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The Phenomenon of Stress in the Professional Work of Preschool Teachers

Abstract

The article presents the results of the author's study, the aim of which was to understand the phenomenon of stress and its determinants in the profession of preschool teachers. Quantitative research involved the diagnostic survey method and the questionnaire technique. The studied group consisted of female preschool teachers from public and non-public institutions. The findings have revealed that the respondents consider their profession stressful due to the high level of responsibility for children, demands and pressure from parents, and an excessive workload. The vast majority of women, regardless of the type of preschool, experience this phenomenon. The study has made it possible to identify the determinants of stress, namely: systemic, intra-institutional, and individual factors. The respondents reported using various coping strategies to reduce stress factors.

Keywords: stress, preschool education teacher, stress factors, coping with stress

Introduction

The profession of a preschool teacher is classified by researchers as a helping profession, or so-called social service, which is based on activities directed to-

wards other people. Its foundation lies in assistance, support, and service to others, relying on close, constant, direct, and active contact with them. These activities may result in numerous burdens and long-term stress, which in turn can negatively affect the performance of professional duties, relationships with pupils, and the overall well-being of educators (Lisowska, 2018).

The family constitutes the first and fundamental environment in which a child grows and develops. The second, equally significant, yet emerging slightly later, is the preschool environment, where qualified teaching staff stimulates the child's comprehensive development, taking into account their individual predispositions, hereditary and innate traits, and the pace of development (Surma, 2011). In preschool education, the key role is played by the preschool teacher, who acts as a guide for children. The teacher performs care, educational, and didactic tasks, educating young people in every area of life. What they convey, as well as the experiences, attitudes, and values that children acquire in preschool, will influence subsequent educational stages, their adult lives, and their functioning in society (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2010; Kundzicz, 2016; Nosek-Kozłowska, 2024; Musiał, 2022).

The increasing social, cultural, and economic changes, transformations of the education system, development of modern technologies, and extensive mediatization cause preschool teachers' professional responsibilities to expand with new tasks and recommendations, which may become potential stress factors. Furthermore, their strong sense of duty and responsibility for young people and their future, combined with awareness of the importance of preschool education and the need to meet growing requirements and expectations, can constitute an additional source of stress (Synal & Szempruch, 2017, pp. 7–9). The challenges faced by preschool teachers highlighting that 'teaching today requires exceptional energy and psychological resilience' (Schaefer, 2005, p. 11).¹

Currently, the issue of teacher stress is attracting increasing attention among researchers from various scientific disciplines, which often renders such studies more interdisciplinary. Although this subject has been explored for many years, there are still areas that have not been fully examined. The available literature provides numerous studies on teacher stress; however, they mainly concern teachers employed in primary, secondary, and special schools rather than those working in preschool education.

The aim of this article is to explore the phenomenon of stress and its determinants in the profession of preschool teachers. The discussion is divided into four parts. The first part describes stress, its specific causes and methods of reducing it; the second part presents the methodological assumptions of the author's own research; the third part presents selected results of the research, and the last part presents conclusions and recommendations.

¹ All translations into English of the original texts are the author's own translations.

Stress: the specificity of the phenomenon, its sources, and methods of prevention

The phenomenon of stress is described not only by scholars in the medical and health sciences but is increasingly becoming a subject of interest within the social sciences. The available literature offers numerous concepts and theories of stress; however, it is most frequently understood as a stimulus (an event or factor, such as a random event, failure, excessive demands, that disrupts homeostasis, causing tension and strong emotions independent of the individual); a reaction (how a person responds to an unpleasant situation, it may occur in the physiological, psychological, or behavioural domain); and a transaction (denoting the interdependence between stimulus and reaction) (Grzegorzewska, 2019; Korczyński, 2014, pp. 27–29; Grzegorzewska, 2006, p. 18).

