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Needs that are not included in the schedule – transactional analysis of students’ (future teachers’) experiences

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Abstract

The aim of the article was to examine how pedagogy students, especially those studying part-time, experience the lack of satisfaction of basic existential needs and how they cope with it. The study was based on qualitative methods – individual in-depth interviews and focus groups – conducted with 23 students. Data analysis was carried out using thematic categorization and concepts from transactional analysis: hungers, strokes, games, and life scripts. I formulated the main problem in the form of a question: how do the unmet needs of pedagogy students, not resulting directly from the curriculum, influence their emotional, social and professional functioning – and how do they manifest themselves in terms of hunger, costumes, games and life scenarios in the context of transactional analysis?

The results indicate that students most often reported needs for rest, emotional closeness, safety, and recognition. The chronic unmet needs may lead to frustration, decreased motivation, and, in the long term, to reproducing destructive patterns in their future work with children. The authors emphasize the need for implementing systemic emotional support in academic environments.

Keywords: student needs; transactional analysis; psychological hungers; emotional support; higher education

Introduction

The modern student – especially in education – lives at the intersection of many tensions: between university expectations and their own boundaries, between daily schedules and their internal rhythms, between the need to be authentic and the necessity of fitting into formal professional roles. In this context, voices are increasingly heard that the higher education system fails to address students' everyday real needs – those related to relaxation, relationships, personal development, and a sense of meaning. Young people report feeling exhausted, overloaded with responsibilities, and lacking space to “be human,” even though they are preparing for work with a strong relational and caring nature.

In today's world, higher education is increasingly no longer a period of “self-discovery,” but a stage of intense work, time management, and a struggle to survive in a maze of responsibilities. This is particularly true for part-time students of pedagogy, who often combine studying with professional work and family responsibilities. In their daily lives, needs such as rest, sleep, social relationships, and moments of peace are relegated to the margins – as “unproductive” or “too expensive” in the realities of academic pressure. Yet, these needs are fundamental – both biologically and psychologically. Their unmet needs lead to fatigue, decreased motivation, lower self-esteem, and difficulty establishing healthy interpersonal relationships (Flick, 2018, p. 29). Pedagogy and psychology often emphasize the importance of a balance between “being there for others” and “being there for oneself,” which is a prerequisite for the mental health and professional effectiveness of future teachers (Nowak, 2011, p. 88).

Transactional analysis – a concept proposed by Eric Berne – provides tools for understanding why and how people reorganize their needs in response to environmental demands. Berne (1961, p. 47) introduced the concept of psychological hungers – the need for stimulation, structure, and recognition – as driving forces behind human actions. Their unmet needs can lead to psychological games, i.e., repetitive and inauthentic forms of interaction, and, in the long term, to the creation of life scenarios that limit individual development (Berne, 1972, pp. 131–135). The purpose of this article is to present how pedagogy students – especially those studying part-time – experience the unmet need for basic existential needs and how they attempt to cope.

Also important here is the analysis of students' everyday, existential needs in the context of their university and personal experiences, using transactional analysis as an interpretive framework. Applying transactional analysis as an interpretive framework allows us to capture compensatory mechanisms, survival strategies, and the role of the university as a transactional space. Research based on qualitative methods gives voice to the students themselves – allowing us to understand what young people truly need before becoming teachers re-

sponsible for the development of others. Applying this concept – based on concepts such as psychological hunger, strokes, games, and life scenarios – allows us to capture mechanisms for coping with unmet needs and the hidden tensions between “need” and “ought.”

This article is based on qualitative research conducted among teaching students, which aimed to identify silenced, ignored, or suppressed needs, as well as ways to compensate for them in everyday academic life. This study gives voice to future teachers as conscious participants in the educational process, attempting to negotiate their own “self” in a space that often does not facilitate this.

Understanding the nature of human needs is a key issue in psychology, pedagogy, and the social sciences. From the classical concepts of Abraham Maslow, through the motivational theories of Ryan and Deci, to contemporary approaches integrating knowledge from neuroscience and psychotherapy, human needs have been viewed as fundamental to an individual's development, relationships with others, and functioning in the social world. One approach that offers a coherent and practical framework for needs analysis is the aforementioned transactional analysis (TA).

