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STRESS INDUCING FACTORS IN THE WORK OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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Annotation

Research objective is definition of the basic factors causing a stress in teachers of physical culture. Professions of the teacher it is accompanied by a constant (chronic) stress. From references follows that most often sources of a stress are: behavior and traits of character of the pupils, not carrying out requirements of teachers; lack of interest and desire of pupils to study; aggressive behavior of pupils; the conflicts in group. Besides, a source of mental tension are communication with parents, rivalry in pedagogical collective, irrational requirements of the management, inappropriate administrative factors. Researches were conducted in group of 100 physical education teachers in Poland, women made 57%, men – 43%. In researches the method of diagnostic poll, the technician – questioning was used. Results of research showed that the most essential stress factors, according to interrogated, are: low salary and prestige of a profession, weak material resources for carrying out lessons, the relation to physical culture as to a minor subject, uncertainty in contract extension, need of additional work for the purpose of earnings.

Keywords: teachers' work, occupational stress, occupational burnout.

ФАКТОРЫ, ВЫЗЫВАЮЩИЕ СТРЕСС В РАБОТЕ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ ФИЗИЧЕСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ

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Аннотация

Целью исследования является определение принципиальных факторов, вызывающих стресс у учителей физической культуры. Профессии учителя сопровождается постоянным (хроническим) стрессом. Из литературных источников следует, что чаще всего источниками стресса являются: поведение и черты характера учеников, не выполняющихся требований педагогов; отсутствие интереса и желания учеников учиться; агрессивное поведение учащихся; конфликты в группе. Кроме этого, источником психического напряжения являются общение с родителями, соперничество в педагогическом коллективе, иррациональные требования руководства, несоответствующие административные факторы. Исследования проводились в группе 100 учителей физкультуры в Польше, женщины составляли 57%, мужчины – 43%. В исследованиях использовался метод диагностического опроса, техника – анкетирование. Результаты исследования показали, что самыми существенными стрессогенными факторами, по мнению опрашиваемых, являются: низкие заработная плата и престиж профессии, слабая материальная база для проведения уроков, отношение к физкультуре как к второстепенному предмету, неуверенность в продлении контракта, необходимость дополнительной работы с целью заработка.

Ключевые слова: работа учителей, профессиональное напряжение, профессиональное выгорание.

Stress may be defined as an imbalance between the demands of the external environment and the capacity of individuals to meet them [13, 17]. Coyne and Holroyd [3] describe stress in terms of particular events that take place in one's environment and argue that certain events may cause tension and stress in individuals. According to such an approach, stress is considered as a characteristic response of individuals to stimuli from their environment. The teaching profession is certainly one of those professions in which close interpersonal relationship, emotional commitment and emotional exchange play a very important role [7-11]. Teachers are not only required to provide knowledge, but also to create conditions for the optimum development of their students. Teachers' personalities together with their interpersonal skills and sensitive approach to their students' needs are their tools, as it were, and have a bearing on their professional success. Commitment to work and everyday concern for their students' development may put a high strain on teachers [18]. The research on teaching as a profession [2, 4, 5, 7-12, 14, 15, 19, 20] has shown that it is an occupation exposed to chronic stress. According to these authors, the most frequent stressors in teachers' work are the behavior and personal characteristics of students that are at variance with teachers' expectations, lack of students' interest and willingness to learn, aggressive behavior, conflicts in the class, noise and too many students in one class. They also mention the following sources of emotional strain in teachers: confrontations with parents, competition among teachers, irrational expectations of their supervisors and unsuitable administrative factors. Teachers play an important role as managers and organisers of physical education and sports at school. PE lessons are very dynamic, full of commotion and changing situations and many other behaviors on the students' part that are very difficult to predict. Kwiatkowska (2009) points out that in the course of their professional education teachers are not being prepared to cope with broadly defined difficulties at work. What is more, they seem to be prepared to perform an idealized job in a harmonious environment. The resulting discrepan-

cy often leads to stress and occupational burnout [7-11].

