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## Life Satisfaction of Physical Education Teachers in Relation to Teaching One or Two Subjects and to Extracurricular Sports Activities

### Abstract

This research, which had the character of a pilot study, assessed the relations between life satisfaction (LS) and one and two subject teaching, as well as LS and extracurricular sport activities of secondary school teachers of Physical Education (PE). We studied the relations within each gender. The sample comprised 42 subjects with a minimum 20 years of experience in teaching. The average age of men was 53 and of women 49,9 years of age. We assessed LS through the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). We utilized a tailor-made non-standard questionnaire to identify extracurricular sport activities and basic sociographic data. The data was processed with the statistical relation Chi Square analysis. The LS level of the women is higher than the level of the men but there is no significant difference. Very minor differences were revealed in the evaluation of LS in relation to the teaching of one or two subject teaching. Women have a tendency to be much more active in extracurricular sport activities and sport activities that have the character of being organized. This variable does not appear to be the determinant in relation to their LS. The frequency of extracurricular sport activities and LS have a statistically significant relation for the men. We recommend to observe the LS in relation to the participation in extracurricular sport activities by using substantially larger sample of male and female PE teachers. Motivation aspect with regard to interests and workload compensation should be taken in to account.

**Keywords:** one and two subject teaching of Physical Education, the average age, extracurricular sport activities, sports activities of organizational character, SWLS.

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## Introduction

Life satisfaction (LS), subjective sense of well-being and quality of life are notions overlapping each other and they are defined differently by each scientific discipline. Individual authors define them rather as interrelated. The analysis of the LS and personal well-being is created by subjective inquiry into the individual quality of life [9]. Personal satisfaction with own life is a cognitive component of subjective well-being [6]. This article includes the notion of LS as an inevitable part of subjective well-being.

LS is defined, according to [1], as an overall life assessment of a person with regard to that person's life. People create a certain standard that is acceptable for them and they compare it with their own conditions of life. According to [17], it is defined as conscious, cognitive judgment of one's life in which the assessment criteria are up to the person. In general, satisfaction is a kind of subjective criterion of positive evaluation of various phenomena, objects and conditions, including oneself. It is perceived primarily as a pleasant experience or the success of an individual in previous activities [22].

LS is often understood as one of the three key aspects of subjective well-being which includes following components according to [6]:

1. LS – is a cognitive component which contains subjective assessment of life satisfaction of an individual. It is a judgment or assessment of the emotional experience acquired in the individual's past life;
2. Positive effect includes the frequency of experiencing positive emotions;
3. Negative effect includes the frequency of experiencing negative emotions.

LS is related to various factors. Babinčák focuses on internal balancing of a person. Situations and life events are evaluated according to the total human predisposition to evaluate them more positively or negatively [1]. Diener et al. (1985) in [1] calls this a top-down approach. A bottom-up approach arises from understanding that satisfaction arises from the existence of certain objective facts. These are e.g. social relationships, the well-being and other correlates of satisfaction that have the strength to influence the assessment of life in a positive or negative direction. Significant relationships between LS and personal traits were observed in teachers [19]. It was shown that substantial predictors of LS are self-assessment, extraversion and neuroticism.

Overall personal time is divided into working time and non-working time. Non-working time is further divided into leisure time (intended for oneself) and so called dedicated time (referring to duties such as active sport activities, etc.). The division is not totally strict and the lines between particular areas are flexible. It can happen that a typical leisure activity can start gaining features of working on the job [24]. Leisure activities help to compensate for one sided workload, develop personality and reduce mental and physical stress [3], [10], [12]. Ragheb and Griffith investigated the relationship between leisure time sat-

isfaction, LS and other variables such as family, standard of living in a group of individuals over the age of 55 [20]. The research has shown that leisure time satisfaction positively correlates with life satisfaction. The higher was the frequency of participation in leisure activities, the higher was the life satisfaction.

The importance of physical activity, including sports or exercise with regard to higher life satisfaction, was proven by the research [26], [14]. Higher average score in LS was recorded in more active female students, in all ranges of BMI, in comparison to less active ones.

A study of the level of LS, dependent on physical activity, which was implemented in Turkish and German exercising and non-exercising community was presented in research [2]. The results confirmed substantial differences in LS in favor of individuals who participated in physical exercise. With regard to gender, higher satisfaction with life was demonstrated in women than in men.

