



PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT TEACHERS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL WORK

N. Kostova*

Department of Theory of Physical Education, National Sports Academy „Vassil Levski“,
Sofia, Bulgaria,

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the level of satisfaction with professional work among teachers of physical education and sport and those teaching other general subjects. Methods: The following scientific research methods were applied: a questionnaire on satisfaction with the pedagogical work, variation, and comparative analysis. Results: a tendency towards high levels of satisfaction among teachers in physical education and sport and those teaching general educational subjects, the empirical research results showed high satisfaction with the time commitment. It is indisputable that teachers' professional work is with a cause aimed at building students' mental, physical, intellectual, and emotional development, which inevitably places the teaching profession among those of high social importance. Therefore, for teachers to fully fulfill their work commitments, they must feel satisfied with their professional work in all aspects and dimensions. Conclusion: Based on the analyzed data, it was possible to outline the main characteristics of professional work satisfaction among teachers (men and women) and to look for differences depending on the subject they teach.

Key words: educational system; subject taught; physical education and sport; general education subject; job satisfaction; teachers.

INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that teachers' professional work is with a cause aimed at building students' mental, physical, intellectual, and emotional development, which inevitably places the teaching profession among those of high social importance. Therefore, for teachers to fully fulfill their work commitments, they must feel satisfied with their professional work in all aspects and dimensions.

Being a subject in the Bulgarian education system, "Physical Education and Sport" is defined as a specific education activity in which students, in terms of physical activity, build themselves as individuals and improve their healthy lifestyles (1). In this sense, the social significance of

physical education and sport determines the importance of a teacher's pedagogical activity, role, and contribution to achieving the goal and solving the tasks that are the basis of the educational process (2).

Various sectors of the public environment have suffered in the conditions of modern everyday life and the changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic (3). The education system was one of the most affected areas, with negative consequences today. The imposed changes made teachers in various subjects, including physical education and sport, face unexpected challenges. The specifics of the school subject of physical education and sport, where a motor activity is added to the cognitive one, provoke significant manifestations of anxiety and tension arising from the nature of work (4). In this aspect, some researchers and authors determine that the thus-created situation and 'new reality' have inevitably influenced the teachers' satisfaction with the pedagogical activity (5). I.

*Correspondence to: *Nadezhda Borisova Kostova, Department of Theory of Physical Education, National Sports Academy „Vassil Levski“, Sofia, Bulgaria, Studentski grad, floor 4, office 413, phone: 00359887714656, e-mail: sugareva_n@abv.bg*

Tosheva supports this by stating that the specifics of the action performed, the conditions of work, and its organization are objective prerequisites for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with professional work (6).

There are many definitions of job satisfaction, but despite this difference of opinion, researchers are united around the idea that it reflects both the momentary and the overall feeling employees experience about their work. M. Radoslavova defines satisfaction as 'a generalized affective reaction of the worker to the objective properties of the specific activity and the work environment' (7, pp. 23). Other authors define it as a personal attitude and emotional reflection of individual aspects of the professional activity, namely the substantive essence, conditions, and situations. (8)

Teachers' satisfaction with their professional work can be considered in different aspects. Many multifaceted factors determine job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Some of the factors are determined by the person's internal needs related to their desire for acknowledgment and professional growth, and others - by interpersonal relationships with people with higher positions, colleagues, the attitude of parents and students, the profession's social status, financial remuneration, working conditions, and others (6, 9-11).

Various studies in this direction establish the shortage of teachers as a global problem. It is attributed to the low satisfaction levels due to the different social and economic challenges this profession faces (12). That is why studies on this area to determine the main characteristics of satisfaction and its manifestations are essential for reaching adequate solutions to improve working conditions and build a strategic framework for ensuring a safe and favorable school environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study aims to determine the teachers' level of satisfaction with their professional work by defining differences by gender and pedagogical experience. It was done among physical education and sport teachers and others teaching other general education subjects.

Tasks of the study:

1. Research and theoretical analysis of literary sources.

2. Determination of the level of satisfaction among teachers by outlining the main characteristics in terms of gender, teaching experience, and subject taught.
3. Statistical processing of the obtained results and their presentation through figures for better visualization.

