

QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE, DETERMINING PROFESSIONAL STRESS AND DRUG ADDICTION IN WORKERS OF ABIDJAN AGRO-FOOD COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of quality of working life on professional stress and drug addiction among workers in the agro-food companies of Abidjan. To do this, a sample of 448 male study participants was drawn up using the on-site sampling method. A questionnaire submitted to this sample made it possible to collect the research data. Processing these data with the Chi-square test leads to results which reveal the existence of a significant relationship between the quality of working life and the negative professional reactions of workers. In other words, the quality of working life has a significant effect, both on professional stress and on workers' drug addiction. This result implements one of the major challenges of the management of modern organizations which consists in placing the human being and interpersonal relationships at the heart of managerial action. Thus, particular emphasis should be placed on the quality of interpersonal relationships favourable to a healthy social climate, guaranteeing well-being at work.

Keywords: Quality, working life, professional stress, drug addiction, agro-food industry, workers, Abidjan.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, work is appreciated for its social character. It provides man with his social definition and has value only through his social prestige which it provides to those who exercise it. In other words, you can't imagine yourself outside of your work. One has value only by its place in the sun. The unemployed person is considered a "good for nothing" because it has no interest. He may experience a sense of social worthlessness and a decline in self-esteem, especially if the insufficiency or weakness of her financial resources makes him unable to meet his family obligations (care of the spouse, children and collateral parents), social (various contributions in the context of work, the region) and cultural (religious, recreational).

Thus, to avoid being discredited socially, people are ready to accept any profession or activity which makes people around them believe that they usefully exist. However, the work situation has its own realities and it is very often that this enthusiasm for having a job and running it turns into a nightmare. Indeed, the mode of organization and the conditions of

execution of the current work are for much in the degeneration of this one and the development of the reactions of hostility of the workers vis-à-vis their employment.

This situation reveals, so to speak, the alienating nature of the work, which reflects all of the actor's psychological misery. In order to better understand this professional alienation, we plan to approach it in the context of this study from the angle of two signs (professional reactions), professional stress and drug addiction as effects of the quality of work life.

Work and employment occupy a relatively large part of our existence. This is how humans devote to it, according to Mahaux (1974), 60 to 80% of their existence. This is more than half of it that he spends on the way and in his working life. Thus, wondering about "How to be happy at work", Guillemot (2006) makes important reflections on the meaning and importance of work. It invites healthy awareness to reduce the work crisis and provide workers with a more humane, more convivial professional situation. Because, of course, work and employment are beneficial to human beings for the benefits they derive from them. The fact remains, however, that they have, in essence, a setback because of their binding nature. Thus, they pose, among other problems, that of alienation (Déjours, 1999; Sordes-Ader, and Tap, 2002) which can be said to be more seriously started in lower-level jobs than in higher-level jobs in the organization. Work and employment, therefore, provide their performers with only meagre benefits, which are generally unrelated to the enormous sacrifices they make. Few are the workers from whom the financial profits made are sufficient to cover most of their material needs (personal, family, social). Few of them are socially regarded and manage to fulfil their duties. This is one of the reasons for the choice of this socio-professional category in this study. This justifies that whenever we use the terms work and employment, we are referring to these as they exist in the working class.

Because, it is very often that this alienation leads this category to reactions in terms of professional stress and drug addiction thus translating the psychological misery of the actors (here, the workers). Kouamé (2008), who worked on stress, reports on this subject that industrial workers regularly experience professional stress, the obvious signs of which are chronic fatigue, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, difficulty concentrating and memorizing.

Indeed, the subordinate staff (workers) have an executive role which confines them to servile and suffocating tasks. Their working conditions are becoming more and more dehumanizing with modern civilization and its increasingly sophisticated technological innovations. They therefore carry more alienation. This phenomenon of alienation seems to us to have largely started among Abidjan workers who live it more intensely. Certain psychological effects of work deprivation (unemployment) largely account for the role of balance played by work in the life of the human being. However, faced with the scarcity if not the scarcity of employment, some are ready to accept all kinds of activities (small trades, marginal activities, jobs bordering on ethical rules such as prostitution and the drug trade). So do not hesitate to submit to the most arduous, dirty or dishonorable tasks provided that these generate the financial flows they need.