Although this theory originally developed in the field of psychotherapy, it has gradually become a universal tool for examining interpersonal interactions, personality structures, and motivations.

In transactional analysis, human needs are not treated solely as biological or psychological mechanisms, but as dynamic components of a life script, shaped by early decisions, parental messages, and social interactions. A special place here is occupied by the concept of so-called psychological hungers, which, according to Berne, encompass stimulus needs, structural needs, and esteem needs (i.e., the hunger for contact and validation). Their satisfaction or deficiency influences the quality of interpersonal transactions, the way emotions are managed, and the individual's capacity for autonomy. The purpose of this article is to present the categories of human needs from a transactional analysis perspective, discuss their importance for individual psychological and social development, and point to the practical implications of this concept in education, therapy, and parenting relationships. The article attempts to answer the question of how TA can expand our understanding of human needs beyond classical psychological models while offering tools for identifying and meeting them in a relational context.

Human Needs from an Existential and Psychological Perspective

Human needs are a fundamental focus of psychology, pedagogy, existential philosophy, and health sciences. In Maslow's classic approach, they are pre-

sented as hierarchically ordered aspirations, ranging from physiological needs to self-actualization (Maslow, 1987, pp. 15–25). However, contemporary approaches emphasize the more complex and relational nature of needs, highlighting their contextuality, variability, and cultural determinants (Deci & Ryan, 2000, pp. 227–229). In the light of the latest pedagogical approaches, students' needs related to recognition, a predictable structure of teaching interactions and relational security are conditions for their well-being and lasting engagement. Analyses of the educational climate indicate that the lack of recognition (acknowledgement) increases the risk of a decrease in motivation and a sense of agency, and also intensifies the experience of loneliness in the study process, especially in fields where the intensity of educational contacts and social requirements is high (Tłuściak-Deliowska, 2023). In the context of transactional analysis, the described deficit of “hungers” (recognition and structure) promotes the development of maladaptive patterns of interaction and psychological games, which in the long run reduces the sense of well-being.

In the existential perspective, needs are understood as the necessity to give meaning to life, find a place in the world, and establish relationships with oneself and others (Frankl, 2009, pp. 72–74). They are not only a condition for survival but also for self-determination and freedom. In this context, needs such as rest, closeness, intimacy, emotional security, and the ability to be heard are as crucial as the need for food or sleep. From the perspective of education and professional work, it is important to recognize that students – including those preparing for the role of teacher – do not function as “pure minds,” but as individuals with specific needs, resources, and deficits. The inability to meet these needs, especially in work and study settings, can lead to burnout, frustration, and emotional withdrawal (Sęk, 2004, pp. 91–93). For students of pedagogy, these effects are particularly significant – a person who experiences chronic insecurity, fatigue, or misunderstanding will be unable to effectively support the development of others, especially children. Burnout during the educational stage can become a precursor to future difficulties in professional life, leading to a reluctance to accept the role of a teacher, professional inactivity, and even resignation from education. Therefore, institutions educating future teachers should not only impart knowledge and develop skills but also create an environment conducive to meeting the emotional, social, and existential needs of students. This approach, rooted in a humanistic model of education, recognizes people as subjects, not as “tools for achieving educational goals.” It is sensitivity to individual needs, the ability to identify and meet them in appropriate conditions, that determines the quality of education – and ultimately, the quality of teachers' future professional lives.

Need Classification in Transactional Analysis

Transactional analysis (TA), pioneered by Eric Berne, is one of the most comprehensive theories explaining the mechanisms of human behavior in the context of interpersonal relationships. In the TA framework, needs are not merely biological or psychological categories but relate to the individual's functioning within the social system. Berne (1961) distinguished three key needs, which he termed "hungers": hungers for stimulus, structure, and recognition.

Stimulus hunger refers to the basic need to receive sensory and emotional experiences. Their deficiency often results in compulsive stimulation seeking or social withdrawal.

Structure hunger indicates the need to organize time and activities in a predictable manner – through rituals, patterns, and norms.

Recognition hunger is the need to be noticed, perceived, and appreciated by others. In TA, particular importance is attached to so-called strokes, or units of recognition – both positive and negative (Stewart & Joines, 2012).

