Exploring Industrial Exhaustion and Its Impacts on Benin Security Agents' Performance

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Abstract: *This study which considers work-related exhaustion's implications on public security agents' professional performance at workplace identifies the deep causes of the phenomenon. It goes further to highlight the influence of industrial exhaustion on the quality of the work performed by those agents. This survey proceeds by collecting data through the conduct of interviews with a sampled population of 33 respondents disaggregated into 24 executives and 9 other agents of the ministry. The sampling techniques used have considered the purposive and systematic sampling. As a result of the analysis of the findings, it can be inferred that the resources lost as a result of the Ministry of Interior and Public Security agents' industrial exhaustion drastically impact on the quality of services delivered. Moreover, the analysis highlights that the industrial exhaustion of those workers is due to organizational and individual factors. Besides, the analysis reveals that the MISP workers' performance depends on their exhibited level of industrial exhaustion.*

Keywords: *Implication; Industrial Exhaustion; Professional Performance; Public Security Agents.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Human being irrespective of his/her sex, faces many needs that he/she strives to meet, not only for his/her own survival purposes and that of his dependents, but also to ensure a certain comfort of life. Thus, once in office, the worker views his/his work as the channel for raising the resources needed to meet those needs. The worker also perceives it as a source of well-being. Although people expect satisfaction, enhancement, fulfillment, the work is not always source of well-being as evidenced by some epidemiological studies (Davezies 1999, Debout and Larose, 2003), it causes more and more sicknesses. Therefore, the hard nature of work has consequences on occupational accidents and socio-occupational diseases (Guillevic, 1999). This situation is observed in Benin, in particular, through the services delivered by the Ministry of Interior and Public Security Agents. The workers who perform under such circumstances suffer and complain of work-related exhaustion. The direct consequence is the negative observations made about their usual benefits and especially the quality of their performance. Thus, psychological health problems arise with central concern like work-related stress and its consequences which include *exhaustion* translated from English by the term ***exhaustion*** (Sima, 2012). Moreover, several sufferings identified at the workplace are also perceived as factors likely to change the relationship linking the human being to his/her work (Desrumaux et al., 2012). These changes generally coincide with the occurrence of some symptoms reflecting the alteration of health. Therefore, there is a health problem in the workplace.

The organizations stakeholders' mental or psychological health, in the long run, appears to be a societal preoccupation causing multiple challenges regarding keeping the agents at work for a long period of time and making them more productive. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 1946), psychological health contributes to the well-being allowing the person to be blossomed, cope with the normal tensions of life, perform productive and fruitful achievements and get involved in the community's life. Herman and Jane-Llopis (2005) have also discussed the issue of mental health. For them, it is determined by individual experiences, social interactions, structures and social resources as well as cultural values. These authors have underscored the fact that there are some

factors like poverty, unemployment or social exclusion which affects both physical and mental which are closely related states. In the field of professional activity, occupational health encompasses all the components that contribute to self-fulfillment of the individual, or, on the other hand, reduce his or her potential for expression at work.

Based on this, and in order to better understand the public security agents' suffering at work, many researchers have made some attempts to find solutions to the issue at stake. Among them range Boudrias, Savoie and Brunet (2007) who have provided a broader view about the psychological health at work which is evaluated not only based on positive clues indicative of well-being and adaptation to work, but also, based on the absence of negative signs reflecting distress and maladjustment at work. These authors thus integrate work adjustment which consists in adjusting and mal-adapting as a multidimensional indicator of psychological health. Adaptation refers to cognitive and behavioral efforts aimed at satisfying external and internal demands perceived by the person as submitting him to test or exceeding his capacity (Lazarus, 1991). According to Brien et al. (2008), maladjustment describes three types of behaviors that are regarded as unsuitable for work, namely: aggression which consists in unnecessarily overloading one's colleagues (indirect aggression), the use of physical force to harm others (physical aggression) and disparaging others (psychological aggression); absconding behavior which consists in running away from problems occurring at workplace; and eventually, alienation and disengagement as a result of withdrawing and disengaging from work (Dimitrova, 1994). Although intended to be exhaustive, this Canadian conception of psychological health does not take into account one of the core dimensions of health resulting from chronic stress. It develops into a values shifting society that requires workers to work more intensively while prolonging their working times, thus, of exhaustion. This status attributed to work-related exhaustion can be explained by the harmful effects produced on the psychological equilibrium of the stakeholders of organizations (Demerouti et al., 2000; Truchot, 2004; and Nahrgang et al., 2001). It also affects the quality of their performance.

The willingness to better understand the situation of the stakeholders' psychological health at work and more specifically, the one related to the state of health / work quality ratio among the Security Agents has prompted to carry out the ongoing scientific reflection on the issue. Assuming that the exhaustion of MISP agents has an impact on their physical and psychological health, what could be the implications of this on their work quality?