On the one hand, the imperative of integration into the modern (Western type) world of an Ivorian society that colonization has detached from its traditions confronts its members with

acculturation synonymous with social and cultural alienation. This is all the more accentuated since Côte d'Ivoire is generally presented as the showcase of France in Côte d'Ivoire.

On the other hand, life in Abidjan adds to this alienation with the social problems of this city which are as inextricable as various linked to the gigantism of Abidjan, economic capital of the country and largest home of high concentration which abounds in the essential of the Ivorian administration. All of this fosters the emergence of a professional emergence to which junior workers are more exposed. This results in questions. Is this phenomenon manifest in Abidjan workers? If so, what can be the signs if not the reactions of workers? Are these reactions expressed in terms of professional stress and/or drug addiction?

Behavioral theories (Fischer, 1996; Nault, 1992; Reuchlin, 1995) will help to understand the significant results of this study. They will make it possible to maintain that the real or experienced bad qualities of the working life generated by the unhealthy, pathogenic or pathological conditions, favor the emergence or the development of a true phenomenon of alienation among the workers of the agro-food industries studied.

From the above, in order to analyze the effect of the quality of working life on professional stress and drug addiction, we make the following hypothesis which guides the present study according to which workers develop negative reactions in terms of professional stress and drug addiction with regard to their (poor) quality of working life. In other words, the frequency of workers reacting negatively to their quality of work life is higher than that of their counterparts who do not show such a reaction. This difference is expressed in the stress felt at work and in drug addiction, in particular the consumption of alcohol or drugs.

Specifically, it can be postulated that the proportion of workers in the study experiencing high stress and engaging in frequent drug addiction is higher than that of subjects experiencing a low level of stress and characterized by low drug addiction or nonexistent.

Clear,

- 1) There is a significant relationship between the quality of working life and professional stress among workers in the agro-food companies of Abidjan.
- 2) There is a significant link between the quality of working life and drug addiction among workers in the agro-food enterprises of Abidjan.

2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Participants

The industrial map of Abidjan shows that the activities of this sector are mainly concentrated in three municipalities which are industrial centers. These are Koumassi, Vridi and Yopougon. So, our choice fell on the workers of these three industrial zones highly codified by the State. These employees are essentially workers whose unhealthy, pathogenic or degrading working conditions are likely to cause discomfort to raise the problem of alienation. They are generally male, of professional seniority, levels of education, age, various family situations. In a word, they form a heterogeneous entity recommending to

choose those on which to actually study. Unable to constitute a representative sample using appropriate sampling methods (random, quota, cluster, etc.) for lack of sampling frame or exhaustive and up-to-date list, we opted for the on-site sampling. Thus, we went to the canteens of the companies identified in the three industrial zones, compulsory passages for the workers, in order to question those whom we find on the spot, who are available and who give their consent. This procedure allows us to ultimately constitute a sample of 448 participants who have the following characteristics. The subjects exercise their current position with a seniority of approximately 5 years; all male workers, of primary education level, they all benefit from a fixed-term contract; they are married or cohabiting with a maximum of 5 dependents with an average age of approximately 37 years.

2.2 Data collection instrument

The questionnaire used for this research essentially has four components relating to quality of working life, professional stress, drug addiction and biographical data.

The item relating to the quality of working life allows the participant to give his assessment of the quality of the working atmosphere or social climate. It is for him to indicate whether he finds this atmosphere conducive to personal development or not. If the answer is yes, it indicates that the worker qualifies a good quality of working life. Otherwise, it describes poor quality of working life. Each participant according to his answer (Yes or No) belongs to one or other of the two categories.