The aim of the study was to identify fundamental factors that cause stress in PE teachers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Province of Silesia, Poland, on a group of 100 PE teachers, 57% and 43% of which were women and men respectively. The teachers surveyed were between 24 and 48 years of age. The study group was selected to maintain the balance between teachers representing all types of schools (primary, junior secondary, secondary). The study utilized the method of diagnostic survey and a questionnaire technique. The questionnaire, which contained 20 questions in a five-point Likert response scale [1], was developed by the authors of the research and verified in pilot studies.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

In the school environment, one can often come across an opinion that PE is one of the less important subjects. Despite the fact that a growing number of people emphasize its health-related aspects and the fact that they can instill healthy habits in students, PE classes rank low in the hierarchy of school subjects. Such opinions are upheld by teachers and students alike and result in the fact that PE classes are frequently devoted to “organizational” activities. Students often try to avoid taking part in them by providing sick leaves issued by nurses or parents. The opinion about the subject brings about negative experiences and, as relevant studies suggest, causes stress in PE teachers.

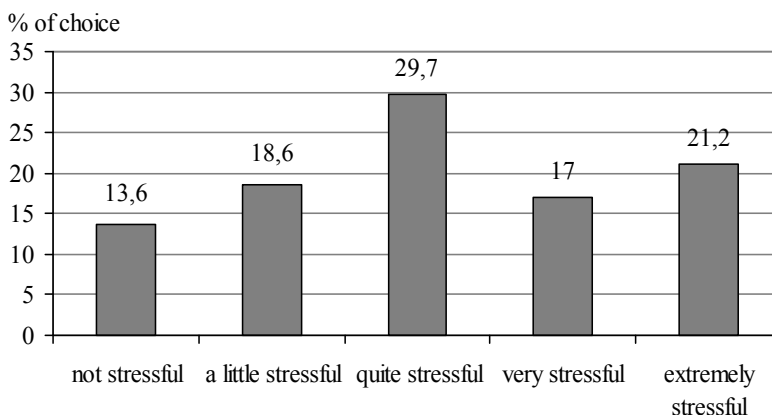


Figure 1. The low ranking of PE in the hierarchy of school subjects as a source of stress (%)

With their subject ranking low in the hierarchy, 21% and 17% of the respondents find it extremely stressful and very stressful respectively. The largest group of the respondents (29.7%) admit to moderate levels of stress (“quite stressful” mark), while 13.6% of them claim that they do not find it stressful that their subject ranks low in the order of priority (Fig. 1).

The quality of physical activities is largely determined by the facilities. That is why the study presented teachers with questions on their feelings about school infrastructure. It is generally believed that the vast majority of educational institutions do not have a sufficient number of facilities and equipment. Given a large number of hours of physical activities, both classroom and extracurricular ones, it can be observed that school equipment and furnishings have a significant impact on the quality of teachers’ work. A significant number of the respondents stated that the facilities they have are insufficient, which in turn makes it more difficult and inconvenient to work. The largest percentage of the respondents (24.6%) confirms that the issue in question is very important, and their comments indicate that there are large deficiencies in basic school infrastructure, which in turn is perceived as extremely stressful. While those who find it very stressful and quite stressful are roughly identical in number (22.9% and 22% respectively),

a small group of the respondents (12.7%) answered that the school infrastructure does not make them feel negative emotions and stress (Fig. 2).

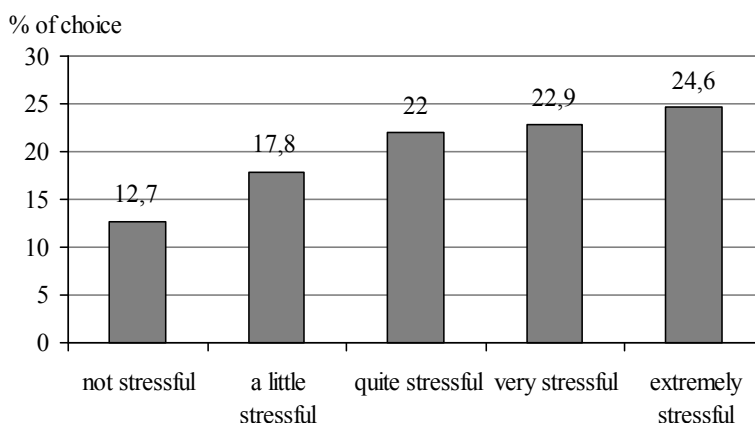


Figure 2. Insufficient or no facilities to run PE classes as a source of stress (%)

In the course of the study, the issues of pay and professional prestige were also raised as problems that often recur among teachers. A large discrepancy can be observed between the rising expectations that society has of teachers and their own feelings in which a sense of material degradation and low professional prestige prevails. The authors of the study have attempted to find out whether these elements have a significant impact on the level of stress in this particular group of professionals. It turns out that they do. Lower financial and social standing of teachers produces extremely high levels of stress in 32.2% of the respondents and is very stressful for 22.89% of them. The average level of stress (“quite stressful” mark) in turn was observed in 33.9% of the respondents (Fig. 3).

