

PAWEŁ F. NOWAK

Liderzy edukacji zdrowotnej we współczesnej szkole

Leaders of health education in the modern school

Streszczenie

Wstęp. Tylko nauczyciel, który wpisze się w rolę lidera o charyzmatycznej osobowości może skutecznie realizować proces edukacji zdrowotnej w szkole.

Cel. Celem niniejsze pracy było poznanie opinii nauczycieli różnych specjalności na temat liderów edukacji zdrowotnej w polskiej szkole.

Material i metody. Badaniem objęto 307 nauczycieli z 37 szkół różnych typów województwa opolskiego uczących różnych przedmiotów. Zastosowano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego z wykorzystaniem autorskiego kwestionariusza ankiety.

Wyniki. W pracy wykazano, że badani dostrzegają związek wychowania fizycznego z edukacją zdrowotną oraz znaczącą rolę wychowawców w procesie kształtowania zdrowego stylu życia. W opinii badanych to nauczyciele biologii i wychowania fizycznego są w największym stopniu przygotowani by zostać liderem szkolnej edukacji zdrowotnej.

Najczęściej w szkołach liderem edukacji zdrowotnej jest nauczyciel biologii, nieznacznie mniej badanych wymieniło nauczyciela wychowania fizycznego. Aż 30% badanych nie dostrzega lidera edukacji zdrowotnej w swojej szkole, co jest niepokojącym zjawiskiem szczególnie, w sytuacji gdy Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej obciąża tym zadaniem nauczyciela wychowania fizycznego.

Wnioski. Istnieje pilna potrzeba wprowadzenia zmian w systemie kształcenia przyszłych nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego jak i przeszkolenia obecnie pracujących, by umożliwić im uzyskanie kompetencji lidera edukacji zdrowotnej.

Abstract

Introduction. Only a teacher, who enters into the role of a charismatic leadership personality may effectively pursue the process of health education in school.

Aim. Knowing teachers' views – teachers of different specialties – on the leaders in health education in Polish schools was the main object of this research.

Material and methods. There research comprised 307 teachers from 37 schools of different types. All teachers were from the Opole Province and teaching different subjects. A diagnostic survey, using the author's questionnaire, was chosen as the method of research.

Results. The research showed that the examined teachers could see the link between physical education and health education and they recognized the significant role of educators in the process of shaping a healthy lifestyle.

In the opinion of the researched group the teachers of biology and physical education are best prepared to be the leaders of school health education – most often the biology teachers, in the second place – physical education teachers. As many as 30% of the respondents do not see the leader of health education in their school. It is a worrying situation especially when the Ministry of Education made the physical education teacher responsible for this task.

Conclusions. Making changes in education system of future teachers of physical education and training for currently working teachers – towards gaining leadership of health education competence, is urgently needed.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja zdrowotna, liderzy, nauczyciele.

Keywords: health education, leaders, teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The Polish system of general education has been undergoing changes which tend towards developing competence and problem-solving skills connected with the current and feasible challenges of contemporary civilization. The issues related to the development of the skills in the scope of health protection, prophylaxis and promotion are of great significance. The widely-shared opinion that health education is a vital component of general education of a contemporary man has been propagated for a long time [1,2].

There appears the problem with educators who would bear the responsibility for the health education of children and youth. Unfortunately, colleges do not train people who would possess adequate skills to work within the modern education environment. Authors of the new reform of education did not make provisions for methodical additional schooling and training of teachers in this scope. On top of it all, teachers themselves do not show interest in additional schooling. This problem refers especially to people of a long professional experience and therefore with the highest degrees of the professional career, which most of the teachers in Poland have [3-5].

The international program *Health Promoting School*, initiated and supervised by WHO, developed an effective concept of health education. It is based on a leader – coordinator, who supervises the work of the health promoting team in a given institution [6]. The leader is not only the most competent person in a given field, having authority but also an individual with leadership skills and a charismatic personality, thanks to which he can win people for joint work. It is the person who mastered the art of persuasion, negotiation and motivating people. It is someone who is above-average, personally involved in his work and who believes in it enough to get the people from his closest environment involved in this work with high motivation [7].

