Management of Psychosocial Risks in the Higher Schools of the University of Douala-Cameroon

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Abstract

Psychosocial risks have negative effects on the health and safety of people and on the performance of companies. This is also the case at the University of Douala where several unfavorable working conditions were recorded, which testifies to the importance of psychosocial risk management. This research aims to contribute to the improvement of working conditions, health and safety through the management of psychosocial risks at the University of Douala. To achieve this objective, we have had recourse to 4 specific objectives, namely: To make a diagnosis of psychosocial risk factors, to analyze the risks during the course periods as well as the potential causes related to psychosocial risks and to propose an action plan for the implementation of some critical actions. In order to achieve the established objectives, we used a questionnaire divided into 6 parties and then administered to a sample of people from the University of Douala, the data collected was analyzed using Excel software showing the significant factors linked to the differences. Observed. Then we made an analysis of the dangerous situations and possible dangers during the course periods and then an identification of the potential causes of psychosocial risks using the 5M method. Some of the identified causes were further analyzed using the fault tree. Finally, we used the QQOQCCP questioning tool to establish our improvement plans and we implemented some critical actions. Overall, the results suggest that the University of Douala needs to do a lot more to improve working conditions. The results also reveal that the deviations observed during the initial diagnosis and analysis of dangerous situations in these schools are potential causes of the occurrence of psychosocial risks. The measures that were proposed in the established action plan have been implemented and are being followed up.

1. Introduction

At the national level, the Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale (CNPS) was received in 2016. In 2016, the CNPS received 2252 occupational injury files (AT) and 9 occupational disease files (MP). In 2017, there were 2003 cases of occupational accidents and five cases of occupational diseases. In 2018, there were 2078 cases of occupational injuries and 12 cases of occupational diseases. This means an average of 2111 cases of occupational injuries per year versus 9 cases of occupational diseases. In terms of percentage, this represents 99.5% for accidents and 0.5 for occupational disease (Jones-Rincon & Howard, 2019; Jemeljanenko & Geske, 2019). We are far from the ILO data, in which accidents occupy 14% and occupational diseases 86%. It should already be understood that the 2111 cases of accidents are very far from reality. For this, the declaration is endemic here. As far as OD is concerned, the situation could simply be described as "silent skin". However, a fight without an advantageous situation can be considered a loss (Anonyme, 2009; Benchetrit, 2018).

Recent developments in the nature of work in relation to design, management, and organization, as well as the wider context of work, are resulting in new and emerging risks, called psychosocial risks (Toukas et al., 2015). Moreover, the educational sector is not spared (Jemeljanenko & Geske, 2019); whatever the function occupied, problems linked to psychosocial risks in universities are increasingly frequent (non-equipped laboratories, practically theoretical training, absence of medical service in case of health problems) and can have serious consequences both on humans (cardiovascular diseases, professional exhaustion) and on the institution (drop in productivity, loss of motivation of the staff). This is the case at the University of Yaoundé 2, where, in 2018, Paul TAGNE, through work carried out with students, made us understand that the major stress among students in these institutions comes from the quality of service (absence of names and notes on the minutes despite the fact that the student has composed and paid his university fees). On the other hand, at the University of Douala, work carried out by Alix FETUE on the same problem but with the teaching staff and administrative staff in 2015, reveals that the latter demand better working conditions (salary) through strike action (INRS, 2016).

The general objective of this work is to contribute to the improvement of the working conditions, health and safety of teachers, administrative staff and students at the University of Douala. The general objective was achieved according to the specific objectives: firstly, to make a diagnosis of psychosocial risk factors in the study area and then, to analyse the causes of psychosocial risks to the health and safety of people and on the performance of schools.

2. Material and Methodology

In the framework of this research it was impossible to carry out this study without collecting data. For data collection we used: data sources, quality tools and software.

Data sources

The data sources used were:

- the COPSOQ questionnaire for the assessment of psychosocial risk factors at work;
- ISO 45001 version 2018, which deals with the requirements of an occupational health and safety management system;
- ISO 45003:2021, which deals with the management of psychosocial risks;
- the old briefs dealing only with psychosocial risks.

Quality tools

The quality tools and methods used were:

- the COPSOQ for the assessment of psychosocial risk factors;
- the cause/effect diagram or Ishikawa diagram for researching and classifying stress-related causes according to the five (5) main families of causes;
- the fault tree, to graphically represent the possible combinations of events that lead to a predefined undesirable event.