These needs determine the ways in which an individual manages relationships, recognizes their own boundaries, and builds identity. Their long-term unsatisfaction becomes the basis for the development of distorted adaptive mechanisms, often referred to in TA as life scripts – unconsciously adopted life plans that limit an individual's autonomy (Harris, 2010). A lack of positive impacts can result in scripts like "I don't exist if I'm not needed," "I have to be perfect to deserve attention," or "don't show emotion because you won't be heard." Distorted patterns of adjustment contribute to internal conflicts, difficulties in forming close relationships, and professional and emotional burnout.

In the educational and parenting context, recognizing the role of impacts is crucial – both in peer and teacher-student relationships. Consciously managing impacts, i.e., providing authentic, unconditional positive impacts, can strengthen learners' self-esteem, psychological safety, and autonomy. In turn, their chronic lack, especially among young adults in academic settings, can deepen feelings of maladjustment and trigger compensatory behaviors – perfectionism, withdrawal, conformism, or rebelliousness.

Transactional Analysis as a Tool for Interpreting Human Needs. Psychological Hungers: Stimuli, Structure, Recognition, and Their Consequences.

Unmet needs (psychological hungers) can lead to the pathologization of social relationships, as manifested by so-called psychological games – repetitive

and inauthentic communication patterns, often rife with manipulation or self-sabotage (Berne, 1964). For example, a person experiencing a chronic lack of positive recognition may deliberately provoke conflicts to obtain even negative attention, thus satisfying their hunger for connection. These hungers are satisfied through everyday interactions – family, school, and work. Individuals constantly engage in social transactions (conversations, gestures, reactions), which, depending on their quality, can enhance or undermine psychological well-being. As James (1973) notes, an imbalance in the satisfaction of these hungers results in the development of an internal compulsion to repeat destructive scenarios. In the educational context, lack of hunger in future teachers can impact the quality of their work with children. A teacher who, during their own socialization – especially in childhood and adolescence – did not experience positive strokes (units of recognition such as praise, acceptance, or attention) may unconsciously replicate this pattern in their work with students (Stewart & Joines, 2012). In practice, this translates to more frequent use of criticism and irony, ignoring children's emotional needs, or rigidly enforcing rules without simultaneously demonstrating support and recognition. A lack of positive strokes in the teaching relationship limits students' sense of agency, leading to passivity, fear of failure, and, consequently, reduced motivation to take on challenges (Schulz von Thun, 2013). Children deprived of a sense of emotional security do not fully develop social-emotional competencies, which negatively impacts their ability to think and learn independently (Branden, 1994). Furthermore, a teacher who fails to recognize the impact of their own socialization experiences may recreate old, destructive parenting patterns, failing to recognize the damage they are causing to relationships with students (Harris, 2012). The latest Polish studies confirm that meeting students' needs for recognition, relationships and emotional security is crucial for their well-being and engagement in the studying process (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2025; CBOS, 2024; EUROSTUDENT VIII – well-being module, 2024).

Therefore, developing self-reflection and the ability to work with one's own experiences and emotions is crucial in teacher education, which helps break this negative cycle and create a classroom environment conducive to each child's development (Rogers, 1995).

Between Need and Duty – The Context of Pedagogy Students' Functioning Student-University Relationships as a Transactional Space

The relationship between a student and a university is not limited solely to the transmission of knowledge and the assessment of academic achievement.

From the perspective of transactional analysis (TA), it constitutes a transactional space in which repeated interactions occur, largely based on adopted psychological roles. Berne (1961, p. 23) distinguishes three ego states: Parent, Adult, and Child, each of which can be activated in various interpersonal contexts. In academic practice, the relationship between student and lecturer is often asymmetrical – the university communicates from the position of the “Normative Parent,” enforcing rules, deadlines, and regulations, while the student – especially part-time students combining studies with work – is sometimes relegated to the role of the “Obedient Child” or the “Rebellious Child” (Stewart & Joines, 2012, p. 66). As a result, students lack the space to express their true needs, as meeting external expectations becomes the priority. University, unintentionally, can thus become an environment that reinforces psychological games – e.g., “Look how much on my plate” or “I have to do everything myself, otherwise I don’t deserve recognition” (James, 1973, p. 109). In such conditions, students don’t feel entitled to rest or admit to overwork – instead, they seek reassurance through sacrifice, perfectionism, or complaining. This is particularly problematic for pedagogy students, as the lack of role models for authentically recognizing one’s own limits later spills over into their relationships with children – their future students. From a transactional analysis perspective, the student-university relationship can be viewed as a continuous sequence of social transactions, revealing dominant self-structures: Child, Parent, or Adult (Berne, 1961). Institutional messages (syllabuses, grading rules, email communication) often take the form of messages from the “Normative Parent” position, while students adopt a subordinate position – the “Obedient Child” or the “Rebellious Child.” Such an arrangement can lead to the creation of psychological games whose goal is not actual change or development, but rather the achievement of identity-affirming attire – even negative ones.

