

INSURANCE INTERMEDIARIES' WORK-RELATED STRESS: CONNECTIONS WITH LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract. *The article deals with work-related stress, the reasons for its occurrence, consequences, and ways how to manage stress in the Lithuanian "X" life insurance company. The intermediaries' work stress connection with labour productivity and type A personality behaviour are analyzed. The study aims to find out how the insurance company takes certain measures to minimize work-related stress and to increase labour productivity.*

Key words: *work-related stress, labour productivity, Type A character behaviour, work-related stress management*

Introduction

In the last decades, in different publications (from ordinary articles in magazines and newspapers to scientific literature) much is written about stress at work, much is discussed about its impact on human health, the reasons for work stress are looked for, the ways how to deal with work stress are investigated. There is no difference where and for whom you are working, but stress at work is inevitable.

Very often, work stress occurs because of the conflict of roles, lack of participation in management, poor work organization, etc. These are the reasons for organizational stress occurrence. On the other hand, stress at work may be caused by individual reasons, e.g., personality types. M. Friedman and R.H. Rosenman (1959) distinguished A and B type personalities, with Type A personalities experiencing more stress and having more often heart and blood vessels problems (Friedman, 1982; Kavaliauskaitė-Keserauskienė, 2011).

Not a high level of work-related stress can bring positive consequences, e.g., a wish to develop, efforts to produce better results, etc. However, more often the negative work-related stress consequences are discussed, such as a high level of absenteeism at work, the increased number of mistakes, a high level of risky incidents, health problems,

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deterioration of relationships at work, demotivation, and decreased labour productivity. Therefore, stress can be harmful for people, companies, and state.

Many managers acknowledge that a certain pressure at work is necessary as a motivator for producing better results. However, too big a pressure at work can cause stress which not only harms the employee's health, but also makes a negative impact on labour productivity. The higher stress is experienced, the lower is labour productivity, and the performance results are not good. The connection between stress and productivity can cause some problems not only for a company but also for the employee, especially if the salary depends on work results. One of the companies where labour productivity is very important is the "X" life insurance company. A company pays commissions to insurance intermediaries who have concluded new life insurance contracts.

Quite a few researches were carried out in many different countries to investigate the level of stress at work and the stressors faced only by people working in the insurance sector. For example, the Financial Services Union (Denmark) in 2001 and 2006 conducted researches which revealed the causes of a high level of stress at work in financial and insurance service sectors. W.J. Coetzer and S. Rothmann (2006) carried out researches in insurance companies of the Republic of South Africa; they identified work stressors, indicated a connection between stress at work, worsening of health, and the commitment level to the organization. A. Chandhok and M. Monga (2013) made a research in an Indian state of Harjana in two insurance companies (LIC and Bajaj Allianz) and defined a connection between insurance intermediaries' work stress and labour productivity. L. Erlbaum (1977), M. Jamal (1990), J. Greenberg (2011) and many other scientists investigated connections between stress at work and the behaviour type of personalities.

In Lithuania, no exhaustive studies have been carried out concerning the level of work stress of insurance intermediaries and indicating the causes and consequences of stress, or researches which might help to find connections between stress at work and labour productivity of insurance intermediaries and Type A behaviour characteristics. The aim of the present research was to investigate a concrete sphere of services in detail.

The goal of the investigation: to evaluate work-related stress for insurance intermediaries and a connection between work-related stress, labour productivity and Type A character behaviour. Also, it was important to clarify whether the "X" life insurance company applies any measures to decrease the level of stress at work.

The object of the investigation: insurance intermediaries' stress and labour productivity.

The study was carried out by applying the following methods: collection of secondary data and survey (two forms of survey were used), questionnaire, and structured interview. The data presented by the questionnaires were analysed applying the statistical method of analysis and the data processing software SPSS and Excel.

The theoretical basis for evaluating work-related stress and labour productivity

So far, there is no unanimous opinion on how exactly to define the concept of stress. On the basis of definitions presented by Selye (1974), Lazarus, Folkman (1984), Greenberg (2011), stress can be described as the state which appears when there is a threat to a human's psychological or physical well-being. Therefore, people try to avoid danger or somehow cope with the existing threat. Besides, if the stress level is low, it still may cause negative consequences, and if the stress level is high, it leads to the same negative consequences. The optimal stress level is preferable.