Software

The software which will be used are:

- Microsoft Word 2013 software for the data entry and final production of this report;
- Microsoft Excel 2013 for the analysis of the data collected and the development of the various risk analysis grids and action plans;
- Microsoft Visio 2013 for the design of the Ishikawa diagram and the fault tree.

3. Results and Discussion

Diagnosis of PSR factors in the workplace of the University of Douala institutions

The diagnosis carried out allows us to note that more than half of the students said they were exposed to PSRs (50.2%). This stress came from the anxiety of being excluded (72%), the anxiety of being admitted to an undesirable course (74%), the inability to act in the face of excitement (59%), and the time taken up by the training, which led to a negative impact on life (70%). On the other hand, 23.6% said that they were exposed to PSRs at times. While 26.2% felt completely safe. At the end of the diagnosis of PSR among the administrative and teaching staff of the Higher National Polytechnic School of Douala. We found that PSRs are experienced in this school by the overall distribution obtained, as 43% out of 100% were exposed to PSRs, while 18% were victims at times and 39% were completely safe (Figure 1).

At the end of the diagnosis of PSRs among the students of the Higher Nation-

al Polytechnic School of Douala. We found that PSRs are present in this school by the overall distribution obtained, as 34% out of 100% said they were victims of PSRs, while 19% were exposed at times, while 47% of the people were completely safe (**Figure 2**).

Analysis of the causes and analysis of dangerous situations associated with psychosocial risks

The problem that arises is that of finding the causes of psychosocial risks within the university establishments concerned.

Interviews with some students and school officials and the results of the initial diagnosis have made it possible to identify the various possible causes of stress in schools. **Figure 3** shows the Ishikawa diagram obtained by grouping these causes into the 5 main families of causes.

The analysis of causes carried out on the basis of the root causes obtained during the diagnosis enabled us to find the root causes of psychosocial risks in order to determine the consequences that these may have on the health and safety of teachers, administrative staff, and students, on the one hand, and on the overall performance of schools, on the other. **Figure 4** and **Figure 5** below show the possible combinations of causes that could lead to the occurrence of the feared event.
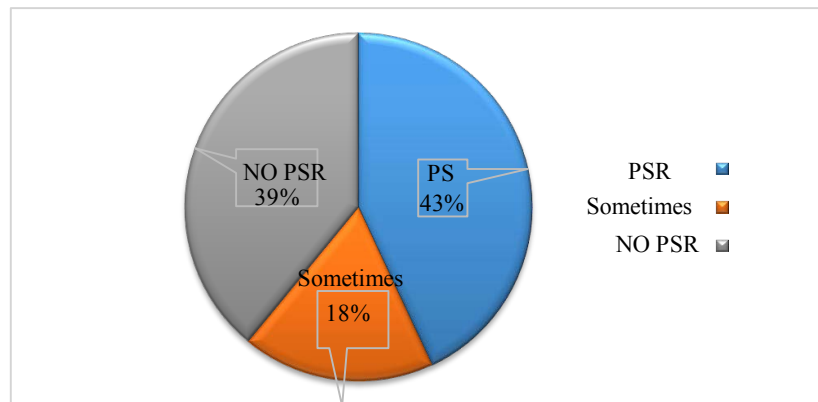

Figure 1. Circular diagram of the overall state of psychosocial risk among teachers and administrative staff at the University of Douala.
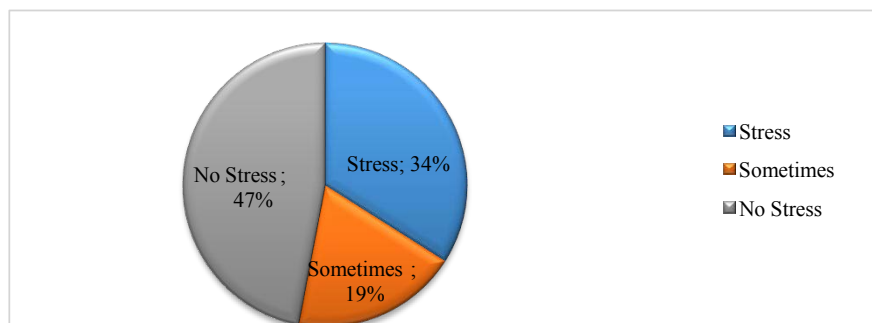