In the first half of the twentieth century, the term ‘stress’ was introduced by physiologist Walter B. Cannon (Kocór, 2019, p. 54), while the issue was popularised by Hans Selye, who defined stress as ‘a nonspecific response of the body to any demand placed upon it from the outside’ (Selye, 1977, p. 25; Oniszczenko, 1993, p. 8). Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman, in turn, argued that stress is ‘a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding their resources and endangering their well-being’ (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 19; Bernat & Krzyszkowska, 2017, p. 259; Wilczek-Rużyczka & Kwak, 2022, p. 82). Both definitions emphasise that stress disrupts human functioning, disturbing both physical and psychological homeostasis.

In the 1960s, empirical research on stress in the teaching profession began in the United States and England. Significant contributions to this field were made by Robert Louis Kahn and his collaborators, as well as English psychologists Chris Kyriacou and John Sutcliffe. In Poland, during the 1990s, the issue attracted the interest of scholars such as Bogusława Jodłowska, Stanisława Tucholska, Helena Sęk, Hanna Rylke, Joanna Kossewska, and Joanna Klisz (Suska-Zakaszewska, 2025).

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe developed and presented their own model of teacher stress. They defined teacher stress as ‘the generation of negative emotions (such as anger or discouragement) in teachers, which are typically accompanied by pathological biochemical and physiological changes in the body (elevated heart rate, increased secretion of adrenocorticotrophic and other hormones into the bloodstream, raised blood pressure), resulting from their professional duties and influenced by the perception of demands as threatening to their self-esteem and well-being, as well as by coping mechanisms aimed at reducing perceived threats’ (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978a, p. 159; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978b, p. 2; Garbacik, 2018, p. 113; Tucholska, 1999, p. 52; Grzegorzewska, 2006, p. 54).

There are multiple stress factors in the teaching profession. Mark Borg and Richard J. Riding, through factor analysis, identified four fundamental sources that may generate this phenomenon. The first factor consists of inappropriate pupil behaviour, including noisiness, misconduct, impoliteness, inability to maintain discipline, large group sizes, and frequent instances of teachers covering for absent colleagues. The second category is time pressure, which generates difficulties such as insufficient time for an individual approach to pupils, poorly designed teaching materials, a lack of teaching aids and tools facilitating work, and the obligation to complete various administrative tasks. The third factor—poor working conditions—is closely related to inadequate remuneration, low professional prestige, the need to cover for absent colleagues, and a lack of recognition for well-performed work. The fourth and final factor concerns poor relationships among colleagues, encompassing attitudes, relationships, and atmosphere among teaching staff, pressure from preschool authorities and other educational bodies, as well as from parents or guardians (Borg & Riding, 1991; Tucholska, 2009, p. 100; Nowak, 2021; Dankiewicz, Cempel & Wasiewicz, 2024). Research conducted by Stanisław Korczyński indicates that the most common stress factors among preschool teachers include time pressure, physical discomfort, and a sense of psychological overload from professional duties. Other identified sources include the perceived lack of rewards, difficulties in fulfilling didactic and educational functions, a sense of insufficient support, and pupils' behaviour. Moderate stress among preschool teachers is also triggered by feelings of threat and responsibility at work, as well as conflict situations (Korczyński, 2018; Korczyński, 2017).

Continuous exposure to stress among teachers may lead to numerous negative consequences, both immediate and long-term. Immediate consequences occur directly after exposure to a stressor and most often manifest as somatic changes and emotional fluctuations lasting for a short period of time. Long-term effects, on the other hand, result from prolonged exposure to a stress factor and the lack of systematic mitigation (Zubrzycka-Maciąg, 2013, pp. 71–72; Suska-Zakaszewska, 2025, p. 81). Moreover, regardless of duration, stress may cause a range of physiological, psychological, and behavioural changes in educators (Korczyński, 2014; Kwiatkowski, 2022).

The stress experienced by teachers often disrupts both their private and professional lives; therefore, it is essential that they undertake preventive actions and possess coping skills. Norman S. Endler and James D. A. Parker developed three styles of coping with stress:

- 1) task-oriented coping – involves actions aimed at solving the encountered difficulty through focusing on the task or planning various ways to resolve the problem;

- 2) emotion-oriented coping – consists of actions intended to reduce or minimise emotional tension caused by the experienced stressor;
- 3) avoidance-oriented coping – is based on redirecting attention to other activities, such as reading or listening to music, instead of focusing on the stress factor (Endler & Parker, 1990; Szczygieł, 2020, p. 325).