Invisible Needs: Rest, Acceptance, Relationships, Being “Enough”.

Among part-time students who simultaneously work professionally and have other commitments (e.g., childcare, shift work), needs beyond the “purely academic” are often suppressed, marginalized, or repressed. Analysis of qualitative student responses reveals recurring needs:

- Rest and sleep (“I’d like to finally get some sleep”),
- Emotional closeness (“I need someone who understands and supports me”),
- Guilt-free relaxation (“Time for a book, a movie, a bath – without thinking about what else I need to do”),
- Recognition (“I need to be appreciated – by my professors, by my loved ones, by myself”).

According to Berne’s theory, these are manifestations of an insatiable hunger for stimulation and recognition (Berne, 1961, p. 47). Students do not receive enough positive attire – and when they do receive it, it is contingent on produc-

tivity (e.g., “good grade” = “you are valuable”). This leads to an internal belief that deserving rest or attention depends on meeting external standards. This creates a so-called life script based on conditional acceptance (Berne, 1972, p. 132).

It's also disturbing that many students report a lack of self-worth independent of action – “I can't do nothing,” “I feel useless when I'm not working.” These are manifestations of an ingrained internal script that dismisses the need for regeneration and rest as “unnecessary” or “selfish.” As a result, many of them create narratives of survival, not well-being – focusing on how to “persevere” rather than “live well.” From a pedagogical point of view, if students do not learn to recognize and respect their own needs, it will be difficult for them to support the emotional development of their future students – especially since the teaching profession is strongly based on the ability to regulate emotions, relational presence and empathetic response.

Own research methodology

This article uses a qualitative approach to capture students' subjective perspectives in the context of their everyday experiences and needs (Flick, 2018). The following research questions were proposed for this study:

1. What needs do pedagogy students declare that are not directly related to their curriculum?
2. What areas of life – emotional, social, and professional – are most frequently identified by students as sources of unmet needs?
3. What significance do these needs have for students' sense of security, agency, and satisfaction?
4. How do the categories of hunger, costume, games, and scenarios, as defined by transactional analysis (Stewart & Joines, 2012), emerge in students' statements?

The research objectives were:

- Identifying the most frequently expressed needs of pedagogy students that are not covered by the course schedule.
- Determining the importance of these needs for students' psychosocial functioning.
- Qualitative analysis of responses in light of transactional analysis concepts, including hungers (needs for recognition, structure, stimulation), outfits (units of recognition), games, and life scenarios.
- Formulating recommendations for the academic community regarding support for students in meeting their emotional and social needs.

The primary data collection method was individual in-depth interviews (IDI) and mini-focus groups (FGI), conducted among early childhood and preschool

education students (N = 23 students). Participants were recruited voluntarily through announcements within academic groups. Students in their second to fifth year of studies, aged 21 to 37, participated in the study. The interviews were conducted in person, on individually scheduled dates, without time constraints, allowing for responses to be provided without time pressure. Students responded to a set of prepared questions. I used a semi-structured interview script, including questions primarily about emotional, social, and academic safety needs. The material was analyzed in several stages. Initial content coding was conducted using qualitative analysis based on thematic categorization (Nowak, 2011), utilizing concepts derived from transactional analysis: cravings, outfits, games, and scenarios. The next step involved applying theoretical categories derived from transactional analysis, including cravings (needs for recognition, structure, stimulation), outfits (units of recognition), and identifying elements of psychological games and references to life scenarios. The coding process was iterative – categories were refined after each reading of the material. Fragments of statements used in the analysis were retained in their original wording to preserve their meaning.

