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# Teachers' mental health during the first two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in Poland.

Tomasz Jakubowski<sup>1</sup>, Magdalena Sitko-Dominik<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>University of Silesia

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Magdalena Sitko-Dominik

## ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to investigate the relation between distance education and teachers' well-being, and their close relations and other social relations during the first and second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## 1 Tomasz Jakubowski, Magdalena Sitko-Dominik

### Design Plan

The project will be realized as observational cross-sectional study. It will not use any blinding nor any experimental manipulations.

## **Aims of the study/Hypothesis**

The aim of the research is to investigate the relation between distance education and teachers' well-being, and their close relations and other social relations during the first and second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the first stage of the research, taking into consideration the research literature on the topic, we formulated the following hypotheses:

Satisfaction from the relationship, satisfaction from social relations and perceived social support negatively predict the levels of mental distress (stress, anxiety and depressive symptomatology).

In the second stage of the research, as the research group and the area of research will be extended the following hypotheses will be added:

The sense of injustice positively predicts the levels of mental distress (stress, anxiety and depressive symptomatology).

The teachers participating in the research during the first wave of the pandemic experience lower levels of mental distress (stress, anxiety and depressive symptomatology) than those participating in the research during the second wave.

Teachers from the Silesian Voivodeship experience higher levels of mental distress (stress, anxiety and depressive symptomatology) than those from other voivodeships in Poland.

## **Sampling procedures**

The Academic Ethics Committee in the University of Silesia in Katowice granted the authors of this project the permission to conduct the study (no. KEUS.93/02.2021) as well as the permission to conduct it outside of the institution in the field sites. The participants will be selected by means of chain referral method.

## **The first stage of the research**

In order to diagnose the teachers' psychological well-being, the retrospective research, concerning the period when the research participants were engaged in distance education (March 16 – June 26, 2020) will be conducted. The stage will be carried out in the workplace, the primary schools in the Silesian Voivodeship.

In the first stage of the research, the participants will be recruited by means of convenience sampling: the researchers will directly contact primary school principals in the Silesian Voivodeship, strictly complying with the recommendations of the Chief Sanitary Inspector. The principals will be informed about the aim of the research and have the opportunity to see the questionnaire for the teachers. On granting the permission for conducting the research, the principals will be handed the questionnaires. The research will be conducted by means of the traditional paper-and-pencil method. Each person that agree to participate in the research will be asked to fill in three questionnaires and provide the sociodemographic data. The participants will not get any payment for participating in the research.

## **The second stage of the research**

In the second stage of the research, we decided to look for factors responsible for the teachers' current psychological well-being. The research will be conducted via the Internet, through Google Forms with an appended consent form, among primary and secondary school teachers.

In the second stage of research, the recruitment of participants will be conducted by means of snowball sampling. In order to get a representative nationwide group, the authors, together with three students acting as research assistants, will try to directly contact teachers, or sent requests concerning the participation in the research to selected schools, as well as post the information about the research project on Internet fora for teachers. Each

person who agrees to participate in the research will be asked to fill in four questionnaires and provide the sociodemographic data. The participants will not get any payment for participating in the research. Registration of the plan was done following the analysis of the data.

## Measures and variables

In the first stage of the research, the following sociodemographic data will be gathered — gender, age, years of work as a teacher, marital status, relationship breakup during the pandemic, total number of children, number of children up to 8 years old, number of children 9-15 years old, number of children 16-19 years old; partner's work status, relationship quality change during the pandemic (between March 16, 2020 and June 27, 2020), and social relations quality change during the pandemic (between March 16, 2020 and June 27, 2020). In the case of relationship/social relations quality change during the pandemic, the respondents will have to provide an answer on a 5-point Likert scale (1 — "It has definitely worsened"; 2 — "It has worsened"; 3 — "It has not changed"; 4 — "It has improved"; 5 — "It has definitely got better").

In the second stage of the research, the following sociodemographic data will be gathered — gender, age, years of work as a teacher, marital status, relationship breakup during the pandemic, total number of children, number of children up to 8 years old, number of children 9-15 years old, number of children 16-19 years old; partner's work status, relationship quality change during the pandemic, social relations quality change during the pandemic, voivodeship of residence, and level of school in which the teacher works. In the case of relationship/social relations quality change during the pandemic, the respondents will have to provide an answer on a 5-point Likert scale (1 — "It has definitely worsened"; 2 — "It has worsened"; 3 — "It has not changed"; 4 — "It has improved"; 5 — "It has definitely got better").

Mental well-being — measured by the Depression Anxiety & Stress Scales-21 by Lovibond & Lovibond (1995), translated into Polish by Tomasz Jakubowski.

Social support — measured by the Berlin Social Support Scales by Schwarzer and Schultz (2003), in Polish adaptation by Łuszczynska and associates (2006).

Relationship satisfaction — measured by the Relationship Satisfaction Scale by Røysamb, Vittersø and Tambs (2014), translated into Polish by Tomasz Jakubowski.

Sense of Injustice — measured by the Injustice Experience Questionnaire by Sullivan (2008), translated into Polish by Tomasz Jakubowski. In the study, the items addressing the medical/health condition will be replaced with those addressing the life situation to measure the perceived level of experienced injustice during the lockdown and remote teaching.

## Statistical analysis

### The first stage of the research

The study will include the stress, anxiety and depression sub-scales of DASS-21 as dependent variables; and sociodemographic data, relationship and social relations quality change during the pandemic, general social support, emotional social support, instrumental social support (measured by BSSS) and relationship satisfaction (measured by RS-10) as independent variables. The analytics software package Statistica version 13.1. will be used to compute descriptive statistics, correlations, intergroup differences, univariate regression and multivariate backward stepwise regression.

### The second stage of the research

The study will include the stress, anxiety and depression sub-scales of DASS-21 as dependent variables; and sociodemographic data, relationship and social relations quality change during the pandemic, general social support, emotional social support and instrumental social support (measured by BSSS), relationship satisfaction (measured by RS-10), perceived injustice, blame/unfairness and severity/irreparability (measured by IEQ) as independent variables. The analytics software package Statistica version 13.1. will be used to compute descriptive

statistics, correlations, intergroup differences, univariate regressions and multivariate backward stepwise regressions.

The statistical significance will be set on  $p < .05$ . In the second stage of the research, an analysis of intergroup differences in levels of stress, depression and anxiety will be conducted with the Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons.