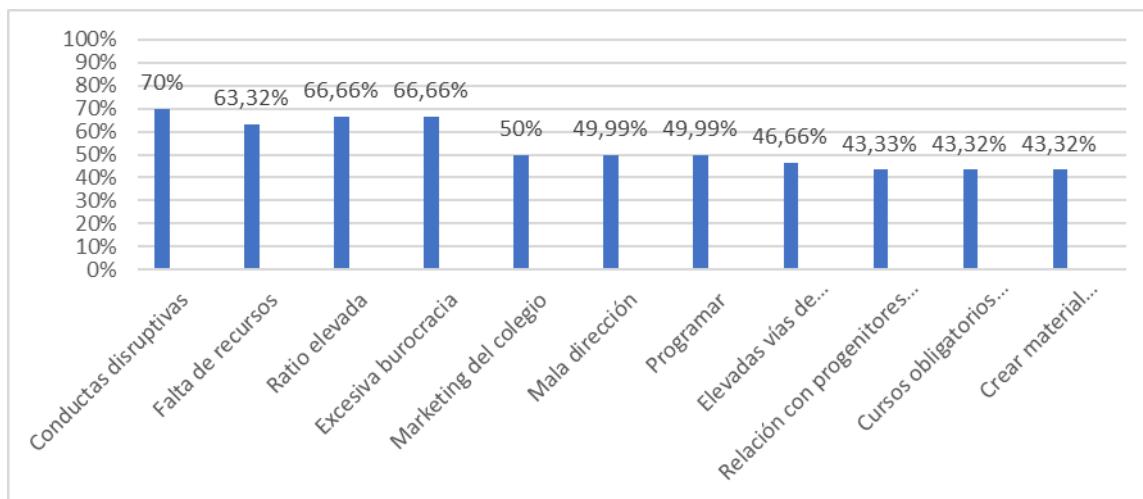
The questions of the self-realization subscale correspond to numbers 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21. According to Figure 6, 26.66% have a low perception of their personal fulfillment, 30% have a medium perception and 43.33% have a high perception.

Figure 4
Self-fulfillment subscale



Next, the third questionnaire on the factors that most stress Early Childhood Education teachers will be analyzed.

Figure 5
Intensity 4 and 5 stressors



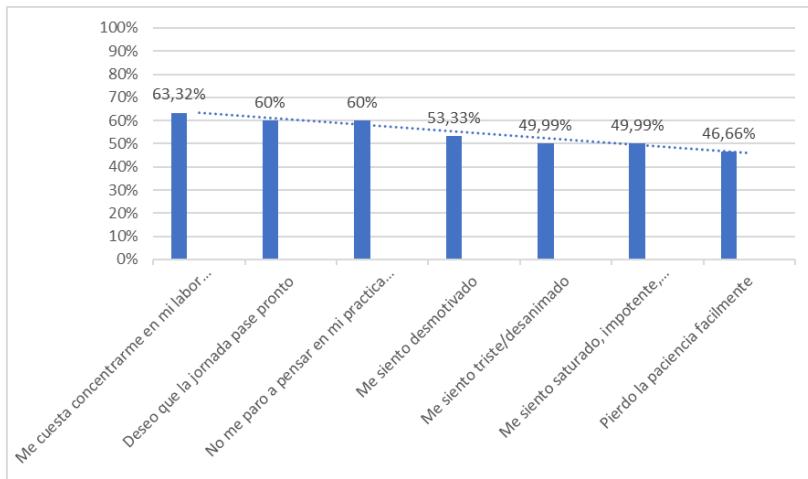
We observe in Figure 5 and more explicitly in Table 2, that the most stressful agents according to the stress values interpreted as high or quite high (4 and 5), are the disruptive behaviors of children (70%), lack of resources (63.32%), high ratio and excessive bureaucracy (66.66% both). This is followed by pressure from school marketing (50%), lack of empathy from management (49.99%), scheduling (49.99%), high communication channels (46.66%), relationship with students' parents (43.33%), unnecessary compulsory courses and constantly creating material (both 43.32%).