Data analysis was conducted based on thematic categorization and preliminary coding of the material (Nowak, 2011), utilizing concepts derived from transactional analysis: hungers, costumes, games, and scenarios. Excerpts from the statements quoted in the text have been retained in their original form, with minimal linguistic editing.

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of humanities and social science research. Participation was completely voluntary, and students were informed of the purpose of the study and provided informed consent to the processing of their data. Data anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout all stages of analysis.

Research results – students' voices about everyday needs

The analysis of the students' responses was conducted through thematic categorization and preliminary coding of the material, using transactional analysis concepts: hungers, costumes, games, and scenarios (Berne, 1964; Stewart & Joines, 2012). OECD reports highlight that the well-being of students (students and young adults) in OECD countries leaves much to be desired: according to OECD data, the average life satisfaction of students is around 6.75/10, and around 67% of students stated that they were satisfied with their lives (OECD, 2023). The results allowed us to identify four main thematic categories corresponding to the key areas of needs reported by students. Furthermore, the WHO report “World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health for All” (2022)

highlights the global mental health crisis among young adults and students – the document states that mental health “is a state of well-being that allows people to cope with the stresses of life, learn and work” (WHO, 2022)

The results allowed for the identification of four main thematic categories corresponding to the key areas of need reported by the students.

1. Hungers: Need for Structure, Stimulation, and Recognition

Students often expressed a strong desire for rest and free time, for example, “I wish I had more time; (...) more peace in my life, less stress” or “I need a few days of doing nothing.” These statements indicate an unmet need for structure and stimulation

in a positive sense – students desire space for regeneration and fulfilling experiences beyond academic responsibilities.

At the same time, a hunger for recognition and appreciation emerges, e.g., “I need to feel appreciated and fulfilled” or “To be appreciated.” This indicates a deficit in positive reinforcement, which, according to transactional analysis, is crucial for developing self-esteem and agency.

2. Appearances: The Need for Units of Recognition

Many statements explicitly reveal the need to receive positive appearances: “I need love/warmth,” “I need to be heard,” “I need to be sure that someone truly loves me.” The lack of such positive appearances can lead to the reproduction of destructive communication patterns in students' future professional relationships as teachers, which is consistent with appearance theory (Stewart & Joines, 2012).

3. Psychological Games Avoiding Open Expression of Needs

Although most students expressed their needs directly, subtle manifestations of psychological games can be discerned in some students. For example, statements such as “I need to finally get some sleep; I want to have winter tea with a friend” may indicate strategies for avoiding direct communication of emotions by using “safe” topics (e.g., tea, trip), which may serve as a defense against confronting one's own emotions or against rejection.

4. Life Scenarios: The Need for Security and Stability

The theme of building a positive life scenario resonates strongly, expressed in needs related to closeness, a place of one's own to live, a sense of security, and planning for the future. Examples include: “I need a loving partner; a place of my own to live; peace; professional fulfillment” and “I want to find someone with whom I can go through life, start a family, and feel loved, safe, and understood.” Such statements demonstrate a desire to shape a positive, stable life scenario, which is intended to protect against repeating negative patterns from the past.

The analysis of the data obtained is presented below:

Table 1
Qualitative data analysis – codes, TA categories, and interpretative conclusions

Selected student statements	Code	TA category	Interpretative conclusion
“I wish I had more time; more peace in my life, less stress.” “I need a few days of doing nothing.”	Lack of time for recovery	Hunger for structure / hunger for stimulation	Chronic overload → decreased motivation and well-being
“I need to be appreciated.” “I need recognition and fulfillment.”	Need for recognition	Hunger for recognition / positive strokes	Low self-esteem dependent on external evaluation
“I need love/warmth.” “I want a day spent with my closest people.”	Lack of emotional closeness	Emotional strokes	Deficit of bonding → risk of emotional isolation
“I can’t do nothing.” “I feel useless when I’m not working.”	Perfectionism; self-pressure	Psychological game “See how much I do”	Self-worth conditioned by productivity
“I want to find someone to go through life with, start a family...”	Desire for stability	Life script (safety)	Compensation for current deficits in future role
“I need to be heard.” “I want to feel understood and safe.”	Need for visibility and acceptance	Positive strokes	Feeling “invisible” within the academic environment
“I need free time only for myself, without thinking of what else I must do.”	Sense of pressure and control	Hunger for structure	Higher education perceived as an oppressive system
“I must earn my rest.”	Self-limitations; strict internal norms	Script: “Be strong” / “Earn to exist”	Pressure for productivity → risk of burnout before entering the profession

Source: own elaboration.