Methodological assumptions of the author's study

The subject of the research was the phenomenon of stress among preschool teachers, and the aim was to identify stressors in the profession of preschool teachers. The main research problem was formulated as follows: What is the phenomenon of stress in the professional work of preschool teachers?' The following specific research questions were posed:

1. How do preschool teachers define stress?
2. Do preschool teachers experience stress in their work, and how frequently?
3. What factors are the sources of stress among preschool teachers?
4. What coping methods do preschool teachers use to deal with stress?

The study was conducted using the diagnostic survey method and the questionnaire technique. Data were collected through an original questionnaire consisting of closed, semi-open, and open-ended questions. The sample selection was purposeful, and the inclusion criterion was the profession of a preschool teacher. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. It was carried out in August and September 2025, online. The study sample comprised 52 preschool teachers from Zamość, of whom 73.1% worked in public institutions and 26.9% in non-public ones. The respondents were women aged between 24 and 60 years, with an average age of 41. The majority were married (76.9%), while the remaining participants were single (11.5%), divorced (5.8%), in an informal relationship (3.8%), or widowed (1.9%). The shortest period of professional experience among the respondents was two weeks, and the longest was 37 years, with an average of 13 years. Among all respondents, 36.5% held the status of appointed teacher, 32.7% were novice teachers, 25% were chartered teachers, and 5.8% were contract teachers.

Results of the author's study

Studies available in the literature indicate that preschool education teachers are exposed to stress. Therefore, the respondents were asked whether they considered their profession stressful and were then requested to justify their answers. The results are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Preschool teachers' opinions on the stressfulness of their profession

Occurrence of stress factors	Type of preschool				Total	
	Public		Non-public			
	<i>n</i> =38	%	<i>n</i> =14	%	N=52	%
Yes	35	92.1	13	92.9	48	92.3
No	3	7.9	1	7.1	4	7.7

Source: Own study

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the surveyed preschool teachers—regardless of the type of institution—perceive their profession as stressful. As many as 92.3% of all respondents reported the presence of stress factors in their everyday professional practice. The obtained results suggest that, irrespective of the organisational or legal form of the preschool, the sense of work-related stress is a common phenomenon within this professional group.

Table 2

Justifications for opinions on the stressfulness of the preschool teaching profession

Category	N=48*	%
High responsibility for children	21	43.8
Excessive workload and time pressure	14	29.2
Demands and pressure from parents	15	31.3
Demands and supervision from management/institution	9	18.8
Unfavourable working conditions and intensity of social interactions	11	22.9

* Twenty-two responses were assigned to more than one category owing to their multifaceted nature.

Source: Own study

The analysis of the respondents' answers made it possible to distinguish five main categories explaining the stress-inducing nature of the preschool teacher's profession (Table 2). According to 43.8% of the surveyed teachers, the profession is stressful because it involves a high level of responsibility for children. As one respondent emphasised: 'The teaching profession carries enormous responsibility for a large group of children. The teacher is responsible for every moment a child spends in preschool; every action has its consequences.' The second identified category concerns demands and pressure from parents—31.3% of the surveyed women indicated this factor. Preschool educators described it as the necessity to cope with high expectations, complaints, and communication difficulties, for example: 'Parents are demanding and entitled, and often unwilling to cooperate.' Slightly fewer respondents—29.2%—explained

that the profession is stressful due to an excessive workload and time pressure resulting from multitasking and numerous duties, both didactic and administrative. The fourth category includes unfavourable working conditions and the intensity of social interactions, such as noise, large groups of children, conflicts among teaching staff, and an unfriendly workplace atmosphere—this argument was mentioned by 22.9% of preschool teachers. Meanwhile, 18.8% of respondents stated that stress results from demands and supervision imposed by principals or educational authorities, as well as the frequently changing educational legislation.

Among all respondents, only 7.7% did not perceive their profession as stressful, explaining that ‘if someone enjoys their job, why should they feel stressed?’ and ‘it is important to plan your working time properly.’

