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BURNOUT SYNDROME OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS***

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The burnout syndrome is the final stage of the process in which individuals who deeply emotionally deal with something are losing their original enthusiasm and inner motivation. Changes occur in the psychological, somatic, and social spheres. It manifests itself with the loss of energy and idealism that leads to stagnation, frustration and apathy. It is accompanied by physical and emotional exhaustion, fatigue, irritability, depression, negative and cynical attitudes towards their own creative or scientific work and students. The burnout syndrome also results in a deterioration in the quality of the learning process. Individuals who burned are late for lessons, extend intervals between lessons and try to leave the work environment as soon as possible. University teachers are not able to focus on the learning process, they feel helpless, they have no understanding for students and are cynic if they experience burnout syndrome. There is a general dehumanization of attitude toward students. An individual can identify the symptoms of a burnout syndrome if he/she observes lack of motivation, feelings of sadness, depravity, hopelessness, negative attitudes towards him/herself, towards work, reached success, feeling of self-worthlessness, self-pity, feeling of being unrecognized, short temper, to the extreme also suicidal thoughts. There is a state of general weakness in the somatic area, a vegetative disorder such as heart pain, nausea and headache without a clear cause, blood pressure disorder, insomnia, feelings of tension in the back, neck, increases in the risk of addiction, chronic fatigue, change of dietary habits, change of body weight. In the social sphere, we observe cynicism, hostility towards colleagues, students, avoiding contact with colleagues, students, low empathy, emotional coldness, distance, conflict, apparent dislike, growing indifference to the environment. It can be assumed that the more symptoms are present, the more burnout syndrome is developed. The

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burnout syndrome is a loss of professional interest, which is manifested mainly by feelings of disappointment. The teacher loses interest in his/her work, he/she is satisfied with the daily routine and does not see the reason for further self-education. He/she does not try to grow personally but only to survive. However, all definitions have several common features – the presence of negative emotional symptoms, low efficiency of work associated with negative attitudes and the resulting behavior. More emphasis is placed on psychological symptoms than on physical, but it should be noted that burnout syndrome occurs with mentally healthy people and is not related to psychological pathogenesis. In the past, work with people was considered the main cause. Today, there is an uncompromising demand for performance, whether by superiors (trying to keep a job), colleagues, in the form of rivalry, or coming from the individual itself (Jeklová, Reitmayerová, 2006). Education is considered an area with exceptional occurrence of burnout. The conducted research mainly concerned primary and secondary education, but Křivohlavý (2012) points out that the burning takes place at all levels of schools.

BURNOUT SYNDROME OF SENIORS AGE TEACHERS

We were mainly interested in the fact that there is a number of full-time jobs teachers in senior age among university teachers. Seniors as university teachers have the opportunity to carry out research and can pass their long-term knowledge and experience to students. There are also those who have not only pedagogical but also practical experience from the subject they teach, which is twice as useful for students. Last but not least, senior teachers differ from non-working seniors by getting paid for their work, so they have no financial problems, have the opportunity to be in contact with colleagues and students, are not socially isolated, moreover, lectures and research maintain them in a good psychic condition. Azeema and Nazir investigated the burnout syndrome of university teachers, pointing to the fact that assistant lecturers have significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion than associate professors and professors. Although the associate professors had a lower level of emotional exhaustion than assistant lecturers, they have higher a level of emotional exhaustion than professors. Assistant lecturers, associate professors, and professors did not differ significantly in levels of depersonalization and personal satisfaction. Rzhevska-Shtefan (2012, 2014) concluded that the emotional interest of the teacher in his/her subject helps to improve the perception and understanding of the lecture content by listeners. Emotional exhaustion of university teacher is manifested by emotional coldness and impersonal communication, and causes anxiety, tension and negative emotions of students, diminishes their confidence and, in longer-term contact, makes it difficult for them to communicate. The manifestation of depersonalization is the deformation of relationships especially with students, emotional coldness and manipulation.



