

Abstract: Occupational burnout of the Polish politicians and its determinants

The aim of the paper has been formulated in accordance with the theoretical and empirical premises, i.e., above all, it involves the commencement of studies on the phenomenon of occupational burnout and its determinants in relation to Polish politicians. In reference to this group, both the impact of selected individual and situational factors was analysed. In the case of comparative groups, only the impact of the psychological factors constituted the subject of the study.

I wish to emphasise that the priority objective of the paper was to understand the phenomenon of the occupational burnout of the politicians, therefore, the theoretical part of the paper was based on issues concerning their personality, functioning and nature of work.

In the first chapter of the paper, the concepts of stress, which constitutes the cause of occurrence of the occupational burnout, the concepts of coping with the stress as the intermediary factor between the perceived stress and the burnout and obviously the concepts of the occupational burnout themselves were discussed. On top of this, this part also includes the discussion of the concept of organisational stress and the styles and strategies of coping with the stress.

The second chapter contains reflections regarding personalities of politicians including the reference to classical concepts of personality. It also comprises extensive references to the type A behaviour pattern included in the model as well as the personality trait such as self-efficacy. Another element of the chapter is the discussion of the concepts and studies of the political thinking and motivation to take the role of a politician. This chapter also contains the characteristics of important values and attitudes as well as their connections with the motivation and personality of the politicians. Furthermore, the considerations regarding the competences significant for this social group and the multi-faceted consequences of governance were presented.

The third chapter is devoted to the analysis of the characteristics of the work of a politician, which can undoubtedly constitute the sources of insecurity and challenge perceived by the politician. As an example, let me mention the political conflict, elections, public and party pressures, political decision-making and fulfilment of the role of a public person. In the discussion of the causes of the occupational burnout among politicians, it turned out to be necessary, and perhaps even overriding, to carry out a detailed analysis of the working environment of the politician.

The fourth chapter presents the methodology of the studies: presentation of the model, research problems and hypotheses as well as nature of research tools.

The fifth chapter contains the analysis of the results of studies conducted by me as well as conclusions following from them. The paper is complemented by the summary – the discussion.

In the period between February 2014 and July 2015, 309 persons were subjected to the study, including: 105 politicians, 104 managers and 100 health professionals. The following psychological factors were subjected to analysis: stress at work, self-efficacy, type A behaviour pattern, evaluation crisis, extraversion, neuroticism, individualism/collectivism, strategies of coping with the stress and the sense of satisfaction from life. Also, the following factors related to situational conditions of work were taken into account: type and number of terms of the exercised mandate, belonging to the coalition or opposition, place of residence of a politician, participation in political conflicts and negotiations and contact with voters via the media. As a result of the conducted analysis of the research material, the following final conclusions have been formulated:

The level of occupational burnout and stress at work in the group of the studied politicians was lower than in the group of managers and medical employees. The lower level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization was reported in the group of the studied politicians. No differences in the level of the sense of personal accomplishments were found.

The stress at work felt subjectively by the studied politicians is determined, above all, by the following factors: complexity of work, lack of control, work organisation, lack of rewards, social contacts and lack of support.

No differences between politicians exercising the mandate of a member of parliament and those exercising the mandate of a councillor were found in terms of the level of occupational burnout. However, the difference was identified between the politicians who exercised the mandate of a member of parliament and those who exercised the mandate of a councillor in terms of the level of stress at work, i.e. the stress felt in the group of the studied members of parliament was much greater than the one in the group of studied councillors. The difference in terms of the level of occupational burnout and the subjectively felt stress at work was found between the politicians coming from the opposition party and those belonging to the ruling party, that is, in both of these aspects, the higher result was reported in the group of the studied politicians from the opposition party. The relationship between the number of terms for exercising the mandate and the level of the occupational burnout of the politicians as well

as between the number of terms and the level of the subjectively felt stress at work turned out to be incidental.

In terms of the level of occupational burnout and the level of stress at work, the differences between the politicians working outside their place of residence and the politicians working at their place of residence were not found. Also, the differences between the politicians who get in touch with their voters via the media with varied frequency were incidental in terms of the level of occupational burnout and the level of stress at work. However, a difference was observed between the politicians participating in political conflicts with varied frequency in terms of the level of occupational burnout. On the other hand, no differences were found between the politicians who participate in political conflicts with varied frequency in terms of the stress level at work and no differences were identified between the politicians participating in political negotiations with varied frequency in terms of the level of occupational burnout and level of stress at work.

Politicians differed from other studied groups in terms of: the level of self-efficacy, obtaining higher score than the remaining studied groups; the level of evaluation crisis, obtaining lower score than the remaining studied groups; neuroticism, obtaining lower score than the remaining studied groups; level of extraversion, obtaining higher score than the remaining studied groups. The differences in the level of the characteristics such as type A behaviour pattern, collectivism and individualism between the studied groups were incidental.

Politicians differed from representatives of other studied groups in terms of the strategies used to cope with the stress. They obtained higher score in the scale of coping actively with the stress, lower score in the scale of helplessness, application of avoidance behaviours and sense of humour. Politicians differ from representatives of other studied groups in terms of the satisfaction from life, obtaining significantly higher score.

Significant positive relationship between the stress at work and occupational burnout was identified in all the studied groups. In the group of studied politicians, significant positive relationship between the occupational burnout and type A behaviour pattern, evaluation crisis and individualism were reported and the significant negative relationship between the occupational burnout and collectivism and satisfaction from life were identified. The mediatory role of stress at work for the relations between the behaviour pattern A, crisis in assessment and individualism as well as burnout were confirmed in the group of politicians.

In the models developed for each studied group, created as a result of the structural modelling, the basic relation refers to the relationship between the stress at work and the occupational burnout. All the three models assume the presence of the type A behaviour

pattern and evaluation crisis. On top of this, the models differ from each other. The relationship between collectivism and occupational burnout appeared only in the occupational burnout model for the group of politicians. On the other hand, the satisfaction from life is present in it as the factor which has a direct negative relationship with the occupational burnout.

Conclusions following from the studies allow the determination of both the individual and situational factors of the occupational burnout of the Polish politicians.

Key words: occupational burnout, stress at work, politics