The preschool teachers were also asked how they defined stress. The analysis of their responses shows that 59.6% of the participants defined stress as ‘a natural reaction of the body to difficult or demanding situations, causing psychological and physical tension.’ In turn, 40.4% described it as ‘fear of failing to fulfil assigned tasks, performing duties according to standards set by principals, and a stomach ache from the anxiety of not being able to cope.’

The study also sought to determine the respondents’ subjective assessment of the presence of stress in the professional work of preschool teachers (Table 3) and its frequency (Table 4). The analysis allows for the identification of differences between employees of public and non-public institutions.

Table 3
Subjective assessment of the presence of stress at work

Occurrence of stress factors	Type of preschool				Total	
	Public		Non-public			
	<i>n</i> =38	%	<i>n</i> =14	%	N=52	%
Yes	30	78.9	11	78.6	41	78.8
No	8	21.1	3	21.4	11	21.2

Source: Own study

The data presented in Table 3 show that 78.8% of all surveyed preschool teachers experience stress in their professional work, while nearly one in five respondents (21.2%) declared that they do not experience this phenomenon. From these findings, it can be inferred that the issue of stress concerns the vast majority of respondents, regardless of the type of preschool in which they are employed.

As shown in Table 4, there are differences in the frequency of stress occurrence depending on the type of institution. Among teachers employed in public preschools, 63.3% experienced stress several times a month, 16.7% once a week, 13.3% rarely, and 6.7% daily. In contrast, 45.4% of teachers working in

non-public preschools reported experiencing stress daily, 36.4% once a week, and 18.2% several times a month. It is worth noting that none of the women employed in non-public institutions indicated the 'rarely' option, which may suggest that the type of institution influences the frequency of stress experienced.

Table 4

Frequency of stress experienced at work by teachers who report it

Frequency	Type of preschool				Total	
	Public		Non-public			
	<i>n</i> =30	%	<i>n</i> =11	%	N=41	%
Everyday	2	6.7	5	45.4	7	17.1
Once a week	5	16.7	4	36.4	9	22.0
Several times a month	19	63.3	2	18.2	21	51.2
Rarely	4	13.3	0	0.0	4	9.8

Source: Own study

To assess the intensity of selected stress symptoms, a six-point scale was used, on which the respondents indicated the extent to which each symptom occurred in them. The absence or very low severity of symptoms was indicated by scores of 0 and 1, moderate severity by scores of 2 and 3, and high or very high severity by scores of 4 and 5. A summary of the findings is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Severity of selected symptoms among preschool teachers (N=52)

Symptoms	Severity					
	None or very low		Moderate		High or very high	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Headache	28	53.8	21	40.4	3	5.8
Fatigue	20	38.5	16	30.8	16	30.8
Insomnia	37	71.2	14	26.9	1	1.9
Loss of energy	23	44.2	21	40.4	8	15.4
Nervousness	27	51.9	16	30.8	9	17.3
Stomach disorders	40	76.9	10	19.2	2	3.8
Muscle pain	41	78.8	8	15.4	3	5.8
Discouragement	33	63.5	12	23.1	7	13.5
Irritability	31	59.6	15	28.8	6	11.5
Frustration	33	63.5	13	25.0	6	11.5
Other	45	86.5	4	7.7	3	5.8

Source: Own study

Fatigue emerged as the most prevalent symptom, with 30.8% of respondents experiencing it at a high or very high level, and a total of 61.6% of teachers reporting this symptom to varying degrees. The second most intense symptom was irritability (17.3%), followed by loss of energy (15.4%). Furthermore, psychological symptoms clearly predominated over somatic ones. The six main psychological symptoms affected, on average, 46.2% of respondents to varying extents, whereas somatic symptoms were reported by an average of 29.8% of teachers. The following symptoms occurred at moderate, severe, or very severe levels: 1.) psychological: fatigue (61.6%), loss of energy (55.8%), nervousness (48.1%), irritability (40.3%), discouragement (36.6%), and frustration (36.5%); 2.) somatic: headache (46.2%), insomnia (28.8%), stomach disorders (23.0%), and muscle pain (21.2%).

