

A STUDY OF STRESS SOURCES, SYMPTOMS AND STRATEGIES OF PHYSICAL EDUCATORS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT: This study was designed to investigate three purposes by means of a questionnaire. The first purpose was to examine the sources and the symptoms of stress among selected elementary physical education teachers in Ankara. The second purpose was to identify the methods, which was used to cope with stress. The third purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between stress and performance of physical education teachers. A 78-item questionnaire was distributed to 39 elementary physical educators. The data were analysed by employing a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Results about sources of organizational stress revealed that lack of educational equipment, not to be use the abilities in the job and not to get the equivalent of work were mainly stress sources of physical educators. The results of this study also indicated that fatigue and tension were main stress symptoms of physical educators. Physical education teachers reported that talking with a friend is mostly used method to cope with stress among them.

KEY WORDS: *Stress, physical education teachers*

ÖZET: Bu çalışma ilköğretimdeki beden eğitimi öğretmenlerinin stres kaynaklarını, belirtilerini, stresle başa çıkma yollarını ve stresin öğretmenlerin performanslarına etkilerini araştırmak amacı ile yapılmıştır. Geçerliliği ve güvenilirliği Pehlivan (1993) tarafından yapılan 78 soru içeren anket ilköğretimde görev yapan 39 beden eğitimi öğretmenine dağıtılmıştır. Veriler sosyal bilimler için kullanılan istatistik paket programıyla (SPSS) analiz edilmiştir.

Çalışırken kullanılacak araç ve gereçlerin yetersizliği, yeteneklerin yapılan işte tam olarak kullanılmaması, çalışmaların karşılığını alamamak ve ücretin yetersizliği beden eğitimi öğretmenleri arasında en çok stres yaratan etkenler olarak bulunmuştur. Çalışmaya katılan denekler yorgunluk ve gerginliğin başlıca stres belirtisi olarak gösterirken, stresle baş etmede en çok yakın arkadaşlarıyla konuşma yöntemini seçtiklerini vurgulamışlardır.

ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER: *Stres, beden eğitimi öğretmenleri*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is generally known that people working in organisations are experiencing boredom and anxiety because of themselves and environment, so they feel discomfort, dissatisfaction and less productive. Employees' physiological and psychological well being are as important as job satisfaction and work productivity.

Investigating physical and psychological problems of people in organizations is also as important as the organizations' future in these days. These problems cause people stressed. Kyriacou [1] reported that prolonged occupational stress could lead to both mental and physical ill health and it impairs the working relationship between a teacher and pupils, and the quality of teaching. The definitions of stress are many and varied, ranging from simple one-word statements, such as, tension or pressure, to complex medical explanations for the physiological responses of the human body to certain stimuli. Stress can be stimulating or energizing, here it is positive and beneficial that is called stress, however, if it is cause of feelings of anxiety and discomfort that is called distress, it is negative and harmful condition [2]. However, in common usage the term stress is used as in the negative way. Stress is a natural and unavoidable feature of work life and daily life because people try to keep their life, thoughts, emotions, and relationships with their environment in a steady state condition [3]. If this steady state condition is disturbed, people feels or think that they have to get back feelings of comfort. There is general assumption or

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consensus that stress is a physical, mental or emotional reaction which results from an individual's response to environmental tensions, conflicts, pressures and similar stimuli. For example, physiologically stress is defined as the body's biochemical response to a stressor (factor causing stress). Too much stress leads to frequent changes in blood pressure that cause cardiac and other illnesses in the future. The most important thing is getting the feeling of stress (beneficial), but getting rid of distress (harmful) to increase job satisfaction and work productivity. Blase's [4] study indicates that teachers lowers their level of job involvement as a result of experiencing stress which decrease teachers' job satisfaction. The main goal of any organization, which can be a school or fast-food center, producing goods or giving services to meet the needs of society. They hire employees to reach this goal, so all forms of organizations are potential causes of stress because people's needs and wishes are not always the same and taken into consideration [2]. According to Ree [6] stress should be considered both the individual and the organizational level to understand it effectively. Educational organizations give services to society and have so many personnel in it. As educational organizations are becoming important in these days, schools have to carry out some responsibilities. Teachers are the first responsible people to educate children or youth. In Turkey, there are limited numbers of studies on teacher stress, symptoms of it, the effects of stress on teachers and coping strategies of stress [5,7]. But, there is no study that of physical educators' stress. It is generally presumed being physical education teacher is not stressful because teaching physical education usually considered easier than teaching other classes. As opposed to, wrong physical education causes unsafe and ineffective learning and irreparable defects on people. The aim of this study was to examine the sources of organizational stress, the symptoms of stress, the relationship between stress and performance and the methods of coping with stress among physical education teachers at elementary schools in Ankara.

2. METHOD

2.1. Subjects:

The subjects were selected from elementary schools in Ankara. There are eight central districts in Ankara from which three districts selected randomly. Schools were also selected randomly to reach physical educators in each school in each district. After getting permission from Ankara National Education Administration, 24 subjects were reached. To secure representative sample 15 more physical educator from other districts were asked to participate in this study. Totally, 19 female and 20 male physical educator participated in this study. To standardize the administration of the instruments, the investigator conducted and arranged all testing procedures. The physical educators were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that the information they provided was anonymous. The subjects were asked to read carefully each of the written direction in the questionnaire. The physical education teachers were also instructed not to disregard any statement on the work stress scale.

