

OVERVIEW ON THE BURNOUT RATE OF ROMANIAN FARMERS

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Abstract

Romanian farmers' burnout rate is investigated through a questionnaire for explorative studies to cover the most commune influences on burnout, integrating original items with selective scales from COPSOQ II. The sample (n=241) joins men 65% and women 35% predominantly aged 40-54 years, medium studies, living in partnership, practicing conventional type of farming within rural areas mainly from 5/8 Romanian development regions, surface of farms lower than 10 ha 57% and 50+ha 23%, ownership of the farm "owner" 50% and "both partners owner" 30%; 58% of the respondents are farm manager, 61% work full-time within the farm. Top 5 (agricultural) pressure factors are: extreme weather events, managerial responsibility, economic pressure, heavy financial burden, lack of leisure. Within the burnout rate (8%), by gender females are almost three times more exposed comparing with males; the most exposed age category is 55-65 years; by double-pressure those who are not in this category are higher compromised (9%) than the others (5%) - which could be interpreted as more work, up to a certain level, involves more engagement and motivation so less chances for burnout and/or depression.

Key words: burnout, burnout rate, Romanian farmers, survey.

Motto: *People are not disturbed by the things themselves, but by the view they take of them.* Epictetus

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, when increasing social dynamics marks profoundly the work field, it seems subversive more than ever; it is not always clear and easy to be recognized, quantified and managed due to the surprising diversity of its causes - a multitude of combinations of factors, internal and external, obvious and insidious, some of them apparently insignificant and controversial while others heavy and approved by the majority of the scientific community; it makes us wonder if work nowadays is still that human specific and deliberate activity during which the human being practices, develops and values, both subjectively (intra-psyche) and objectively (inter-relating with the fellowmen) an always amazing potential; it is rated nowadays as a major global public health issue as its price disrupts the individual as the cell of the society and, in this quality, a sum of results (a sort of common denominator of the bibliography we used for the present study)

assesses this disturbance as extremely costly starting with the personal level of one's quality of life up to the national, even global socio-economic dimension; and despite its gravity, it is called by a more and more common word, possible not always used with the awareness of its complex meaning according to its complexity as phenomenon: the burnout.

The notion *burnout*, introduced in the psychosocial literature in the middle of the 1970's by Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976), is today a common ground within psychosocial research. For the last 30 years researchers examined the job burnout (interchangeably with burnout, word whose origin is *burnout* equivalent to complete combustion, breakdown) described as a „psychological syndrome involving chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors that individuals experience at work and their subsequent responses to their tasks, organizations, coworkers, clients and themselves” (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993;

Maslach, 2003; Maslach and Leiter, 2008 apud Swider and Zimmerman, 2010). There are two well-known standardized instruments used for its measurement: 1. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which, around year 2000, according to Schaufeli and Enzmann (apud Kristensen et al., 2005), has been applied in more than 90% of all empirical studies in the world; 2. Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) (Kristensen et al., 2005), included in a revised version of Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ II), released in 2005, a tool that also gained ground.

Burnout relates to depression (some specialists consider depression and/or anxiety as causes of burnout), they have common symptoms (permanent fatigue, exhaustion, low energy, states of sadness, problems of concentration and memory, decrease of motivation and performance) but there are also differences between them: 1. burnout is considered a state of physical and emotional exhaustion of the person at exposure to chronic stress at the *workplace*, with negative effects on his physical and mental health, respectively the increase of the risk of developing affections – but there is not a general consensus if it could be qualified as affection; 2. depression¹ is a complex mental disorder (affection) that requires treatment for healing, caused by genetic, psychological, social interacting factors (after Costin, 2017).

It is considered that depressive disorders are those psychological disturbances most marked by stress (Légeron, 2003, p. 173) and it is also signaled more than 15 years ago that „Psychiatric disorders are becoming more and more common [...] a worker out of ten suffers from depression, anxiety, stress or fatigue and because of this/these risks hospitalization and unemployment. [...] Employees are depressed,

¹Depression, though frequent beyond the professional context and for reasons out of its frame, often intersects with the workplace where, however, nowadays, it is still preferable to use instead of the term "depression" another words like "tiredness" or "fatigue" due to high stakes, especially for managers of all kinds, and in general due to the high price of the burnout: absenteeism, professional instability, nervous exhaustion, work accidents, violence, claims for damages. Depression is characterized by several categories of symptoms: mood collapse (Hypothymia), loss of interest, slow-moving life, unbalanced appetite, sleep disturbances that cause chronic fatigue. Conjugated and installed, these symptoms generate physical and psychological exhaustion, characterized in turn by symptoms that include intense fatigue with diffuse pain and sleep disorder, "dehumanization" as emotional detachment of the fellows, deceptions of the profession and the feeling of uselessness relatively to the professional activity (synthesis from Légeron, 2003, p. 173-178).

overwhelmed, anxious, stressed. They lose their income; they even get into unemployment and, following, victims of the disparagement as inevitably consequence of a mental illness.” („Mental health at work”, International Labor Office, Geneva, 2000 apud Légeron, 2003, p. 164-165).

