



WEALTH AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose. The purpose of the study was to assess the perceived quality of life of physical education teachers depending on their standard of living. **Methods.** The study included 287 graduates of the University Schools of Physical Education in Poznań and Wrocław, of whom 165 were men and 122 were women aged 40 to 60 years. The perceived quality of life was assessed on the basis of Kowalik's Quality of Life Questionnaire. The relationship between the perceived quality of life and the standard of living was then established, with statistical analysis performed using two stratum weights (k), the Mann-Whitney U -test and Spearman's rank correlation (r). **Results.** The majority of the studied participants positively assessed their lives, with no significant differentiation found between genders in their satisfaction in various spheres of life. However, only half of the respondents were satisfied by their level of income. A higher standard of life was found to be linked to higher life satisfaction, where the level of wealth significantly differentiated only in the perceived quality of life in the studied women. **Conclusions.** The surveyed graduates were found to be a very homogenous group of professionals in terms of their quality of life level. Only financial status was found to significantly differentiate in the level of satisfaction of the surveyed women.

Key words: quality of life, wealth, the physical education teachers

Introduction

A sense of the quality of life is a complex measure of the subjective psychological well-being of an individual. There can be no doubt that every person wants to feel fulfilled, happy and experience only happy moments in life. However, this satisfaction can be derived from various parts of life. Hence, more is being written and said about the aspect of the quality of life, but difficulties arise when one attempts to define this concept in relation to a specific individual or social group. Generally, the World Health Organization [1] outlines the quality of life as an individual's perception of their life situation in terms of their culture and adopted value system, which influences their life objectives, expectations, standards and interests.

According to Włodarczak [2], the quality of life is made up of such aspects as self-esteem, education, financial standing, having a life partner, good people relationships, coping with life, the ability to set and carry out goals, personal development, a good physical and psychological condition. Kiebert [3], on the other hand, feels that the quality of life is made up by one's physical health, mental health, social relationships, physical fitness, financial standing, spirituality, sexuality and self-esteem. In this study, the concept of the quality of life and personal happiness decided to also take into account the subjective perception of one's own prosperity, the welfare of their life, a feeling of overall happiness, satisfaction and mental well-being [2].

Physical education graduates feel a discrepancy between their level of education, the large amount of responsibility and difficulty they have at work and their financial compensation. According to Cieśliński [4], low wages and difficult working conditions are the main reasons that nearly one in three physical education teachers consider leaving their jobs. It has been found that physical education teachers feel that their professional specialization is considerably undervalued in comparison to other educated individuals in other occupations. The reasons for this have not changed over the years: physical culture's low standing in society, low wages, difficult working conditions and physical education's overall low standing in both schools and in society [4]. Therefore, it seems interesting to know if physical education teachers feel a sense of inferiority in relation to other professionals and, if so, whether this affects their perceived quality of life.

As such, the aim of this study was to determine the relationship between the financial standing of physical education teachers and their quality of life, with the following research question posed: In a group of surveyed respondents, does the perceived quality of life differ based on one's gender and financial status?

Material and methods

Research was conducted on 287 graduates from the University of Physical Education in Poznań and Wrocław, of which 165 were men and 122 women. The age of the subjects ranged from 40 to 60 years old, with

the largest group being those aged 50 to 60 years old (over 50% of the sample). 86% of subjects worked as physical education teachers. Their perceived quality of life was based on Kowalik's Quality of Life Questionnaire [5], which, as a measurement tool, assumed that an individual is able to experience their life in two ways – to live and to learn. In other words, the quality of life is treated as a reflection of one's own life and the experience of different mental states (as a subjective quality) over the course of one's life [5, 6].

Financial standing was determined by an individual's average monthly income split per person in their household; each of the respondents self-evaluated their own financial standing and family size. Based on the above, the homogeneity of the sample was divided into two socio-economic groups. Individuals who rated their financial standing as "high" were those whose average monthly income per person in a household exceeded 2780 PLN gross (2780 PLN gross was the average salary of teachers in 2010 [7]), and therefore, treated as those with a high standard of living. Similarly, based on the above classification, the respondents who rated their financial standing as good or average, with their monthly average income per person in a household not exceeding 2780 PLN gross were classified as having an average standard of living. The sample size, split by their standard of living, is presented in Table 1. The majority of the respondents ranked themselves as having an average standard of living, even though one-third of the respondents were classified with having a high financial standing.