The analysis indicates a predominance of unmet needs: rest, recognition, security, and closeness, which, according to transactional analysis, are responsible for regulating psychological hunger. Consequently, students adopt compensatory strategies: games (e.g., perfectionism as a way to earn strokes) and scripts (“I have to earn attention”). The data suggest that the educational system reinforces conditional self-worth and limits the possibility of regeneration – which poses a risk of carrying these patterns into future teaching.

Table 2
 Extended student quotes assigned to TA categories

TA category	Representative student quotes
Structure and stimulus hunger (need for rest and balance)	<i>"I am constantly on the run – work, university, home – I have no time to stop and catch my breath." "I dream of at least two days when I don't have to think about anything and can simply sleep."</i>
Recognition hunger (positive strokes)	<i>"I would like to hear that what I do matters, not only look at grades." "I feel noticed only when I do something extraordinary."</i>
Emotional strokes (need for closeness and relational safety)	<i>"Most of all, I need someone who truly understands me." "Being listened to gives me strength – and that's what I am missing here."</i>
Psychological games (perfectionism as compensation)	<i>"If I do everything perfectly, maybe I will finally feel worthy." "I can't rest – rest feels like a reward, not a need."</i>
Life script: security and future stability	<i>"I want to have my own place where I feel calm and safe." "I dream of a family that supports and loves me unconditionally."</i>
Conditional strokes (feeling invisible)	<i>"Sometimes I feel like I could disappear and no one would notice." "I have to earn attention; otherwise, I am nobody."</i>

Source: author's own analysis.

Analysis of the quotes indicates that students' unmet needs – primarily those related to relaxation, recognition, and a sense of emotional security – lead to the use of compensatory strategies described in transactional analysis, such as psychological games or condition-based life scenarios. Students attempt to gain positive reinforcement through overloading themselves with responsibilities, perfectionism, and suppressing their own needs, which temporarily alleviates the lack of recognition but long-term reinforces patterns of dependence on external evaluation and feelings of loneliness. These data confirm that the academic environment – rather than serving a supportive role – often perpetuates defensive mechanisms and a contingent sense of self-worth, which may have negative consequences for students' future professional roles as teachers.

Summary of the analysis

The collected responses clearly indicate that students' key unmet needs revolve around relaxation, recognition, a sense of security, and emotional closeness. Failure to meet these needs can lead to a diminished sense of agency, reduced mental well-being, and difficulties in building healthy relationships in both

personal and professional life. These results emphasize the need to incorporate emotional support into the academic environment, which should be treated as an integral element of the educational process, not merely an optional supplementary activity. Students who experience chronically unmet emotional needs during their academic education – such as recognition, closeness, and security – are at risk of low motivation, burnout, and feelings of isolation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Their ability to acquire knowledge and develop interpersonal skills, crucial for the teaching profession, is significantly limited. Statements from study participants, such as “I wish I had more time, more peace in my life,” and “I need to feel safe and heard,” indicate that higher education, even when implemented in accordance with the curriculum, fails to address students' fundamental needs for mental well-being. Therefore, universities should implement emotional support strategies such as mentoring, tutoring, access to psychological counseling, and fostering an open, empathetic classroom atmosphere. Training academic staff to recognize signs of student mental overload and provide appropriate support is particularly important (Hughes & Byrom, 2019). Only then can universities serve as an environment conducive not only to intellectual development but also to shaping the emotional and social competencies of future teachers, which is essential when working with children and young people. Moreover, incorporating the topic of students' mental well-being into teacher education programs can prevent them from transferring their own unmet emotional needs to future students, as indicated by the analysis conducted in this study. Developing awareness of one's own needs and the ability to constructively meet them is therefore not only a matter of individual well-being but also a factor in the quality of pedagogical work and the social responsibility of the academic community.