Related to stress at the workplace, the burnout study expanded with the entry into the informational era where burnout syndrome has left medical practices, hospital corridors and classrooms and has extended to almost all professional categories.

The research on occupational health enriched mainly revealing the negative work-related outcomes (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). One of the main and most serious consequences of exhaustion is suicide (Légeron, 2003, synthesis p. 173-187) and if we add that in 2010 a representative Canadian study has been reported agricultural work to be among the professions with the highest risk of mortality by suicide, with a normalized mortality rate in males rising to 31.4 suicides/100 000 people per year (Mustard et al., 2010), hopefully we made out a case for the topic of our study.

As, according to our knowledge, the scientific literature doesn't provide results on the burnout rate within Romanian farmers and farm managers or their life partners, the investigation of burnout degree and peculiarities among these categories is the research problem and main goal of the present study.

Due to the specificity of the Romanian agriculture which bear the imprint of the transition period characteristic for Romania after 1989, to the working conditions and the typical low incomes of subsistence rural households/farms as well as due to the predominant traditional model of the Romanian rural family (Iorga 2014; Nicolaescu, 2017), our research hypothesis is that we will find the burnout phenomenon among the studied population and that, analyzing the burnout rate by sex, it will be higher among the female population.

The associated objectives of the research are to introduce and justify, within a general frame on professional stress - particularly worldwide stress in farmers nowadays, the original instrument designed to collect the data, the

sample and its representativeness and the statistical analyses that conducted to results on the psychosocial condition of the Romanian farmers nowadays. Based on the primary descriptive results, we further search for analyses and correlations to identify and explain, taking into account the main features of the Romanian rural space, the most influential factors of the burnout rate.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Coordinates from the scientific literature related to stress in farmers

We focused on stress in farmers studies starting with the debut of our century until present for both justification of the present research and also as a landmark to relate our results. Sanne et al. (2004) indicated that „farming is associated with increased levels of anxiety and increased levels and prevalence of depression”. A qualitative research across England and Wales (Parry et al., 2005) noted that „Principal farmers displayed the most visible manifestations of stress, linked at once to the intrinsic, extrinsic and work related dimensions of their work.”, and also influential in explaining stress were the differences (by dimension, by type - livestock/arable, mixed/non-mixed) between farms (Parry et al., 2005, introduction, i). Another survey on farmers in England and Wales confirmed results from regional studies that many farmers are experiencing considerably stress and among factors they indicated „record keeping and paperwork (62%), difficulty understanding forms (56%) and problems arising from the effects of new legislation and regulations (49%). Nearly a quarter reported financial problems and most worried about money. Very few were socially isolated, 70% worked >10 hours a day, and 31% had health problems which interfered with their work” (Simkin et al., 1998).

Studying stress in farmers from New Zealand, Firth et al. (2007) highlighted the most stressful factors as „increased work load at peak times, dealing with workers compensation’, bad weather and complying with health and safety legislation” - with differences by gender regarding the stress experienced. „Age, being separated or divorced, being a deer farmer, the

farm not making a profit in the last year, and supervising staff were independently associated with higher stress.”

A Canadian study between 1991-2001 on suicide mortality, based on a 15% sample of the non-institutionalized population aged 30 to 69 years, showed that among occupationally active men, elevated rates of suicide mortality were observed for 9 occupational groups and the group „other farm, horticulture, or animal husbandry” figured within these 9 groups (Mustard, 2010).

A risk perception study among farming families in Switzerland showed that „a part of economic and political risks, the risk of depression and burnout was considered as a considerably high risk among a rather big group of the participants” - results in line with national Swiss statistics which identified a growing number of depression diagnoses within population working in agriculture (Reissig and Jurt, 2015).