In order to carry out the process of health education at school, the subject matter of which is extremely interdisciplinary and abstract for young healthy people and for whom anti-health behavior is often the manifestation of being fashionable and of curiosity, a charismatic educator with leadership skills is required.

AIM

Presenting the opinions of the teachers of various specializations on health education leaders in the Polish school.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

For this purpose, 307 teachers of various subjects from 37 schools of various types from Opole Province were surveyed. The population consisted of 250 women and 57 men, and 27 persons in this group were physical education teachers. The method of a diagnostic survey using the author's questionnaire consisting of 7, mostly closed questions, was applied. The survey was of an anonymous and auditorium character and it was carried out within a cycle of trainings on analyzing the quality of school work. The people surveyed answered the closed questions defining their feelings

towards a given issue in a growing scale 1-5. A qualitative analysis of the answer content was carried out in relation to two open questions.

RESULT ANALYSIS

A modern school providing a healthy environment, professing universal and socially required values, such as health, is the ambition of education authorities. Therefore all teachers employed in educational institutions should take on the roles of healthy lifestyle educators and promoters. Are they really well prepared for this role?

The teachers are quite positive about their professional competence (Figure 1). Most of them believe that they are prepared for acting as propagators of a healthy lifestyle. Women show a higher self-esteem in this respect. Eighteen per cent of women and 15.8% of men believe that they are well prepared. Around 10% of those under study admit that they do not find themselves prepared for providing health education (Figure 1).

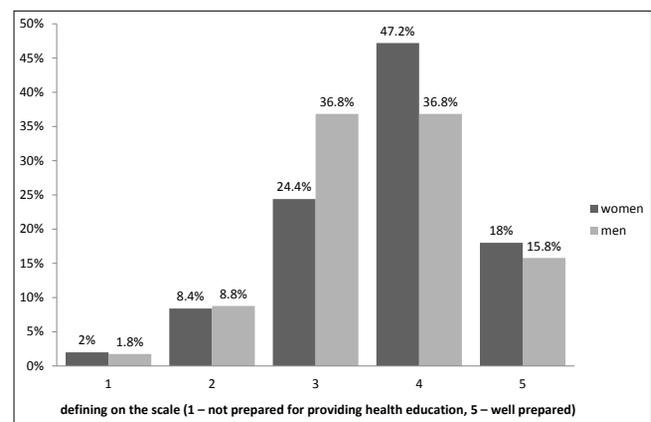


FIGURE 1. Preparing for acting as propagators of a healthy lifestyle – self-evaluation of teachers.

Health education is not only the process of passing definite knowledge; these are also educational activities aiming at developing required attitudes and habits in relation to the value such as health. Each teacher, within the scope of his duties, is to teach, educate and take care of the students he is responsible for. This refers especially to the teachers who act as class tutors – supervising the education of a group of students. A class tutor is a leader, who gets in touch with students' parents and who, theoretically, spends most time with his students at school. The teachers surveyed assess quite high the activities of a class tutor in the field of health education. In teachers' opinion, class tutors play a significant (37.1%) and very significant (37.5%) role in students' health education. Hardly a few per cent (3.6%) claim that this role is insignificant (Figure 2).

The teachers surveyed recognize a strong connection of physical education with health education. Most of the teachers surveyed (67.1%) believe that the school subject such as physical education plays a significant role in health education of children and youth. Only one out of 307 of those under study claimed that physical education is not too closely connected with the field of education analyzed. It is worth stressing that no person believed that there is no such connection at all (Figure 3).

A significant majority of teachers claim that biology (38.8%) and physical education (16%) teachers are best prepared for the role of a health educator. As many as 30.6% of the respondents indicated, in the open question, these two specializations – physical education and biology. Less than 5% did not provide any answer to this question at all. The few (2.9%) indicate a school pedagogue in this role (Figure 4).

Most often, the real leader of pro-health education in schools is a biology teacher – 24% of the respondents' indications. Some teachers (21.2%) indicate a physical education teacher. Over 10% of the surveyed indicated a school pedagogue, and 8.5% a school nurse.