2.2 Instrument:

The work stress scale was developed by Pehlivan, [5] to measure the following areas: a) factors creating stress, b) symptoms of stress, c) the effects of stress on performance, d) coping strategies with stress. The questionnaire has been shown to demonstrate face validity. The reliability coefficient for each subscale of the questionnaire has ranged from 0.80 to 0.90. The five point likert scale ranging from 'very serious stress' to 'not stressed' was used for scoring the 78-item work stress scale.

3. RESULTS

The 35 items related with factors creating stress were first subjected to a descriptive analysis by calculating their mean scores. According to mean scores items were ranked. Factors creating

serious stress on physical educators orderly are lack of educational equipment (\bar{x} =4.20; SD=1,44), not to be use the abilities in the job (\bar{x} =4.10; SD=1,20), not to get the equivalent of work (\bar{x} =4.10; SD=1,16), insufficient salary (\bar{x} =3.82; SD=1,49), noise in working environment (\bar{x} =3.54; SD=1,30). Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of sources of stress factors reported commonly.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Of Factors Creating Stress

	Mean	St. Dev.
Lack of educational equipment	4.20	1.44
Not to be use the abilities in the job	4.10	1.20
Not to get the equivalent of work	4.10	1.16
Insufficient salary	3.82	1.49
Noise in working environment	3.54	1.30

Symptoms of stress among selected physical educators were found at moderate level, the most common symptoms were tension (\bar{x} =3.40; SD=0,85) and fatigue (\bar{x} =3.10; SD=1,23). The most commonly reported items as effects of stress on job performance among subjects were 'not to want to go to the job' (\bar{x} =2.72; SD=0,86), 'thinking leave the job' (\bar{x} =2.40; SD=0,93) and 'decreasing quality of work' (\bar{x} =2.15; SD=1,12). Table 2 shows the effects of stress on job performance.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations on effects of stress on job performance

	Mean	St. Dev.
Not to want to go to the job	2.72	0.86
Thinking leave the job	2.40	0.93
Decreasing quality of work	2.15	1.12

The three most commonly used strategies to cope with stress were talking stressful situation with confidential people (\bar{x} =3.80; SD=1,17), watching cultural and sports activities (\bar{x} =3.80; SD=1,15) and going over stressful situation (\bar{x} =3.64; SD=0,86), as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics And The Most Commonly Used Strategies To Cope With Stress

	Mean	St. Dev.
Talking stressful situation with confidential people	3.80	1.17
Watching cultural and sports activities	3.80	1.15
Going over stressful situation	3.64	0.86

To test there was a significant differences between female and male subjects considering factors and symptoms of stress, t-test scores were compared. T-test results showed no significant difference between male and female physical educators in sources of stress and symptoms of it.

Table 4. T-test Results For Subscales; Sources Of Stress And Symptoms Of Stress For Gender

		N	Mean	St. Dev.	t-value
Sources of stress	female	19	102.05	23.57	1.8
	male	20	115.80	22.11	1.88
Symptoms of stress	female	19	75.84	11.11	0.2
	male	20	75.75	13.49	0.2

(*p<0.05)

4. DISCUSSION

Kyriacou [1] reported that "studies worldwide typically indicate that a large proportion of teachers report experiencing stress or burnout. School-teachers reported one of the highest levels of occupational stresses". Many studies stated that pupil recalcitrance and excessive demands on teachers' time were serious stressor for teachers [11]. However, in this study, the serious stressors were found as lack of educational equipment and not being used abilities in work places. It can be speculated that lack of educational equipment would be

more serious stressor for physical education teachers working at small villages in Turkey. Pehlivan [5] conducted a study on teachers and inspectors to investigate sources of stress. The researcher found that lack of salary was the most serious stress factor for both groups. However, in this study, lack of salary was not reported as a very serious stressor. It was also reported that not being used abilities in work places because of lack of equipment, unsuitable environment and high number of pupils in each class. This finding was also supported by Brown and Ralph [12]. This study reflected that tension ($\bar{x}=3.40$; $SD=0,85$) and fatigue ($\bar{x}=3.20$; $SD=1,23$) were main stress symptoms on physical educators. Generally, they have done administrative duties in many schools. They have also done their job physically and mentally. That may be why fatigue and tension were the main stress symptoms for physical educators. The effects of stress on performance of physical educators are seen as not to want to go to job and thinking leave the job. These seen moderately among physical educators. With regard to gender differences, the study reveals there was no significant differences between male and female physical educators in sources and symptoms of stress, and our results consistent with [6,9,10]. The roles of physical educators on students' physiological, psychological and social development are important, so decreasing the effects of stress and improving the quality of their working lives are important for the community. It is necessary to be made organizational arrangements in a short time. Talking with a confidential person was reported the most used strategy to reduce stress. This may have been cultural a thing. In many studies done in Western Countries, as opposed to, more scientific and meaningful strategies have been used to reduce stress such as ensuring that you understand the work you are about to teach and lesson preparation [13]. Owing to the relatively small sample size, the findings are suggestive, and should provide hypothesis to be pursued in future research. Studies for physical education teachers are needed. Controls for symptoms of stress and

factors causing stress would be required to increase the physical and mental well being of teachers and give rise to quality of education at schools.

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