A Finnish study on psychosocial risks revealed changes during the past decade and new features of the well-being at work on dairy farms with surface over 50 hectares and that the prevalence of stress (42%) was found to have increased, the whole group was classified as having slight symptoms of burnout, and one tenth (9%) of dairy farmers had experienced severe burnout. „The most common stressors were external, such as agricultural policy of the EU” (European Union) and „the treatment of farmers in society and the media”. Common stressors were related to farm and work (e.g. amount of work, unpredictability, and animal diseases). Stressors related to the workload and health, a poor economic situation and loneliness were associated with stress and burnout symptoms. „Factors protecting against burnout included positive features of the work and living environment” (Kallioniemi et al., 2016).

As for burnout research in Romania, we could find mainly that: 1. according to recent EU social and health policies, from year 2014 there is a Romanian standardized translation of CBI (Iordache & Petreanu, 2014); 2. the most part of Romanian studies investigated factors, peculiarities, rates of burnout mainly within the employees from medical and educational fields; 3. a psychosocial comparative study

between blue and white collars (Stoia, 2015), with results from applying a short and adjusted COPSOQ version (but the burnout scale was not between the scales applied), showed significant correlations between 18 of 23 dimensions investigated, „especially in white collars group between fatigue - stress, and social support - quality of leadership (rSpearman >0.71). Reliability and diagnostic power for low vitality (fatigue) was better reflected in white collars group (rSpearman =0.61) compared with blue collars group (rSpearman =0.55), considering the criteria of interpersonal relations and leadership scale more relevant than quantitative demands or job satisfaction in assessing Romanian psychosocial working conditions for certain groups”; 4. Karatepe, 2013, using data gathered from frontline hotel employee-manager dyads in Romania, showed that “emotional exhaustion functions as a full mediator of the effects of work overload, work-family conflict, and family-work conflict on job embeddedness and job performance”.

Previous results determined us to investigate from psychosocial perspective the Romanian professional category involved in farming: farmers, farm managers and/or their life partners.

The sample

Final sample size ² n=241, response rate: 80%. Baseline characteristics of studied population and representativeness of the sample are in section “Results”.

Figure 1 allow better understanding/orientation on certain national administrative divisions (a) and the distribution of respondents by Romanian counties (b).

The instrument and data collection

The instrument we applied to collect the data has been provided by the Swiss author of this study and it is a wide questionnaire used in explorative studies to cover the well-known and most commune influences on burnout. Still, the Romanian partner, for the present study, applied a shorter and adapted version of

this instrument due to peculiarities related to the way of collecting the data (mainly by subject’s self-filling on paper printed questionnaire) and other restrictive conditions related to the Romanian respondents’ availability/receptivity to a very complex, still long, new (for them) and personal-oriented investigative tool.

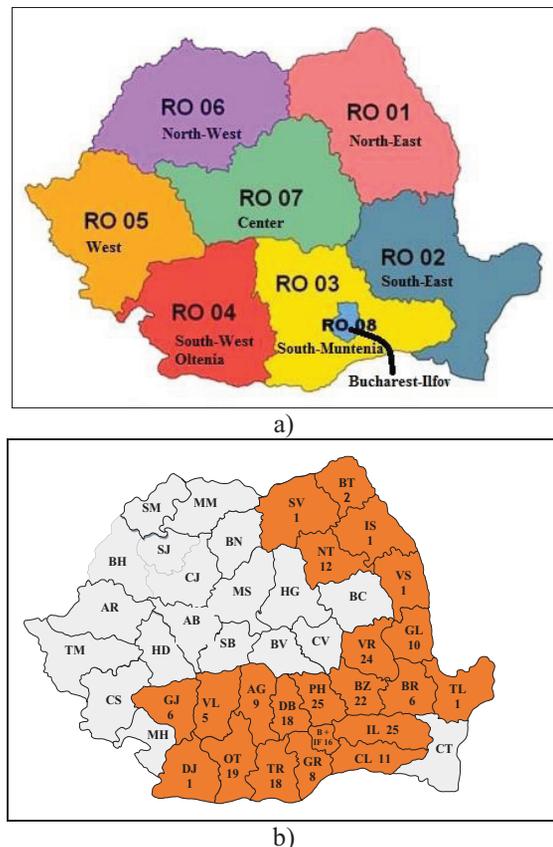


Figure 1. Administrative map of Romania: development regions and counties

a) development regions (8)

(source: <http://www.romania-central.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/map-romania-nuts-ii-development-regions-1.jpg> and further own processing)

b) distribution of respondents by Romanian counties, from 22 / 41 counties (source: own processing)

The main sources of the items/variables lay in selective scales from Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ II) combined with a questionnaire used in a pre-study not entirely published by now (Reissig and Jurt, 2015), to comprehensively measure the pressures on the farmers related and/or supposed to have a connection with burnout.

