ICEEPSY 2014

Psychological needs, level of frustration and anxiety of teachers at primary school

Jana Příbylová a,*, Veronika Smetanová a, Josef Machek a, Markéta Kožnarová a, Lukáš Knaute a

aDepartment of Primary and Preprimary Education, University of Hradec Králové, Rokitanského 62, Hradec Králové 500 03, Czech Republic

Abstract

Due to the increasing burden of teachers in primary education is necessary to evaluate their actual psychological needs, level of frustration and anxiety and potential compensatory mechanisms. The purpose of the study is to determine the current level of teachers’ mental stress because of need to formulate following recommendations in the direction of their education and strengthening of the relevant personal and professional competencies in undergraduate and postgraduate levels. As the research method we applied The Lüschercolor test, which is used to diagnose enduring personality traits and to capture psychological needs and potential frustration. This method allows to determine an individual’s resistance to stress, conflicts at different levels of unconsciousness and it also allows to capture the anxiety which is accompanied with these conflicts. Results, that our research brings, have the meaning as partial information. Teachers practicing in primary education are currently exposed to burden, which necessarily requires a considerable degree of psychological resilience and ability to cope with stressful situations. The research results brought an overview of the capabilities of self-regulation and specific ways of responding to external stimuli of primary school teachers.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of ICEEPSY 2014.

Keywords: teacher; psychological needs; frustration; anxiety

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +420-776-225-433
E-mail address: jana.pribylova@uhk.cz
1. Introduction

Our society places high demands on teachers, which relate not only to achieve higher levels of moral properties associated with the exercise of their profession. Teachers are generally expected that should perfectly control their field, they have a comprehensive overview, still develop their communication skills and most importantly have a warm relationship with the students. Rapidly changing conditions and technical possibilities of forcing teachers to constantly update instructional, educational and teaching methods. Today’s teacher must understand the new knowledge, technology, to meet the rapidly changing demands of society. These demands inevitably introduce a great deal of stress. Teachers are under great pressure and often with them a feeling of frustration.

Teacher’s personality is an instrument of his work. If the teacher knows himself, his way of life, he better knows how to find the way of life for children (Kurelová, 1998). An essential requirement for teachers is also responsible attitude to work and consciousness about demands of this profession. The teacher should meet a certain level of knowledge, constantly motivate, inspire interest in knowing and support the love of knowledge (Kudláčková, 2002).

The teacher should see the meaning, purpose and direction of the way, to which the student is issued. Teaching is creative profession and the teacher should be creative. He must constantly learn and improve in his field. Appeal to students, collaborate with them and improve himself not only in the methods of work. Try to understand children as well as himself.

In our research, we focused on the extent of the anxiety that current teachers are feeling. We have tried to determine how much teachers are feeling frustrated. We investigated whether teachers know their needs and how they can handle. The method used allowed us to examine both open and hidden desires of teachers without conscious distortion and stylization.

2. Method

2.1. Purpose of study

The purpose of the study is to determine the current level of teachers’ mental stress because of need to formulate following recommendations in the direction of their education and strengthening of the relevant personal and professional competencies in undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

2.2. Participants

The participants in the first phase of the study were primary school teachers (102 respondents).

2.3. Material and procedure

As the research method we applied The Lüsscher-color test, which is used to diagnose enduring personality traits and to capture psychological needs and potential frustration. This method allows to determine an individual’s resistance to stress, conflicts at different levels of unconsciousness and it also allows to capture the anxiety which is accompanied with these conflicts.

The Lüsscher-color test allows us to see enduring personality traits and current psychological state of the individual. It examines the level of activity and motivation, volitional qualities tendency to act in a manner typical of certain important situations. The method helps diagnose psychological needs of the individual and shows the potential frustration of these needs. The Lüsscher-color test enables diagnose mental contents at different levels of the unconscious, conflicts between these levels and the anxiety. It also uncovers the compensatory behaviors and feelings, their intensity and thematization. Detects the ability to communicate and tend to interpersonal conflicts. The method allows to determine an individual resistance to stress, the method of coping with stressful situations, ability to regenerate forces and the eventual disposition to psychosomatic illness (Lüscher, 1994).

Individual colors in The Lüsscher-color test have, according to the author, objective meaning independent of a particular person. Preference of colorthereforemay be a source of information about the basic features of human personality. Meaning of colors in The Lüsscher-color test is following (Lüscher, 1994):
3. Results

The evaluation of the obtained data shows that in the preference of colors in The Lüscher color test of teachers is almost no statistically significant difference and covers the full spectrum of options offered (see Table 1). Only significant rejection blue color (1) can be interpreted in relation to the teaching profession based on the importance of color in The Lüscher color test (see Table 2).

Lüscher’s blue color means peace. In the body is reflected as a calm breath, decreases the pulse rate, lowers blood pressure, behavior is quiet. The feeling of calm allows good-nature, inclination, sensitivity, caring and loving connection, harmonious friendship and sense of security. The blue color evokes the feeling of satisfaction (Lüscher, 1994).

Rejection of blue color means defending against calm. Calm is experienced as emptiness, and therefore is feeling as boring. Because of fear of emptiness are relationships perceived as addiction, which raises concerns because relationships are not satisfactory. The feeling of dissatisfaction can escalate up in a state of perpetual dissatisfaction, which manifests itself as impatience and restlessness. One would like to have everything else. This discontent and restlessness may cause inner loneliness (Lüscher, 1994).

Table 1. Number of preferences of colors in The Lüscher color test: Descriptive statistics (N=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Number of rejection of colors in The Lüscher color test: Descriptive statistics (N=102)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Discussion

The results show that the teachers try to be active, prefer stimulation and excitement before calm and contentment. This may be related to stress, which are exposed and also with an emphasis on performance, which is generally demanded by our society. At the same time, it may mean that they fear the feeling of emptiness, which could bring calm. Therefore, they prefer the activity, challenge and conquest.

A teacher at his profession needs to create harmonious relationships. His personality should be stable and balanced. For his work are needed patience, affection and sensitivity. It seems that these personality traits should be within his training more supported.

The personality of teacher plays crucial role in the educative process. However the formation of personality of teachers in education often takes only minimal attention. Motivating teachers to exercise this profession is an important part of his training and continuous upgrading of skills in the teaching practice.

In an effort to improve the training and professional development of teachers should be paid more attention to the teacher and his personality, concentrating on his personal needs and interests, his personal experience. Provide him with the necessary support in solving problems not only teaching, but also in search of their own personal confidence and stability in the teaching profession. We should therefore focus on the development of personality traits and competencies that can be weakened, especially patience, empathy and responsiveness.

5. Conclusion

In this part of our research has shown that teachers are active and prefer the challenges and stimulation. They prefer acquisition and conquest before satisfaction and calm. The focus is on performance and joyous activity. Refuse to calm can have a negative effect on relationships. The teacher should naturally create friendship, be patient and open-minded.

Acknowledgements

This paper presents results of the Specific Research Project of University of Hradec Králové number SV 2110 called Personal characteristics of primary school teachers.

References