Sources of Occupational Pressure among Lawyers and Legal Professionals
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Abstract
Current paper focuses the occupational stress in legal industry. Two similar empirical studies were carried out in 2006 and 20012. A web-based survey of occupational stress was conducted by employing an international questionnaire Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI-2). Some important trends in the Estonian lawyers’ occupational stress were found. The basic sources of occupational pressure in lawyers and legal professionals were identified. Most relevant sources of occupational pressure among lawyers and legal professional were home and work imbalance, managerial roles, and insufficient recognition, managerial roles, and hassles. We found that the relationship between job satisfaction and sources of occupational pressure was negative and significantly valid among five pressures of lawyers and legal professionals. Majority of lawyers and legal professional were adapted problem solving oriented coping strategy. Therefore, the social support from peer, friend, family member etc. was also widely used coping strategy by lawyers and legal professionals. Our findings well demonstrate that awareness of occupational stress in law industry has been raised.

It is well documented that the legal field is stressful for lawyers and legal professionals, statistics show that a legal career is one of the most stressful occupations. On the other hand, there are many high stress professions, but lawyers are the most frequently depressed occupational group1.

Occupational stress, depression and anxiety among lawyers and legal professionals are well-known public evidence in modern mass media2. Several earlier studies suggested that signs of stress of students have had begun already in law school3. Therefore, it is still evidence that there is some role of legal education in producing occupational stress to lawyers and legal professionals4.

Despite the evidence described above, surprisingly, the sources of occupational pressure in lawyers and legal professionals have received undeservedly little empirical attention. In earlier occupational stress literature with the focus on lawyers’ stress there are not many comprehensive studies. With some notable exceptions in survey after survey researchers had demonstrated different response to stress effects to lawyers’ behavior, for example, such maladaptive coping with stress behaviors as alcoholism, substance abuse, suicidal behavior, depression, and anxiety. In recent years, the main focus of lawyers’ occupational stress research has been changed as it turned toward the sources of occupational pressure in lawyers and legal professionals. Unfortunately, this volume of research have not been fully integrated into an appropriate theoretical framework of occupational stress. It is not too surprising because the degree of theoretical fragmentation permeate much of different professionals’ occupational stress literature, such as occupational stress of engineers as well as university academics.

In legal literature, the depressive side of lawyers work has rather been related to the profession itself, not so much of the individual lawyers based inquires.

**Keywords:** occupational stress, stressors, sources of occupational pressure, lawyers and legal professionals

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