The causes of stress that preschool teachers believe occur in their profession are listed in Table 6.

Table 6
Stress factors in the work of preschool teachers

Stress factors	Type of preschool				Total	
	Public		Non-public			
	<i>n</i> =38	%	<i>n</i> =14	%	N=52	%
Poor work atmosphere	13	34.2	7	50.0	20	38.5
Excessive workload	22	57.9	10	71.4	32	61.5
Low salary	10	26.3	2	14.3	12	23.1
Parent-teacher meetings	6	15.8	4	28.6	10	19.2
Inadequate supervision by the principal	1	2.6	3	21.4	4	7.7
Responsibility for children's safety	22	57.9	7	50.0	29	55.8
Frequent changes in the curriculum	6	15.8	1	7.1	7	13.5
Children's behaviour	12	31.6	2	14.3	14	26.9
Evaluation by children, parents, and other teachers	13	34.2	5	35.7	18	34.6
Classroom observation by the school principal	1	2.6	0	0.0	1	1.9
Classroom observation by a mentor/supervisor	0	0.0	0	0,0	0	0,0
None	1	2.6	0	0.0	1	1.9

Source: Own study

As shown in Table 6, an excessive workload was the most frequently reported source of stress, indicated by 61.5% of all respondents employed in pub-

lic institutions (57.9%) and non-public institutions (71.4%). Responsibility for the safety of the children was the second most significant cause, reported by 55.8% of all respondents. The third most commonly cited factor was an unfavourable work atmosphere (38.5%), which was more frequently emphasised by teachers in non-public preschools (50.0%) than those in public ones (34.2%). Other relatively prominent stress factors included evaluation by children, parents, and other teachers (34.6%) and children’s behaviour (26.9%). Factors that the respondents perceived as less significant included low salary (23.1%), parent-teacher meetings (19.2%), and frequent changes in the curriculum (13.5%). Inadequate supervision by the principal (7.7%) or classroom observations conducted by the preschool principal (1.9%) were rarely mentioned. Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated stress caused by classroom observations conducted by a mentor or internship supervisor.

The impact of noise levels and working conditions in preschools on perceived stress levels was also analyzed (Table 7), while respondents were asked to justify their position (Table 8).

Table 7
Impact of noise levels and working conditions in preschools on perceived stress levels

Occurrence of im- pact	Type of preschool				Total	
	Public		Non-public			
	n=38	%	n=14	%	N=52	%
Yes	31	81.6	13	92.9	44	84.6
No	7	18.4	1	7.1	8	15.4

Source: Own study

The data presented in Table 7 clearly indicate that noise levels and working conditions in the preschool influence the occurrence of stress. As many as 84.6% of all respondents confirmed that these factors contribute to stress. This tendency was slightly more pronounced among employees of non-public preschools (92.9%) than those in public institutions (81.6%). Only 15.4% of the participants did not perceive a direct impact of these factors on their experienced level of stress.

First, the answers of those women who indicated that noise levels and working conditions in preschool contribute to stress were analysed. The justifications were categorised and are presented in Table 8. The dominant category (38.6%) comprised explanations referring to psychological and somatic consequences. Teachers described chronic fatigue, headaches, irritability, and nervous system overload as direct effects of working in conditions of constant noise. One respondent explained: ‘The nervous system is strained by noise. Our hearing de-

teriorates. Sometimes it causes irritability and agitation.’ Nearly one-third of the responses (31.8%) concerned problems with concentration and related difficulties in organising work. In this group, respondents emphasised distracted attention, disruption of duties, and loss of control over the course of activities. An illustrative statement reads: ‘Noise often causes distraction, and when working with young children, attention levels should be at their highest—one loses control over what is happening.’ A further 20.5% of women highlighted sensory overload. One participant noted: ‘After or during work with children, a person is often overstimulated; this affects concentration, makes it difficult to focus on duties, and leads to irritability.’ The final category—institutional conditions and care-related requirements—mainly refers to the sources of noise in the pre-school and accounted for 15.9% of responses.