Professional stress is assessed using a Lickert-type metric scale. This is the stress level scale developed by Patesson (2000). It is a four-point metric scale which is the response mode "never", "sometimes", "frequently" and "always". The 32 items measuring stress were scored as follows according to the author's instructions: never: 1 point, sometimes: 2 points, frequently: 3 points and always: 4 points. The stress score for each participant is obtained by adding the points for the different items on the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.78, which reflects the internal validity of the instrument. From the median score (75.28) of stress scores for the entire sample, we distinguished two groups of participants. Thus, the workers in the sample who have a stress score below the median experience a low level of stress; their counterparts with a stress score above the median experience high-stress levels.

Drug addict behaviours are appreciated by whether or not to indulge in alcohol and/or drugs. This allows us to distinguish two categories of workers, namely addicted subjects and workers with little or no addiction. The drug-addicted workers are victims of chronic or acute alcoholism and/or frequent users of a drug (coffee, heroin, cannabis, various pharmacy products classified as drugs); they manifest frequent drug addiction. Workers with little or no drug addiction are employees who do not stand out for their alcoholism (chronic or acute) or for taking (regular) substances assimilated to drugs; their addiction is said to be occasional or nonexistent.

The biographical data section of the questionnaire provides us with information relating to age, level of education, seniority, family status, gender and type of contract.

This questionnaire finally made it possible to collect data which we consider credible having regard to the rigor which presided over its construction.

2.3 Statistical test

These data are used to assess the existence or not of a relationship between two characteristics within a population, on the one hand between the quality of working life and professional stress, and, on the other hand, between the quality of working life and drug addiction. These variables are all qualitative in the present study. Under these conditions, the appropriate statistical test is the chi-square test. Thus, these data were statistically processed using the Pearson Chi-square test. The results obtained are presented in the following lines.

3.0 RESULTS

The results (both) are presented using the tables below. In order to appreciate the significance of the effect of quality of working life on professional stress and drug addiction, we draw conclusions at the probability threshold $p \leq .05$.

Quality of working life and professional stress

Table 1: Quality of working life and professional stress variables

			Stress professionnel	
			Elevé	Faible
Qualité de vie de travail	Bonne	Count	75	82
		Column %	24,2%	59,4%
	Mauvaise	Count	235	56
		Column %	75,8%	40,6%

Source: SPSS Processing Software Study Data Kouame 2020

Table 1 is a cross-tabulation of the quality of working life and professional stress variables, in which the numbers and the column proportions constitute the summary statistics. The column proportions are calculated so that their sum is equal to 100% for each column. In each line, we notice that differences seem to exist between the proportions. This reveals that the two variables are related. So we can do a check using the chi-square test.

Table 2: Pearson's chi-square test

		Stress Professionnel
Qualité de vie de travail	Chi-square	52,062
	df	2
	Sig.	.000*

**The Chi-square statistic is significant at the 0.05 level*

Source: SPSS Processing Software Study Data Kouame 2020

The chi-square statistic gives the value 52,062. This value is significant at a probability threshold 0.05. Thus, the quality of working life maintains a significant relationship with professional stress. In other words, the proportion of workers experiencing high work stress (75.8%) linked to poor quality of life at work is higher than that of workers experiencing low stress (40.6%).

Quality of working life and drug addiction

Table 3: Quality of working life and drug addiction variables

			Toxicomanie	
			fréquente	Occasionnelle ou inexistante
Qualité de vie de travail	Bonne	Count	63	94
		Column %	24,7%	48,7%
	Mauvaise	Count	192	99
		Column %	75,3%	51,3%

Source: SPSS Processing Software Study Data Kouame 2020

Table 3 is a contingency table that crosses the variables quality of working life and drug dependence, in which the numbers and the column proportions constitute the summary statistics. Here again (as we did for Table 1), the column proportions are calculated so that their sum is equal to 100% for each column. In each line, we notice that differences seem to exist between the proportions. This reveals that the two crossed variables are linked. So we can do a check using the chi-square test.