Life Scenarios and Unmet Needs – in the Light of Qualitative Research with Students

The results of the study clearly emphasize the need to consider emotional support in the academic environment, particularly for students of pedagogy, who will be responsible for the future well-being of children and youth. The students' responses were dominated by needs for rest, closeness, and a sense of security, including: “I would like to have more peace in my life,” “I need to be appreciated,” and “I need to be heard.” This indicates a deep emotional hunger, which – if unmet – can lead to feelings of frustration, decreased motivation to learn, and even emotional and social disturbances (Ryan & Deci, 2000). At the same time, many responses revealed a need for unconditional acceptance and closeness, such as “I need reassurance that someone truly loves me,” “I want a day spent with my loved ones,” which aligns with the desire for positive attire,

crucial for healthy personality development (Stewart & Joines, 2012). The lack of systemic support at the university level – understood not only as an offer of psychological help, but also as the creation of relationships based on trust and openness between lecturers and students – leads to a growing sense of loneliness and low self-esteem, which was clearly evident in statements such as “I need self-esteem,” “I want to feel understood and safe.” According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the needs for competence, autonomy, and social relationships are fundamental to the development of intrinsic motivation and well-being. However, your study results show that students feel overwhelmed by responsibilities, lack of time to recharge, and academic pressure, as expressed by statements such as “I'd like to have a few days to do nothing,” “I need to finally get some sleep,” and “I want free time just for myself, without a to-do list.” The lack of space to meet these needs in the academic environment leads to chronic stress, which can result in burnout even before they begin their professional careers (Flett et al., 2016).

Additionally, statements such as “I need a loving partner; my own place to live; peace and quiet; professional fulfillment” indicate students' strong desire to build a positive life scenario (Berne, 1964). Unfortunately, if the academic environment lacks emotional support and openness to discussing students' needs, they may recreate the same deficient patterns in their future interactions with students, limiting their sense of security and agency. Therefore, based on the collected results, it is recommended that teacher training programs include psychoeducation in recognizing one's own emotional needs, empathetic communication, and stress management techniques. Building an academic environment that strengthens a sense of community, provides space for expressing emotions, and encourages seeking support is also crucial. This can translate into higher quality work for future teachers and better prepare them to work with children. For this reason, the academic community should develop mechanisms of real emotional support: mentoring, support groups, access to professional psychological counseling, and training for academic staff in empathetic communication and recognizing signals of psychological overload in students. Only such systemic actions can break the cycle of reproducing destructive patterns and enable students to build healthy life scenarios based on a sense of agency, security, and value (Flett et al., 2016).

Summary and practical conclusions

The contemporary academic environment, especially in pedagogical fields, does not fully address students' needs for relaxation, recognition, emotional security, and interpersonal relationships. The results of qualitative research clearly

indicate that students struggle with a chronic deficit of psychological needs, including recognition and structure, which, according to transactional analysis, can lead to the development of destructive life scenarios and psychological games. Students declared, among other things: "I need to feel safe and heard," "I want a day without responsibilities, just for myself," and "I need appreciation." These statements demonstrate a deep hunger for positive attire, which, in transactional analysis, is a fundamental building block of a healthy identity. Failure to meet these needs leads to feelings of loneliness, decreased motivation, and chronic overload, which, in the long run, can result in burnout even before starting a career in education. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the needs for competence, autonomy, and social relationships are fundamental to the development of intrinsic motivation and well-being. The study revealed that students feel overwhelmed by numerous academic and professional responsibilities, which pushes needs related to rest, relationships, and free time into the background. As a result, life scenarios are shaped based on the belief that rest is a reward that must be earned, which reinforces perfectionism and fear of evaluation. The analysis of the results also shows that universities may unconsciously reinforce psychological games in which students strive to achieve positive attributes through overload, self-sacrifice, and a constant pursuit of perfection. Such mechanisms, if not recognized and addressed, can result in these destructive patterns being transferred to teachers' work, limiting their ability to build safe and supportive relationships with children. In turn, the results of international studies show that the deficit of positive recognition ("outfits") from lecturers and the lack of a stable communication structure contribute to a decline in well-being and engagement and increase the feeling of loneliness in the studying process (Al-Thowaihi, 2024).