The international social research program – International Social Survey Program in the Czech Republic monitored the amount of determinants influencing the LS [8]. It was found that gender does not substantially influence life satisfaction. Overall LS of individuals aged between 45 and 60 decreases with age.

The differences in evaluation of LS as a whole, as well as in individual areas of life (satisfaction with a job, with the persons themselves) was investigated in research [16]. In both study areas, there was a substantial difference between primary and secondary school teachers in favor of the primary school ones.

The paper of [18] points to the long-term dissatisfaction of teachers in the Slovak Republic as a significant social concern. It presents lack of social and financial rewards of the profession, the lack of interest of graduates to engage in education, often poor working conditions, reduction of the hours of compulsory Physical Education (PE), underestimation of the importance of this subject.

All of these factors, including other factors, can lead to the exhaustion of teachers and to an occupational burnout. The burnout syndrome primarily affects categories of employees whose basic mission is to work with people [7].

Teachers who do not want to succumb to burnout should undertake physical compensation, activity in nature, relaxation and meditation exercises [13].

The importance of aerobic activities with regard to lower stress for teachers is highlighted by [4]. The author studied the relation between the stress, the burnout and the participation of primary school teachers in physical activities in the state of Connecticut. These findings are consistent with the theory that teachers who perform a physical activity are less likely to experience burnout and job dissatisfaction.

In a medical center in Minnesota the effects of physical activity on the quality of life and burnout were compared between a group of training participants and non-training participants in a 12 week training program. The research results showed lower burnout in the group of training participants [25].

Pursuant to Slovak legislation, PE can be studied as a two-subject, as well as a single subject study. The condition of its accreditation was a study program

accepting a broader profile of a graduate with regard to his or her possible spectrum of engagement. The study of PE as a single subject thus exists with the possibility to focus on a particular sport, in combination with fitness coaching, sport activities for health, etc.

The term “balancing period” is a frequently used term in the ontogenetic psychology, which characterizes late maturity period of life, i.e. the age of 45–60 [11], [15]. Individuals balance their personal and professional achievements, they answer the question if the achievements meet the expectations or not at all, or whether the results can still be developed and finalized. They evaluate the right solutions, mistakes in the choice of profession, the choice of a life partner etc. Late adulthood critically examines whether the choice of life goals was right.

Apparently there are more answers to the question about the reason of teachers’ dissatisfaction. It is obvious, more than answers to the question as to what influences their life satisfaction. The research question is whether there is a relation between the LS of PE teachers and sports activities in their leisure time, which is essentially a part of their profession. The question that arises from this context is whether it is this activity that is a compensating factor for their workload.

### The Aim

The aim of this article is to contribute findings to solving LS issues of PE teachers at secondary schools with minimum 20 years of experience from the perspective of one and two subject teaching and extracurricular sport activities.

### The Sample Characteristics

The research sample for data collection consisted of 57 PE teachers. To maintain its homogeneity the number was reduced to 42 PE teachers of secondary schools with a minimum of 20 years of teaching experience. Detailed characteristics of the research group are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the Research Group in Terms of Gender, Age and Length of Teaching Experience

Gender	n	%	Average age	sd	Length of teaching experience	sd
Men	18	42,9	53	5,7	28,44	5,7
Women	24	57,1	49,92	5,3	25,96	6,1
Overall	42	100,0	51,24	5,6	27,02	6,0

Legend: n – quantity, % – percentage, sd – standard deviation.

## **Organization of Research**

A transversal research of a pilot study character took place in the month of June 2016 within selected secondary schools and secondary vocational schools in the Slovak Republic. During its implementation we cooperated with the directors of the selected schools or directly with the teachers of PE. The questionnaires were administered in person or electronically via e-mail.

## **The Methodology**

The LS of participants was examined by the standard method of the SWLS questionnaire – Satisfaction With Life Scale [5] which was developed by Diener et al. 1985. SWLS consists of 5 questions: 1. “Substantially completely my way of life is congruent with my ideal”, 2. “The conditions of my life are excellent”, 3. “I am satisfied with my life”, 4. “So far I have gotten out of life almost everything that I wanted”, 5. “If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing”. There is a seven point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The questionnaire is publicly accessible on the official website of Diener, with the author’s invitation and consent to free use of the scale.

