

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Job Satisfaction of Physical Education Teachers in Slovakia

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Abstract

Many studies have confirmed that job satisfaction is one of the important factors that maintain a high level of performance. The aim of this study was to analyze job satisfaction among physical education teachers in Slovakia. This was a cross-sectional intraindividual ex post facto research. 139 male and 173 female Slovak physical education teachers participated in this study, 165 of them were employed at primary schools and 147 of them worked at secondary schools. To get the empirical data, the method of questionnaire and interview was used. It has been shown that job satisfaction of physical education teachers in Slovakia are differentiated in terms of gender, but are not differentiated from the point of view of age and of the type of school. The obtained results shows that male physical teachers working in schools have better job satisfaction than their female counterpart ($\chi^2=10.308$, $p<0.01\%$). The findings suggest that job satisfaction of physical education in Slovak teachers is low. This research was realized out within the project VEGA, No. 1/0523/19 „Telesná a športová výchova a jej kvalita a potenciál v podpore zdravia z pohľadu žiakov, učiteľov a rodičov“ [“Physical and Sports Education and its Quality and Potential in Promoting Health from the Perspective of Pupils, Teachers and Parents”].

Keywords: job satisfaction, PE teachers, workload, financial evaluation

Introduction

Teachers have undoubtedly a key role to play in providing of quality education. The majority of teachers in OECD countries and economies in TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) (90%) are satisfied with their job, and most of them (91%) do not regret becoming a teacher (OECD, 2020). However, several data show that the attractiveness of this profession is relatively low in Slovakia and teachers perceive their profession from a public point of view rather negatively, while abroad teachers feel more valued. According to the 2018 International Study TALIS, only 26% of teachers and 37% of OECD principals involved in research agreed with the claim, that profession of the teacher is valued in society. In the Slovak Republic, this share was even the smallest of all OECD countries (the average of the countries is 19.7%), as only 4.5% of teachers and 2.1% of principals in Slovakia

believe that the teaching profession is valued in society. It was the lowest evaluation rate among the most economically developed countries. Compared to the previous cycle of TALIS 2013, there was no significant difference in the perception of Slovak teachers or principals in their perception of how their profession is valued in society. Longer-serving teachers are also more likely than their younger colleagues to say that the profession is undervalued, suggesting a degree of professional disillusionment as teacher's progress along the career path (OECD 2020).

Basically, job satisfaction is about liking your job and finding fulfilment in what you do. It combines an individual's feelings and emotions about their job and how their job affects their personal lives (Hundito, 2015). TALIS defines job satisfaction as the sense of fulfilment and gratification that teachers get from their work. Job satisfaction may have



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a positive association with teachers' attitudes towards their work and with their performance (OECD, 2020). Fisher & Hannah in another definition see job satisfaction as a psychological factor and define it as an emotional adaptation to job conditions i.e., if a job provides ideal conditions for the individual, he will be satisfied with his job, but if it does not, he will start to blame his job and if possible will leave it. Job satisfaction causes an increase in the employee's productivity and organizational commitment; his physical and mental health is guaranteed; he is motivated; he is satisfied with life; and he learns new professional skills quickly (Tajnia et al., 2014). Nascimento et al. (2016) stated that job satisfaction is defined as an emotional state resulting from interaction of professionals, their personal characteristics, values and expectations about labor environment and organization, which can have an influence on a worker's perception of quality of life and wellbeing.

Considering specifically the teaching profession, it is possible to state that the notion of professional satisfaction of teachers is complex, finding, beyond that, an endless amount of factors responsible for their (dis)satisfaction with teaching. For this reason, one should consider abrupt cultural, social, political and economic changes occurred within the school sphere that impact teaching activity over time, generating, in turn, the confrontation of teacher with problems and difficulties currently faced as they exercise their profession, since school, as a public institution and space for professional intervention, has a direct influence on teaching performance and on a teacher's satisfaction with his professional activity (Nascimento et al., 2016). Since the teaching of physical education (PE) is a specific process that differs from other teaching processes at school, the teacher's work is specific in terms of workload, which Kyriacou (2001) defined as the experience of unpleasant and negative emotions of the teacher resulting from his profession and can manifest as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, and can result in depression. The workload can cause a teacher to perceive his or her work situation as a threat to his or her mental health and to underestimate himself or herself.