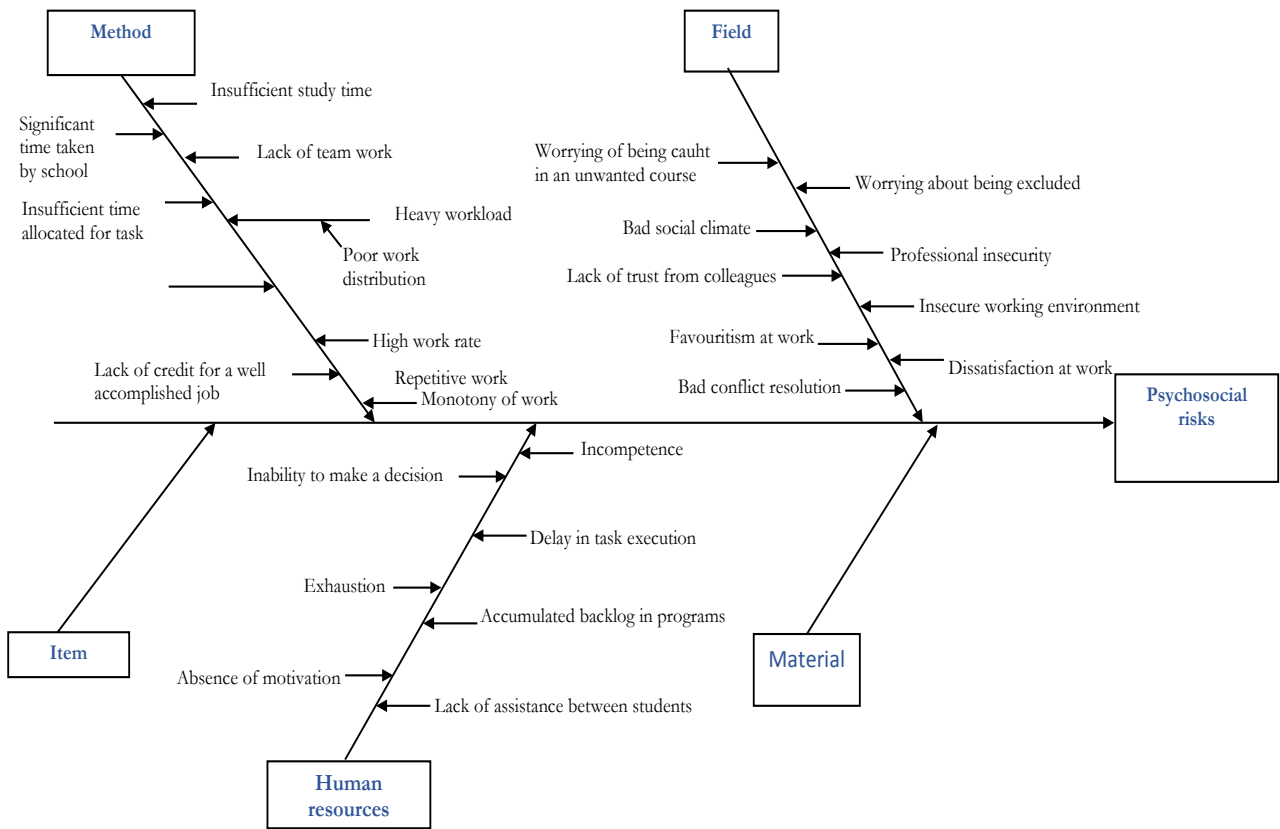**Figure 2.** Pie chart of the overall state of psychosocial risk among students at the University of Douala.