For the needs of this research we also applied a questionnaire prepared by the authors of this article, consisting of seven questions. The questionnaire gathered basic sociodemographic data about teachers and a teacher’s activity with regards to the teaching of PE as a single subject or teaching another subject in combination with PE. Subsequent questions addressed the length of this teaching activity, the total length of teaching experience, engaging in coaching, refereeing, or other related activity and the frequency of engaging in a sport activity outside of work.

To process the data, we used basic descriptive mathematical statistics (absolute frequency, relative frequency, mean, median and standard deviation). To determine the significance of differences, relations and dependencies we used Chi Square test. We considered the statistical substance of the results obtained from the levels of  $p \leq 0,05$  and  $p \leq 0,01$ . Substantive interpretation was performed on the basis of logical methods.

## **Results and Discussion**

In the context of balancing a lifetime role, the period of sufficient experience in this pilot study focuses on PE teachers with a minimum of 20 years of teaching experience. Considering the fact that their profession is intertwined with their extracurricular activities, we are interested in LS in connection with the

implementation of these activities by both the men and the women. Non-working time of PE teachers is observed through the engagement in sport activities in free time and in sport activities of organizational character that require time commitment.

By decomposing the group into those teaching PE as a single subject and those teaching the subject in combination with another one, in male teachers we identified 56 % teaching single subject and 44 % teaching a combination. Comparable results were found also for the women. Female teachers of a single subject make up 54 % and 46 % of female teachers teach the subject in combination with another one. 58 % of the women and 73 % of the men do not participate in sports activities of the organizational character (e.g. coaching or referee activities). Statistically significant difference was not revealed ( $\chi^2 = 0,9^2$ ,  $p \geq 0,05$ ). However, there is a tendency for women to be more proactive in participating in these activities.

The frequency of engagement in leisure time sports activities is shown in Table 2. Similarly to the premise concerning sport activity of the organizational nature, there is also a tendency of gender differences in leisure time activities. However, statistically significant difference was not revealed ( $\chi^2 = 6,6^1$ ,  $p \geq 0,05$ ). Engagement in sports activity 3 times per week is reported by more than 46% women, but only by 28% men. Men show lower interest in these activities, which was demonstrated by the results showing irregular sports activities by 28% of men and only 4% of women.

**Table 2.** Frequency of Leisure Time Sport Activities of Men and Women

Gender	Regularly 3 and more times per week		Regularly once-twice per week		Not regularly at least once per week		Not regularly (not at all)		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Men	5	28	3	16	5	28	5	28	18	100
Women	11	46	8	33	4	17	1	4	24	100

Legend: n – absolute quantity, % – relative quantity.

We identified the LS of teachers with five SWLS questionnaire items on a seven-degree scale, divided according to gender (Table 3). The only substantial gender difference was demonstrated in Question 4: “So far I have gotten out of life almost everything that I wanted”. The gender was reflected as a factor associated with a differing result in this item ( $\chi^2 = 17,2^1$ ,  $p \leq 0,05$ ). The results revealed that 50% of the women respondents are more likely to agree that they have achieved their life goals and plans. On the contrary, no man stated that he would rather agree and 33% rather disagree with the questionnaire item. In the group of the men, a relatively negative result can be observed in fulfillment of life ambitions.

**Table 3.** Life Satisfaction of Men and Women

Gender	SWLS Questions									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd
Men	4,0	1,8	3,7	1,7	4,8	1,6	4,1**	1,7	3,6	1,5
Women	4,5	1,4	4,1	1,7	5,2	1,0	5,0**	1	4,1	1,3

Legend: SWLS – Satisfaction With Life Scale, 1 – 5 – SWLS questionnaire survey (full questions in the “Methodology” section), sd – standard deviation, \*  $p < 0,01$ , \*\*  $p < 0,05$ .

Table 4 displays the characteristics of LS in the research group in terms of basic descriptive mathematical and statistical features of men and women. It shows that the women have a higher average score of LS than the men, while in the women results the standard deviation attests to a greater uniformity of results. The most frequent value of the gross score as well as of the median value is higher in women’s results. Generally, there is a higher level of LS for the women, but no significant difference was revealed.

**Table 4.** Basic Statistical Characteristics of Life Satisfaction in Group of Men and Women

Gender	Mean	sd	Median	Mode
Men	20,4	7,6	19	14'
Women	23	5,5	23	23

Legend: sd – standard deviation.

Next we analyze the relationship between the level of LS of male and female teachers and selected variables: the nature of teaching, i.e. single subject and two subject teaching; participation in sport activities of an organizational nature; and active participation in sports during leisure time.