What factors could be shaping teachers' satisfaction? There are many factors which affect the job satisfaction level of teacher such as age, seniority, education level, gender, marital status, salary, the attitude of school principal, physical structure, colleagues and that can be categorized as internal aspects (personality traits, feelings and emotions) and external aspects (organizational, social and cultural conditions and characteristics) (Xiaofu & Qiwen, 2007; Saygi et al. 2011; Tajnia et al., 2014; Dogan et al. 2018). There are some variables that provide satisfaction for PE teachers such as having job security, going on vacation, being physically active during the PE lessons, and facilitating satisfactory lifestyle (Bizet et al., 2010). High job satisfaction among teachers has been associated with an increase in overall school effectiveness (Hung, 2012) and a decrease in the desire to leave one's job (Johnson et al., 2012). Machado-Taylor et al. (2010) found that job satisfaction and motivation played an important role in contributing to positive outcomes in the quality of the schools and the students' learning.

Many studies have confirmed that job satisfaction is one of the important factors that maintain a high level of performance. Some researchers have pointed out that the low levels of job satisfaction may lead to lower productivity, associated

apathy and loss of interest, as well as, the low level of organizational commitment, because this relationship affect the quality of education and student achievement (Mouloud et al., 2016). Wage income is an important factor influencing job satisfaction and low income has a dramatic effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, the items in the questionnaire asked teachers also about their satisfaction with the salary evaluation because salary has a direct relationship with job satisfaction.

In the Slovak Republic 18% of teachers report being satisfied with their salaries, which is lower than the OECD average (39%) (OECD 2020). But what is the satisfaction of PE teachers? It is known that PE teachers face with many problems and stress about their duties in their professional lives. Identification of problems faced by PE teachers will play an important role in solving problems related to PE. Kul et al. (2018) stated that in order to be able to create a good learning environment, it is necessary to establish a good learning environment first and in order to be able to create this environment, it is necessary to first identify the problems faced by the PE teachers and to offer solutions.

The prestige of the teaching profession is often reflected in the satisfaction of the teachers themselves with the job. In the context of previous findings, the aim of this study is to find how physical and sports teachers in Slovakia evaluate their workload and financial evaluation and what are their complaints.

Methods

Participants

The research group consisted of PE teachers who teach this subject at several types of schools (primary schools, secondary schools - general focus, bilingual grammar schools, secondary vocational schools, united schools and others). A total of 312 teachers of physical and sports education in Slovakia were involved in the research. The numbers of men and women in our sample do not match. In this total number ($n=312$), 139 were men (44.6%) and 173 women (55.4%). In terms of individual types of schools, more than half were PE teachers from primary schools (52.9%), who were slightly more represented than teachers teaching at secondary schools (47.1%). In terms of age, the largest group (28.8%) were teachers aged 31-40. Less than one percent less (27.9%) were teachers aged 41-50. The smallest group is the oldest teachers aged 61 and over (9%). In our research group, there was not only beginning teachers with a length of practice of up to 5 years, who accounted for 20.8% of the total number, but also PE teachers with many years of practice and experience (30 years and more), who formed the largest group (21.2%) of the total.

Slovakia currently distinguish in terms of administrative division 8 self-governing regions, which are concentrated around the largest cities and differ in population, population density, age structure, natural and cultural specifics, as well as folklore customs. Each region consists of districts. There are currently 79 districts in Slovakia. The number of teachers participating in the research by individual regions and districts is shown in Figure 1. During the obtaining data an effort was to obtain the opinions of teachers from every region of Slovakia, which almost successful. Out of 79 districts, teachers from up to 70 districts are represented in our group.

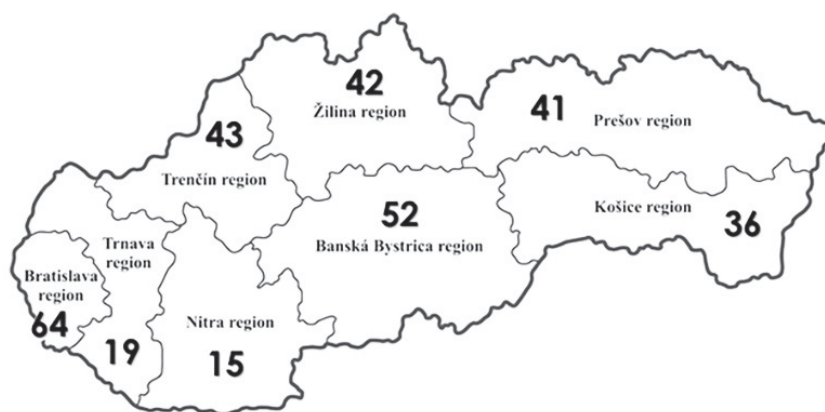


FIGURE 1. Number of teachers according to the region.