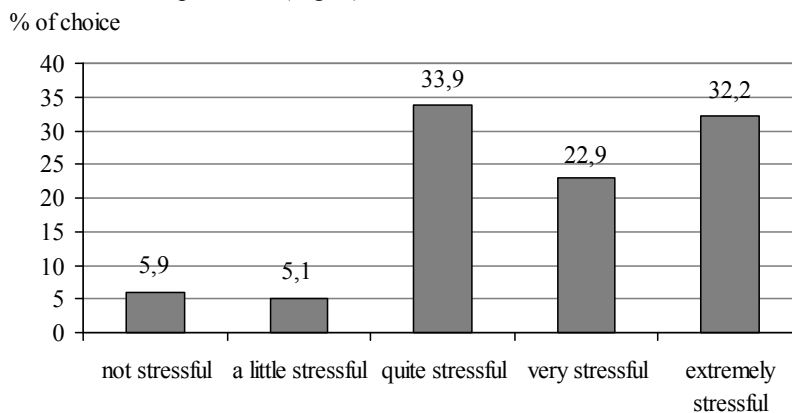


Figure 3. Low pay and low professional prestige as a source of stress (%)

The analysis of the subsequent information included in the questionnaire shows that the insecurity of employment is yet another issue that recurs among teachers. A number of students with various specialization's graduate from pedagogical universities every year. However, the majority of university graduates cannot find employment in the system of education as a result of the current demographic low. In addition, relevant studies indicate that people in employment also feel insecure. This can be proved by the following data: 28% of the respondents say that the insecurity of employment is extremely stressful, 25.4% find it very stressful and 11.9% report the average levels of stress (“quite stressful” mark). The remaining teachers did not declare negative feelings, which indicate that they feel secure as employees (Fig.4).

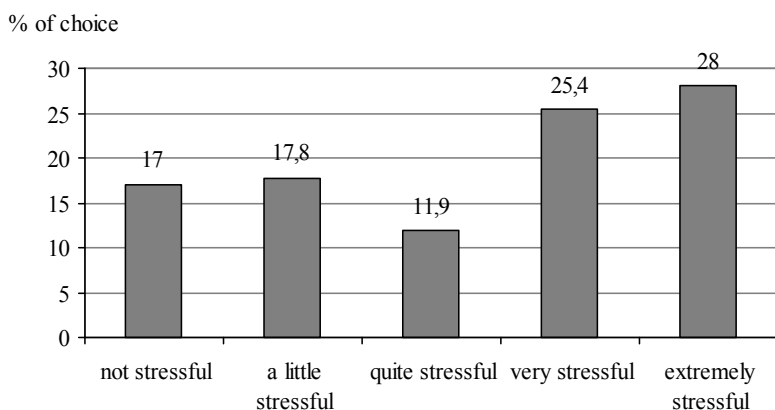


Figure 4. Insecurity of employment as a source of stress (%)

A growing number of professional teachers feel the necessity to take additional employment due to economic reasons. However, the opportunities to find such jobs are rather limited. Teachers most frequently search jobs in other educational units, give private lessons and run additional extracurricular activities. This often requires that they embark on additional studies, can organize their time efficiently and can adjust their schedules in both schools they work in. The five-point scale used in the questionnaire shows that the largest number of the respondents find it very stressful (26.3%) while 21.2% find it either quite stressful or a little stressful. The necessity to take additional jobs has been reported as extremely stressful by 15.3% of the respondents (Fig. 5).

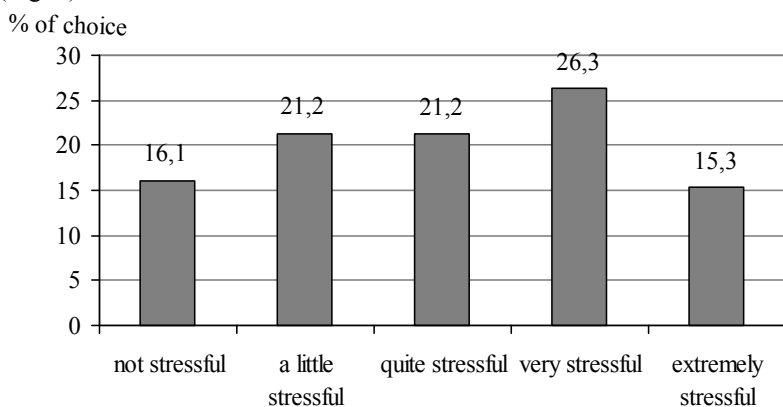


Figure 5. Necessity to take additional jobs as a source of stress (%)