METHOD

We were interested if we prove statistically significant differences in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and level of personal satisfaction among Slovak, and Ukrainian university teachers, as well as the impact of socio-demographic variables such as age and length of employment at the university.

The dependent variable in our research was burnout syndrome with its components – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal satisfaction. Independent variables were age, nationality, length of employment at the university, general satisfaction with work, financial satisfaction, and level of workload.

Hypothesis 1: Among Slovak university teachers there will be a lower level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than among Ukrainian university teachers and a higher level of personal satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Younger university teachers will have a higher burnout rate than older university teachers, and university teachers teaching a longer time period will have a lower burn rate.

Hypothesis 3: Teachers with higher overall job satisfaction and higher financial satisfaction will have a lower score in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but higher score in job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Teachers with higher workload will have a higher score in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but a lower score in the level of personal satisfaction.

A research sample was made up of 80 university teachers chosen by random occasional choice. The percentage of women was 68.75%, the percentage of men was 31.25%. The age range was from 25 to 68 years. The average age of men was 37.36 years; of the women 41.76 years. 41.3% of respondents were of Slovak nationality; 58.7% of respondents were of Ukrainian nationality. 10 women and 10 men were single, 37 women and 13 men were married, 8 women and 2 men were divorced. Assistants lectures were represented in 76.25%, associate professors and professors in 23.75%. Respondents employed at the university within one year created 17.6% of the total, within 5 years 8.7% of the total, within 10 years 15.0% of the total, more than 10 years 58.7% of the total.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and its edition for teachers – MBI Educators Survey were used to collect data. The authors of the questionnaire are Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, and Schwab. It is a 22-item tool consisting of three scales: Emotional Exhaustion Scale, Depersonalization Scale, and Personal Accomplishment Scale. Respondents answer to questionnaire questions on a 7-level Likert Scale, depending on how strongly the emotions and symptoms in the questions represent them. For purpose of this work, the Slovak version of the questionnaire published in the Petlak and Baranovská study was used. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of the instrument. The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Reliability of the MBI-ES questionnaire

Subscale	Cronbach's alfa (α)	Number of items
EE	.90	9
DP	.71	5
PA	.84	8

Comment: DP – Depersonalization; PA – Personal Accomplishment; EE – Emotional Exhaustion

Source: authors' study.

The MBI-ES questionnaire had a very good internal consistency in this research. The translation of the given version to the Ukrainian language was done by the co-author of the article. Subsequently, it was sent to five Ukrainian respondents to verify the clarity. The content of the items and their correction was consulted with a teacher of the Ukrainian language. A sociodemographic questionnaire was also included in the data collection, where the respondents anonymously reported data on their gender, age, nationality, marital status, academic title, and length of employment as a teacher. Data are listed in the description of the research sample. Satisfaction with the job and satisfaction with the financial evaluation of the work was detected by the questions in the form of the statement "I'm happy with my work" and "I'm happy with the financial evaluation of my work" with the possibility of answering the 5-level Likert scale. The workload was assessed by respondents on a 5-level scale from 1-very low to 5-very high; subsequently, they reported how many hours per day they spend with their work including work outside the workplace (e.g. preparation for lessons, preparation of tests, research activity). The research consisted of creating two equivalent versions of questionnaires for Slovak and Ukrainian respondents. These were addressed by email and personally. Data collection began in early December 2017 and ended at the end of April 2018. In Ukraine, all the questionnaires sent by emailed and addressed personally were returned. In Slovakia, the return was lower. Data received from 80 respondents were processed using the SPSS 20 statistics software. Distribution of normality of data was verified subsequently, based on which it was possible to use parametric statistics in the scale of emotional exhaustion and non-parametric statistics in the scale of depersonalization and personal satisfaction. The hypotheses were verified by parametric and non-parametric t-tests, Spearman's correlation coefficient and Pearson correlation coefficient. The Man Whitney U-test was also used.