During the study, in order to define the insurance intermediaries' work-related stress level, its causes, consequences, and the tools of managing stress, the respondents were given questions formed on the basis of a literature review presented by C.L. Cooper and J. Marshall (1976) on the work stress model.

In the literature, while defining the reasons for individual stress, a Type A personality should be evaluated. It is stated that Type A personalities experience much more stress than do Type B personalities (Robbins, 2006). Type A personalities are inclined to compete, they are impatient, aggressive, very often short of time, eager to achieve their goals and be successful. Type B personalities are less competitive, they do not conflict with people, usually are not short of time, and their attitude towards life is more balanced.

In the process of investigation, it was important to clarify whether there exists any connection between work-related stress and Type A personality. For defining a Type A personality, a test proposed by M. Friedman and R.H. Rosenman (1974) was chosen.

The concepts of productivity and increase of productivity in an organization and management practice have a rich history which started at the beginning of 1900 – the industry management epoch. Much attention was paid to the measures aimed at increasing the labour productivity and control resources (McGowan, 1984, p. 315).

Labour productivity is measured by estimating the quantity of economic results per time unit (hour, month, year, etc.).

Productivity is the most important index of economic development. The utility of productivity is analyzed at several levels: national, organizational, and individual. The increase of productivity at the national level increases the standards of living, because a higher income promotes consumption of goods and services, more money is allocated for leisure time, home, education. In the year 2011, the labour productivity of Lithuanian employees as compared with that in other EU countries was only 66 percent of the EU average (Eurostat, 2012).

The second level of productivity benefit is organizational. The increase of productivity in an organization implies higher revenues which, in turn, facilitate payments to suppliers, employees, and shareholders. In the present study, the labour productivity of

insurance intermediaries was measured as the average number of calls made, the number of meetings with the clients, and the number of insurance contracts concluded per month. To evaluate the labour productivity of insurance intermediaries, the indexes presented and described in Table 1 were used.

The high productivity helps an organization to operate more successfully in the competitive environment. The employees in a successfully operating organization are more motivated, more often feel a greater job satisfaction, and this is the third work productivity level of benefits.

It is a known fact that in organizations where the staff members are healthy the stress level is very low, and the labour productivity level is high. Such organizations have the following qualities: the managers indicate a higher productivity level of employees; career opportunities are provided, the organization values every employee; the management actions are consistent with the organization’s values (NIOSH Working Group, 1999).

TABLE 1. Labour productivity indexes and their description

Indexes	Description
<u>The number of meetings with the clients per month</u> The number of calls per month	The more meetings with clients take place calling a smaller number of clients, the more productive are the calls made by the insurance intermediaries.
<u>The number of concluded contracts per month</u> The number of meetings with the clients per month	The more life insurance contracts are concluded meeting a smaller number of clients, the more productive are meetings with the clients of insurance intermediaries.
<u>The number of concluded contracts per month</u> The number of calls per month	The more contracts are concluded calling a smaller number of clients, the more productive are the calls and meetings with the clients of insurance intermediaries.

M.Weiss (1983) states that in conditions of social support and if the organization cares about its employees, their labour productivity increases. Today, the productivity and its enhancement are considered to be the outgoing process which implies the creation of work standards for a chosen labour activity and for the trained personnel. These efforts undergo criticism, because an increase of productivity obligates organizations to pay higher salaries and wages, but their budget is limited. Because of these circumstances, the employees’ potential to work more productively can be wasted (McGowan, 1984, p. 316).

According to the EU Commission, if work-related stress problems are solved, the labour productivity and the staff health will improve; as a result, companies, employees, and society will gain social and economic benefits.

Analysis of stress and its causes in an insurance company

The investigation was done in February–March 2013. The scope of research which indicates the number of insurance intermediaries was performed applying the Paniott formula. The reliability of 95% and 5% of error magnitude was chosen. The magnitude of the general array being 244, the representative amount was 151 respondents. The study included 154 life insurance intermediaries of the “X” life insurance companies from five regions of Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys and Šiauliai). There were 107 women (69.5 percent) and 47 men (30.5 percent). Three structured interviews with managers of life insurance departments from Vilnius, Kaunas, and Šiauliai were conducted.