Table 8
Justifications for positions on the impact of noise and working conditions on stress occurrence

Category	N=44*	%
Sensory overload	9	20.5
Difficulties in concentration and work organisation	14	31.8
Psychological and somatic consequences	17	38.6
Institutional conditions and care-related requirements	7	15.9

* Three responses were assigned to more than one category owing to their multifaceted nature.
Source: Own study

Teachers who did not associate noise and working conditions with stress (15.4%) explained their responses in terms of successful adaptation to noise (habituation), the ability to control noise (through influencing children), or neutrality in evaluating noise (perceiving it as a natural phenomenon). Four responses did not contain a justification or clearly referred to the stress-inducing aspect of noise and were therefore not assigned to the main categories.

The rest of the study focused on stress coping methods (Table 9) and the organization of programs for coping with this phenomenon in the workplace (Table 10).

Respondents were asked an open-ended question regarding methods of coping with stress at work. The answers obtained made it possible to identify the most commonly used coping strategies, as illustrated in Table 9. One quarter of the respondents manage stress through organising their work and maintaining a positive attitude. An equal proportion indicated rest outside of work, restorative activities, and attending to personal needs by engaging in hobbies and interests, such as reading, listening to music, dancing, or painting. Other frequently mentioned stress-relief methods included physical activity and sports (19.2%), as well as breathing and relaxation techniques (19.2%). Meanwhile,

17.3% of teachers considered social support—from the principal, other teachers, family, and friends—as a coping strategy. Slightly fewer—15.4%—used quick self-regulation techniques (short-term strategies), such as counting, taking a quick break, using an anti-stress gadget, leaving the classroom, or drinking lemon balm tea. Only 7.7% of preschool teachers coped with stress by actively engaging in work-related activities, for example: ‘I play with children and do with them what they enjoy the most.’ In contrast, 5.8% did not use any coping strategies or felt powerless in managing stress.

Table 9
Stress coping methods (as perceived by respondents)

Category	N=52*	%
Physical activity and sports	10	19.2
Breathing and relaxation techniques	10	19.2
Social support	9	17.3
Work organization and a positive attitude	13	25.0
Relaxation outside of work, restorative activities, and self-care	13	25.0
Quick self-regulation techniques	8	15.4
Involvement in activities with children	4	7.7
Lack of strategies or a sense of helplessness	3	5.8

* Eighteen responses were assigned to more than one category owing to their multifaceted nature.

Source: Own study

Table 10
Organisation of stress management programmes in the workplace

Organisation of programmes	Type of preschool				Total	
	Public		Non-public			
	n=38	%	n=14	%	N=52	%
Yes	5	13.2	0	0.0	5	9.6
No	33	86.8	14	100.0	47	90.4

Source: Own study

As illustrated in Table 10, as many as 90.4% of preschool teachers—employed in both public and non-public institutions—emphasised that stress management programmes are not organised in their workplaces. Only a small proportion of teachers in public preschools (9.6%) reported the implementation of such programmes, which stands in stark contrast to the scale of occupational stress in this professional group. No such initiatives were recorded in non-public institutions. Respondents from public preschools (13.2%) noted the availability

of training sessions and relaxation activities. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that stress prevention in the work of preschool teachers remains a marginalised area.

Those respondents who reported participation in stress management programmes were asked to evaluate them. Three teachers highlighted the limited number of such initiatives in their institutions, while two noted that they participated willingly in those offered. At the same time, all respondents agreed that additional forms of support for teachers in coping with stress are necessary.

Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of the study was to learn about the phenomenon of stress and its determinants in the profession of a preschool teacher. Analysis of the results obtained allows us to conclude that preschool teachers belong to a professional group exposed to stress. The study has shown that the vast majority of respondents (78.8%)—regardless of the type of institution—experience stress in their work, and 92.3% perceive their profession as stressful. Among teachers in public preschools, 63.3% most frequently experience stress several times a month, whereas 45.4% of respondents employed in non-public preschools experience stress daily, and 36.4% once a week. This indicates that teachers in non-public institutions experience stress more frequently, which may result from the structure of the preschool, as well as differing working conditions and organisation.