Table 2
Stressor Questionnaire (1 low intensity, 5 very high)

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5
1. High ratio in the classroom 53.33%		13,33%	6.66%	13.33%	13.33%
2. Schedule weekly, quarterly and annually	-	20%	30%	26.66%	23.33%
3. Constantly creating materials	6.66%	33.33%	16.66%	16.66%	26.66%
4. Disruptive behaviors of students	-	13.33%	16.66%	40%	30%
5. Relationships/mentoring with parents	3.33%	26.66%	26.66%	23.33%	20%
6. Poor management from coordination	16.66%	13.33%	33.33%	20%	16.66%
7. Poor relationship with colleagues	30%	20%	10%	16.66%	23.33%
8. Little empathy from management 16.66%		16.66%	13.33%	20%	33.33%
9. High number of Communications 23.33%	10%	23.33%	20%		23.33%
10. Marketing of the school	10%	26.66%	13.33%	20%	30%
11. Lack of human and/or material resources 36.66%		13.33%	13.33%	10%	26.66%
12. Completion of mandatory courses unproductive courses at the center	6.66%	26.66%	23.33%	16.66%	26.66%
13. Excessive unnecessary bureaucracy	3.33%	16.66%	13.33%	36.66%	30%

Figure 6 below shows the results of the fourth questionnaire corresponding to the impact of stress on teachers and on educational quality.

Figure 6
Impact of stress on teachers and educational quality



Observing Figure 6 and more explicitly Table 3 of percentages, and taking into account the sum of values 2 and 3 corresponding to "often" and "always", we analyze that when teachers feel stress at work it is difficult for them to concentrate on their teaching (63.32%), they want the day to pass quickly, they do not stop to reflect on their teaching practice (both 60%), and they feel unmotivated (53.33%). This is followed by feeling saturation, helplessness and frustration, feeling sad and/or discouraged (both with 49.99%), losing patience easily (46.66%).

Table 3
Implications for teaching and educational quality

When I feel stress at work.... **0: No, never 1: Very few times**
2: Often 3: Yes, always

ITEMS 0 1 2 3

1.I find it hard to concentrate on my pedagogical work	3.33%	33.33%	46.66%	16.66%
2.I feel unmotivated	20%	26.66%	23.33%	30%
3.I am not interested in continuing my education	20%	50%	13.33%	16.66%
4.I don't observe my students as closely	26,66%	40%	13,33%	20%
5.I wish that the day would pass soon	13.33%	26.66%	20%	40%
6.I only do what is strictly obligatory, dejar unfinished tasks	30%	33.33%	10%	26.66%
7.I easily lose patience	26.66%	26.66%	30%	16.66%
8.I feel sad and/or discouraged	20%	30%	33.33%	16.66%
9.I find it difficult to regulate myself emotionally	23.33%	43.33	26.66%	13.33%
10.I tend to get angry and raise my voice	13.33%	56.66	13.33%	16.66%
11.I feel saturated, helpless and/or frustrated	20%	30%	33.33%	16.66%
12. In my free time I don't stop to reflect about my work and I want to disconnect	23.33%	16.66%	30%	30%
13.I lose interest in creating new resources	33,33%	30%	20%	16,66%
14. Project drawings or songs for the students and so on have a moment of rest	40%	36,66%	13,33%	10%

We will now proceed to analyze the qualitative research data, observing the lexicon used by the participants, which provides us with very valuable information. The responses to the request "Describe how you feel at work under punctual and/or prolonged stressful situations over time", were:

- I feel bad because I tend to take the stress/bad environment situation into my personal life. This makes it impossible for me to disconnect from the work environment and I keep thinking about it.
- Exhausted
- Frustrated and powerless. I feel that I am unable to perform the work that I chose as a vocation, and that I still enjoy, usually for reasons unrelated to the actual work of teaching. That is, stress is almost always caused by tasks that have nothing to do with children's development, which prevents us from enjoying and learning together in the classroom.
- Tired, frustrated, unmotivated
- I feel that the work we do is not valued by families and society in general, which leads to demotivation on many occasions
- Sad, but the students help me not to think.
- I disconnect and in the end I don't give my 100%, I just do things to get by
- Exhausted, I lose confidence in my abilities. I think I'm in the wrong profession
- I believe that when we are under stress we do not contribute to the personal team functioning as it should.
- Not answered
- I feel anguish
- When I am more stressed, I tend to lose my patience more easily
- Unmotivated
- It makes you feel that you do not reach the children as they deserve because it is important to keep in mind that we must have a flexible schedule to attend to the little things that come up, problems, spontaneous centers of interest... if we cannot attend to these things because of a schedule, it personally frustrates you because you cannot reach them.
- I try not to let it influence my teaching practice, trying to separate that stress and leave it in the background, prioritizing and focusing on the students, although it is not always easy.
- Unmotivated, very tired and sad about what the classes could be and are not. There are times when no matter how hard you try, depending on the degree of stress, you can't give more of yourself.
- I feel quite frustrated. In general, I think that I do not have the necessary skills to tackle this job. That I lack patience and emotional management, above all.
- When it is prolonged, I think about changing profession. Sometimes it is a very frustrating job that generates a lot of stress.
- Unmotivated and often going against my principles and my vision of education.
- One-time stress is more easily managed. I have not suffered it as a teacher, but I have suffered it before and the one that really deteriorates you is the one that is suffered continuously over time.
- I feel like I can't give any more of myself. Sometimes I think I would be better off in a cupcake factory and my job would be every 24th cupcake a bag. No worries outside of work, no chores at home, no family to deal with...