The insurance intermediaries’ work stress average was found to be 2.6 on a 5-point scale. It was checked whether this estimated index (“I feel stress at work”) correlated with the factors that cause stress, its consequences, labour productivity, Type A behaviour, and the demographic-social indexes. Also, two hypotheses were verified: 1. The bigger the work-related stress the insurance intermediaries experience, the lower is their labour productivity. 2. The more Type A personalities prevail among insurance intermediaries, the higher is the work-related stress level.

Causes of work-related stress. In order to find a relation between stress at work and the reasons for its occurrence, the average rating of stresses (M) was estimated on a 5-point scale; the modes (Mo), standard deviations (SD) and Spearman’s (r) coefficients of correlation, which identify a correlation between stress experienced at work and its causes, were defined. Connections between stress and its causes were closely related with the stressor groups (organizational, individual, and others); the group of organizational causes was subdivided into five subgroups (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Stress cause estimation averages and the correlation coefficients of stress and its causes, n = 154

	M	Spearman’s correlation coefficient
STRESS CAUSES	3.0	
Organizational causes:	2.9	0.407**
• disruptions at work	3.0	0.319**
• employee’s role in the organization	2.3	0.144
• career opportunities	2.9	0.412**
• labour relations	2.5	0.288**
• organizational structure and environment	3.1	0.206*
Individual causes (the level of anxiety, emotional stability, the perception of ambiguity)	3.1	0.425**
Other reasons (family problems, financial difficulties, etc.)	3.1	0.334**

* Statistical significance (δ) 0.05.

** Statistical significance (δ) 0.01.

Organizational causes. Data presented in Table 2 show that the connection of organizational causes with the stress at work is moderately direct and statistically important (Spearman's $r = 0.407$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$).

The occurrence of work-related stress in an insurance company is influenced by organizational causes which are related to a group of factors such as **problems at work** (Spearman's $r = 0.319$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$): the insurance intermediaries work intensively, very often they are short of time to achieve the desired result, they do not manage to perform the planned jobs, the work place is not convenient to work at, there are not enough work equipment, they feel the pressure on the managers' side to perform more jobs and to do them quicker.

The group of stress factors is connected with the **employee's role in the organization**; it has rather a weak correlation with work-related stress.

Organizational causes connected with **career opportunities** (Spearman's $r = 0.412$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$) cover the following factors: a manager always tells that the results do not meet his expectations, there is no connection between the input and commissions, the plans are not fulfilled, and there is some fear of contract termination.

As regards the stressors' group of **work relations** and stress at work, their direct statistically significant correlation is very weak (Spearman's $r = 0.288$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$). This correlation exists between two stressors: frictions and conflicts among colleagues and the fact that the insurance intermediaries do not feel being part of a company.

The results presented in Table 2 indicate a weak positive statistically significant connection between work-related stress and the factors of stress associated with the **structure and work environment** (Spearman's $r = 0.206$, $p = 0.011 < \delta = 0.05$). This means that insurance intermediaries experience more stress because of some changes at work and the disadvantage of participating in decision-making.

Individual causes. The strongest connection was revealed between work-related stress and the causes of individual stress (Spearman's $r = 0.425$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$). This correlation is moderate direct and statistically significant.

Therefore, because the amount of commissions for insurance intermediaries depends on the number of concluded contracts, it is no wonder that the statement "the cause of concern is unstable salary" was agreed upon by the greatest majority of respondents: 34.4 percent totally agreed and 42.9 percent just agreed with this statement.

A work-related stress may be caused by specific reasons: if the goal is not achieved, the self-confidence is reduced, some hesitation appears whether everything will be performed well. Less stress is caused by the following factors: fear to call the clients, failure to perform the tasks in the right way, and the lack of skills to carry out certain tasks at work. However, as one can see from the information presented in the parentheses, the opinion of insurance intermediaries differs because of the reasons caused by individual stress.

The Type A character. The results of the study indicate that in the “X” life insurance company almost half of the intermediaries (48.1%) are more of the A than B character type. Therefore, if more insurance intermediaries are of Type A character, they face more causes of stress. Connections between Type A personality and the causes of stress (presented in Table 2) vary from weak (Spearman’s $r = 0.168; 0.283; 0.288; 0.291; 0.343$) to moderate (Spearman’s $r = 0.0417; 0.431; 0.444$) direct and statistically significant ($\delta = 0.01$ and $\delta = 0,05$). These results confirm the hypothesis that the more insurance intermediaries are of Type A the higher is the level of work-related stress.