Procedures

A questionnaire and interview method was used to obtain the data. The questionnaire was compiled using research works dealing with the same or similar issues carried out in the recent past (Procházka, 2013; Fialová et al., 2014), supplemented with own questions and adjusted according to our goals and tasks to address the research problem. The questionnaire underwent an expert assessment by several experts working in the field and was divided into the following seven parts: 1) The position of PE among other subjects, the prestige of the teaching profession; 2) Problems of non-training students; 3) Number of PE hours, competitions, tournaments; 4) The issue of evaluation/classification of the subject PE; 5) Problems of spatial and material conditions; 6) Information and communication technologies; 7) Quality of teaching physical and sports education.

The total number of questions in the questionnaire was 45, with both closed and open answers, but paper bring only some results from our research regarding job satisfaction. The teachers' opinions was also supplemented with interviews.

The research was conducted during in the years 2019-2021 and data collection took place in the third phase from April 2019 to the end of 2019. The distribution and administration of the questionnaires was ensured at trainings within the project "Use of motivational factors in teaching physical and sports education in primary and secondary schools", which focused on educational activities in physical and sports education with an emphasis on the development of key competences, knowledge and skills of primary and secondary school teachers.

In all the cases, the questionnaires were filled anonymously, and participation in the study was entirely voluntary. This study was approved in advance by the Ethics committee of the Faculty of physical education and sport, Comenius University (no. 9/2019). All participants were informed about the aims, methods of data collection, and their use for research purposes.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequencies) were used to describe the basic features of the data, providing simple summaries about the measures to identify the opinions and complaints of physical education teachers concerning their job satisfaction and financial evaluation. The results of the questionnaires were evaluated by the percentage analysis and in the search for correlations between the selected indicators we applied the correlation analysis and Chi-square test (χ^2). P-values of ≤ 0.05 were considered statistically significant. The data were analyzed by using the statistics software SPSS 23.0. (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, v23.0 SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

Results

138 teachers (44.2%) stated complaints about the workload. However, the negative finding is that not a third of PE teachers (30.4%) are satisfied with the workload (answers are yes, absolutely yes). When comparing the answers of primary and secondary school teachers, we see (Figure 2) that 1% only more satisfaction with the workload was expressed by PE teachers from primary % schools (30.9%) then from second-

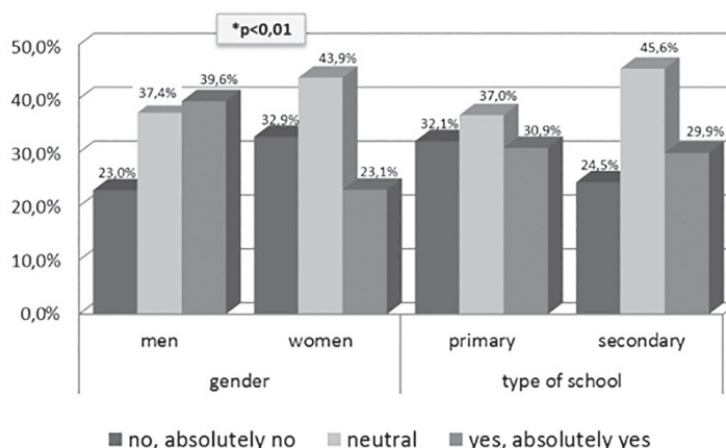


FIGURE 2. Satisfaction of PE teachers with workload.

ary schools (29.9%). There were no significant differences in terms of school type [$\chi^2(2, N=312)=3.02, p=0.221$]. In terms of gender, men (39.6%) expressed significantly greater satisfaction than women (23.1%) [$\chi^2(2, N=312)=10.3, p=0.006$]. It turned out that up to one third of women are not satisfied with their workload (32.9%). On the contrary, in the evaluation job satisfaction there were significant differences neither in terms of in terms of age [$\chi^2(4, N=312)=1.9, p=0.753$] nor school type, and school location.