RESULTS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

In the first hypothesis, we assumed that there are significant differences between university teachers from Ukraine and Slovakia in terms of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. University teachers from Slovak sample will have a lower level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and a higher level of personal satisfaction than university teachers from Ukrainian sample. This assumption was verified by a T-test for two independent selections and a Mann-Whitney U-test. The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Results of the t-test for differences in emotional exhaustion in terms of nationality (N = 80)

Slovaks (N = 33); Ukrainians (N = 47)							
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	Sig.
EE	30.85	14.167	27.85	11.018	78	1.064	.291

Note: M – median; SD – standard deviation; EE – emotional exhaustion; * means p <.05; ** means p <.01

Source: authors' study.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney test for two independent selections for variables depersonalization (DP) and personal accomplishment (PA) of university teachers in terms of nationality (N = 80)

		M	Z	Sig.
DP	Slovaks	12.15	-.583	.560
	Ukrainians	12.13		
PA	Slovaks	37.76	-2.330	.020
	Ukrainians	42.11		

Note: DP – depersonalization; PA – personal accomplishment; M – median; Z – value of the statistical test; Sig. – significance

Source: authors' study.

Based on the results presented in Tables 2 and 3, we can conclude that there was no significant difference in the level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization between Slovak and Ukrainian university teachers. A significant difference in the level of personal accomplishment among Slovak and Ukrainian university teachers was identified, but the difference was the opposite of what we assumed. Slovak university teachers have significantly lower average scores in a range of personal accomplishment than Ukrainian university teachers.



Table 4. Results of Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients between burnout dimensions and age (N = 80)

Variable	Age	Sig.
EE	-.034	.766
DP	-.047	.680
PA	.035	.757

Note: EE – emotional exhaustion; DP – depersonalization; PA – personal accomplishment, Sig. – significance

Source: authors' study.

No statistically significant relationship between age and burnout dimensions syndrome was identified as shown in Table 4. Hypothesis 2 was not confirmed because neither a significant relationship between length of employment at the university and burnout syndrome was identified as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlations between burnout dimensions, length of employment at university, general job satisfaction, financial satisfaction with work and workload

Variable	Duration at University	Sig.	General satisfaction with the work	Sig.	Financial satisfaction with work	Sig.	Level of workload	Sig.
EE	.068	.550	-.493**	.000	-.107	.347	.316**	.004
DP	.057	.614	-.432**	.000	-.095	.402	-.012	.915
PA	.039	.731	.247*	.027	-.021	.850	.033	.768

Note: EE – emotional exhaustion; DP – depersonalization; PA – personal accomplishment; Sig – significance

Source: authors' study.

Table 5 shows that the higher the rate of general work satisfaction, the lower the score in the dimension of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and higher the score in personal satisfaction. No statistically relevant significance between financial satisfaction with work and burnout syndrome was identified in this research. As far as the level of workload is concerned, based on the results presented in Table 5, we can see that our assumption was confirmed only in the case of emotional exhaustion. A positive moderate significant relationship between workload and emotional exhaustion was identified but, in the case of depersonalization and personal accomplishment, relationship between burnout dimensions and workload was not confirmed.