Table 4: Pearson's chi-square test

		Toxicomanie
Qualité de vie de travail	Chi-square	27,780
	df	2
	Sig.	.000*

**The Chi-square statistic is significant at the 0.05 level*

Source: SPSS Processing Software Study Data Kouame 2020

The chi-square test gives a value of 27,780. This value is significant at a probability threshold of 0.05. This finding suggests that the quality of working life has a significant effect on drug addiction among the workers who participated in the study. We can, therefore, admit that the number of workers who frequently use alcohol or drugs (192 or 75.3%) in reaction to the

poor quality of working life is higher than that of workers who consume occasionally or do not consume not these products (99 or 51.3%).

In light of these two results, we can argue that the negative professional behaviours studied in this research are both observed among the participants. Thus, the superiority of the frequency of negative reactions over that of positive reactions is evident with regard to professional stress and drug addiction among workers. As a result, by reacting to their poor quality of working life, more workers are developing a high level of professional stress and frequently addict themselves to drug addiction.

The explanation of the predominance of negative reactions over positive reactions, therefore, seems to us essentially to relate to the quality of working life in the subjects studied. This is fundamentally determined by company parameters, notably the social climate. Admittedly, these parameters have an objective dimension in the sense that they have a logical and impersonal impact on the organization's partners. However, they also have a subjective dimension insofar as they exert a certain effect felt by each partner as a function of their affects, interests, representations, in a word, of their personality. These relational parameters of professional existence can therefore create a positive (favorable reaction) or negative (unfavorable reaction) sensitivity.

Behaviourist theories seem appropriate to help us better understand this reality. According to these theories, the psychological field has a "living space". This includes variables of different natures (physical, social, psychological) and in interaction with each other. These variables have a certain valence for the individual on which they can exert an attraction (positive valence) or a repulsion (negative valence). This means that the variables of the field are at the origin of the forces which can be antagonistic or convergent.

In the first case, they lead the subject to drive away, avoidance or hostility which explains the negative reaction observed in workers (high-stress level, frequent drug addiction). In the second case, the forces coexist harmoniously to establish a balance, a pleasant state, which is the basis of reconciliation behaviour, hence the positive reactions observed among workers (low-stress level, occasional or nonexistent drug addiction).

In light of this analysis, we can assume that if a large proportion of workers react negatively, it is that their quality of working life seems poor and leaves something to be desired. The social climate is pathogenic or unhealthy, in a word not fulfilling, not to say alienating. Under these conditions, workers may still experience excessive stress and will be tempted to take refuge in alcoholism, drug use to give the impression or the illusion of having "eliminated" this poor quality of working life whether they're fleeing or forgetting momentarily. Such depersonalization, which we assimilate to alienation, in fact, consists of dehumanization of professional activity. This keeps the worker away from joy at work.

4.0 DISCUSSION

This study establishes two levels of results relating to the independent variable considered, quality of working life, the effect of which is tested on two dependent variables, the level of professional stress and drug addiction.

The results obtained confirm our two working hypotheses previously issued. It appears from this fact that the quality of working life maintains a significant link with professional stress and drug addiction. Thus, the working atmosphere has an impact on the mental health of the worker who will develop the negative reactions described in the context of this study. This conclusion is in line with that reported by Lévi (1984) who maintains that workers exposed to harmful physical and environmental working conditions such as noise are often sick and have high rates of absenteeism and accidents at work. The ILO (1986) does not say anything else when it finds that mental and physical health at work is generally damaged by the poor conditions prevailing in working life. For his part, Kouamé (2008) reports, on a sample of 270 workers in industrial enterprises, that the average stress score of subjects exercising in a chain is higher than that of their counterparts occupying an independent position. In support of this fact, he writes: "the body's biological response to stressors is behavior which consists of the individual being able to fight or flee (general behaviour inadequate at the workplace)" (Cf. Kouamé, op cit. P.23).

Unlike this research, we are emphasizing here the human and not the physical dimension of the working environment in terms of social climate or quality of working life and we come to the same conclusions. Our results thus reveal that interpersonal relationships, at the heart of the quality of working life, have a significant influence on the mental health of workers. It seems to us that this is what Chanlat (2003) talks about when he suggests that the human world is a social universe which brings into play social relationships of all types (sexual, professional, ethnic, age, etc.). These relationships are both constitutive of social life and produced by daily interactions. The individual being strongly influenced by these relational dynamics, especially at the professional level, could see his mental health deteriorate if he considers that these relationships are unhealthy and degrading.

