TEACHERS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' satisfaction with their professional activities. 272 teachers who have classes in physical education and sport in the Bulgarian school system participated in the research study. The teachers have different levels of professional qualification. A modified questionnaire was applied, with 22 items related to the satisfaction with the teaching profession. The statistical methods used for the research were: variance analysis, factor analysis (principal component analysis), non-parametric Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests.

The following four factors related to the satisfaction of the profession were identified: organization and professional environment, social working conditions, reforms in education, education and personal development. The items with highest values were: the duration of holidays, professional relations with colleagues, professional relations with the school management, and professional relations with parents. The items with lowest values were: the amount of the salary, the professional relations with the Ministry of education and science, the prestige of the profession, and the reforms in education. Factors related to the internal educational environment have the greatest impact on the satisfaction of the surveyed teachers.

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Introduction

In modern socio-economic conditions, the teaching profession occupies a significant place and performs important social functions. In recent years, there has been considerable interest in professional activities at schools related to increasing teachers' salaries and providing more opportunities for qualification of the educators in the country. In this relation additional incentives for professional work were included. The Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science accepted and approved the learning programs for all levels of the educational system. The quality of school education was based on the State Educational Standards (new standards since 2016) with reference to the learning content, the evaluation system, the professional qualification of teachers and the provision of the entire process of education at school. The adoption of a number of normative documents regulating the improvement of teachers' professional qualification and their career development has helped to increase the prestige of the teaching profession. In 2016 the new Law for Pre-school and School Education (2016) was passed. Improving the quality of education was amongst the priorities of European scientific and cultural policy. Consequently, Regulation № 12 (from 01 September 2016) for the status and professional development of teachers, principals and other pedagogical specialists was adopted (2016). In-service education was given a compulsory status with this Regulation. The improvement of the qualification of pedagogical specialists was to be carried out by specialized service units - higher schools and scientific organizations, or training organizations whose training programs have been approved by the Ministry of Education and Science (Mileva, 2018).

Neminska (2018), on the basis of her own teaching and training experience, made a normative, methodological, and motivational analysis of in-service teacher training in the country for the period between 2013 and 2018. The aim was to study the relevance of the topics for continuing qualification and their eligibility. A positive attitude of mentor teachers toward partnership with a higher school in the context of life-long learning and their own professional development was established (Ivanova & Ivanova, 2018).

According to Doncheva (2016), it was necessary to consider the psychological and pedagogical characteristics of the teacher's personality and the specific aspects of their pedagogical activity, determining the significance of the pedagogical profession, and the meaning attached to the concept of "teacher's professionalism" (Doncheva, 2016).

The new social conditions and normative documents raised the question of teachers' satisfaction with the profession and the factors that influence it.

Teachers' satisfaction was analyzed by different authors. Gospodinov (2013) provided research in this area with 293 teachers from 14 secondary schools in 4 different cities and towns. He reported a relatively good level of satisfaction on the part of the respondents. The level of "general work

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satisfaction” was above average, the relative share of respondents “satisfied to a small extent” and of “totally unsatisfied” was small. Among the individual types of satisfaction from work, the highest value was that of “relationships with the students”, and the lowest - that of “the payment”. Among the factors influencing work satisfaction of the teachers in the research, the most important were “the payment of their work”, their “participation in school management” and “the motivation of students to learn” (Gospodinov, 2013).

Ivanov (1997) analysed the results of a study on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. An average level of satisfaction with the profession was established. The author stated that social and demographic factors had different effects on teachers’ job satisfaction in Bulgaria in 1988 and in 1995.

Kriviradeva (2019) presented results from an empirical study among teachers from all over the country about their satisfaction with professional labor. A questionnaire for the evaluation of labor satisfaction was used in the study, developed by Radoslavova and Velichkov (2005).

Results from the study of pedagogical optimism were similar to the phenomenon of teachers’ satisfaction. Shivacheva-Pineda (2018) established a relatively high level of indicators of pedagogical optimism among specialists in different positions and with different pedagogical experience, as well as among young teachers. The author found that optimism in the pedagogical profession corresponded to pedagogical goals and tasks.

Tosheva (2012) examined the problem of teacher’s burnout and its reflection on the satisfaction of the work and teacher’s health, as well as on the turnover in the field of education.

Kostova (2014) investigated the relation between stress and teachers’ satisfaction. The author stated that one of the most significant consequences of stress was its negative impact on work satisfaction. The relationship between satisfaction and stress was two-way. Stress in the work environment caused a decrease in satisfaction, and low satisfaction in turn became an additional source of stress (Kostova, 2014).