Eighty-two teachers from different schools in Sofia were **subjected to** the research - 56 women (68.3%) and 26 men (31.7%). Their distribution depending on the subject taught was as follows: 60 teachers in physical education and sport (men and women) (73.2%), and the remaining 22 (26.8%) (men and women) in general education subjects in secondary school. In terms of teaching experience, the distribution of teachers was as follows: the most significant was the percentage of teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience (34.1%), more specifically 28 of the researched teachers, 27 teachers with an experience of 11-20 years (32.9%), 14 teachers were with experience of 6-10 years (17.1%) and those with the least pedagogical experience of 1-5 years were 13 (15.9%) of all teachers studied.

Methods of the scientific research:

1. *Questionnaire on satisfaction with pedagogical work of I. Tosheva* (6). The questionnaire consists of 15 items determining the main factors of satisfaction, which are divided into four subscales: ('Realization and development,' 'Relationships' (work-person), 'Time commitment,' and 'Rewards'). The questionnaire has 15 items determining the main factors of satisfaction, which are divided into four subscales: ('Realization and development,' 'Relationships' (work-person), 'Time commitment,' and 'Rewards'). The questionnaire also includes an item on overall job satisfaction. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to evaluate the items with options from 'I am not satisfied at all' to 'I am completely satisfied.' The questionnaire has good psychometric indicators.
2. *Methods for statistical processing of empirical data and analysis of results: variation analysis* (to establish minimum, maximum, mean values and standard deviation) and nonparametric tests (Mann-Whitney; Kruskal-Wallis) for independent samples, with significance level $p < 0.05$. Calculations were

processed using the statistical program SPSS Statistics 23.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the empirical data regarding teachers' satisfaction with their professional work is represented by the following indicators:

- Realization and Development - related on the one hand to the quality of education and teachers' influence on students' personal growth, and on the other hand to the professional development and qualification of the teachers themselves;
- Relationships - concerning all participants in the school and educational environment;
- Time commitment - distribution of academic work in terms of working days, vacations, and holidays;
- Rewards – working conditions, pay, socio-economic status of the teaching profession, authority, and prestige. Overall satisfaction was also analyzed, representing a set of all manifestations (items – establishing the levels of satisfaction).

Figure 1 presents the results of the mean values' distribution and their comparison depending on

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the respondents' gender. The analysis of the results comparing the satisfaction of the surveyed women and men - (Mann-Whitney test) showed no statistically significant differences about the ranked subscales, namely: ($p=0.143$ for Rewards; $p=0.494$ for Time commitment; $p=0.552$ for Relationships; $p=0.734$ for Development and Realization and $p=0.819$ for overall satisfaction with all the studied items).

It should be noted that, although insignificant, differences were observed regarding the following items: **Relationships** with colleagues, management, parents, etc., with mean values for women ($M=3.32$; $SD=1.16$) and men ($M=3.24$; $SD=0.91$), **Time commitment** for women ($M=3.58$; $SD=1.01$) and men ($M=3.45$; $SD=0.91$), where the indicators are higher in favor of women. Regarding the indicators for **Rewards**, higher satisfaction levels were found in men, where the mean values were ($M=2.71$; $SD=0.96$), while in women, they were ($M=2.39$; $SD=1.02$). Other authors have found similar results in studies on physical education and sport teachers' satisfaction (6, 9, 12).

