

PSYCHO-HYGIENIC ASPECTS OF TEACHING PROFESSION

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Abstract: *Psycho-hygiene as a prerequisite for mental balance of teachers, preserving psycho-hygienic principles and healthy lifestyle, scaled questionnaire method, qualitative interpretation of the findings.*

Keywords: *psycho-hygiene, stress, stressor, daily routine, lifestyle, healthy diet aspects, teacher personality.*

Teacher's performance is considerably influenced by personal satisfaction and the degree of mental stability of every teacher. Teacher's work is among the very demanding and stressful professions. Mental stability of teachers has a strong influence on children psyche, mainly at primary school level. The teacher influences pupils' motivation for learning, stimulates their cognitive processes and entirely affects productivity, relations in the class and creating optimal emotional climate.

Long term research of primary school teachers that has been carried out by the Psychology department of the Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, reveals unsatisfactory situation and a high degree of stress in most educators. For this reason, observing basic psycho-hygienic principles as one of the existing tools for stress prevention and control of its negative consequences.

We focused our attention on how primary school teachers keep the basic psycho-hygienic principles. The main task was to get an idea about psycho-hygienic aspects of primary school teachers. We wanted to find out how teachers observe the principles of healthy diet and lifestyle. The research was carried out using non- standardized questionnaire with a quantitative variant of scaled close questions.

Scaled questions of the questionnaire dealt with the following issues:

- 1) Daily routine, time management
- 2) Sleep and relaxation
- 3) Physical activities
- 4) Diet

5) Stress

6) Job

Particular questions from every area were processed in both qualitative and quantitative way. The results represent some kind of a probe into primary school teachers' life.

As most teaching staff are women, the respondents were mainly female, aged between 31 and 45. From all the addressed primary school teachers 125 responded. When analyzing the results we drew on the areas the questions dealt with.

1. Daily routine, time management

Most teachers think about their daily activities and try to keep the daily routine. S. Sládková (2007) states that teachers have a regular daily routine and an everyday pace of activities that have a favourable influence on the entire organism. A vast majority of teachers divide their tasks according to their importance and try to use effectively the spare time during the day. Unfortunately they do not use time for recovery and relaxation.

2. Sleep and relaxation

Teachers do not have problems with regular sleep and falling asleep, which is a pleasing finding. During the day they do not have time for a nap and often only little time for active relaxation. It can be stated that teachers of this age group are not stressed by insomnia or interrupted sleep. They mostly sleep 6 to 8 hours per day and try to keep the optimal time and environment for sleeping.

3. Physical activity

Physical activity is an important activity and a suitable compensation mainly for primary school teachers. Sport or physical activity help the organism to recover and are a pleasant alternative for weekends. Almost half of the respondents do hiking, cycling, running or skiing in winter.

4. Nourishment

It is obvious from the processed answers that most respondents have good eating habits and try to keep the proper liquid intake. More than one half of them eats fresh fruit and vegetables every day and try to reduce the intake of fat. A vast majority of respondents avoid excessive coffee and alcohol drinking. Almost one half of the teachers admit that they have lunch in the stressing environment of the school canteen. Many of them also do not have regular breakfast (M. Šnajdrová, 2006).

5. Stress

Mental strain and stress are felt by one third of the questioned teachers. The most common stressors are:

Too many job tasks (mainly before the term end), behavioral problems in the class, pupils with disabilities, organizational changes at school system. Work place relations are not stressful, problems in human relations are in the sphere of teachers private life.

6. Job

It is pleasing that the addressed teachers are satisfied with their profession, they like their job and feel job satisfaction. Most primary school teachers have good relationships with both pupils and teachers. Also the relations between colleagues and the school management are perceived as positive.

Conclusion

It can be generally said that observing psycho-hygienic aspects in primary school teachers' job is on a satisfactory level. Very good results were obtained in the field of professional performance and in human relations at the working place. Improvement can be made in incorporating relaxation into the daily routine, in having regular breakfast and finding a quiet place for lunch. Some teachers work in a time pressure and do their job tasks in their personal free time.

Mental stability is one of the basic conditions for success and satisfaction of the teacher. One of the means to reach it is observing healthy lifestyle, which should not be done only intuitively, but thoughtfully and purposefully. Regular application of psycho-hygienic principles should become a part of primary school teachers' lifestyle.

PSYCHOHYGIENICKÉ ASPEKTY UČITELSKÉ PROFESE

Abstrakt: Psychohygiena jako předpoklad duševní rovnováhy učitelů, dodržování psychohygienických zásad a správné životosprávy, metoda škálového dotazníku, kvalitativní interpretace zjištěných výsledků.

Klíčová slova: psychohygiena, stres, stresor, denní režim, životní styl, aspekty životosprávy, osobnost učitele.