There are almost no differences (Figure 3) in satisfaction

with salary evaluation between primary and secondary school teachers [$\chi^2(2, N=312)=0.15, p=0.926$]. Although women (12.7%) were slightly more satisfied than men (10.8%), we did not notice statistically significant differences in terms of gender [$\chi^2(2, N=312)=0.71, p=0.702$]. We did not notice much differences in terms of age either [$\chi^2(4, N=312)=1.68, p=0.795$]. The youngest teachers under 30 were the least satisfied with the salary (71.1%). The greatest dissatisfaction is among teachers in the Bratislava region, where more than $\frac{3}{4}$ teachers (76.6%) are not satisfied with the salary evaluation.

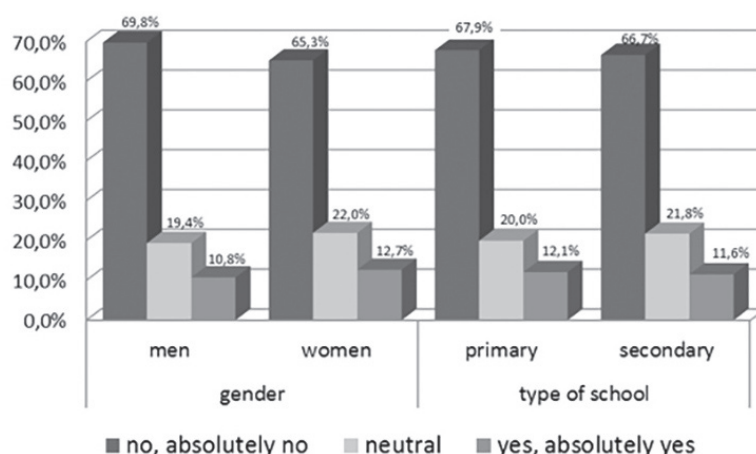


FIGURE 3. Satisfaction of physical education teachers with salary evaluation.

Discussion

Teachers undoubtedly have a key role to play in providing quality education. As the teaching of physical and sports education is a specific process that differs from other teaching processes at school, the teacher's job is also specific in terms of workload.

The basis of the results of this research is noticeable that most teachers are dissatisfied with their work and salary. Teachers are most annoyed by the amount of bureaucracy and administrative duties they have to perform during breaks, which they consider unnecessary. To a large extent, they also complain about overload and a number of outside teaching duties such as supervision in the corridors. Among the other most frequently mentioned complaints was their frequent participation in competitions, which affects the standard teaching of physical and sports education at school, and in addition, these competitions are often attended by a narrow circle of students. Their dissatisfaction with the workload is often related to the high number of students in the class. They also drew attention to high hours and overtime, which they consider to be inadequately assessed. On the other hand, teachers have complaints about the current number of PE hours, which they consider insufficient to manage the school curriculum. Some teachers also complain about the lack of space (learning in other areas such as the gym), high noise and, in particular, the high psychological demands and responsibility for health and safety during exercise.

Reservations for salary evaluation were specified in the questionnaire by up to 220 teachers. PE teachers have the greatest objection to the low evaluation of teachers, which in their opinion is financially underestimated, insufficient and underappreciated due to the work done. A significant number of teachers also stated that their evaluation is inadequate in comparison with other professions with a university degree,

or other EU or OECD countries. One of the PE teachers from a secondary vocational school remarked that pupils earn a teacher with an apprenticeship certificate in the same way as a teacher with a university degree himself.

Several teachers also said that in addition to working at school, they also had to work in the afternoon to improve their financial income, suggesting that they would earn more as coaches in less time. According to teachers, this is a really low ratio of salary to time they have to spend preparing for lessons, competitions, students during breaks and they state that their current salary does not reflect and adequately reward their overall effort, physical and mental effort, great responsibility for the safety of trainees and overall difficulty. Noordin & Jusoff (2009) state that salary have a positive effect on job satisfaction. In recent years, the number of PE teachers in Slovakia who were dissatisfied with their financial evaluation has increased, which is in line with our results. In 1992 it was 75% and in 2006 even 94.1% of PE teachers (Baginova et al., 1992; Lakóová, 2006). The international study TALIS 2018, which aimed to monitor the working environment and conditions of teachers and school principals, similarly showed that in Slovakia there is a low percentage of teachers (17.9%) who are satisfied with the salary evaluation. At the time of the study in 2018, on average, in OECD countries, 39.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they were satisfied with the salary they received for their work (OECD, 2020).