The goal of the instrument is to assess factors which could be called and generally simplified in two big categories: external and internal influences - even we are aware this is a risky, critical way to classify them due to the complexity and dynamics of individuals

²We eliminated 9 cases from the initial sample: 8 subjects did not fit the target group having no direct involvement in the agricultural activity, being only people living in the countryside, landowners whose professional activity is not related with the agriculture/farming or landowners that have leased to someone else their land and only collect the tax; 1 case eliminated for inconsistent answers.

personality system which determine the people's ability to cope with stress to be „very personal, linked to their unique biographies and the constellation of events within these, to particular triggers, and to their individual resources” (Parry et al., 2005, p. 46). More, it is difficult to precisely discern between factor and consequence, as vicious circles are also

involved in burnout cases. Under these circumstances, even it seems really impossible to clearly distinguish and objective measure the degree of intrinsic/extrinsic influence within every dimension directly related to burnout that we investigated, we would frame and synthesize the Romanian version of questionnaire in Table 1.

Table 1. The questionnaire used to collect the data - structure, content, sources

Categories of items / dimensions	Variables (main aspects and dimensions investigated)	Source of the items
Farm descriptors, personal perception and planning related to the farm (possible stress factors)	Management type Localization (county, type of locality – rural/urban, landform), Ownership of the farm, The manager, Surface, Type/ types of production Work within the farm (for the respondent and for his/her partner) Employees The main responsibility(-ies) of the respondent Farm work: main activity or sideline (for the respondent and for his/her partner) Fluctuation of the revenue during the last 10 years Present financial situation (self-rated) Forthcoming expenditures	Variables designed / propounded by the Swiss author
Socio-demographic variables	Age, Gender, Civil status, The household component, Level of education	Variables propounded by the Swiss author
Burnout measurement ➤ general factors and indicators	Quantitative demands (tempo, work pace) Self-rated health Burnout Sleeping troubles Work-family conflict Absenteeism from work (no. of whole days during last year) Present chronic illness Life events during the last year (partner's death, serious illness of a family member, serious illness of the respondent, unemployment, death of a friend, the respondent as victim of an act of violence, divorce / separation, care of a close person) Active conflicts (besides the previous mentioned): within couple / quality of the partnership (where applicable) family-work conflict (with children / parents and parents-in-law, child care) within the farm / off-farm job (where applicable) Heavy financial burden Addictive behavior (alcoholism) of the respondent and within close people Depression/burnout in the personal environment of the respondent Social isolation Keeping up social appearances Over investing in work Various anxieties	Selective items / scales from Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ II) Variables propounded by the Swiss author according to / derived from the scientific literature on stress and burnout
➤ agricultural work-related factors	Managerial responsibility High administrative input Difficulty in finding suitable employees Changes in the agricultural surface (increase, decrease) Diversification of areas of work Lack of solidarity among farmers, Lack of social support and security, Lack of appreciation of agricultural work (including unsatisfactory revenue), Lack of skills to be a farmer (self-rated), Lack of partner Economic pressure (capitalist economy, international trade and competition, frequently changing guidelines, tendency towards flexibility in today's society etc.) Changes in direct payments Traditions (as restrictive factor or loss) Innovation (e.g. genetic engineering) Out of control constraints (weather, environment, State regulations etc.) Crop failure and/or animal illness, mortality Workload (peaks, stress) Loss of independence Lack of leisure and “You don't get sick in farming” Intensive manual labour Poor water-, wastewater- or traffic infrastructure Creeping information on new regulations, Other - open item	Variables propounded by the Swiss partner according to / derived from the scientific literature on stress and burnout in farmers, based on a pre-study (Reissig and Jurt, 2015)

Statistical procedure: descriptive statistics (distribution, frequencies, min./max., means, median, cross-tabulation) using SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

We start with **baseline characteristics of studied population** searching meantime the

representativeness of the sample (task which has required the use of multiple criteria, not always in the most satisfactory way). By **gender** we found men 65% and women 35% and the predominance of men could be assessed as representative as a status like “farmer”, “manager”, “administrator” is typically represented by men in Romanian tradition and