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Ministry of the Interior and Public Security is one of the 21 ministerial departments making up Benin's Executive. Since April 06th 2016 that Hon. Sacca LAFIA was sworn in as Interior and Public Security Minister, the mission assigned to this department is to develop and implement the state policy in the areas of security, civil protection and liberties. As part of its public safety prerogative, the Ministry of Interior and Public Security is responsible for:

- ensuring public order, especially the internal and external security of the country;
- taking all necessary measures to ensure the prevention, investigation and repression of any activities likely to disturb public order;
- implementing the boundaries integrity policy.

As part of its duties relating to the protection of civil liberties, the MISP is responsible for:

- taking all acts regulating the civil life of the populations, the circulation of goods and persons in accordance with the laws and conventions in force;
- ensuring the enjoyment of public liberties;
- ensuring a better organization of the national transhumance and to fight trans-border transhumance;
- preventing and settling the social conflicts born of successions to the thrones of traditional chieftaincies, and inter and intra-religious conflicts;
- modernizing civil status through the creation of a central register or population register and computerization and the training and retraining of civil servants and civil status officers in accordance with the regulations in force.

As part of its civil protection responsibilities, MISP is responsible for:

- preparing and implement civil protection and defense;
- ensuring throughout the national territory, the protection of persons and property, the security of facilities of general interest and the natural resources of the nation in liaison with the other ministerial departments concerned.

All of these attributes mean that MISP agents are subject to intense work pressures that exhaust them. This would not be without consequences on the quality of their work.

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The target population of this research is mainly composed of MISP executives. It is also composed of all law enforcement agents in Benin (police, gendarmes, military ...) encountered in the MISP vicinity during the investigation period. Those are the resource persons identified for the sake of this study as they undergo another form of tiredness due to the types of perilous activities they perform during their career. As a matter of fact, those activities definitely differ from those of the officials of that Ministry.

The sampled subjects were identified by a non-probabilistic sampling technique, in particular, the purposive choice technique which consisted in choosing deliberately the subjects to be investigated according to the pre-established inclusive criteria. Law enforcement officers encountered in the vicinity of the Ministry during the investigation were systematically taken into account. The investigating team has been able to identify 33 individuals who meet the selection criteria. Data collection in the field was done through an investigation based on an interview guide and an observation grid. The so-collected data was processed through a content analysis. In the dynamics of the qualitative paradigm, the data processing went through content analysis. Thereafter, there was items have been grouped based on thematic, which allowed to identify the main themes and the secondary themes. Items that fell outside the scope of this research have been eliminated. The thematic content analysis carried out on the corpus has enabled to identify elements of answers relating to the objectives of the study. These interviews have allowed to taking stock of the situations experienced by MISP staff as stressful and exhausting. These interviews evoked different sources of stress at work and multiple experiences specific to each respondent. They have been encouraged to speak through some reminders and requests for more clarifications.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Individual Factors of Work-induced Exhaustion among the MISP Agents

From the findings analysis it appears that the individual characteristics also interfere in the ins and outs of work-related tiredness. Regarding the causes of industrial tiredness, the individual factors involved in the genesis of this pathology are essentially age, gender, personality, education, social status and expectations of the workers. As for the literature available on the involvement of individual factors in the development of tiredness syndrome, it indicates that until then the age, level of instruction and gender effects, from the onset of this condition, have not yet been clearly identified. That is the observation made by Zawieja and Guarnier (2013), who postulate that the link between individual characteristics and tiredness, in the one hand, and gender, age or level of education, on the other, is not established. The results of the studies are divergent Nevertheless it seems that the elderly would be more at risk. But this point of view contrasts with what has been observed in the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security. In this professional environment, the most exposed workers are the junior and less qualified officers. It is clear that on this investigation site the age and the level of training are concomitantly considered and predispose the employee to tiredness. This experience of the young MISP agents is informed by Mr. A. V. (27 years old) statement which highlights the points of view of some of the age group under 40 years.

> "[...] here, it's the degree and the sponsorship that are important. People like those that do not have high level certificates or that are good for anything. They call you every way. You work like a sick person and nobody cares about you. I even pity young trainees who think that by doing so, they will win a contract. They are fooling themselves. Me when I am tired me, I ask care in family ...] "

This statement extract first highlights the excessive and harsh workload that this category of people faces on daily basis in this ministry. There after, it depicts the kind of relationships (in this case the hierarchical relationship) existing between the staff members. This relationship marked by the

indifference to the suffering of the other is a big source of frustration. This statement by the agent raises the suffering of professional work. Indeed, signs such as physical exhaustion, disinterest and absenteeism are reflected in these statements. The disease, whether real or invented is taken as a refuge. Family care is a time of relief. Moreover, the hat that has the same meaning here as sponsorship is in this environment a factor of protection. This implies discrimination which also is another source of frustration and discontent. Apart from the age factor, the effects of the personality also contribute to giving shape to this morbid state. The vulnerability of this young population is also captured by Marchand-Pégard (2015), who, in his research work concludes that the younger agents are, the more at-risk they are. Those are risks caused by services deemed difficult, duty schedules, and lack of knowledge and experience. There is in addition to that the fear to fail. Some personality traits act as protective factors and others as risk factors. Thus subjects who have a strong tendency to introversion are more exposed to exhaustion. The inability to release these emotions through verbalization is source for incoercible ruminations which leads to cognitive distortions with sometimes misjudgments of comprehension and misperception. This finding corroborates that of Paterson (2000). The latter states that the difficulties of expression have a negative impact on the person's ability to appreciate his relationships, to accomplish his goals in life.