The participants demonstrated theoretical knowledge of stress, incorporating elements of stimulus, physiological response, and person–environment transactions, in line with the scientific theories of H. Selye and R. Lazarus and S. Folkman. The study enabled the identification of systemic, intra-institutional, and individual factors potentially generating stress. Respondents indicated that the most frequent sources of stress are an excessive workload and significant responsibility for the safety of children. Other identified stress factors included an unfavourable work atmosphere, evaluation by children, parents, and other teachers, and children's behaviour. Additionally, 84.6% of preschool teachers reported that noise and working conditions affect their perceived stress levels. These factors produce negative psychological and somatic consequences, disrupt concentration and work organisation, and contribute to sensory overload.

The study has found that respondents employ a variety of stress-coping strategies. The most frequently used methods include organising work and maintaining a positive attitude, rest outside of work, dedicating time to personal interests, and attending to personal needs. Other strategies include physical activity, breathing and relaxation techniques, social support, and quick self-regulation techniques. Alarming, 90.4% of respondents indicated that stress man-

agement programmes are not offered in their institutions, suggesting a lack of institutional support. The results obtained are consistent with earlier Polish studies: Stanisław Korczyński (2017; 2018), Ewa Smak (2018), Anna Klim-Klimaszewska and Agata Fijałkowska-Mroczeł (2015).

It is worth noting that this article has its limitations. One of them is the small size and deliberate selection of the sample, which means that the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of preschool teachers. Therefore, the study group should be expanded to include other towns or provinces. Another difficulty was recruiting respondents, which may have been due to the fact that the research was conducted at the end of the summer vacation and the beginning of the preschool year. Therefore, when conducting research, it is worth taking into account the intensity of teachers' professional duties. Another limitation was the lack of a control group. The presented results can be considered preliminary, while the conclusions can be seen as a starting point for further research.

The analysis of the collected data allows for the proposal of pedagogical implications, the implementation of which could reduce both the severity and frequency of stress and prevent negative consequences. It is therefore recommended to implement a series of training sessions and workshops, during which preschool teachers could: (1) understand the mechanisms of stress; (2) build networks of support and collaboration; and (3) acquire skills in distinguishing between adaptive and pathological stress, recognising early symptoms in themselves and colleagues, organising time and tasks, and developing strategies to cope with noise (for example, flexible management of children's activities, introduction of quiet sessions, creation of relaxation zones in classrooms, visual signalling). It is also advisable to promote a healthy lifestyle, emphasising the importance of maintaining emotional balance through active rest, relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, and self-regulation. Other equally important measures could include training in interpersonal communication and strengthening an organisational culture that fosters collaboration and minimises conflicts among staff. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to develop clear procedures for emergency situations and introduce an insurance system protecting preschool teachers from legal liability, as well as to implement architectural and organisational solutions that minimise noise.

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Zjawisko stresu w pracy zawodowej nauczycieli wychowania przedszkolnego

Streszczenie

W tekście zaprezentowano wyniki badań własnych, których celem było poznanie zjawiska stresu i jego uwarunkowań w profesji nauczycieli edukacji przedszkolnej. W badaniach ilościowych wykorzystano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego i technikę ankiety. Grupę badaną stanowiły nauczycielki wychowania przedszkolnego z placówek publicznych i niepublicznych. Wyniki badań wykazały, że respondentki uważają swój zawód za stresujący ze względu na dużą odpowiedzialność za wychowanków, wymagania i presję ze strony rodziców oraz nadmiar obowiązków zawodowych. Zdecydowana większość kobiet, niezależnie od rodzaju przedszkola, doświadcza powyższego zjawiska. Badanie pozwoliło na identyfikację uwarunkowań stresu, tj. systemowych, wewnątrzinstytucjonalnych oraz indywidualnych. Ankietowane, by zredukować czynniki stresogenne, stosują różne metody zaradcze.

Słowa kluczowe: stres, nauczyciel edukacji przedszkolnej, czynniki stresogenne, radzenie sobie ze stresem.