culture; also, like in UE27, within the total volume of labour force from agriculture predominate men (**Socio-economic analysis of Romanian rural space, p. 7). By **age** we have five categories as following: 16 - 24 years 11%, 25 - 39 years 21%, 40 - 54 years 53%, 55 - 65 years 9%, 66+ years 6%, with min. 20 - max. 84 and mean 43.68. The census from January 1st, 2014 (**Stable - resident) population - main demographic characteristics on 1st of January 2014), showed the following population distribution by broad groups: 1-14 years 17%; 15-64 years 64%; 65+ years 19% and for both sexes age mean 41.2 years. We did not find statistical data on age specific to working force, still, if we add that in the Romanian subsistence farms there are no legally age limits for work (there are regulation only to access funds, subsidies), we could consider the sample representative for Romania. By **educational level** 8% respondents attended minimum school up to professional school, 65% respondents high school, post-secondary studies and 27% respondents academic studies. With 5 age groups in the sample and due to the fact that during last 8 decades there were significant changes in Romania (socio-economic, political, cultural) it would be required a detailed investigation on this topic (an it is not major for our topic) to measure sharp. Still, correlating with the most representative age groups and specific/rigors of education before 1989 (under socialist regime), also with new regulation for funds competitions and the fact that 23% of the sample own or manage farms over 50 ha and (assuming this requires know-how), we could assess that the sample is representative for nowadays Romania. Results of **living in partnership** (marriage or consensual union) variable shows 79% yes and 21% no (from "no partnership" category 16 % of the respondent are single and 5% belong to one of the following: divorced, separated, widowed). According to a 2011 census, more than half of Romania's 20-year-old resident population consists of married people (61.1%) and 4.5% of the 20-year-old population or more have declared that they are living in a consensual union (Population and Housing Census, 2011), cumulated it means 66% living in partnership (legal or not) in 2011. Also, due to the major

age groups from the sample and as in Romania the family based on marriage continues to be an essential element in the life of the individual (the consensual union is not as prevalent as in other EU states - see Population and Housing Census 2011) we would consider the sample generally representative for Romania. By **type of farming** results show conventional 80%, organic 15%, farm in transition 5%. We know that in 2010 organic farms had an insignificant per cent "(0.4%) but rising" (**Socio-economic analysis of Romanian rural space, p. 1), and this could partly explain the difference with our sample. Also, it is very possible that the respondents from "organic" category, also owners of subsistence farms, may have never official certification as they are not aware of such thing and/or have a vague notion of "organic" and/or according specific regulation. So, in 2017, we would also consider the sample representative. **Farm location** joins three aspects: type of locality - rural 96%, urban 4%; landform - plain 62%, hill 31%, mountain 7%; Romanian development regions - North-West, West, Centre 0%, North-East, South-East 33%, South-Muntenia together with Bucharest and Ilfov 54%, South-West Oltenia 13%.

Rural space is representative for Romania. In 2012 it contained 87% from the national surface (**Socio-economic analysis of Romanian rural space p. 1), so from this criterion the sample is representative, and also taking into consideration the sample distribution by landform, which keeps proportion with the national distribution: the largest share of the agricultural land belongs to arable land (62.4%) predominant in the South-East and South-Muntenia regions (these are plain zone), followed by pastures and meadows (33.9%) specific to hill and mountain (**Socio-economic analysis of Romanian rural space, p. 6).

We would assess the sample representative for 3 of 4 Romanian macro-region (even for macro region IV we have the least data), because in the two regions of which it is very well represented there is the largest part of the Romanian agricultural land. By **surface of the farm** we found 0 - < 3 ha 25%, 3 - < 10 ha 32%, 10 - < 20 ha 11%, 20 - < 30 ha 3%, 30 - < 50 ha 6%, 50 + ha 23%; total agricultural area (ha) min. 0.12 ha - max. 3300 ha, mean