The first relation analysis is performed with regard to the single subject PE teaching or to the PE teaching in combination with another subject, and the LS of both genders (Table 5). We did not note any significant difference between the men respondents ( $\chi^2 = 2,8^2$ ,  $p \geq 0,05$ ) and the women respondents ( $\chi^2 = 0,6^2$ ,  $p \geq 0,05$ ) in the context of one or two subject teaching and life satisfaction. Substantive analysis of the relation also does not demonstrate any fundamental differences in the evaluation of higher LS among single subject or two subject teachers of both genders. Among the men teaching PE in combination with another subject, 88% expressed lower than average life satisfaction. While for male teachers below-average LS score is associated with teaching PE in combination with another subject, paradoxically for female teachers it is associated with teaching of a single subject. 62% of the female teachers were found in the lower than average category here.

**Table 5.** Relation of Life Satisfaction to One or Two Subject Teaching of Male and Female Teachers.

Gender	Subject teaching	SWLS				Total
		Below average		Above average		
		n	%	N	%	
Men	1 subject	5	50	5	50	100%
	2 subjects	7	88	1	12	100%
Women	1 subject	8	62	5	38	100%
	2 subjects	5	46	6	54	100%

Legend: SWLS – Satisfaction with Life Scale, n – absolute quantity, % – relative quantity, 1 subject – single subject PE teaching, 2 subjects – PE teaching in combination with another subject.

In the second observed relation, which is LS and sport activity of the organizational nature (coaching, referee activity, etc.), 60% of the men engaged in these activities are in the above average level of satisfaction (Table 6). Only 30% of the women engaged in this type of activities are at the same level. We can state that the subjective LS for the men rises when they are engaged in the coaching or the referee activities (60% above average). In women, this activity is not connected with a higher level of subjective life satisfaction. In this relation analysis, the statistically significant difference between the men and the women was the lowest ( $\chi^2 = 2,2^2$ ,  $p \geq 0,05$  for men and  $\chi^2 = 1,7^2$ ,  $p \geq 0,05$  for women).

**Table 6.** Relation of Life Satisfaction and Sport Activities of Organizational Character in a Group of Men and Women

Gender	Sport activities of organizational character	SWLS				Total
		Below average		Above average		
		n	%	n	%	
Men	Yes	2	40	3	60	100%
	No	10	77	3	23	100%
Women	Yes	8	70	5	30	100%
	No	5	43	6	57	100%

Legend: SWLS – Satisfaction With Life Scale, n – absolute quantity, % – relative quantity.

The relation of LS to the third variable – regular or irregular engagement in sport activities during leisure time is displayed in the Table 7. The frequency of the sport activities was expressed by categories: on a regular basis; irregularly; non-performance of sport activity. We identified statistically significant relation between sport activity and LS in the group of men ( $\chi^2 = 14,4^1$ ,  $p \leq 0,05$ ), but not in the group of women ( $\chi^2 = 1,4^1$ ,  $p \geq 0,05$ ). Based on the results, it is evident that 100% of the men who engage in sports activities regularly are in the category of higher than average satisfaction with life. It is interesting that while higher



frequency of engagement in sport activities during leisure time is associated with higher score of in LS for male teachers, for female teachers the tendency is towards the opposite relation.

**Table 7.** Relation of Life Satisfaction to Leisure Time Sport Activities in a Group of Men and Women

Gender	Frequency of sport activities performance	SWLS				Total
		Below average		Above average		
		n	%	n	%	
Men	Regularly	38	3	62	5	100%
	Irregularly	80	4	20	1	100%
	Non-performance	100	5	0	0	100%
Women	Regularly	58	11	42	8	100%
	Irregularly	50	2	50	2	100%
	Non-performance	0	0	100	1	100%

Legend: SWLS – Satisfaction with Life Scale, n – absolute quantity, % – relative quantity.

## Discussion

Based on the results of our study, women have a tendency to perceive higher level of LS than men. We consider this contrary to findings of several studies that LS is not gender dependent [8], [17]. The area of LS did not reveal any differences between men and women [21]. Such findings can be explained, according to [23], for example by the range of emotions that men and women live through. Women have a tendency to experience more joy and a less sorrow and they experience these emotions more often than men.