Figure 3. ISHIKAWA diagram of PSRs in higher education institutions at the University of Douala.
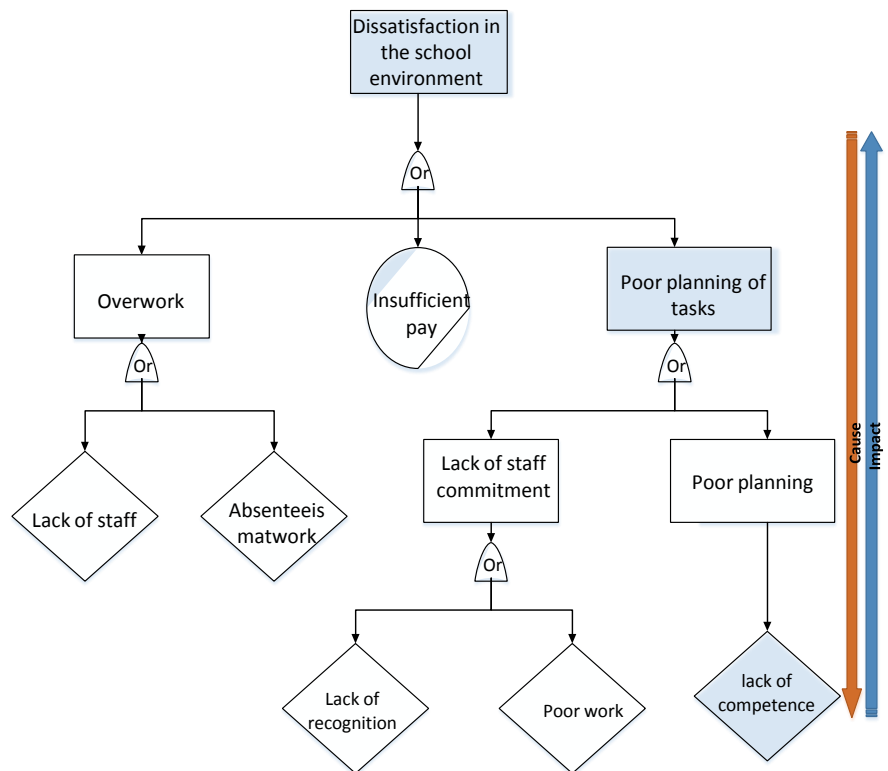

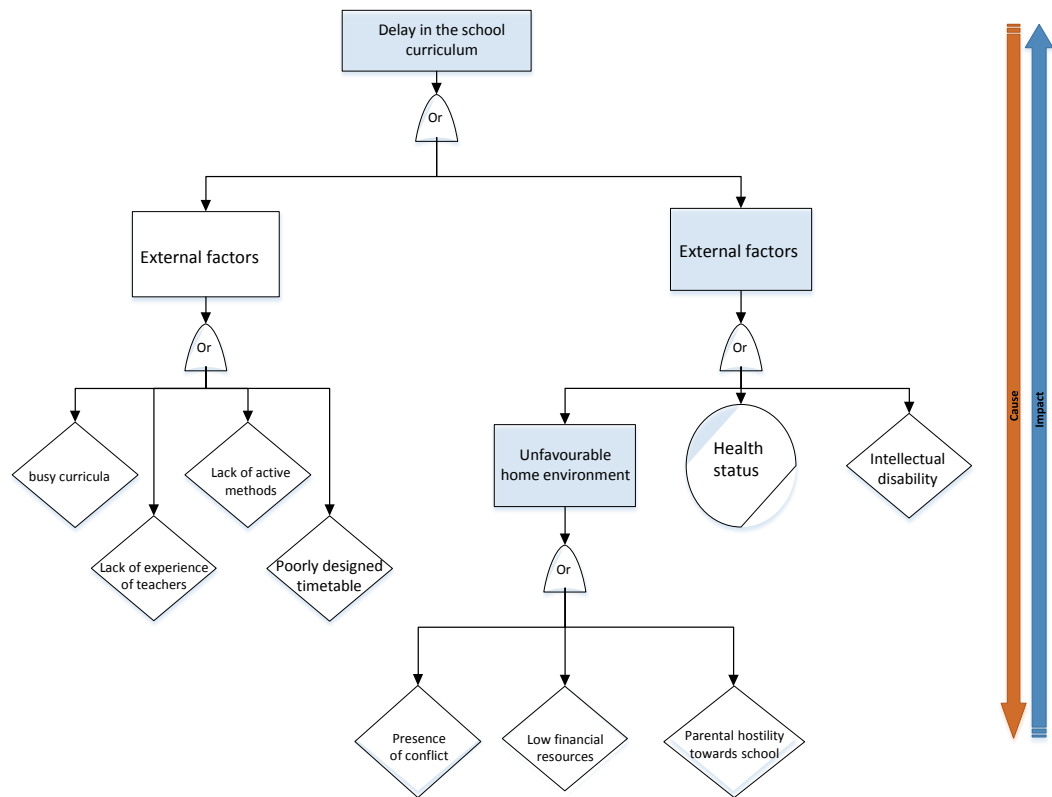**Figure 4.** Fault tree of dissatisfaction in schools.

Figure 5. School curriculum delay fault tree.

Dissatisfaction in the school environment is of great concern. The results of this analysis have shown us that it can be caused firstly by work overload, which has two sources of causes (lack of staff and absenteeism at work), secondly by the inadequacy of the salary, and thirdly by the poor planning of tasks, which can be induced by poor planning and a lack of commitment on the part of the staff) (**Figure 5**).