- I feel bad and try to forget about it.
- Lack of professional projection, lack of resources and lack of time to prepare resources and plan, lack of professional training are the causes of demotivation and burnout.
- I think it is important to have the resources to self-manage stress, get the necessary rest and enjoy the day-to-day work.
- With demotivation, discouragement and fatigue.
- Anxiety.
- I feel very proud of the work I do, although sometimes the workload is very high.
- Overwhelmed, unwilling, just to get through the day.

Therefore, the results reveal that, in the group of female teachers of Early Childhood Education in public and private schools of traditional education, the female gender is predominant and their ages range mainly between 31 and 40 years old. Analyzing the Maslach test data, stress does exist in the Early Childhood Education teaching profession. Fifty percent of the participants suffer from high emotional fatigue, 20% from medium and 30% from low. A 66.66% feel a low level of depersonalization, 20% medium and 13.33% high, which indicates that teachers are sensitive in their work and try to overcome difficulties and emotional fatigue. This would go along with 43.33% high on the personal fulfillment subscale, they consider their work important and are useful in their work, followed by 30% of medium personal fulfillment and 26.66% who have a low view of themselves and their worth. From this we interpret that teaching is vocational, that teachers generally believe in their work and its positive effects, but that there is an emotional exhaustion that prevents them from performing their work in a totally satisfactory manner.

These data verify the first hypothesis of the present study in which early childhood education teachers suffer job stress. There is stress in all subscales, with emotional exhaustion being predominant.

The second questionnaire is related to the second objective and hypothesis of the research work, since the stressors and their intensity have been detected. According to the percentages analyzed above, what most stresses the infant teacher are the disruptive behaviors of children (70%), the lack of resources (63.32%), the high ratio and excessive bureaucracy (66.66% both). This is followed by pressure from school marketing (50%), lack of empathy from management (49.99%), scheduling (49.99%), high communication channels (46.66%), relationship with students' parents (43.33%), unnecessary compulsory courses and constantly creating material (both 43.32%). But it does not mean that the other items present in the questionnaire do not stress, they stress, but with less intensity, and the sum of all the agents makes the stress level higher.

The third questionnaire allows us to affirm the third hypothesis of the study: the greater the stress, the worse the teaching and the lower the quality of education. Stressed teachers find it difficult to concentrate on their pedagogical work (63.32%), they want the day to pass quickly without stopping to reflect on their teaching practice (both 60%), and they feel demotivated (53.33%). This is followed by feeling saturation, helplessness and frustration, feeling sad and/or discouraged (both with 49.99%), losing patience easily (46.66%).

Qualitative analysis is much more explicit than quantitative analysis, and reading the teachers' own sentences inevitably brings us closer to reality than simply analyzing percentages. This qualitative question could be considered tremendously revealing. When reading the sentences, it is observed that the teacher frees himself, expresses himself and feels the stress and anguish he may be experiencing. Quantitative analysis

could be considered unemotional, since its analysis is merely numbers, and there can always be small subjective nuances between scales, depending on how the participant interprets it. But the qualitative analysis is forceful, warm, expressive and emotional, and also between the lines it can be observed that teachers are grateful for this place to express themselves, to tell how they feel, without being able to communicate it in their workplaces, in private or charter schools. We analyzed that, when asked to "Describe how you feel at work under situations of punctual and/or prolonged stress", a large number of adjectives are frequently repeated related to work fatigue: I feel bad, exhausted, frustrated, powerless, unmotivated, sad, distressed, tired, or nouns such as demotivation, discouragement, anxiety. Others try to express themselves with phrases and give alternatives, what is perceived is that they want to enjoy the profession, but there are agents who do not allow them to do so. They argue that, with the stress, the teaching team does not work, they just want the day to end and that they do their teaching to get by, with some considering leaving the profession. Many think of the classroom as one block, teacher and children, and emphasize that children deserve better quality education. Stress does not allow them to enjoy the teaching process either, they often feel overwhelmed, and although children can sometimes help, they obviously do not eliminate the stressors.