Therefore, it is crucial for universities to develop systemic emotional support mechanisms, including: training for academic staff in empathetic communication, mentoring, access to psychological support, and creating spaces for students to openly express their needs. Only such actions can break the cycle of reproducing negative patterns and enable future teachers to build life scenarios based on autonomy, a sense of security, and satisfaction. In summary, the article indicates that the unmet needs of pedagogy students are not only an individual problem, but a challenge for the entire higher education system. Incorporating topics related to mental well-being and recognizing one's own needs into curricula becomes a prerequisite for preparing teachers capable of supporting children in their development. Understanding the role of psychological hunger and attire in the academic socialization process allows for the creation of an environment in which students can not only acquire knowledge but also develop as individuals capable of empathy and building healthy relationships – key competencies in teaching.

Practical conclusions

1. **Introducing systemic emotional support** – universities should ensure the availability of professional psychological help and mentoring programs that enable students to share their difficulties in a safe environment;
2. Training for academic **staff – it is necessary to develop lecturers' competencies in empathetic communication**, recognizing signals of mental overload, and providing emotional support to students (Hughes & Byrom, 2019);
3. **Creating a space for open conversation about needs** – conducting workshops and integration activities that allow students to express their needs, dreams, and concerns, fostering a sense of community and security within the group.
4. **Self-discovery education** – introducing subjects or modules related to personal development and understanding one's own emotions into curricula, in line with the principles of transactional analysis (Stewart & Joines, 2012).
5. **Monitoring student well-being** – conducting regular diagnostic assessments of student needs and well-being, which will allow for a rapid response to emerging issues and the adaptation of support services.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that the needs of pedagogy students – including rest, a sense of security, and being heard and appreciated – are crucial not only for their well-being but also for the quality of their future professional work. Research findings clearly indicate that chronically failing to meet these needs in the academic environment leads to decreased motivation, poorer mental health, and the development of negative life scenarios that can be replicated in working with children. The use of transactional analysis allowed for a better understanding of the mechanisms by which students interact with the university and themselves – demonstrating that an insatiable hunger for positive attire and structure fosters the development of destructive psychological games. The research results send an important message to the academic community: universities cannot limit themselves solely to developing substantive competencies, but must also create a space that fosters the emotional, relational, and social development of future teachers. Only in this way can the cycle of negative patterns be broken and educators be prepared to support children and young people in building their self-esteem, empowerment, and security. Therefore, it is necessary to implement systemic measures that demonstrate the practical conclusions drawn from these considerations. The proposed training for academic staff in empathetic communication, mentoring programs, psychological support,

and spaces for students to freely express their emotions will certainly yield positive results. These actions not only increase the chances of developing students' intrinsic motivation and well-being but also build a foundation for a better quality future education for children, to whom they will impart not only knowledge but also patterns of healthy interpersonal relationships.

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Potrzeby, które nie mieszczą się w planie zajęć – analiza transakcyjna doświadczeń studentów (przyszłych nauczycieli)

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest ukazanie na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań, w jaki sposób studenci pedagogiki, szczególnie studium w trybie niestacjonarnym, doświadczają niezaspokojenia podstawowych potrzeb egzystencjalnych i jak próbują sobie z tym radzić. Badanie oparto na metodach jakościowych – wywiadach pogłębionych i grupach fokusowych – przeprowadzonych wśród 23 studentów. Analiza danych została przeprowadzona w oparciu o kategoryzację tematyczną i pojęcia analizy transakcyjnej: głodów, znaków rozpoznania, gier i scenariuszy życiowych. Wyniki wskazują, że studenci najczęściej zgłaszali potrzeby odpoczynku, bliskości emocjonalnej, poczucia bezpieczeństwa oraz uznania. Ich chroniczne niezaspokojenie może prowadzić do frustracji, obniżonej motywacji, a w perspektywie długofalowej – do powielania destrukcyjnych schematów w pracy z dziećmi. Autorzy podkreślają potrzebę wdrażania systemowego wsparcia emocjonalnego w środowisku akademickim.

Słowa kluczowe: potrzeby studentów, analiza transakcyjna, głody psychiczne, wsparcie emocjonalne, edukacja wyższa.