It appeared that the subjects who have a great capacity to trivialize matters live better situations of stress at work. They adapt better to the drastic working conditions and change of working atmosphere. Thus personality can be both a protective factor and a risk factor. This result flows along with and corroborates the conclusions of Friedman and Rosenman (1959) who state that the properties of the person play an important role in the stress process. For these authors, individuals experience stressful situations based on their personality traits. The latter participate in exposing them more easily or on the contrary to protect them from burn-out. This is also what the transactional model of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) assumes. According to this model, stress situations are not evaluated in the same way in individuals. Through perception and cognition, events are interpreted differently from one person to another. The situation will appear stressful only if the individual judges it as such.

Another salient aspect of these findings that also comes into play for personality traits is the nature of the relationships between professionals. Good co-operation between colleagues protects staff from exhaustion because it gives the operator the illusion of being understood and supported in what he/she sees as difficult. It leads to the feeling of not being alone in hard situation. Good collaboration brings employees to a satisfaction of working conditions which in reality is only apparent. This allows to having friendly and smooth working conditions. Individuals suffer from their conditions or situations only when they have the feeling that the conditions of their peers are better than their own or they deserve better. This is the idea defended by Schyns (1998) in the perception of social well-being. The author believes that the individual in the perception of his social well-being is bound to making comparisons between his living conditions and those of others, or what he wants and should have. . The theory of social comparison conceives happiness as a group of various elements on which final perception depends. It is crystal clear that the overall feeling induces the negative and destructive emotions which lead to resignation. Workers just surrender or give up to their conditions and therefore no longer suffer. It is not the working conditions by themselves that constitute the reason for satisfaction. It is the conviction of being with people who experiencing the same realities. This illusion is, in fact, a source of subjective well-being. This is also the conclusion drawn by Diener et al. (2003), who discuss psychological well-being at work and deduce consider that subjective well-being is first and foremost the positive assessment that a person makes of his life in a global way, that is to say, that tries to find out if it is satisfied with it. So he affirmed that subjective well-being includes not only the absence of negative effects but also the presence of positive effects. This point of view of Diener and his collaborators is corroborated by Dagenais and Savoie (2011), who conclude that psychological well-being does not translate concretely the reality experienced at work. The following excerpt from the next statement is a good illustration of such observation.

> "[... for me, that does not mean anything anymore, we are used to working like that. It is the reality of the job. My wife and children know that I am busy all the time and I am not alone in that case. This is the daily life of all the executives in this ministry. We have no choice ... if I stay at home for example, my sectors and my team members are paralyzed ... I do not fear, my body adapts to the rhythm that is impose by the work load] ". [Interview excerpt with V.H. 45 years old A1 MISP]

The analysis of this discourse makes it possible to highlight, the perception of overall happiness, and the trivialization or denial of the difficulties or sufferings that could follow some appalling working conditions. Since that is part of the daily life of all, people no longer complain. The well-being is perceived through the others. There appears in fine, an intellectualization of the psychic sufferings and investment of the respondents in the work. Moreover, its essential feature relating to the evolution and good progress of works is indicated in this extract. Excessive workload, excessive selfishness and the intellectualization of suffering are characteristic features of the obsessive personality. But this personality is at risk in this pathology. This discourse delicately mixes the impact of the work situation on life outside the workplace. Therefore it can be observed that this category of people, that is, those subjects having that kind of obsessional mindset or tendency and who are in subordinate position especially under the supervision of a director whom they regard as deficient, suffers more from exhaustion. Those people being incapable of submitting themselves cannot feel free to move and act. Rather they think that they are misunderstood, subjugated or "enslaved" and live it painfully. This painful experience substantiates the appearance of the feeling of non-self-realization and depersonalization. This translates into a lack of sensitivity to the neighborhood, a turning in on oneself, a disruption or a fragility of relationships with other people especially the colleagues or hierarchy, a psychological disinvestment. This is what I.V. tells us during the interview. This agent of the ministry is a paramilitary officer placed under the services of a civilian agent of rank A1. From his speech one simply remembers that he does not feel confortable.