As many as 30% of the surveyed did not provide any answer to the question Who is the leader of health education in my school? It can be assumed that in these cases there are no leaders and thus there is no effective long-term health education (Figure 5).

DISCUSSION

Educational circles must face not only the economic and demographic crisis but also the crisis of values. Human health – in spite of the fact that it is a commonly acknowledged and highly treasured value – does not have its due place in school reality. Social expectations as to the realization of the health education process at school are considerable. Everybody should be interested in this sphere of education as the effects

of the changes in our approach, the changes in our attitudes, habits related to health care influence directly and indirectly our social and economic reality.

Healthy societies of a high tolerance to homeostasis disorders caused by the development of civilization can shape effectively their living conditions, raising the life standard and its quality.

Krawański [8] claims that the need and the chance of the contemporary times is the so-called 'doctor of a healthy man'. Not only the sick need support, it is also needed by people in good health. It is needed by people who aspire to achieving satisfaction from a high level of fitness and physical efficiency – significant measures of man's health [9]. Hence there also appears the need for an individual health trainer – a guide to a healthy lifestyle [10,11].

Education without leaders is not a too effective process. Z. Cendrowski, the chief editor of *Lider* [Leader] magazine, which is addressed to physical education teachers and all those who are interested in health promotion, has often written about it. In his books, popularizing physical and health culture, Cendrowski [12,13] stresses an extremely significant role of the guides to the areas of the two cultures mentioned. Nowadays, it is not as easy as it used to be to gain and maintain respect of the youth. Most probably the causes should be sought in the development of the information society and economy based on knowledge. Information covering various disciplines is widely accessible, e.g. in mass media, which diminishes the role of a teacher as the

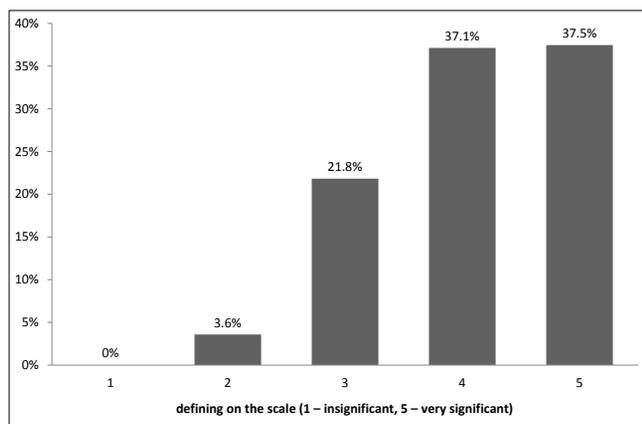


FIGURE 2. Role of class tutors in students' health education – in teachers' opinion.

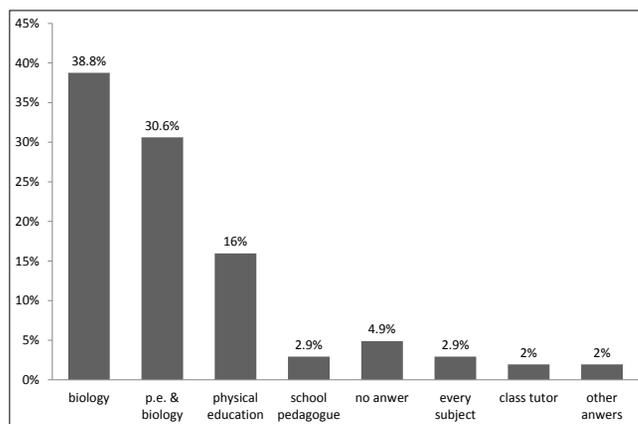


FIGURE 4. Teachers best prepared for the role of school health educator – in teachers' opinion.