Findings suggest that satisfaction with the salary assessment is low even today (Figure 3), as only 11.2% of our research teachers are rather satisfied with their salary, and only 2 teachers (0.6%) from the whole group stated that they are completely satisfied with the salary. PE teachers clearly agreed that their current financial reward is not adequate for their teaching profession and is not a dignified reward for their

work in society, despite recent salary increases. Logically, they had the biggest complaint about their low salary and also drew attention to the problem of financing rewards during the hours they spend with students on extracurricular activities, especially ski courses or competitions, in which they participate or even organize themselves, but also the hours they have to devote to classroom, or by substituting other subjects and stating that these hours are not properly reimbursed.

The majority of teachers in OECD countries and in the TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) economies (90%) are satisfied with their work and most (91%) do not regret becoming a teacher (OECD, 2020). However, the findings of current research suggest that the attractiveness of this profession is relatively low in Slovakia and teachers perceive their profession from a public point of view rather negatively, as only 30.4% of physical education teachers are satisfied with their workload and only 11.8 teachers are sooner or completely satisfied with their salary. Topič and Mujanović (2012) achieved much more positive results in Slovenia, according to which job satisfaction of physical education teachers in Slovenia is generally at a very high level. The results of their study showed that Slovenian PE teachers are very satisfied with their current profession, but are more likely to expect their retirement due to the extension of their years of service. The authors also noted a statistically higher satisfaction with management in schools where the principal was a PE teacher compared to other schools where the principal taught other subjects.

In this study, a significant difference was found in the comparison of satisfaction level of male and female PE teachers. Male PE teachers job satisfaction levels were higher than female PE teachers. In similar studies (Topič & Mujanović, 2012; Hundito, 2015; Ünlü & Filiz, 2019), they stated that male PE teacher's job satisfaction level was higher than the level of females. This results was consistent with present study. However, in another study, Tajnia et al. (2014) determined that female PE teachers had higher job satisfaction than males did. As it was seen there were different results related to the job satisfaction according to gender. It was indicated that job satisfaction of male employees was mainly based on enthusiasm and dynamism as a characteristic of their earlier age phase. On the other hand, the job satisfaction of women was apparently based on the capability of quick recognition with the work content induced by the experience accumulated with age (Bekiari & Ntakou, 2018).

In the comparison of job satisfaction level of PE teachers with their current job considering their ages, there were not any significant differences. The findings of the present research

suggest that age did not affect the overall job satisfaction of PE teachers in Slovakia. However, some of the studies revealed the significant differences between age and job satisfaction (Tajnia et al., 2014; Bekiari & Ntakou, 2018). Bernabe et al. (2016) stated that experienced teachers aged 45 years or older had higher levels of job satisfaction. In our research, we did not find differences in the job satisfaction of teachers in terms of age.

There are some variables that provide satisfaction for physical education teachers such as having job security, going on vacation, being physically active during the PE lessons, and facilitating satisfactory lifestyle (Bizet et al., 2010). Job satisfaction is thus a very important factor, as it is the basis for maintaining quality PE classes and well-designed PE programs, although there are many factors responsible for (dis) satisfaction with workload. Therefore, preventive measures should be developed to increase teachers' satisfaction with the workload, where, in addition to the financial area, promotional and educational opportunities could be improved. On this basis, it can be stated that the current financial evaluation of teachers does not meet the qualification requirements of their profession or its importance for society. At the same time, it has a negative impact on the attractiveness of the profession. This can result not only in low interest in the teaching profession, but also in the abandonment of it by those who already practice it. We are of the opinion that countries' education systems should offer their employees salary conditions that are also attractive in relation to other jobs that require similar qualifications.

This study included PE teachers who were working in public schools in Slovakia. There were also PE teachers who were working in private schools. These PE teachers were not included in this study. Also, the sample of the study consisted of Slovakia PE teachers may not be comparable to other contexts or countries. In the research, only the satisfaction with workload and with salary evaluation of PE teachers was examined and compared according to gender, age and type of school variables. In further research, it can be examined comparatively with different branches of teachers and variables including; working hours, teaching experience, working conditions and working environment.

Future research should include factor analysis and bigger, more representative sample. PE teachers' job satisfaction should be also investigated through longitudinal study. In the future, we recommend comparing the state of PE before the pandemic, during, resp. after its completion, and therefore we recommend repeating similar research and watching how the corona virus pandemic affected teachers' opinions and their view of job satisfaction.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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