> "[... we can not say all that, otherwise we will get sick. I avoid thinking about it especially when I'm not at work. The politics to spoil everything in this country. We bring you people who are full of confidence but nothing in the head. I do not know where it's coming from. They have no standard ... no logic in the facts. One gropes in the decisions. People who have no personality. The worst is that it is they who will evaluate your performance. It annoys me when I think about it. For my health, I have already made several times the assignment request but alas. I'm afraid to crack one of these days. "

The apparent surrender of this agent overshadows his painful psychic experience which is a source of mental pollution. This psychological state predisposes to the development of both somatic and psychic disorders. The findings of the ongoing research are consistent with those of Paterson (2000), who indicates that difficulties with assertiveness may represent the core vulnerability leading to severe psychopathology. In the same vein, this vulnerability can contribute to maintaining social and professional deterioration. It is an obvious reality nowadays that the causes of exhaustion are subject matters of many research studies. They are at organizational level, at inter-individual level, and at intra-individual level. The experience of exhaustion and its manifestations depend on each individual. Individuals face working conditions with the resources they have. Thus at the MISP, professional exhaustion is manifested on the individual by irritability, excessive consumption of "warming-up or stimulating drugs" or tranquilizers, decreased self-esteem, surrender, sadness, anxiety, etc.. The management approaches adopted by individuals vary from one subject to another. That is the gist of this statement by K. J. 32 years old, official at MISP.

> "[... Stressful days are not uncommon here. Sometimes I desire to drop everything and rest but that is not the solution. When I was at the National Civil Protection Agency (ANPC), I constantly drink coffee as stimulating tea so as to be awake and hold until the evening. ... nowadays there are other corner to distract in the offices, I use my laptop, otherwise I would be bored to death. But after a tiring day, a cold beer also seems to be therapeutic solution. It calms the nerves and I can go back well relaxed ...] ".

Thus, like Mr. K. J., many of the ministry's agents use psychoactive substances to deal with the situation physically and psychologically. This result is consistent with, and corroborates those of Colquitt et al. (2000); and Nabatchi et al. (2007), who are with the opinion that when the organization does not provide individuals with the means to effectively deal with exhaustion, everyone goes with these shortcomings and beliefs. Moreover, they emphasize that the feeling of freedom, support and justice can effectively prevent exhaustion at individual level. It can therefore be concluded that the determinants of exhaustion, tiredness or fatigue are not only organizational but also, and above all, individual. In this regard, the age, level of education or training, personality and previous experiences are also protective factors and risks.

4.2. Organizational Causes of Exhaustion of MISP Agents

The exhaustion of MISP agents is not only the outcome of their participation in activities as individuals or group members, but also the organizational characteristics and dynamics of the department equally play their part. The organizational dimension of the causes of exhaustion is related both to the organizational structure of the Ministry, the availability of resources and work materials, but also to the nature of the functioning that depends on hierarchical and managerial arrangements governing within the department.

4.2.1. The MISP Organizational chart, as a source for Industrial exhaustion

The challenges faced by the officials of this Ministerial department are at several levels according to their own statements. They believe that the working material and tools made available for them are quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate. They also think that the working environment is not conducive. Thus, the lack of material resources is at many occasions source of the frustrations experienced by the officials of this department. This situation is observed in several offices of the institution. The difficulties faced by the workers because of these shortages of basic resources have been recurrently raised by the workers in their statements. In this respect, S. E., one of the interviewed expresses his opinion as follows:

> "[...] Fortunately enough you are here and you can witness the situation, otherwise you cannot believe it. Can you imagine? There is a serious lack of basic working tools. To staple a simple document, you have to go from one office to another, to put a hidden, you have to walk from one section to another; that annoys me, but I have no choice, I try to do with what I have at hand [...]. The other problem is that our superiors do not want to tackle and resolve the situation. Rather, when they order something, they want it to be ready quickly. That is the functional paradox we experience here [...] "[Interview excerpt with S. E., 37, MISP officer]

The analysis of the statement made by this respondent makes it possible to understand that the inadequacy and unavailability of the material resources is a fact, but his remarks also show the incidence of the situation on his state of mind. For him, being forced to be revolving around offices just to do simple things is annoying. Like informant S. E., several other Ministry workers experience similar situation. The magnitude of this dimension of the problem prompts to considering it as an important damage to the working conditions of the employees of the Ministry. Those people suffer from it so that just thinking about the service leaves them with a sad impression. For some of the informants, the majority of the problems and health problems they experience come from the atmosphere and working conditions prevailing at their workplace. This reality has also been revealed in the work done by the authors of the 2013 report of SSQ-Financial Group and Axé-Santé, which claims that exhaustion originates from the workplace in that the initial difficulties are concentrated and encountered in the sphere of work. Exhaustion is also always caused by chronic stress and the result of this stress. The major cause would be a deterioration of the quality of life at work resulting in a feeling of exhaustion. Apart from this reality, the nature of the context also contributes to worsening the difficulties of the actors of the ministry in so far as the tasks and activities are not always identified and distributed in advance, as would their standardization require. Moreover, these activities are distorted and twisted by the political atmosphere prevailing in the ministry. This prompts workers to feel more the characteristics of an informal organization where the functional relationship between individuals is essentially driven by their political belonging or inclination. This state of affairs is illustrated by the words of informant U. L., an employee at MISP:

> "[...] It is not easy to work in the ministry because the agenda of activities is never stable. Apart from some routine and familiar tasks that often come up, there are also other requests from line managers who literally run out. [...] they ask you to perform some tasks that have nothing to do with any of the trainings you have received. Moreover, no matter the difficulties you encounter, no flexibility is allowed regarding the political partners of those officials. You cannot understand what I'm telling you, it's very complicated. But we are there anyway, we support the day to day stress"[Interview excerpt with U. L., 32, employee at the MISP]