Other causes. The data presented in Table 2 show that respondents have experienced stress because of negative changes in life, which make a negative impact on work results, financial difficulties, the fact that the profession of insurance intermediaries is ignored by society and by the people they know. Stressful situations at work are mitigated by the fact that the respondents try to find a balance between work and private life, because the statement “work and private life are two incompatible things” gives the estimation average of 2.1 points. The results show also that there is a weak positive statistically significant correlation between stress at work and the above-mentioned factors (Spearman’s $r = 0.334, p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$).

On the basis of the analysis, the following conclusions can be made: the higher is the stress insurance intermediaries’ experience at work, the more stressful they are in organizational, individual and other situations. However, the estimated deviations and modes indicate that respondents have no unanimous opinion on the stressors.

Relation between the stress of insurance intermediaries and their labour productivity

To achieve the goal of the study, a relation between stress at work and labour productivity and between causes of stress and labour productivity were estimated (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Connection among stress, its causes, and labour productivity, n = 154

Labour productivity indexes	I experience stress at work	Career opportunities
The number of concluded contracts / the number of meetings with clients	-0.195*	-0.282**
The number of concluded contracts / the number of calls made	-0.171*	-0.165*

* Statistical significance (δ) 0.05.

** Statistical significance (δ) 0.01.

The following indexes indicate a relation between the incurred stress at work and labour productivity: the relationship between concluded contracts and the number of meetings with clients, and the relationship between concluded contracts and calls made. The correlation between stress at work and the number of contracts and meetings with clients is weak negative and statistically significant (Spearman's $r = -0.195$, $p = 0.015 < \delta = 0.05$). This implies that the higher stress is incurred, the fewer are life insurance contracts concluded during meetings with the clients.

The relationship between stress at work and the number of concluded contracts and calls made is weak negative and statistically significant (Spearman's $r = -0.171$, $p = 0.034 < \delta = 0.05$). The obtained results lead to the conclusion that the higher stress insurance intermediaries experience at work, the fewer life insurance contracts are carried out on the basis of the number of calls made as compared with the intermediaries that experience less stress.

A correlation between labour productivity and the causes of stress has been found only in one organizational stressors' group which is closely linked with career opportunities. The following four stressors are the indicators of career opportunities: the manager always informs when the insurance intermediaries' results do not meet his expectations, the existing work does not present the possibilities to perform it well, there is no connection between the input and the commissions paid, the outstanding plans cause a fear of the termination of a mediation contract. The results indicate a weak negative statistically significant correlation between career opportunities and between contracts concluded during meetings with clients (Spearman's $r = -0.282$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$). Therefore, the more often intermediaries face the above-mentioned four stressors, the less number of life insurance contracts is concluded during meetings with clients.

A weak negative and statistically significant correlation exists between stressors related to career possibilities and the relationship between concluded contracts and the number of calls made (Spearman's $r = -0.165$, $p = 0.041 < \delta = 0.05$). This implies that intermediaries who often face such stressors have to make more calls in order to conclude more contracts than the intermediaries who face fewer stressors.

The obtained results show that managers, in order to increase the productivity of calls and meetings with clients, should pay more attention to stressors connected with career opportunities and the methods of management.

During interviews with the heads of life insurance departments at "X" life insurance companies in Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai two questions were raised: who influences the labour productivity of insurance intermediaries, and how to increase it? Nobody has mentioned that labour productivity is influenced by stress at work or by the causes of stress related with career opportunities; neither did anybody mention that labour productivity may increase if the stress level goes down and the number of its causes decreases.

Consequences of work-related stress and their effects on the insurance intermediaries' labour productivity and Type A character behaviour

The investigation results indicate that there exists a strong direct statistically significant connection between work-related stress and its consequences (Spearman's $r = 0.748$, $N = 154$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$). Therefore, conclusions can be drawn that intermediaries who face stress at work more often have to endure the consequences of stress more often, too.

The consequences faced by insurance intermediaries are shown in Table 4 where the estimation average is presented in the descending order; also, standard deviations and modes are given.

Many respondents do not agree that they face the stress consequences listed in Table 4. However, as the study results indicate, the answers were given by respondents to each question which were different from most of those surveyed. The estimated correlation has indicated that insurance intermediaries who experience stress at work more often face the consequences caused by stress.