As was mentioned, research on the perceived quality of life was assessed by the "Perceived Quality of Life Scale" developed by Kowalik [5], which is based on Campbell's "Quality of Life Scale" [8]. The questionnaire was made up of two parts [6]. The first was a reflective evaluation of one's life that consisted of 15 spheres (i.e., marriage, family life, health, neighbors, friends and acquaintances, house chores, job, life in Poland, leisure, education level, earnings and savings, domicile, place of residence, standard of living, and "Me"). The respondents rated their satisfaction with these spheres using the five-point Likert scale, from strongly satisfied (4 points) to strongly dissatisfied (0 points). The total score of the 15 spheres allowed for an overall assessment of an individual's quality of life.

The second part of the survey was experiential, it assessed a person's perceived well-being over a period of time. Similarly, a five-point scale was used to assess

Table 1. The sample size of the respondents, divided by their rated standard of living

Standard of living	Men	Women	Total
Average	105	58	163
High	59	35	94

the occurrence of nine positive emotional states and thirteen negative emotional states, where positive emotions were given positive points while negative emotions negative points. The total score represented the emotional state that a respondent recently felt.

All of the collected data were subjected to comprehensive analysis using the following statistical methods: stratum weights (*k*) for the ranked variables, the Mann-Whitney *U*-test and Spearman's rank correlation (*r*).

Results

The respondents all belonged to a professional group of individuals with a relatively high level of education but one that has a relatively low income [4]. In this study, the surveyed graduates were found to be considerably satisfied with their education (97%) and professional career (over 89%). This applied to both men and women (Tab. 2). This, however, did not reflect into a feeling of satisfaction with earnings. Only half of the surveyed women and slightly more than 60% of the men felt satisfied with their income. The respondents felt the largest amount of satisfaction with their family life, friends, their domicile and place of residence. Over 80% of the respondents were also satisfied with their health and themselves. Although men were found to be more satisfied than women in the surveyed spheres of life, most of these cases were not statistically significant.

Further analysis on the respondent's rating of positive and negative emotions was summarized by comparing the frequency of these emotions (Tab. 3 and 4). Both groups were found with similar results when eval-

Table 2. The perceived quality of life – a comparison of percentages

Perceived quality of life	Men (%)	Women (%)	Two stratum weights of the tested variables (<i>k</i>)
Marriage	81	78	0.49
Family life	92	91	0.30
Health	84	84	1.31
Neighbors	64	77	2.36*
Friends	85	96	3.11*
House chores	76	72	0.84
Job career	89	94	1.37
Life in Poland	59	66	1.13
Leisure	77	77	0.04
Education	97	97	0.28
Earnings	65	50	2.63*
Domicile	88	91	0.93
Place of residence	86	90	1.15
Standard of life	79	74	0.97
"Me"	80	83	0.67

* where the difference was found to be significant at 0.05

Table 3. Percentage of individuals who often feel negative emotions

Emotional state	Men (%)	Women (%)	Two stratum weights of the tested variables (<i>k</i>)
Anger	20	21	0.15
Sadness	36	50	2.34*
Dissatisfaction	34	30	0.66
Irritability	34	36	0.35
Hopelessness	23	19	0.78
Guilt	24	22	0.33
Burnout	38	39	0.09
Powerlessness	28	31	0.61
Unnecessary	16	15	0.16
Alone	23	25	0.24
Exhausted	33	36	0.53
Hurt	14	13	0.16
Tense	30	38	1.31

* where the difference was found to be significant at 0.05

Table 4. Percentage of individuals who often feel positive emotions

Emotional state	Men (%)	Women (%)	Two stratum weights of the tested variables (<i>k</i>)
Satisfaction	97	92	1.76
Cheerfulness	91	89	0.41
Happiness	87	89	0.27
Successful	83	72	2.14*
Joy	90	93	0.78
Safe, secure	89	85	1.02
Achieved success	83	66	3.37*
Relaxed	87	81	1.24
Freedom, carelessness	60	61	0.28

* where the difference was found to be significant at 0.05

uating their feelings, only the feelings of success and sadness differed significantly. Women were less likely than men to feel they were successful in life and felt sadness more often.

A comparative summary of the women’s and men’s total score on the quality of life in both the cognitive and experiential aspects is presented in Table 5. These totals find that the differences between genders do not differ significantly, which allows this group be treated as a very homogenous professional group of individuals.