The analysis of this informant's statement shows that the structuring of the system in which he works in the Ministry is unstable in terms of activities reserved for employees. This forces workers to find themselves in uncomfortable work situations. This discomfort is more obvious because of the demands of seniors regarding to the relationships between employees and political partners. This

aspect of the results flows along with Lawrence and Lorsch, (1989), view. They believe that there is no typical standard structure that would be suitable for all situations and that each organization goes along with its context. This, according to these authors, means that the organization of the department, in its structure, has to take into account the context in which it operates. Political operations respect some principles about which employees should be trained. Moreover, adapting the organization to the context would facilitate the activities and could have contributed to establishing some consistency in the actions of employees, reducing thereby the risk of exhaustion. Beyond the organizational structure of the ministry, the professional exhaustion of agents is also nourished by the organizational dynamics which prevails in political institution.

4.2.2. The MISP Organisational Dynamics as source of Professional Exhaustion

From the hierarchical relations and the structure of the MISP, the dynamic of work which is installed, turns proving for many agents. In fact, taking into account the respondents' comments, the organizational dynamics in which they work, give rise to a lot of professional stress for many of them. This stress is rooted in several levels of dynamics. The number of staff does not respond to the workload, as informants feel that they are too busy with the work and there is an inadequacy and mismatch between the workload and workers' population that do the daily and occasional tasks, resulting in a repetitive mess between departments and between staff and the Ministry officials. First, this deficiency often means that the same agent is assigned several tasks at the same time and by different managers. It results into a work overload which negatively affects the working conditions and outputs of several informants. Among those who are living this ordeal, S. A. a Ministry official states:

> *"[...] You know, I understood that here everything depends on the willingness of the leaders' mood. When they target someone, they can order whatever they want when they want and how they want. So we end up being overwhelmed by a list of tasks, very overloaded in our mind. [...] We do not have time to think about ourselves, it is only in the evening that we come back to exhaust everything. Somehow, I think this is due to the fact that not many of us are able to satisfy the superiors. And because of that, they no longer respect positions, they command those they trust. Even worse, we do not negotiate the orders of the superior. Execution before claims. That is how it works here. "[Interview excerpt with S.A., 29, MISP officer]*

On examining the statement of this informant, one realizes that it points out the reality of the work overload of the agents who satisfy their superiors, because of the requirement of confidence and satisfaction of the latter, for the different missions. This work overload leads the workers to invest more to the point of gradually depleting their physical and emotional resources. The issue of work overload has been raised by several authors (Friedman, Rosenman and Carroll, 1958, French and Caplan, 1973, Beerh and Newman, 1978). These showed the negative effects of the workload on the organization: dissatisfaction, exhaustion, decreased commitment, motivation, absenteeism and many others. For them, social risks are steadily increasing due to the increasing requirements in terms of flexibility of companies and institutions, changes in the job market and socio-demographic changes. These social paradigms shifts in the labor market seem to be among the causes of the primacy of informal behavior over formal ones. This is source of a climate that disadvantages the concern for formality in the organization. There is every reason to believe that agents in the service of superiors are just executing. Their association with the decisions is not obvious to the ministry sheltering our investigations. This lack of autonomy is one of the many factors that sustain the bad character of working conditions. Exhaustion is not just an individual problem. According to Statistics Canada (2010), a set of individual (40%) and organizational (60%) factors leading to exhaustion were identified. As main factors related to the organization, according to their surveys, the work overload, the lack of autonomy, the fact of not participating in any decision related to his task are at the top of the list. An imbalance between the efforts made and the recognition obtained (salary, esteem, respect, etc.), poorly defined responsibilities, inadequate communication, ambiguous roles, an unhealthy climate, difficult schedules are also harmful for psychological health when the situation persists.

The situation thus presented, is exploited by certain agents who wish to be in the good graces of the superiors. The latter cause role conflicts by stubbornly wanting to satisfy all the tasks to the detriment of others. One of the informants thinks that this is insidiously what some colleagues do. He expresses himself in these terms:

"[...] Me, I think that finally, to work in this ministry is like evolving in a jungle where each one rather looks for its interests. We do not know who is doing or who should do this or that. Which causes so much frustration. [...] Everything seems calm when you look from a distance, but deep down, it's a real mess that comes alive silently in the ministry, and it's a shame. [Interview excerpt with Z. G. 43, MISP officer]

The analysis of these remarks shows the point of view of this agent who considers the working atmosphere in the ministry like a jungle. He thus expresses his perception of the harshness of the quest for interest among workers in this ministry. This situation does not help these workers in terms of working conditions. Once again, the department's organizational characteristics contribute to the onset of exhaustion. In this respect, some authors believe that, overall, role tensions negatively influence the occupational health of professionals (Schwab and Iwanicki, 1982, Leiter and Maslach, 1988). More specifically, the more the role tensions are strong, the more the individual is likely to feel overwhelmed by events and exhausted. Some previous studies show disparities in the results emanating from the research that deals with this topic. For Boles et al. (1997), only role conflict has a significant effect on the emotional dimension of exhaustion. Role conflict would have a greater impact on emotional exhaustion, while role ambiguity is more strongly associated with decreased sense of self-accomplishment (Truchot, 2004). The relationship between perceived stress with respect to organizational roles and the emotional dimension of exhaustion is considered linear; that is to say, the more the tensions felt are strong and the more discomfort is perceptible for individuals. The conflict seems to have a stronger influence on "the drying up of emotional resources" than ambiguity.