109. Around 2013 the average size of a Romanian farm was 3.4 ha ASU (agricultural surface used) / farm (Eurostat apud *** Socio-economic analysis of Romanian rural space, p 6). According to a 2010 statistics (***Socio-economic analysis of Romanian rural space, p 6), small farms less than 5 ha were 93% - at present the percent is evaluated to 95% (*** Clarifications required for semi-subsistence farms), our sample is around half represented by this criterion. By Otiman (2012) it is higher representative. Still, small farms under 5 ha use around 30% from Romanian agricultural land, while the farms over 50 ha manage around 53 of it. Taking into account the national distribution of the agricultural land and also the heterogeneity and polarization of the sample, we consider these peculiarities valuable to investigate the burnout rate on all categories of farm owners/ managers. Top 7 (> 20%) **farm production** from 14 investigated types are Special crops (vegetables, fruits, berries) 49%, Poultry 45%, Pigs 43%, Field crops 41%, Wine 30%, Milk 29%, Sheep, goats, other 23%. According to General Agricol Register 2010, livestock farming is an area with a tradition in Romania confirmed by the preponderance of farms with animal breeding profile and mixed farms: 68% of the total. (***Socio-economic analysis of Romanian rural space, p. 7), but there are some differences comparing to Otiman (2012). Within our sample, the **ownership of the farm** is shared in: Respondent owner 50%, Partner owner 9%, Both partners owner 30%, Farm is leased 11%. As we found that, according to the surface of the farm, around 60% of the farms from the sample are subsistence and semi-subsistence farms (surface between 0 - 10 ha), the ownership of the farm is predominantly representative. **Farm manager** status is distributed between Respondent 58%, Partner 16% or Both 26% share it - the figures confirm that the respondents belong to our target group. **Work within the farm:** by Respondent / partner we have Respondent 85% yes, 14% occasionally and Partner 63% yes, 16% occasionally; by the time invested (full time job/collateral work) we found Full time 61%, collateral 39% and Work both in farm and off-farm (min. 41% off-farm) with Double pressure risk 28%. **Responsibility within the farm:** by

top-down frequencies we found Farm work 58%, Administration 45%, Garden and landscaping 34%, Caring for family members 31%, Household 25%, Off-farm paid employment 24%, Child-rearing/childcare 22%, Para-agricultural activities 13%; by the number of responsibilities per respondent we found min. 1 - max. 7 with mean 2.5. The responsibilities within the farm are representative for Romanian farms/rural households. The **household structure** (selective) includes: Partner 71%, Parent(s)/parent(s)-in-law 34%, Child(ren) 44%. Taking into account the respondent age, particularly the most predominant age group of the sample, and predominant traditional rural model of family (living with and caring for old parents), the sample is representative at least for the macro-regions of origin. For the **income evolution over the last ten years** we found next top-down frequencies (self-rated): somewhat better 52%, much better 21%, the same 13%, somewhat worse 8%, much worse 5%, I don't know 2%. After 1989, Romanian people started experiencing transition to market economy. More, the last decade coincides with the entrance of Romania within EU. Around 70% of the sample lived „before“/„after“ ‘89, respectively „outside“/ „inside“ EU - and their financial capital, personality features and other peculiarities can explain the figures.

Sample's characteristics usually related to burnout and to the vicious circle factor - consequence (general health self-rated, sleeping troubles, absenteeism from work, present chronic illness, quantitative demands at work, life events during last year) are presented in Tables 2-7 and show prevalently a good general health of respondents (self-rated), mild sleep disorders, low rate of absenteeism as well as of the chronic or persistent illness, an work tempo which often (cumulated frequencies for „fairly often“ and „very often/always“) determines to give up breaks only for 27% of the sample, work at fast pace (cumulated frequencies for „fairly often“ and „very often/always“) for 50% of the sample and work under time-pressure (cumulated frequencies for „fairly often“ and „very often/always“) for 58.5% of the respondents. On life events criterion (with/without) the sample is almost half-half.

Table 2. General health (self-rated)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	very good	52	21.6	21.6	21.6
	good	148	61.4	61.4	83.0
	fair	40	16.6	16.6	99.6
	bad	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. Sleep disorders

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	no	17	7.1	7.1	7.1
	mild	213	88.4	88.8	95.8
	moderate	2	.8	.8	96.7
	very strong	8	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	240	99.6	100.0	
	Missing System	1	.4		
Total	241	100.0			

Table 4. Absenteeism from work, full days, the last 12 months, owing to a health problem

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	None at all	105	43.6	43.6	43.6
	9 days as most	101	41.9	41.9	85.5
	10-24 days	30	12.4	12.4	97.9
	25-99 days	3	1.2	1.2	99.2
	100 Tdays plus	2	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. Chronic or persistent illness/disease or health problem in present

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	No	183	75.9	75.9	75.9
	Yes	30	12.4	12.4	88.4
	Don't know	28	11.6	11.6	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

Table 6. Quantitative demands (tempo, work pace)

How often are you unable to take a break owing to too much work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Very rare / never	28	11.6	11.6	11.6
	Rarely	72	29.9	29.9	41.5
	Occasionally	75	31.1	31.1	72.6
	Fairly often	53	22.0	22.0	94.6
	Very often / always	13	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

How often does your work require you to work at a fast pace?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Very rare / never	14	5.8	5.8	5.8
	Rarely	37	15.4	15.4	21.2
	Occasionally	69	28.6	28.6	49.8
	Fairly often	87	36.1	36.1	85.9
	Very often /always	34	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