According to other researchers, the satisfaction with the professional activity was connected with the personal definitions of success and failure (Zhelyazkova-Koynova, 1996).

Satisfaction with the professional activity directly affects the quality of pedagogical work and the achievement of good results in the educational sphere. We can assume that there are certain factors which have a significant influence on satisfaction with the teachers’ profession and professional activity of primary school teachers and physical education teachers.

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to examine teachers’ satisfaction with their professional activities. A total of 272 teachers who had classes in physical education and sport in the Bulgarian school educational system participated in the research. 251 (85.7%) participants were primary teachers who taught physical education and sport together with the other school subjects from the 1st to the 4th grade. 21 (14.3%) of the respondents were specialists in physical education and in sport at all educational levels.

It has to be noted that 96% of all teachers were female and only 4% were male. In this area the feminization of the profession was very strong.

The teachers had different levels of professional qualification. 107 (39.3%) had a high level of professional qualification, 97 (35.7%) had an average level of qualification, and 68 (25%) were without professional qualification.

The surveyed teachers were at the age of 21 to 65. 70.2% were between 41 and 65 years old and 29.8% were between 21 and 40 years old. The primary school teachers and the physical education teachers had different years of pedagogical practice. 57% of the respondents had over twenty years of pedagogical practice at school. 43% of the teachers in our study had been working at school for between one and twenty years.

The largest group included teachers working in large towns – 49.6%. The smallest group comprised the relative share of teachers working in the capital Sofia – 12.2%. The rest of the respondents worked in small towns and villages – 38.2%. All surveyed teachers had a higher educational degree – Master/Doctor (83.1%) or Bachelor (16.9%).

A modified questionnaire (Tosheva, 2012) was applied, with 22 items related to the satisfaction with the teaching profession. The Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 – lowest level and 5 – highest level) for evaluation of different levels of teachers' satisfaction was applied. The items were focused on many aspects of the profession correlated to the teachers' satisfaction.

The statistical methods used for the research were: alternative analysis, variance analysis (mean and standard deviation), factor analysis (principal component analysis), and Cronbach's Alpha, non-parametric Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H tests.

Results and Discussion

The factor analysis as the principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was applied. The following four factors related to the satisfaction of the profession were identified that explained 59.8% of the total variance:

- The first factor "Organization and professional environment" explained 40.1% of the total variance
- The second factor "Social working conditions" explained 8.7% of the total variance
- The third factor "Reforms in education" – 6% of total variance
- The fourth factor "Education and personal development" – 4.9% of total variance.

Results of the factor analysis after Varimax rotation were presented in Figure 1.

The analysis determined that the whole test had very good psychometric characteristics - Cronbach's $\alpha = .927$. The first scale named "Organization and professional environment" had very high reliability - Cronbach's $\alpha = .901$. The second scale "Social working conditions" had high level of Cronbach's $\alpha = .822$. The scales "Reforms in education" and "Education and personal development" had similar levels of Cronbach's $\alpha = .775$ and $.771$.

After data processing it was clear that the teachers were most satisfied with *the duration of holidays, the professional relations with colleagues, the professional relations with the school management, and the professional relations with parents* (Table 1). It was a very positive fact that the items related to *internal educational environment* and *interpersonal relations with different subjects* had the greatest impact on the satisfaction of the surveyed teachers.

Good communication with the school management has been assessed as a basic precondition for teachers to conduct an effective educational process. Work and cooperation were an external factor (according to Herzberg), but it had a significant impact on the teacher because it redefined the organizational climate of the teaching school staff. The results were similar to the data for the satisfaction of primary and pre-school teachers received by Kriviradeva (2019). This could be explained with the social character of the teacher's profession and the role of different kinds of communication for the successful pedagogical activity.

The items evaluated at an average level of teachers' satisfaction were connected with the organization of the pedagogical activity, such as *the duration of working day, the weekly schedule, the working conditions and facilities for educational activity, and the general organization of work at school* (Table 1). Therefore, in the future it will be necessary to improve the organization of school activities and to optimize the distribution of work activities of primary school and PE teachers.

A study conducted by the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (Perspectives on teaching and learning, 2015) revealed that 87% of the working day of teachers in Bulgaria was engaged in teaching and training. The remaining 13% included administrative tasks (5%) and classroom maintenance (8%). An average of 18 hours per week was devoted to teaching, 8 hours for lessons and 5 hours for pupils' assessment. The data on average values of the surveyed total of 100 000 teachers from 34 countries were similar to those of Bulgarian teachers: 38 hours of work weekly, 19 hours per week for teaching, 7 hours for preparation of lessons, 5 hours for evaluation and 2 hours for administrative work, conversations with parents, etc.