DISCUSSION

The burnout syndrome is generally related to professions connected to working with people, but recent research also confirms its relation to the pressure on performance. Therefore, it can be stated that that conclusion of the research is positive, since the higher level of general job satisfaction lowers the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization slightly increases personal accomplishment. Results must be considered with caution, due to a small research sample. However, they can be used as a basis for further research regarding university teachers. Research of burnout rate comparison between Slovak and Ukrainian university teachers showed little national differences. Slovak university teachers were less satisfied with work as Ukrainian teachers. The difference in experiencing emotional exhaustion and depersonalization has not been confirmed. The conclusion was made based on research by Rzhevska-Shtefan (2012, 2014). We believe that Slovak teachers have higher expectations related to working conditions, and that difference creates a lower level of satisfaction. No statistically significant difference between age and burnout syndrome has been identified. This may be due to a smaller research sample, but we believe that the research we constructed our conclusions from (Antoniou et al., 2006) were relevant to burnout syndrome of high school teachers. The situation of university teachers is different. They should collaborate with motivated students, but also their work consists of altering lecture, consultation, and research activities. Garvish and Friedmann (2010), Poshkamp (2013) identified that younger teachers, especially those who taught the first year, were more emotionally exhausted than older ones. The result again concerned high school teachers. In our research, the difference has not been confirmed. This irregularity only confirms that research focused on burnout syndrome of university teachers in our conditions is not excessive. When considering prevention of burnout syndrome of university teachers, humor as a coping strategy positively affects emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment (Tümkaya, 2007). Also, the pedagogue's spontaneity in teaching process prevents depersonalization and emotional exhaustion. We believe that the results of our research will, at least to a lesser extent, contribute to improving the knowledge of burnout syndrome of university teachers.

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BURNOUT SYNDROME OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

Keywords: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal satisfaction, university pedagogues
Abstract: Comparison of the burnout syndrome rate of university teachers in Slovakia and Ukraine was one aspect of research. Verification of the relationship between age, job satisfaction (overall and financial), workload and burnout of university teachers was another aspect of research. The research also dealt with the verification of burnout syndrome depending on the length of teaching at university. To verify the differences and relationships examined, the MBI-ES questionnaire measuring burnout syndrome in three dimensions, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal satisfaction, and a sociodemographic questionnaire containing questions to measure overall and financial satisfaction with work and perceived workload was used. The research sample consisted of 80 university teachers aged 25 to 68, of whom 25 were women and 55 men. There was a significant difference in personal satisfaction among Slovak and Ukrainian educators. Slovak university teachers were less satisfied with the work as Ukrainian teachers. The difference in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization has not been confirmed. The variables - age, length of time at university, and financial satisfaction with work did not significantly affect the burnout syndrome in college teachers. General job satisfaction has a significant positive impact on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal satisfaction as components of burnout syndrome in college educators.



WYSTĘPOWANIE ZESPOŁU WYPALENIA ZAWODOWEGO W ŚRODOWISKU NAUCZYCIELI AKADEMICKICH

Słowa kluczowe: emocjonalne wyczerpanie, depersonalizacja, satysfakcja, nauczyciele akademickcy

Streszczenie: Celem prezentowanego artykułu jest porównanie występowania wskaźnika wypalenia zawodowego wśród nauczycieli akademickich na Słowacji i na Ukrainie. Przyjęto następujące zmienne: wiek, zadowolenie z pracy (w aspekcie całościowym i finansowym), obciążenie pracą, staż pracy. W badaniach wykorzystano kwestionariusz MBI-ES, który mierny stopień wypalenia zawodowego w trzech wymiarach: emocjonalnego wyczerpania, depersonalizacji i satysfakcji. Drugim narzędziem badawczym był kwestionariusz zawierający pytania odnoszące się do ogólnej i finansowej satysfakcji z pracy, jak i subiektywnych odczuć związanych z obciążeniem pracą. Próba badawcza obejmowała 80 nauczycieli (25 kobiet i 55 mężczyzn) w wieku 25–68 lat. Na podstawie uzyskanych wyników badań ustalono, że słowaccy nauczyciele akademickcy są mniej zadowoleni z pracy niż osoby wykonujące ten zawód na Ukrainie. Nie zauważono natomiast różnic w zakresie wyczerpania emocjonalnego i depersonalizacji. Wykazano natomiast znacząną różnicę w zakresie odczuwanej satysfakcji. Istotnego wpływu na poziom wypalenia zawodowego nie stwierdzono również w zakresie takich zmiennych, jak: wiek, staż pracy, satysfakcja finansowa.