Table 4. Estimation indexes of intermediaries' work-related stress consequences, $n = 154$

Consequences of work-related stress	M*	SN	Mo**
The extent of search for another job	3.2	1.268	2
Comming home tired after work	3.1	1.029	4
There is no job satisfaction	2.5	1.049	3
Work has a negative influence on health	2.5	1.029	2
Going to work unwillingly	2.3	1.046	2
Very often absent from work without any serious reason	2.2	0.984	2
Having headache at work	2.2	0.927	2
Insomnia	2.1	1.096	2
Smoking more often at work than in a usual environment ($n = 101$)	2.0	1.264	1
Increased blood pressure	1.9	0,989	1

* Five-point scoring system.

** 5 – totally agree, 4 – agree, 3 – not sure, 2 – disagree, 1 – totally disagree.

Connections with labour productivity. The study results imply (Table 5) that insurance intermediaries who experienced stress more often concluded fewer life insurance contracts during meetings with clients than did intermediaries who rarely faced stress consequences (Spearman's $r = -0.278$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$). Similar conclusions could be made about a weak negative statistically significant correlation between the consequences of stress and the concluded contracts and calls made (Spearman's $r = -0.200$, $p = 0.013 < \delta = 0.05$).

On the basis of the above results, which imply a weak indirect statistically significant correlation between stress consequences and labour productivity and stress, its causes

TABLE 5. Work-related stress consequences and correlation with labour productivity, n = 154

Labour productivity indexes	Correlation with consequences of stress
The number of concluded contracts / the number of meeting with clients	-0.278**
The number of concluded contracts / the number of calls made	-0.200*

* Statistical significance (δ) 0.05.

** Statistical significance (δ) 0.01.

and labour productivity, which is verified by the hypothesis: the higher the level of work-related stress of insurance intermediaries, the lower their labour productivity.

Connection with Type A character behaviour. A correlation between the causes of work-related stress consequences and the Type A behaviour of insurance intermediaries was estimated. The results indicate a weak direct statistically significant correlation (Spearman's $r = 0.326$, $p = 0.000 < \delta = 0.01$). It implies that the more of Type A character insurance intermediaries are, the more often they face the effects caused by stress.

The analysis of stress causes and effects indicates that among all stressor groups, (Table 2) the effects of stress, and Type A behaviour there is a weak moderate direct statistically significant correlation. Thus, the hypothesis has been confirmed: the more of Type A character insurance intermediaries are, the higher is the level of their work stress.

Managing work-related stress in an insurance company

The respondents' opinion was ascertained as regards the question: who is responsible for stress at work: the insurance intermediary or a company itself? Respondents almost equally divided the companies' and personal responsibility for work-related stress: 37% of insurance intermediaries agreed that they themselves were responsible for stress at work, 20.8% disagreed with this statement, as well as 41.6% of respondents agreed and 13.6% disagreed that the organization itself is responsible for stress at work.

Table 6 presents information on the methods applied to manage stress in an insurance company. Firstly, all management methods are divided into four levels: insurance intermediaries, line managers, companies, and close people. It indicates that stress management does not depend only on a company or employees; it may be influenced by line managers and close people, too.

According to the answers presented by respondents, it could be stated that the following methods of managing stress are less frequently selected: to deal with the difficulties in private life could be helped by a manager ($M_o = 2$) and the company's motivation system which brings satisfaction to the biggest number of insurance intermediaries, and other steps of development ($M_o = 2$) should be applied.

A correlation between stress at work and stress management methods was estimated. A negative statistically significant correlation (Spearman's $r = -0.278$, $N = 154$, $p = 0.001$

$< \delta = 0.01$) was defined. It indicates that the insurance intermediaries experiencing stress at work less frequently apply the stress management methods listed in Table 6. Also, a weak negative statistically significant correlation between Type A character behavior and the methods of stress management was indicated (Spearman's $r = -0.282$, $N = 154$, $p = 0.001 < \delta = 0.01$). This implies that the insurance intermediaries who are more of Type A character less frequently apply the methods of stress management.

TABLE 6. The methods of stress management, $n = 154$

At the level of insurance intermediaries (brokers)	M*	SN	Mo**
Promoting healthy living	3.3	1.176	3
Spending leisure time actively	3.5	1.116	4
At the level of line managers	M*	SN	Mo**
Getting help from managers while solving problems at work	3.6	1.155	5
If problems in private life occur, a person can address the manager	2.3	1.035	2
At the company level	M*	SN	Mo**
Flexible working hours make your working day easier	3.7	1.107	4
The company's motivation system brings satisfaction	2.9	1.342	2
At the level of close people	M*	SN	Mo**
When there is a failure at work, people close to me always help	3.3	1.180	4

* Five-point system of evaluation.