It was a fact, that in many Bulgarian schools different organizational problems have existed. Very often the primary school and PE teachers had to adapt their professional activity to the schedule and to the working conditions of a separate school and school level. An average level of satisfaction with the profession was also established by Ivanov (1997) twenty four and thirty years ago.

The items with lowest values were *the amount of payment, the professional relations with the Ministry of education and science, the prestige of the profession, and the reforms in education*. This was considered as a natural result from the current social and economic situation in the country. The constant changes in the educational system and the tendency towards continuous reforms in the educational sphere had a negative effect on the prestige of the teachers' profession and caused a state of frustration among teachers in Bulgaria. A low level of satisfaction with the payment in the pedagogical profession was also found in the study of Gospodinov (2013).

The application of non-parametrical Mann-Whitney (U) and Kruskal-Wallis (H) tests showed no impact of all tested personal and demographic criteria on the amount of payment and the amount of holidays in connection to teachers' satisfaction.

It was interesting to note that the prestige of the teacher's profession was higher for teachers up to thirty years of age ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.15$), and decreased as age increased ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 1.02$). The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test were significant, $H = 17.16$, $df = 3$, $p = .001$. The prestige of the profession was higher for teachers without a qualification degree ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.30$). Satisfaction with teachers' prestige was lower with highly qualified pedagogues ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.02$), $H = 12.00$, $df = 2$, $p = .002$. This result could be explained with young people's greater desire for professional activity and realization.

According to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test on the criterion *Relationship with the Ministry of education and science*, there was no difference in the level of satisfaction between teachers in the capital and teachers from the other towns and villages, $H = .28$, $df = 2$, $p = .860$).

Figure 1: Explanation of factors connected to teachers' satisfaction with their professional activity

Table 1: Significance of different statements for teachers' satisfaction

No.	Statements	M	SD
1	amount of payment	3,01	,96
2	duration of holidays	4,13	,91
3	duration of working day	3,30	1,22
4	weekly schedule	3,44	1,19
5	social and health insurance and other social benefits	2,86	1,24
6	prestige of teachers' profession	2,19	1,11
7	possibility to participate in education and personal development of youth	3,46	1,11
8	possibility for expression of personal qualities on your working place	3,70	1,06
9	working conditions and facilities for educational activity	3,38	1,09
10	general organization of work at school	3,50	1,08
11	relations with colleagues	3,93	1,05
12	relations with school management	3,93	1,11
13	relations with the Ministry of education and science	2,58	1,20
14	relations with parents and with school board	3,78	1,07
15	opportunity for career development in the profession	3,36	1,17
16	opportunity for enhancing the qualification	3,71	1,11
17	style of school management	3,48	1,26
18	evaluation of school management of your work	3,94	1,00
19	participation in taking decisions for school work	3,47	1,20
20	reforms in education	2,16	1,13
21	combining your work with personal and family engagements	3,03	1,16
22	the work as a whole	3,70	,97

Source: Authors

Teachers with the highest professional degree were more dissatisfied with their relationship with the Ministry of education and science ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.14$). Probably because of their higher requirements in view of the high level of professional qualification achieved. Less experienced teachers were also more satisfied with their relationship with the Ministry of education and science ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.21$), $H = 13.77$, $df = 2$, $p = .001$. This was due to their preliminary attitudes and their predisposition to professional satisfaction.

After processing the data and applying the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test, it was found that teachers from the capital city were more satisfied with the duration of the working day ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.09$), compared to the other respondents ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.21$), $H = 6.72$, $df = 2$, $p = .035$. This is probably due to the more flexible organization of the working day in most schools of the capital city and the optimal combination of regular classes with extracurricular activities.

Teachers in the capital city were more satisfied with the reforms in education ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.18$) with comparison to teachers from small towns ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 1.17$), $H = 6.90$, $df = 2$, $p = .032$. This was probably because of more information on educational policy and a better relationship with the Ministry of education and science and public educational institutions.

Conclusions

The satisfaction of teachers who teach physical education and sport at school in Bulgaria is a natural result of the social and economic conditions in the country.

The adoption of new regulations aimed at improving teachers' qualification and payment has led to greater satisfaction of educators.

Proper school organization and good professional relations and environment have the strongest impact on satisfaction within the teaching profession.

The low prestige of the profession and the frequent reforms in the educational system of Bulgaria have a negative impact on the satisfaction with pedagogical work.

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