The following **Table 1** presents the results of the preliminary psychosocial risk analysis using the PRA tool.

The causes of PSRs identified are different in nature, and each has consequences for the teaching staff, administrative staff, and students of the institutions concerned. The implementation of appropriate corrective actions to avoid or reduce PSR is therefore necessary.

4. Discussion

The diagnosis carried out for the different items in the area of quantitative constraints showed that 40.34% of teachers and administrative staff said that they were greatly exposed to psychosocial risks (PSR), and that this stress was due to the fact that the work required them to remember many things (81%) and to concern about the work environment (75%). However, it can also be seen that 19.17% are also exposed at times. This compares with 40.49% who said they were free from PSRs, which is largely due to the other items in the domain (Jones-Rincon & Howard, 2019; Jemeljanenko & Geske, 2019; Anonyme, 2009).

Table 1. Analysis grid for psychosocial risks in higher education institutions at the University of Douala.

Activity	Risk components				Estimation of the risk index			Proposed risk reduction measures
Description	Phénomène dangereux	Hazardous event	Hazardous event	Hazardous event	Gravity G	Occurrence O	Criticality C	
Supervision of the different functional services in the school	Incompetence	Under staff qualification	Isolement	Absenteeism	3	4	12	Conduct a training needs assessment
Material organisation of the courses	High course load	Teachers and students under strain	Lack of rest	Overwork	1	16	16	Planning course programmes in advance
Supervision of the different functional services in the school	Conflicts	Unfairly resolved conflicts	Birth of clans within the school	Birth of clans within the school	4	4	16	Encourage discussion and clarify roles
Drafting and transmission of correspondence	No recognition	The work of staff is not recognised and appreciated by the administration	Excessive worry	Anxiety	4	9	36	Organise frequent individual work recognition awards
Manage agendas	Surcharge de travail	Lack of room for manoeuvre manoeuvre at work	Work without rest	Burn-out	4	12	48	Granting freedom and rest to workers

In addition, we found that 57.75% of students were exposed to PSRs as a result of insufficient study time (75%), high pace of tutorials (74%) and maintaining a high pace of study (68%). On the other hand, 19% claimed to be periodically exposed. This compares with a stress-free rate of 23.5% (Toukas et al., 2015; INRS, 2016; Langenhan et al., 2013).

According to the results, 23.25% of people (teachers and administrative staff) declared that they felt they were victims of PSR because of the atmosphere of poor relations between colleagues caused by a lack of trust (75%). However, 17.5% of people said that they were exposed to no major problems. On the other hand, 59.25% said that they were completely free of PSR (Mochungong et al., 2008; Navarro et al., 2018).

In addition, the results obtained from the evaluation showed that the field of organisation and leadership is an area where PSR situations are also experienced, as 23.68% of the staff in this school had declared that they were victims of PSR in the school environment, due to (poor conflict resolution (78%), poor distribution of work (74%) and contradictory demands (81%). On the other hand, 10.56% of them declared that they were regularly exposed to psychosocial risks, compared to 65.76% who said that they were safe from such risks (INRS, 2016).

Moreover, the field related to work experience is the field where teachers and administrative staff also feel exposed to PSRs as 33.2% claimed to be stressed due

to dissatisfaction at the school (87%) and not recommending a friend to apply for a job in this school (72%). While 8.8% are sometimes exposed, against a shelter rate of 58%. In the area related to the health and well-being of administrative and teaching staff, there is concern that 35.2% were experiencing PSR situations due to loss of job (100%), change of job position (91%). On the other hand, it can also be noted that 9.1% said that they were exposed at times. On the other hand, 55.7% declared that they had good health and a good life situation (Navarro et al., 2018; Iavicoli & Di Tecco, 2020).

At the end of the study on PSR among administrative staff, teaching staff and students of the University of Douala. We found that PSR situations exist within the schools by the overall distribution obtained as 33% out of 100% said they were exposed while 13% were affected at times, while 54% of people were completely safe (Iavicoli & Di Tecco, 2020; Leka & Cox, 2020; Yahyaoui, 2016).

5. Conclusion

We have come to the end of our study on the management of psychosocial risks within the University of Douala. We were asked to solve the issue on how to manage psychosocial risks within these universities. To improve the health and safety of individuals in order to ensure the performance of universities. After solving this issue, it emerged that in order to manage psychosocial risks, it was important to identify, analyse and evaluate them and to propose action plans for better monitoring of these psychosocial risks.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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