The joy of working can immediately turn into psychological suffering, generating negative reactions such as high stress and frequent drug addiction. These reactions are hardly good performance indicators, on the contrary. Zipkin's (2000) study reveals the unhappiness of the employee who can adopt various reactions. The author relates a survey of the Gallup house, carried out among two million employees working in 700 companies in the United States showing that the stability and the productivity of an employee were determined by the relationship he had with his superior immediate. Another Florida survey also found that only 11% of employees who rated their boss excellent thought of changing jobs, while 40% of them thought of it when they rated their boss as bad (Zipkin, 2000). We can reconcile and admit that those of workers (40%) who think of changing jobs would develop professional stress linked to their poor quality of life caused by the wrong boss.

When we know the very determining role that the immediate supervisor can play in the quality of the working relationships that determine the quality of working life, the mental health of employees depends on it. Because our research leads to the conclusion that professional stress and drug addiction can be considered as consequences of the nature of the social climate or interactional dynamics within work teams or organizations. This is precisely what Leconte (2017) reveals for whom, according to a study by La Fabrique Spinoza, there is a serious divide between employees who are happy at work and those who are not. In fact, 34% of workers are dissatisfied, or even very dissatisfied (18%) against 23% very satisfied. He adds that this proves the importance given to the well-being of the employee in

companies. Thus, when employees do not find a quality of working life (QWL), this quality of life can even be replaced by discomfort, and therefore, professional stress. Through its National Barometer of Happiness, this study shows that one in two employees (51%) feels stress or fatigue at work, that 44% do not find meaning or feel overworked, and finally that 24% are in a burnout situation. This is a very present problem that companies should not conceal, but on which words must be put in order to be able to find lasting solutions that will benefit everyone.

The present study seems to have limits in that the vast phenomenon of professional alienation has been restricted here in its manifestations to professional stress and drug addiction. The study would benefit from being deepened by examining other reactions, indicators of professional alienation. Research on the quality of work life in relation to strike sensitivity, absenteeism, turnover, demotivation, for example, would shed significant light.

However, it is noted with this study that professional alienation is a fact, a reality in the agro-food businesses of Abidjan in view of the two events revealed. Thus, faced with multifaceted constraints and requirements, we agree with Bergère (2019) that the paradigm shift presents itself as a serious alternative. This paradigm stipulates to choose "build for" rather than "fight" with the objective of the well-being and performance of the employee. It is about injecting well-being as a source of satisfaction in all the systems involved. Change is strategic with a reorientation of energies towards construction rather than suppression. This new paradigm implements one of the major challenges of the management of modern organizations which consists in placing the human being and interpersonal relationships at the heart of managerial action. Thus, particular emphasis should be placed on the quality of interpersonal relationships favourable to a healthy social climate, guaranteeing well-being at work.

By carrying out this study, we intend to approach, raise the problem of professional alienation among industrial agro-food workers in Abidjan. More precisely, we want to describe two frequent manifestations of the phenomenon that are professional stress and drug addiction linked to the quality of working life.

At the end of the study, the least that can be said is that the hypotheses stated are supported by the facts, they are confirmed. Indeed, professional alienation is effectively manifest among the industrial workers studied. It results in negative reactions that the latter express towards their employment. These are job stress and addiction. Each of these two signs shows a lower frequency of positive reactions than that of negative reactions.

There are more workers with high levels of stress and frequent drug addiction than those with low levels of stress and little or no addiction (occasional or no addiction). As a result, the alienation that threatens workers in agro-food enterprises in their jobs constitutes a phenomenon linked to the quality of working life. These facts raise, in any case, the problem of the decline of value, work.

To remedy this situation, it seems important to us to be more concerned with the study of occupational alienation, particularly among the employees who are the most victims (workers) of it because of their dehumanizing working conditions.

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