DISCUSSION

While at work, teachers are in permanent contact with their students, their students' parents and their own colleagues. However, as they interact with their charges, teachers take enormous responsibility for the education and upbringing of future generations. As the data collected in the survey suggest, with as much as 32.2% of the respondents claiming that they find it extremely stressful, low pay and low professional prestige are the most powerful stress-inducing factor of all. The analysis of the results also shows that teachers because of the insecurity of employment often experience high tension and emotional strain: 27.9% of the respondents find such situation extremely stressful. Poor working conditions and insufficient facilities (24.6%) are another reason for extreme stress. 21.19% of the respondents find it extremely stressful that PE is perceived as worse than other school subjects are. Similar results were achieved in the study carried out by Kretschmann et al [6], who concluded that numerous teach-

ers are exposed to stress at work as a result of the poor facilities at schools, insufficient teaching aids, low pay and little support on the part of society, which not only make it difficult for them to satisfy their professional aspirations, but also preclude any life in dignity. In her research conducted in 1991-93, [18] demonstrated that teachers are under significant stress. On average, they scored 3.2 in the five-point scale. All the respondents described their jobs as extremely stressful and their working conditions as difficult. Inappropriate behavior on the part of the students and their attitude to teachers, meager pay and low professional prestige, attitude of the parents, relationships with other teachers, poor management and a sense of helplessness were all indicated as major stress inducing factors. The author of the study claims that stressors can also be found in teachers themselves. The most important of these are a discrepancy between the idealized image of their profession and their own aspirations and professional opportunities. Chronic stress leads to occupational burnout, which affects even those teachers that have a lot of commitment. As a result, the system of education loses its best employees. Chronic stress causes defensive reactions in teachers, reduces their commitment, brings about aversion to extracurricular activities and makes them avoid contact with parents and humiliate students. The statistical analysis of the presented results indicates that women are exposed to higher stress levels than men.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The PE teachers surveyed are exposed to stress at work. The results also indicate a wide variety of factors and situations at school that may be perceived as stressful.
2. According to the respondents, the most prominent stressors are:
 - low pay and low professional prestige,
 - poor or missing facilities to run PE classes,
 - treating PE as worse than other subjects,
 - no certainty of continued employment,
 - necessity to take additional jobs.

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ВЗАИМОСВЯЗЬ ДОПОЛНЕННОГО МЕНТАЛЬНОГО ТРЕНИНГА И ТЕХНИЧЕСКИХ ДЕЙСТВИЙ В СТОЙКЕ

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Аннотация

В работе приводятся результаты влияния разработанной программы дополненного ментального тренинга, основанной на ментальном тренинге по методу профессора Унесталля, усовершенствованного профессором Бунзенем в НИИ физической культуры в 1994 году, на результативность борцов-самбистов в стойке. Эксперимент проводился с участием экспериментальной группы и двух контрольных. Численность каждой группы пятнадцать человек. Все группы, принявшие участие в эксперименте состояли из студентов Санкт-Петербургского государственного университета. В каждой группе проводился анализ 100 схваток. В процессе анализа определялось среднее количество бросков оценкой 4 балла, 2 балла, 1 балл на одного спортсмена. Определялись максимальные, минимальные, наиболее часто встречающиеся количества бросков, проведенные одним спортсменом. Определялось среднеквадратичное отклонение от среднего значения и достоверность различий.

Ключевые слова: ментальный тренинг, самбо, восстановление.

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INTERRELATION BETWEEN THE ADDED MENTAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ACTIONS IN A STANCE

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Annotation

This article presents the results of the effect of the developed program of the added mental training based on the mental training by Prof. Unestall, advanced by Professor Bunsen at the Research Institute of Physical Culture in 1994, on the effectiveness of the wrestlers in the stance. The experiment has been conducted with the participation of the experimental group and two control groups. Each group consisted from fifteen people. All groups participated in the experiment consisted from the students of St. Petersburg State University. 100 fights have been analyzed in each group. In the process of analysis, the average number of throws ranked with 4 points, 2 points, 1 point per athlete has been defined. The maximum, minimum, and the most common number of throws performed by one athlete have been determined. The standard deviation from the mean value and the reliability of differences has been determined.