Our findings were insignificant in evaluating LS related to one and two subject teaching. The men teaching PE in combination with another subject presented a lower level of LS in comparison with the men teaching PE as a sole subject. The explanation can be that the profession of a single subject PE teachers can overlap with their interests in sport, in which they engage in the process of teaching to a larger degree than in the case of the teachers of two subjects. The study did not reveal statistically significant differences in relation to one or two subject teaching.

The results of the analysis we performed show that subjective LS for men rises when they engage in coaching or refereeing activities, while for women there is no significant relation. The explanation can be found in the motivation of women to engage in other areas of life that are more important for them. Higher frequency of sport activities in leisure time is related to higher score in life satisfaction, but only for men. Higher LS of individuals participating in

physical activities, however without addressing the gender issue, was shown also in the studies of many authors [20], [26], [14], [2].

The profession of a PE teacher is very specific with regards to monitoring life satisfaction, professional involvement and extracurricular sport activities. That is because this work activity may overlap with leisure time activities. Sports activity can be a continuum on a life journey, an interest during childhood and youth, later a profession and extracurricular activity, later only a profession or only a non-working activity. Therefore, there arises a question in this context whether it is the extracurricular sport activity that is the compensating factor for the workload of PE teachers. In order to provide a reliable answer to this issue, it is necessary to have a larger research sample of both genders. This will improve the quality and the informative value of the mathematical and statistical interpretation of the obtained results. At the same time it is also necessary to focus attention on the motivation side of the personality in the context of the interests.

## Conclusions

On the basis of this pilot study we are able to state that after engaging in activities, such as coaching and refereeing, the subjective evaluation of LS increases only in male teachers; in female teachers it does not relate to a higher level of life satisfaction. This relation analysis did not reveal any statistically significant difference. An increase of the frequency of leisure time sport activity results in an increase of subjective evaluation of life satisfaction. However, this pilot study demonstrated significant relations for male teachers. For female teachers higher frequency of leisure time sport activity is not associated with higher score for the life satisfaction. We realize that the mathematical statistics in our study is limited due to a small sample size and the results cannot be generalized. Our future ambition is to observe the issue of LS in relation to sport activity on a larger sample of male and female PE teachers and to focus also on the motivation aspect from the perspective of interests and workload compensation.

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## **Satisfakcja z życia nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego w związku z nauczaniem jednego lub dwóch przedmiotów oraz pozalekcyjnymi zajęciami sportowymi**

### **Streszczenie**

Badanie, które miało charakter pilotażowy, ocenia relacje pomiędzy zadowoleniem z życia a faktem nauczania jednego lub dwóch przedmiotów, a także zadowoleniem z życia a pozalekcyjnymi zajęciami sportowymi u nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego w szkołach średnich. Reakcje te zostały poddane badaniu wśród przedstawicieli obu płci. Próbie poddano 42 osoby z minimum 20-letnim doświadczeniem w nauczaniu. Średnia wieku mężczyzn wynosiła 53 lata, a kobiet 49,9 lat. Oceniliśmy ich satysfakcję z życia za pomocą Skali Zadowolenia z Życia (Diener et al., 1985). Wykorzystano indywidualnie dostosowany, niestandardowy kwestionariusz do identyfikacji poza-

lekcyjnych zajęć sportowych i danych socjograficznych. Dane opracowywano za pomocą analizy relacji statystycznych Chi Square. Poziom zadowolenia z życia u kobiet jest wyższy niż poziom u mężczyzn, jednak różnica ta nie jest znacząca. Drobne różnice odkryto w ocenie zadowolenia z życia w związku z nauczaniem jednego lub dwóch przedmiotów. Kobiety wykazują większą aktywność w prowadzeniu pozalekcyjnych zajęć sportowych oraz sportów mających charakter zorganizowany. Zmienna ta nie wydaje się być czynnikiem warunkującym w odniesieniu do ich zadowolenia z życia. Częstotliwość pozalekcyjnych zajęć sportowych i zadowolenie z życia mają statystycznie istotny związek w przypadku mężczyzn. Autorka proponuje obserwację zadowolenia z życia w odniesieniu do pozalekcyjnych zajęć sportowych z udziałem większej liczby kobiet i mężczyzn – nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego. Należy wziąć pod uwagę aspekt motywacji w związku z zainteresowaniami oraz rekompensaty za nakład pracy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** nauczanie jednego i dwóch przedmiotów wychowania fizycznego, średnia wieku, pozalekcyjne zajęcia sportowe, zajęcia sportowe typu zorganizowanego, SWLS.