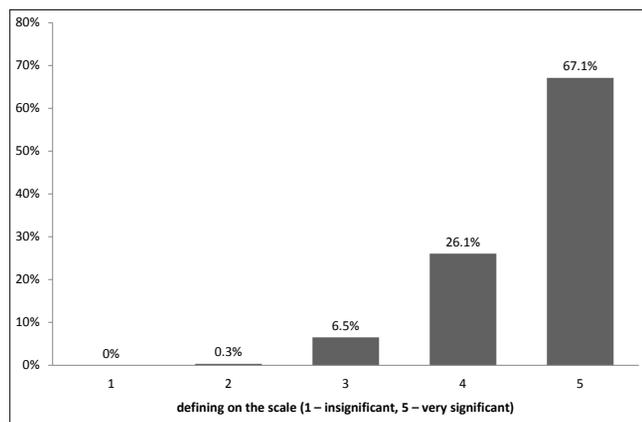


FIGURE 3. Role of physical education in health education – in teachers' opinion.

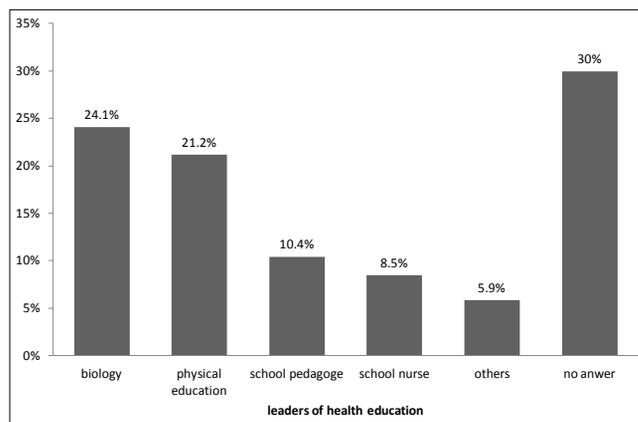


FIGURE 5. Leaders of school health education – in teachers' opinion.

source of knowledge [14]. Obviously, there exists the problem of information noise – untrue, incomplete or unverified information, especially in the Internet. Therefore, the expert role of the leader of health promotion and education, which comes down to taking a definite attitude to controversial or disputable issues, is becoming more and more significant. It may be assumed that in the nearest future, not a broad knowledge but a rich, interesting personality will be required from a health teacher, trainer or educator. This obviously constitutes a great challenge for colleges training prospective teachers [15]. The health education leader is a person using in his work his own respect built on a total identification with the field of his own interests. In this case, demonstrating solely a pro-health approach is an obvious strategy. However, the study shows that many students – prospective physical education teachers – live unhealthily and developed bad habits [16]. Few physical education teachers are physically active. Hardly 15% of them practice a selected recreational activity and about 30% admit that they do not exercise even occasionally [17].

The Ministry of National Education assigned the leading role in health education to physical education and the teachers of this subject as the individuals best prepared in this scope. However, based on my own study, most teachers see a biology teacher in the role of the leader and not a physical education teacher. The school reform experts, participating in information meetings with physical education teachers, admit that teachers are not interested in taking on the role of the health education leader at school. This unsettling phenomenon is caused by many factors. The most significant issues reported by teachers are organizational obstacles connected with the class-lesson system of the school functioning and their insufficient methodological preparation for conducting health education without proper teaching aids [18].

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The people surveyed realize the connection between physical and health education and a significant role of the tutors in the process of developing a healthy lifestyle.
- Most teachers believe that they are well prepared to take on the role of the health education propagator in their school.
- In the opinion of the people surveyed, it is the teachers of biology and physical education that are best prepared to become leaders of the school health education.
- Most often it is a biology teacher who is the leader of the health education at school and only slightly fewer teachers surveyed indicated a physical education teacher.
- As many as 30% of the teachers surveyed do not recognize the health education leader in their school, which is an unsettling phenomenon, especially in the situation when the Ministry of National Education makes a physical education teacher responsible for this objective.
- There is an urgent need for implementing some changes in the system of education of prospective physical education teachers and providing training to those already employed to acquire the competence of the health education leader.

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Informacje o Autorze

Dr PAWEŁ F. NOWAK – adiunkt, Wydział Wychowania Fizycznego i Fizjoterapii, Politechnika Opolska.

Adres do korespondencji

Paweł F. Nowak
Wydział Wychowania Fizycznego i Fizjoterapii, Politechnika Opolska
ul. Prószkowska 76, 45-758 Opole
tel. 697 719 604
E-mail: p.nowak@po.opole.pl