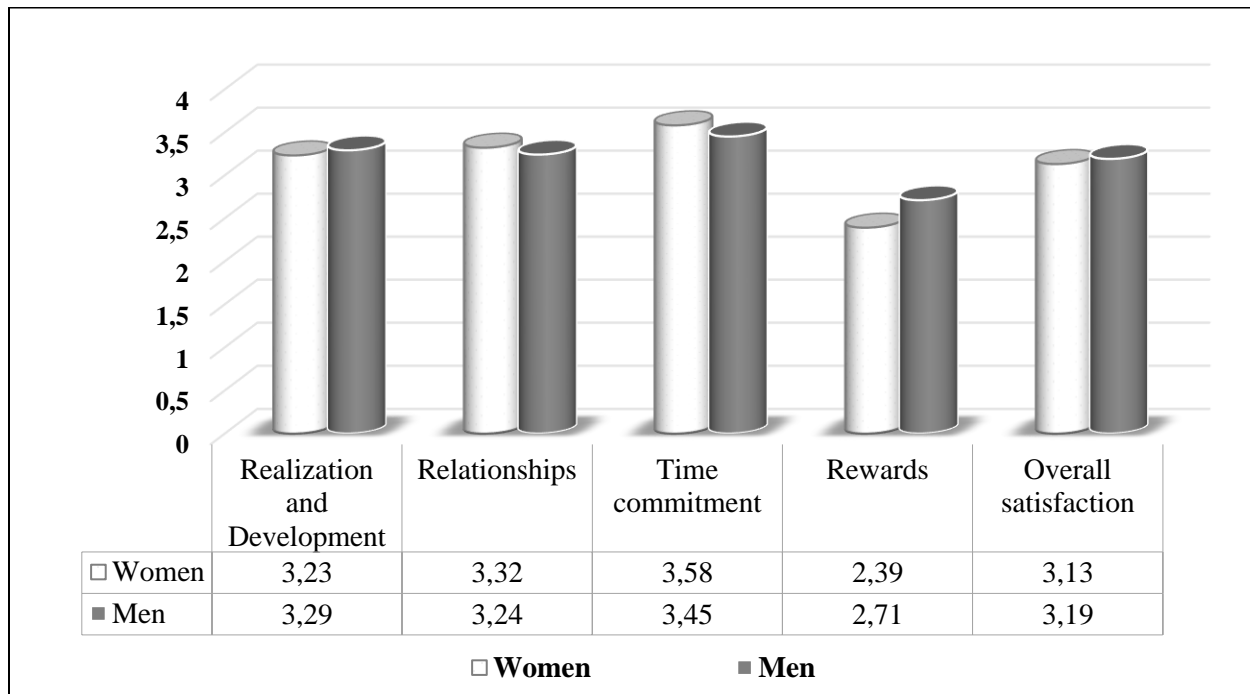


Figure 1. Mean values of teachers' satisfaction by gender

Logically, the higher satisfaction levels on the time commitment subscale were shown by women depending on their social role as mothers and housewives and the related duties in the family environment. The opportunity of having more free time, expressed in extended leave and numerous vacations, is a prerequisite and a chance to fulfill family commitments. The results for relationship indicators were also of no surprise. The feminization of the teaching profession largely explains these higher levels of satisfaction. Women (teachers) express their

feelings and emotions, looking for social support and empathy, which is precisely manifested in relationships with other colleagues - teachers, principals, and school staff.

The next part of the analysis shows the difference in satisfaction levels among physical education and sport teachers and those teaching other general education subjects. It is important to note that, in contrast to the results by gender, the statistically significant differences here are clearly outlined on all ranked subscales (**Figure 2**).