How often are you under time pressure?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Very rare / never	10	4.1	4.1	4.1
	Rarely	36	14.9	14.9	19.1
	Occasionally	54	22.4	22.4	41.5
	Fairly often	90	37.3	37.3	78.8
	Very often /always	51	21.2	21.2	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

Table 7. Life event(s) during the last year (partner's death, serious illness of a family member, serious illness of the respondent, unemployment, death of a friend, the respondent as victim of an act of violence, divorce / separation, care of a close person)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	without life event(s)	116	48.1	48.5	48.5
	life event(s)	123	51.0	51.5	100.0
	Total	239	99.2	100.0	
Missing System		2	.8		
Total		241	100.0		

Referring to **Work-Family Conflict**³, high values (75 = Tend to agree, 100 = Completely agree) correspond to high scores on the respective dimensions (COPSOQ) and there are 16% respondents between 75-100 value, with the half 8% between 85-100.

Romanian farmers' burnout rate, 7.9%, is presented in Table 8, while Table 9 shows a synthetic way to introduce the outputs from cross-tabulations of burnout rate with the independent variables sex, age, double pressure and life events:

Table 8. Burnout rate of Romanian farmers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	No burnout (risk)	222	92.1	92.1	92.1
	Burnout compromised	19	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

Identification of **the most agricultural influential factors for Romanian farmers** (20/56 variables) is presented in Figure 2 which shows on top extreme weather events. It must be add that the values for the pressure felt at the contact with each of the given factors were between min. 0 - max. 4 (0 „not at all”, 1 „slightly”, 2 „medium”, 3 „strong”, 4 „very strong”) and the highest mean of scores for the Romanian sample is 2.2.

³Items for work-family conflict:

The demands of my job disrupt my private- and family life.

The time I spend working makes it difficult for me to meet my familial or personal obligations.

Things that I'd like to do in my free time remain undone owing to the demands of my job.

My work generates stress that makes it difficult to meet private or family obligations.

Work obligations make it necessary for me to alter plans for private or family activities.

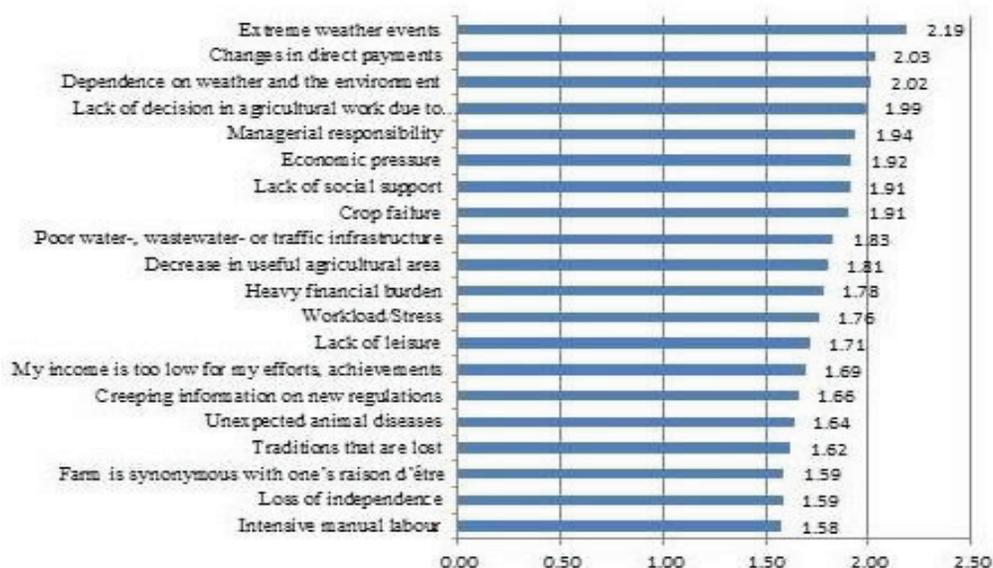


Figure 2. Top 20 agricultural influential factors for Romanian farmers

Table 9. Burnout rate by gender, age, double pressure, work-family conflict, life event

n	241										
Burnout rate for n (% round)	8%										
Variable	SEX		AGE (5 categories)					DOUBLE PRESSURE		LIFE EVENT(S)	
Categories of variable	♂	♀	16-24 years	25-39 years	40-54 years	55-65 years	66+ years	no	yes	without	with
Categories of variable (% round)	65%	35%	11%	21%	53%	9%	6%	62%	38%	48,5%	51.5%
Burnout rate within categories (% round)	5%	14%	4%	8%	6%	27%	7%	9%	5%	7%	9%

Within the burnout rate by gender females are more exposed (14%) comparing with males (5%) which confirm the hypothesis and can be justified by their manifold traditional roles; the most exposed age category is 55-65 years (27%, over 3 times higher than the following); by double-pressure those who are *not* in this category are higher compromised (9%) than the others (5%) - which could be interpreted as more work, *up to a certain level*, involves more engagement and motivation so less chances for depression (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The burnout rate is 7% for those without life events within last year and 9% for those with, which is in accord with the fundamental theoretical background for burnout.