** 5 – totally agree, 4 – agree, 3 – not sure, 2 – disagree, 1 – totally disagree.

During the interview, managers of the life insurance company departments were asked some questions: what is the company's responsibility in managing stress among insurance intermediaries, and what methods are applied to diminish stress at work? All the managers have stated that the company is responsible for stress at work; however, only one manager has indicated a method of management which depends on the company (strengthening the company's image). All the other methods of stress management, presented during the interview, were connected with the insurance intermediaries themselves (competence development, becoming more tough when communicating with clients, sharing best practices, etc.), which implies that managers perceive the stress usually to arise from the insurance intermediaries themselves.

The methods of stress management should be directed towards the stressors that usually are the reasons for the stress of insurance intermediaries. As the study results show, a company should pay more attention to the methods of managing stress, which are as follows: remuneration, organized trainings for insurance intermediaries and their managers, and campaigns for developing the company's image.

An insurance company, trying to manage the causes of stress connected with low commissions depending on the number of concluded contracts, should consider the possible changes in the remuneration system. One of the alternatives is to employ insurance

intermediaries under a an employment contract (but not under mediation agreement) as insurance consultants, to pay the minimum salary plus commissions (which should be lower than the money paid today to insurance intermediaries). Insurance consultants working under an employment contract should conclude a planned number of life insurance contracts per month.

Specifically selected trainings and seminars could lower the work-related stress level for insurance intermediaries. The trainings should develop insurance intermediaries' competences, verify their knowledge of life insurance products and insurance laws, introduce the future changes in the company. During the seminars, the topics that might bring the assuredness of insurance intermediaries, develop communication skills, teach them how to plan the time, etc. should be introduced. The insurance company should organize trainings for department and team managers on how to help the insurance intermediaries to manage stress at work.

The study results bring the conclusion that the campaign of strengthening the image of an insurance company could help to avoid some stressful situations. According to the department manager of the Vilnius district insurance company, enhancing the company's image would help the insurance intermediaries to have more confidentiality in dealing with clients by telephone and face-to-face. In advertising, the number of products offered and their high quality are the methods that might help to develop the company's image. It is very important to know who represents an insurance company. Therefore, candidates for the position of insurance intermediaries should have a higher or high level of education in the insurance or financial sphere.

Conclusions

On the basis of the obtained data, two hypotheses were confirmed: 1. The higher is the level of work-related stress among insurance intermediaries, the lower is their labour productivity. 2. The more of Type A character behaviour insurance intermediaries show, the higher is the level of their work-related stress.

With reference to the first hypothesis, the conclusion is as follows: if the insurance intermediaries' level of work-related stress is lowered, the causes of stress and its consequences decrease, i.e. labour productivity increases. However, during the interviews, not a single manager of a life insurance company's department has mentioned that stress at work, its causes and consequences make a great impact on labour productivity. On the other hand, nobody has mentioned that labour productivity may increase if the work-related stress level and its consequences are minimized.

The results indicate that almost half of insurance intermediaries (48.1%) are more of Type A than Type B character. The second hypothesis confirms that the more of Type A character insurance intermediaries are, the more often they face the causes and

consequences of stress. In order to minimize the level of work-related stress, the stress management should be started at the beginning when the insurance intermediaries are chosen for the employment in a company. The individual reasons for work stress of insurance intermediaries appear because of the following stressors: unstable commissions, not achieved goals, low self-confidence, loss of work motivation, doubts if everything will be done in the right way. From the organizational point of view, low career opportunities and the problems at work can cause work-related stresses. Some stresses are experienced by insurance intermediaries because of other reasons such as problems at home and financial difficulties.

An insurance company, with regard to the obtained results, in order to avoid the negative consequences of stress, should take certain measures of managing it. Work-related stress in an insurance company is managed at four levels: insurance intermediaries, line managers, the company itself, and close relationship levels. The study results show that the above-mentioned methods of managing stress are not enough as was stated by insurance intermediaries and managers during the interviews. Therefore, in managing stress at work effectively, of great importance is the awareness of a stress management system.

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