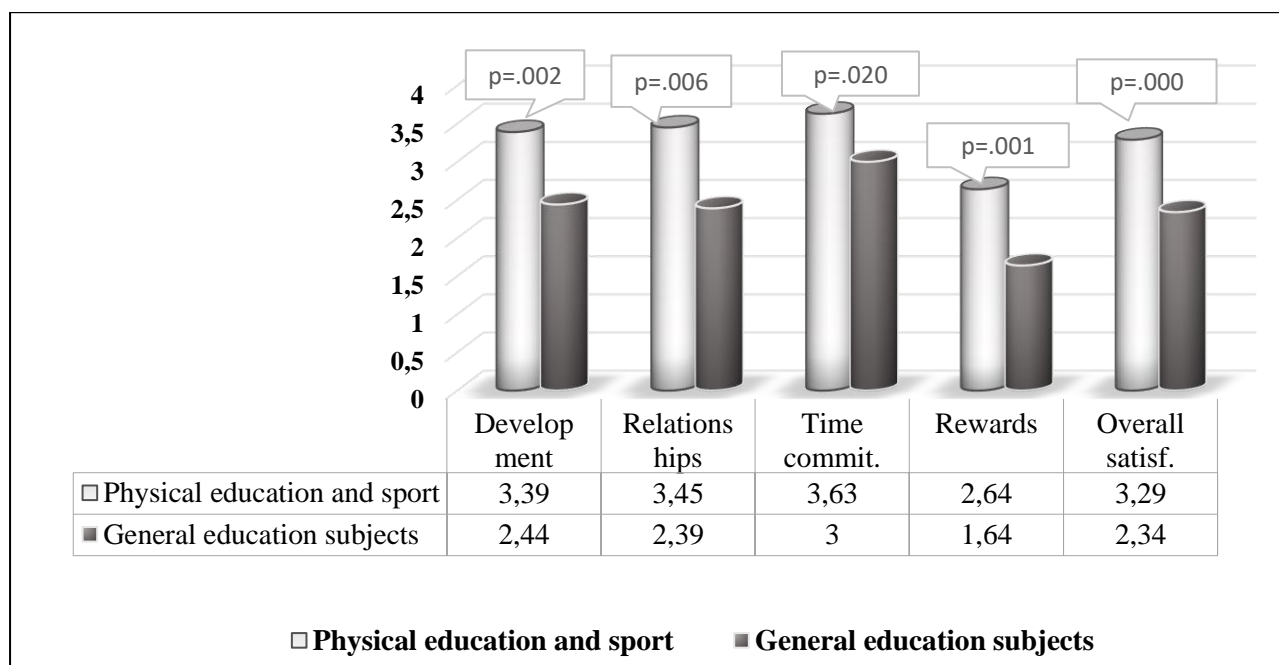


Figure 2. Mean values of teachers' satisfaction depending on the subject taught

Time commitment, expressed in the length of the working day, the weekly schedule of educational employees, and the number of vacations, was outlined with the highest satisfaction value among physical education teachers. The analyzed indicators have a mean value ($M=3.63$ and $SD=0.98$) for physical education and sport teachers and ($M=3.00$ and $SD=0.80$) for those teaching other subjects, at a significance level of $p=0.020$. These differences can be attributed to the peculiarities of the education activity and the specifics of physical education. The expected results and their evaluation in the physical education and sport subject mainly occur during the school hours established according to the weekly schedule. Unlike their colleagues, physical education teachers do not have to check and evaluate tests, projects, and other tasks set for

students' homework. Due to the significant amount of administrative and teaching commitment, the students' work mentioned above often has to be checked and assessed at home, which appears to be the reason behind the lower satisfaction with time commitment among the teachers in other general education subjects.

Significant differences were also found regarding the relationships related to good work organization at school, collegiality and understanding among teachers and management, non-teaching staff, the school board, and dialogue with students and parents. For physical education teachers, the mean values are ($M=3.45$ and $SD=1.00$), and for their colleagues, ($M=2.39$ and $SD=1.13$) with a significance level of $p=0.006$. When comparing the results for the subscale

'Realization and Development,' physical education teachers with values ($M=3.39$ and $SD=0.83$) again demonstrate higher satisfaction levels than teachers of other subjects ($M=2.44$ and $SD=0.87$) with a significance level of $p=0.002$. The opportunity for the career development of pedagogical specialists is essential here. In this regard, sports teachers have an excellent chance to increase their qualification level in the physical education system (13). The situation is similar concerning the total value of satisfaction, where the statistically significant difference is supported by ($p=.000$). In the subscale 'Rewards' concerning teachers' satisfaction with labor remuneration and social benefits, teacher authority, and working conditions, significant differences in terms of satisfaction were found again in favor of physical education and sport teachers. This can be explained by the theoretical and practical implementation of the sports pedagogues' education activity. The learning material is perceived through the students' physical activity and games, accompanied by good emotions during the lessons. These are a

prerequisite for a different and, at the same time, appropriate environment for personal development, improvement of individual qualities, and interpersonal relations of students in the conditions of motor-cognitive activity.

No statistically significant differences were found in the analysis of the empirical data regarding the distribution of teachers depending on their pedagogical experience (Kruskal-Wallis H test, at $p=0.123$ 'Realization and Development'; $p=0.207$ 'Satisfaction in general'; $p=0.304$ 'Rewards'; $p=0.348$ 'Relationships' and $p=0.812$ 'Time commitment').

However, the relatively higher satisfaction values in all subscales among teachers with the least experience (from 1 to 5 years) make an impression. The results here were as follows: the highest mean values for 'Time commitment' ($M=3.76$ and $SD=0.83$), 'Relationships' ($M=3.71$ and $SD=1.08$), and 'Realization and Development' ($M=3.67$ and $SD=0.63$) (**Figure 3**).