CONCLUSIONS

Romanian farmers' burnout rate is investigated through a wide questionnaire for explorative studies to cover the well-known and most commune influences on burnout which integrates original and particular items for this

research with selective scales from COPSOQ II.

The sample (n=241) joins men 65% and women 35% predominantly (53%) aged 40-54 years with dominant educational level high school and postsecondary studies (65%), living in partnership 79%, practicing in 80% conventional type of farming within 96% mainly rural space from 5 Romanian regions (North-East, South-East, South-Muntenia, Bucharest-Ilfov, South-West Oltenia), surface of farms lower than 10 ha 57% and 50+ha 23%, ownership of the farm "owner" 50% and „both partners owner” 30%; 58% of the respondents are farm manager, 61% work full-time within the farm.

The highest frequencies (round) are: good general health (self-rated) 61%, mild sleep disorders 88%, absenteeism from work (full days within last year owing to a health problem) showed 44% none at all and 42% 9 days as most, present chronic illness 76% no, for the work-family conflict 16% tend to agree & completely agree and 51% passed through a life-event during the last year; regarding the

work tempo and pace 31% of respondents are occasionally unable to take a break owing to too much work, 36% are fairly often required to work at fast pace and 37% are fairly often under time pressure.

Top 5 pressure factors are: extreme weather events, managerial responsibility, economic pressure, heavy financial burden, lack of leisure and the highest mean is 2.2/max. 4.

Within the burnout rate (8%), by gender females are more exposed (14%) comparing with males (5%) which confirm the hypothesis; the most exposed age category is 55-65 years (27%, over 3 times higher than the following); by double-pressure those who are *not* in this category are higher compromised (9%) than the others (5%) - which could be interpreted as more work, *up to a certain level*, involves more engagement and motivation so less chances for burnout and/or depression (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The burnout rate is 7% for those without life events within last year and 9% for those with.

Degree of generalization of the results: the sample could be assessed as representative for the Romanian regions where it belongs and generally indicative for Romania.

Last but not least we keep a recommendation on preventing or dealing with burnout at least on a self-intervention level (generally hard to practice if the personality type doesn't favorite it and it lacks awareness in this matter) which in short would be „Make engagement, not burnout!” (Maslach & Leiter apud Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), assuming by job engagement the positive antipode of burnout. „We define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”⁴.

⁴Schaufeli & Taris (2005) accept the theoretical underpinnings of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), even Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) do not approve to consider burnout-engagement as opposite poles of a continuum entirely covered by MBI (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 24, 34); they develop the concept of engagement: „Engagement refers to a persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence also in the face of difficulties. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Vigor and dedication are the direct positive opposites of exhaustion and cynicism, respectively. The third dimension of engagement is called absorption, which was found to be a constituting element of engagement in 30 in-depth interviews. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. Being fully absorbed in one's work comes close to what has been called 'flow,' a state of optimal experience that is characterized by

Another desirable economic approach would start by noticing that calculating the cost of distress and burnout is a difficult exercise. Perhaps also interesting and even more useful would be the evaluation of earnings deficit, namely the benefit that firms could have from the well-being of their employees wishful to express their skills and creativity within their jobs (Légeron, 2003, p. 213).

But because such directions, though complicated and risky, are easier to debate than practically intervene to recover, strengthen mentalities and also multiple levels and fields related to conditions and particularities of work nowadays (work which get under the same social, political, economic frame where the individual is extremely exposed, from the earliest ages, to manipulative means of control), we end this paper in the same key that we started it through our motto (considering that prevention is preferable to treating the professional distress complications), paraphrasing an ancient Chinese proverb as the quintessence of self-management of the stressful thoughts that have stirred the human being during times, hoping that all in need will find power to change what can be changed, power to accept what cannot be changed and wisdom to distinguish between these two.

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focused attention, clear mind, mind and body union, effortless concentration, complete control, loss of self-consciousness, distortion of time, and intrinsic enjoyment.”

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