Nevertheless, other authors (Leiter and Maslach, 1988) advocate a two-dimensional approach to role tensions on exhaustion. It brings out questions about the place of roles in explanatory models of exhaustion. This construct may be an antecedent of exhaustion, and may also mediate the relationship between other "stressors" such as lack of control for example, and exhaustion. The absence of tension plays a role in moderating the relationship between stress perceived by people and the state of exhaustion they feel.

This is what Singh (1998) attempts to address in these studies. Whatever the approach, there seems to be a direct link between role tensions and exhaustion. Schematically, the mismatch between the individual's values and the demands he or she perceives at work, as well as the lack of clarity about the perceived information, can become a factor of wear. Added to this are the growing demands of the different roles of people's lives. Investment in the various professional roles, the constraints related to the exercise of these different roles and the difficulties of finding a balance between the professional and non-professional roles of the individual lead to a drying up of emotional resources as well as professional ones. The exhaustion caused by these different sources is not without consequences on the quality of work of the MISP agents.

In terms of complements to the discussion of the results of this research, it must be emphasized that beyond the individual factors cited by the interviewees and attested by the authors such as Hatinen et al. (2004) ; Demerouti et al. (2000) that Leiter and Maslach (1988) showed that exhaustion events increase in a working population when there is a lack of fit between the employee and the organization on the six dimensions. control, workload, recognition, justice, values and professional support. Thus, it is not to ignore the organizational determinants and even the available resources and the work context. Speaking of interpersonal and organizational factors, we must remember the age, gender, personality, level of training, social status, expectations of the professional, the nature of the work, the work overload, ambiguity and conflicts. lack of support, lack of control and recognition, etc. The analysis of the speeches of the interviewees allowed us to note that the determinants of the exhaustion having been most often mentioned are the age, the gender, the personality, the level of training, the social status and the expectations of the professional. . These observations are consistent with the conclusions of Zawieja and Guarnier (2013).

Through their activities and responsibilities, MISP officers report high pressure at work. A situation that may result in greater perceived or sustained tension than in other professional activities. It should also be noted that stressors can also be at the root of exhaustion. To this, a particular emphasis must be placed on the work overload which the interviewees did not make the case as determinants on the basis of exhaustion. These last elements were highlighted by Stordeur et al. (2001). For these authors, workload, stress, interpersonal conflict, then role ambiguity and leadership styles are in order predictors of exhaustion.

4.3. L'épuisement professionnel: un syndrome à trois dimensions au MISP

While exhaustion is a typical state of exhaustion, this syndrome is actually more complex and can be described through a process with other dimensions according to the data collected in the field. Indeed, the scientific works, and especially those of Dares (2013) have conceived exhaustion as a process of degradation of the subjective relationship to work through three dimensions such as emotionalism, cynicism and the decrease of personal fulfillment of the worker.

4.3.1. Emotional exhaustion of MISP agents

As quoted above, the first and most central dimension of the exhaustion of the MISP cadre is emotional exhaustion. According to the informants, this dimension of exhaustion also has both psychic and physical connotations. At least that's what A.F., MISP executive, believes:

"[...] I often feel totally drained of my resources when I spend more time in the office [...]. I am extremely tired due to continuous exposure to factors that I myself do not know. Working conditions are very demanding with a lack of resources and support to cope with them. The usual rest periods (sleep, weekends, holidays, etc.) are not even enough to relieve this fatigue [...] ". [Interview excerpt with A.F., MISP executive, 49 years old].

It emerges from reading this excerpt that some MISP executives lack the physical, mental and emotional resources to cope with the tasks assigned to them. Faced with this difficulty, agents adopt several strategies to cope. Table I provides information on the strategies adopted by MISP agents to deal with the emotional exhaustion they face.

Table1. *Répartition des agents du MISP enquêtés selon les stratégies adoptées pour gérer l'épuisement émotionnel.*

Adopted Strategies	Size (N=33)	Percentage (%)
Sleep at break time	08	24.24
Relax over the weekend	07	21.21
Wait for the leave	11	33.33
Have lunch	24	72.72

Source : Données de terrrain_2016

From the examination of this table, it can be retained that 24.24% of the agents surveyed on behalf of this study choose to sleep during break times to face their exhaustion against 21.21% who think that the best strategy is to 'wait for the weekends to deal with this disaster. 72.72% of respondents prefer to go out to feast on break times. Others, on the other hand, consider that it is more necessary to wait for the holidays to really face this scourge. From this reading it should be remembered that the strategies adopted by the majority of MISP agents to cope with the emotional exhaustion they face are not an adequate strategy for solving their problem. Thus, for Douillet (2013), the demands of work are all that in the work environment is a source of tension and can lead to exhaustion. Resources, meanwhile, allude to anything that can work well. They can also be a risk of exhaustion when they run out. According to Davezies (2001), the quality of the agents' work is based on the assumption that control and support are moderators of the effects of the demands on the psychological health of the latter.