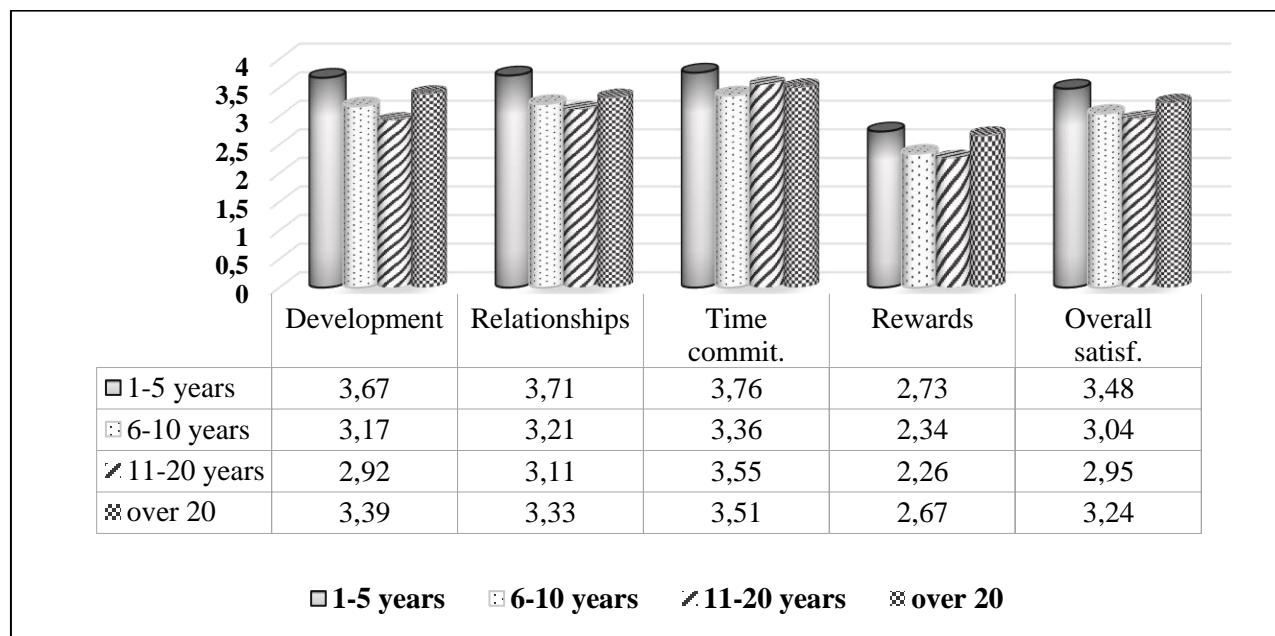


Figure 3. Mean values of teachers' satisfaction depending on their pedagogical experience

When studying the dynamics of satisfaction depending on teaching experience, a downward trend was clearly outlined in all its manifestations among teachers with work experience of 11 to 20 years. This period may be critical to the challenges, difficulties, and pressures of labor

commitments in the teaching profession. The satisfaction of teachers who had been teaching for more than 20 years was also of interest, where an increase in the values of all indicators was found. Other authors also found similar results (12).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research and the results obtained, some specifics of teachers' satisfaction with their professional work were outlined. When distributed according to the subject, higher satisfaction levels were found among physical education and sport teachers. Statistically significant differences on all ranked subscales supported this, namely - professional realization and career development, relationships with colleagues, management, school board, parents and students, time commitment related to the length of the working day, and the number of vacations, conditions of work, prestige, and authority of the teaching profession. In contrast, no statistically significant differences were found regarding teachers' satisfaction distributed by gender and teaching experience.

Future studies on teachers' satisfaction with their work will further enrich the research in the specific field. In this regard, differences could be looked for in terms of educational level and qualification, the place of teaching, and the changes that occurred in the field of education during the 'Covid-19' pandemic and their impact on satisfaction. They could outline the main parameters for searching and finding adequate solutions to increase job satisfaction and the effectiveness of work and professional activity among teachers, particularly physical education and sport teachers.

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