Based on the above data, the following question was posed: Is there a relationship between respondents’ subjective quality of life and their financial stating? In order to find this relationship, the level of quality of life was traced with their financial standing (Tab. 6). As was found, women and men who were less wealthy

Table 5. The perceived quality of life for the surveyed male and female graduates – numerical characteristics

Perceived quality of life	Men	Women	Mann-Whitney U-test
Cognitive aspect	43.49	43.66	0.15
Experiential aspect	2.56	1.79	0.68

Table 6. Financial standing and the quality of life

Standard of living	Average		High		Mann-Whitney U-test
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	
Men	41.51	7.70	45.73	5.80	1.19
Women	44.62	9.34	42.58	7.03	2.80*

* where the difference was found to be significant at 0.05

had a lower quality of life, while those who had a higher financial standing were more satisfied with their quality of life. Only in the surveyed women was the level of wealth found to be significantly different to their perceived quality of life.

Discussion

Polish research on graduates of physical education universities has been on-going for nearly 80 years. However, most of these studies focused on a number of issues connected to being a physical education teacher, such as what kind of teacher one should be (in seeking a normative standpoint) or how does today’s physical education teacher work. A comprehensive review of the research conducted on physical education teachers can be found in Krawczyk [9], Żukowska [10], Mańkowski [11], Cieśliński [4] or Kosiby [12]. Whereas studies carried out by Dziedzic [13], Borzyszkowa [14] and Biniakiewicz [15] concentrate on graduates who studied physical rehabilitation. The results of these studies may be helpful in determining the professional profile of physical education graduates. The normative model of a physical education teacher, as described by Żukowska [10], provides a good frame of reference for the planning, organization and verification of these various empirical studies. Most of the studies indicated a conflict in the socio-economic roles of professional physical education teachers, especially with the functions, responsibilities and expectations that they face [4, 11, 16–19]. This could point to the fact that graduates of physical education universities, especially those who are teachers, feel burdened by numerous societal aspects.

Some of these studies indicated that a higher level of social stratification, defined as, above all, an individual’s level of education, predisposes them to being more satisfied in life. However, in a study by Wiłkomirska it was stated that “[...] low wages lead to lower self-

esteem, where the employee feels less valued [...], it is one of the most important factors that affect their sense of satisfaction” [20, p. 23]. On the whole, most of the studies found a relationship between one’s social position and their attitude and psychological state; individuals with higher class values and who were better educated had greater satisfaction in life than those less educated [21]. One’s level of income is considered as a measure of the quality of life only in the poorest countries (e.g., India, Bangladesh) and is found to have a weak correlation with the level of happiness in individuals living in industrialized countries [22–24].

On the other hand, there are data supporting a highly direct correlation between income levels and an individual’s perceived quality of life [25, 26]. Pinguart and Sörensen [27] even stated that good financial standing correlates stronger to a better quality of life than education. This could be a factor in the result obtained in this study, such as the respondents’ highly stressful socio-economic situation, which affected both sexes in a similar way, as evidenced by the low scoring of one’s earnings (only 50% of the respondents were satisfied with their income). It is also worth mentioning that this economic aspect was found only in the surveyed women. There were no significant differences among the group of men representing different standards of living.

Nonetheless, the results obtained in this study found that over 80% of women and men were satisfied with their lives. Although male graduates were found to feel more happy than the group of female graduates, in most cases these differences were not statistically significant. The results of this study are also somewhat consistent with the results of test conducted by Czapiński and Panek in 2009 on the general population of Poland [28]. According to their Social Diagnosis test, which has been in effect since 1991, the mental well-being of Poles has significantly risen in recent years; currently 43% of the population stated they consider their life to be at least somewhat successful, while 76% considered themselves to be happy [28].

In summary, it is worth nothing that the surveyed graduates, most of whom were physical education teachers, composed a very homogenous group of professionals in their self-assessment of their quality of life. There were no dimorphic differences in most of the examined spheres of life, where the most significant differences in the perceived quality of life were found in the group of females. On the whole, teachers in general are found to be considerably satisfied with their lives, as found in a study by Day [29, p. 8–23]. This may point to the fact that teachers belongs to a group of “individuals with a passion”. It is felt, by this author, that “teachers with a passion” are both hard-working and practical individuals who know their jobs and as such, store an incredibly amount of intellect and emotional energy that is reflected on their perceived happiness.

Conclusions

1. The majority of the respondents evaluated their life positively, with no differences between genders among the surveyed spheres of life. However, only half of the group was found to be satisfied with their income level.

2. Both men and women who were less wealthy had a lower perceived quality of life, while those who had better financial standing were found to be more happy. Only in the surveyed women was the level of wealth found to significantly differentiate in their perception of the quality of life.

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