Discussion and Conclusions

Therefore, according to the data analyzed, and relating them to the objectives of this research, it can be affirmed once again that there is work stress in Early Childhood Education teachers, that some stressors are more powerful than others, and that a teacher who feels pressure, stress and dissatisfaction in his or her job can, to a greater or lesser extent:

- Not feeling motivated to continue training in their profession.
- Have difficulties in scheduling correctly and concentrating on organizing the learning program.
- To be satisfied with the existing material due to lack of enthusiasm and not to create new resources that motivate their students.
- Inattention to student processes and behaviors and lack of observation.
- Failure to engage in reflective practice about their work as teachers.
- Not delving into their reactions and emotions, allowing themselves to become confused and despondent.
- Engaging in inappropriate behavior with students, peers and parents.
- Failure to be patient and respect the developmental rhythms of each child.
- Presenting moods that are not suitable for being present in a classroom: sadness, despair, anger, etc.
- Lack of emotional self-regulation.

All that has been argued is in line with the lines emphasized by Holmes (2014) throughout this research initiation work with respect to teacher stress. This study has been characterized by finding a certain bibliographic gap when it comes to establishing the theoretical framework, relating stress and infant stages in private or subsidized centers. We wanted to give a voice to early childhood education teachers, especially with the qualitative question, so that as a result of the results, which are conclusive and have a clear interpretation, the educational community will question a change, to improve the welfare of their students, that of teachers, and visibly improve the quality of education. This work also stands out because it justifies the importance of minimizing the stressors,

many unnecessary, to which an early childhood teacher may be exposed. Because the teacher can, almost without realizing it, become burned out (Fueguel and Montoliu, 2005) and seriously damage his or her pedagogical work. From the results of the data extracted, stress and emotional exhaustion is an aspect that is seen and felt, but the system does not stop to think about it.

The consequences of stress are in total contradiction with the competencies of the teaching dimension, both professional and attitudinal and socio-affective, both argued in the theoretical framework, that a teacher of Early Childhood Education should possess and therefore it is not possible to exercise the teaching profession in a highly professional manner, entering in decline the educational quality.

A teacher must be surrounded by a certain well-being and feel satisfaction in his work (Pedreira, 2017), only with positivity and enthusiasm will he also be able to achieve this pedagogical tact (Vanen, 1998) and put it into practice with his students.

Throughout this research we have found stressors that are part of the teaching action and those added stressors that are not part of it, both with high stress values. The question is the following: "Isn't the postmodern school then contributing to an increase in teacher discomfort?" (Lesme, 2011, p. 52). Another question, no less intelligent that can be posed, instead of looking for culprits, looking for solutions, generating some hope and encouragement for improvement, could be will the school be able to keep out the new epidemic of the 21st century (Rodríguez et al., 2017), i.e., work stress?

With these questions and the present research, we are not trying to create on paper idyllic, stress-free schools where there are no problems or conflicts. Stress is a part of life, but a healthy balance must be found for the teacher and for the children, with the difficulties inherent to the profession, but not added unnecessarily. As mentioned, this research work, according to its orientation, is mainly focused on conclusions and decision making, under the socio-critical paradigm, whose objective is to reflect and identify the key points to promote change. The data extracted, as already mentioned, lead to a clear and objective conclusion. It is necessary to make a reflection, not only for teachers on their educational practice, but also at the level of the educational community, on where our classrooms are going. The errors have already been identified through the present study, now the work is a field work aimed at improvement. An exhaustive work of those centers that are interested in improving their educational quality, which is the ultimate consequence of the teacher's welfare.

In this research on early childhood teachers and their teaching work diminished due to stress, difficulties have been encountered in obtaining a significant sample for the study, perhaps because teachers are short of time, in view of the end of the school year. Undoubtedly, the research has been tremendously enriching, since, as previously mentioned, there was a certain gap in the Early Childhood Education stage, relating teachers to work stress. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, different lines of research can be extracted, such as making a comparison between stress in early childhood teachers in public centers and teachers in private/contracted centers. It would be interesting to contrast whether the stressors are the same or, on the contrary, some are more stressful than others. It would also be interesting to investigate whether stressors affect males and females in the same way. In this case, according to the sample, the participants were only female. Another open line would be the differences in terms of teaching stress between traditional teaching centers and active pedagogy centers.

Once again, it should be emphasized that it has been considered vital to vindicate the importance of feeling well in order to be a good teacher. The change, the solutions, the tools to alleviate these work stressors must, as has been said, come from each center,

individually, actively listening to their teachers, with a deep dialogue and thus be able to offer in their program a true educational quality.

Caring for the caregiver who cares, who teaches, who helps and who accompanies. In these terms, without falling into paternalism, it would have to deepen the educational system and therefore make schools in general, and private and charter schools in particular, at the Early Childhood Education levels, centers of education and welfare.

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