4.3.2. Cynicism about work at MISP

Cynicism is the second dimension of exhaustion among MISP agents. It is at least those on which illuminates Table II.

Table2. *Répartition des personnes enquêtées selon les obscénités observées*

Obscénités	Effectif (N=33)	Pourcentage (%)
Attitude négative	23	69,69
Etre dure avec son collègue	17	51,51
Se détacher de son travail	13	39,39

Source : Données de terrrain_2016

Based on the data in this table, the worker's attitude becomes negative (69.69%), lasts (51.51%) and even detached (39.39%), vis-à-vis his work and colleagues facing the difficulties to which he is subjected.

In this postulate, Langevin et al. (2014) point out that the worker gradually withdraws from his work, from the structure in which he evolves. A barrier between him and the others is erected. He

subconsciously "dehumanizes" others by putting his entourage at a distance. For Clot (2010), this second dimension corresponds in a way to a self-preservation movement facing the emotional demands of the profession that the person can no longer cope with. In such a case, the workers can defend themselves by attributing a form of responsibility to the recipient of the activity. Later, the author points out that this movement leads the worker to reduce his investment and to develop pejorative, cynical conceptions about the people for whom or with whom he is supposed to work. This second dimension is sometimes considered as an adaptation strategy in response to the over-solicitation felt by the worker.

4.3.3. Decrease in Personal Accomplishment at Work

In its third dimension, the exhaustion of MISP agents is characterized by a loss of personal fulfillment, a self-deprecation, which translates both to the feeling of being ineffective in one's work and not to to be at the height of the position he is at. Despite all his efforts, the worker feels stalemated. This last dimension is controversial; some authors consider that it is rather a personality trait or a consequence (among others) of the stress at work which would thus not be necessary to be integrated in the definition of this syndrome (Langevin et al., 2014). This is the case of a police officer on duty at MISP who says:

"[...] My job, I love it, I chose it, I did everything to get there [...]. For several weeks, I feel emptied of the interior. I have no more energy to get up in the morning, no more envy [...] I have too many projects in progress, I go from one to the other and I never see the end. I feel like I never have the time to do my job properly. I support less and less my colleagues, requests from my manager. We accept things that we should not accept. I tell myself that being a police officer here is not as rewarding, gratifying as that [...] ". [Interview excerpt with J.L., policeman on duty at MISP, 34years old].

This overloaded agent is literally exhausted while trying to satisfy the high quantitative objectives set for his position. The same agent works on many projects without ever having the feeling of having fully accomplished his/her assignment (quality prevented), does not feel any satisfaction at his work, cannot reach the fixed objective and, not benefiting from a sufficient recognition of the part of his professional circle, gradually loses the meaning of his work (value conflicts). The exhaustion syndrome results both in a commitment and feelings erosion (as cynicism sets in) and an erosion of the match between the job and the worker (experienced as a personal crisis). In the most extreme cases, Langevin et al. (2014) believe that the worker may be in such a physical and mental condition that he cannot continue his work activity; what can be experienced as a rupture, a sudden collapse, while warning signs could foreshadow it. Exhaustion results in physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that results from prolonged investment in emotionally demanding work situations (Clot, 2010).

4.4. Exhaustion Syndrome and its Manifestations in MISP

According to MISP officers surveyed in this study, several events are related to exhaustion at MISP. Among these manifestations, we have cognitive, emotional, physical, behavioral and interpersonal manifestations.

The reading of exhaustion syndrome depends mainly on the association of these different manifestations. Here is the statement of Mrs. D.F:

"[...] at the beginning I was tired all the time, I wanted to do nothing [...] then I became more and more sad, everything irritated me; even my colleagues that I liked so much. I'm not doing my job well at the point where I'm starting to have doubts about my skills because I cannot focus on my work at [...] the stage where I am, I feel sorry for my life [...] I am thinking of resigning but I do not know if it is a good idea [...] "[DF interview piece, 36 years old, executive secretary at MISP].

Mr P.M. goes further, stating that:

"[...] I cannot stand the pressure at work and I feel that my colleagues criticize my work which is often the cause of our repetitive disputes [...] before, I was of those who liked the work well done but now it's not the case anymore [...] I complain every time my superiors give me a job and I've been very aggressive lately [...] "[PM interview excerpt, 42-year-old MISP executive].

Through these interview extracts, it appears that the manifestations of the syndrome of exhaustion can appear progressively among MISP agents and without any real medical cause. Also, the first manifestations of exhaustion syndrome that emerge are often the emotional and physical ones that are followed by cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal manifestations. However, the appearance of these manifestations may take another form; as revealed by the words of P.M. in whom the syndrome of exhaustion first manifested itself on the cognitive and interpersonal level.

Exhaustion, or exhaustion syndrome, the preferred term, is a response to chronic emotional and physical stress. According to Larouche (2002), a set of varied and nonspecific symptoms can be observed in exhaustion victims, who can be classified into four categories: physical manifestations, emotional manifestations, cognitive manifestations and behavioral manifestations. Although common features exist regarding their symptoms, exhaustion differs from depression in the sense that it is expressed primarily in the professional sphere. This is not the case for a depression that extends to all aspects of life and requires a more comprehensive treatment. According to Langevin (2001), the diagnosis of depression describes a "state" of the individual, while burn-out describes a "process" of deterioration of the subjective relationship to work. As a result, the reduction or mitigation of exhaustion-related disorders requires an analysis of organizational and relational dysfunctions, which must be conducted in a collective manner - that is to say, in a paritarian and participative manner. However, the syndrome of exhaustion can make the bed of a real depression or even lead to suicide.

The results we obtained are consistent with those of Larouche (2002) for the four modes of manifestations of exhaustion syndrome.

4.5. MISP Agents' Reactions towards Industrial Exhaustion

In the face of exhaustion, the MISP agents surveyed do not react in the same way.

Some MISP agents surveyed are persevering and hope for an imminent improvement. This is what Mr. A.Y. states for this purpose:

> *"[...] I know that this situation (exhaustion) is not going to last and that I will quickly get a taste of my work [...] it's just a bad temporary pass that I go through [...] you know in life has ups and downs ... "[Interview excerpt from AY, 39, MISP police officer].*

For others, exhaustion is due to the nature of the function held at MISP. According to them, a professional retrograde would be the ideal solution to overcome this step. Here are the words of Mr. B.J. to this effect:

"[...] since I was promoted to this ministry, I am no longer in peace ... I do not feel in my place in this position and I am very cornered from everywhere [...] I am more and more more undecided while my new position is a decision-making position [...] I intend to take up my old position because at least I feel useful [...] I do not do it cheerfully but I have to understand myself [...] " [Interview excerpt from BJ, 45, senior manager at MISP].

Other agents display a fatalistic reaction to exhaustion in the MISP. This is what Ms. T.O. reveals in these terms:

> *"[...] I think this situation I am currently experiencing is a sign ... I can not understand that after 20 years of service in the public service, I can still make such mistakes! [...] I think it is time for me to stop, I will take early retirement and convert back into business [...] I can not stand office work any more [...] "[Interview excerpt from TO, 47 years old, MISP executive].*

These various reactions are not without consequences on the quality of work of the MISP agents. The reactions of MISP agents to exhaustion depend on personal factors, but also organizational factors. According to Soulat (2009) the quality of work of employees is a function of their reactions to exhaustion. Some will adopt a "fleeting" attitude while others adopt a "fighting" attitude. Through a study of salaried doctors in Belgium, Cruiller (2011) shows that the more the employees' reaction to exhaustion is positive, the better the quality of their work. He goes further by saying that this report is not systematic; it also depends on the employee's career aspirations, career ambitions and personal abilities. However, we observed in our results that these factors influence the reactions of MISP agents to exhaustion. Thus, our conclusions join those of Soulat (2009) and Cruiller (2011) on this subject.

5. CONCLUSION

This scientific research has made it possible to highlight the predictive factors of exhaustion which could serve as early warning signs, and to show the place of health at the heart of the organization of work and more particularly in the psychological health of MISP agents. The objective of this research work is to analyze the implications of exhaustion on the quality of work of MISP agents. To deliver that objective, it has been absolutely necessary to follow the principles guiding qualitative method paradigm by studying the agents of the Ministry so as to understand the implications of exhaustion on the quality of their work. The findings of the ongoing study have revealed, on the one hand, that the personal characteristics of MISP agents seem to have a significant impact on their level of exhaustion. As a matter of fact, the tendency to depression and the fragile psychological health are real vulnerability factors that should be seriously taken into account. In addition, some organizational determinants, including the work environment at MISP, are functional factors that trigger and induce the exhaustion of the MISP personnel. These determinants are also correlated with certain representations of the profession in Benin, in particular, that of the Police Forces which perform a risky job. While fatigue is regarded as a typical condition of exhaustion syndrome, the latter becomes more complex and can be described through a process which includes other dimensions. Indeed, the findings of this study as well as those of some previous ones on the subject made it possible to conceive exhaustion as a process of deterioration of the working relations through three dimensions: *emotional exhaustion*, *cynicism towards work* and the *depletion of personal accomplishment* at work. In a second step, it has been found that exhaustion is manifested differently among the agents of the MISP and that their reactions to this situation are all equally different from one agent to another. These differences can be explained by the fact that each investigated agent experiences exhaustion according to his/her strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, one remains convinced that these findings are not cannot be definitely generalized because there still are limitations calling therefore for the needs for further studies to ponder more deeply over the issue.

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