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TOPICS:

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Adapted physical activity and sport Healthy aging practices

Smart models for Aqua practices and healthy life style

Aquaphotomics and Recreology Water influences for Well-being

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Wellness Foods&Drinks

Innovations in Niche tourism services Education & Research for new jobs

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DEAR LEADING RESEARCHERS,
DEAR YOUNG SCIENTISTS AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS,
PARTNERS AND PRACTICE SPECIALISTS,

In this second issue of Volume 6, published in 2024 in the Bulgarian-language journal, we are proud to share the words of Prof. Roumyana Tsenkova, PhD—founder of the new scientific branch, Aquaphotomics. This edition of the scientific journal for Intelligent Innovations in the Wellness Industry for Recreation and Niche Tourism is Issue 2 for 2024. It offers an online platform for the presentation



and publication of scientific materials by young researchers, doctoral students, practicing physicians, physiotherapists, specialists, rehabilitators, and leading researchers from national and international networks for educational and scientific exchange, with a thematic focus on the infinite possibilities of water and, in particular, its innovative applications. On behalf of the editorial board and personally, Prof. Roumyana Tsenkova, PhD—member of the editorial board—stated: "It is our pleasure to welcome you to this second issue of the electronic platform for specialized science and innovation in 2024. I am delighted that this edition prioritizes the scientific publications of young researchers and doctoral students in the interdisciplinary field of the Recreation Industry and Niche Tourism. We believe their scientific findings will contribute to building a knowledge-based economy, ensuring inclusive and

intelligent growth. We are confident that they will become the future scientific and managerial leaders in the Wellness Industry and Niche Tourism. Their scientific innovations, stemming from their research, will form the foundation for enriching the European Research Area. It is particularly significant that the scientific evidence presented by young researchers in this field will enhance the quality of end products, supporting healthy lifestyles and healthcare for all social groups. I am especially pleased to have been



part of the scientific team at the NSA 'V. Levski' in the project for the establishment and development of the Center for Excellence 'Heritage BG.' Reviewers of this issue include expert representatives from the Global Wellness Institute, the Health Cluster of Montenegro, the Serbian Academy for Wellness & Spa, the World Cluster for Healthy Aging, the Balkan Cluster for Health, Wellness & Spa Tourism, as well as Bulgarian and international partner universities, research institutes, representatives of Bulgarian ministries and municipalities, NGOs, owners of*

Wellness & Spa resorts, entrepreneurs in the leisure industry and Wellness business, and leaders of international and Balkan agencies and organizations.

Founder & Editor in Chief:

Prof. Bistra Dimitrova, D.Sc.

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THE ROLE OF WELLNESS, SPA, AND THALASSOTHERAPY IN STRESS MANAGEMENT: GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN TRENDS IN HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

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Keywords: Terminology, conceptual framework, SPA culture, Thalasso practices, Recreation

INTRODUCTION

A fundamental driver in the development of emotional stress is the presence of negative emotions and the conflict situations they generate (Gartner, 2004; Dimitrova, 2017, 2019a). These conflicts often stem from a prolonged inability to fulfill essential biological, psychological, and social needs, leading to heightened mental strain (Maslow, 2003; Dimitrova, 2017a, 2019). Several key factors contribute to the emergence of such conflict situations, including:

- Disruptions in moral, ethical, and socio-legal norms – Ethical dilemmas, social injustice, and breaches of societal expectations can create significant emotional turmoil (Mason et al., 2000; Polimenov, 2018).
- High-speed modern lifestyles and information overload – The relentless pace of contemporary life, coupled with an overwhelming influx of digital and media information, can lead to cognitive exhaustion and mental fatigue (Polimenov, 2019; Dimitrova, 2020).

Adverse environmental and occupational conditions – Various external stressors contribute to emotional distress, such as:

- Air pollution, which affects both physical and mental well-being by increasing oxidative stress and reducing cognitive function (Polimenov, 2022).
- Elevated radiation levels, which can contribute to cellular damage and long-term health concerns, exacerbating anxiety and emotional strain (Hall, 2001).
- Noise pollution, a persistent urban stressor that disrupts concentration, sleep patterns, and overall mental equilibrium (Hoffman et al, 2000).
- Physical stressors, including prolonged work hours, insufficient rest, and ergonomic strain, which can lead to chronic fatigue and heightened susceptibility to emotional stress (Polimenov, 2023).

In the professional domain, stress arises from a complex interplay of workplace demands and external pressures. Key sources of occupational stress include:

- Heavy workloads and unrealistic expectations, leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction.

- Organizational changes and restructuring, which create uncertainty and job instability.
- Interpersonal conflicts, whether with colleagues or management, that contribute to a hostile work environment.
- Role ambiguity and lack of clarity, making it difficult for employees to align their responsibilities with organizational goals.
- Job insecurity, exacerbated by fluctuating economic conditions and shifting market demands (WTO, 2002).

Beyond the workplace, external influences such as economic instability, rapid technological advancements, and evolving workforce expectations further intensify stress levels. The increasing interconnectivity of global markets and the constant demand for adaptability create an intricate web of stress-inducing factors that affect both personal and professional well-being (Mason et al., 2000). The impact of professional stress extends far beyond individual well-being, significantly affecting workplace efficiency, employee engagement, and organizational stability. Chronic stress in the professional environment is a leading contributor to reduced productivity, heightened absenteeism, and increased turnover rates, placing a substantial financial and operational burden on businesses. From a physiological standpoint, prolonged exposure to stress triggers a cascade of adverse health effects. It has been linked to cardiovascular disorders, weakened immune function, metabolic imbalances, and a heightened risk of mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and burnout (Hoffman et al, 2000). Left unaddressed, these health complications not only diminish an individual's quality of life but also contribute to escalating healthcare costs and workplace inefficiencies. At the organizational level, unmanaged stress erodes team cohesion, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, ultimately weakening workplace morale and diminishing overall corporate culture. A toxic work environment fueled by excessive stress can stifle innovation, hinder collaboration, and lead to disengagement, all of which threaten an organization's long-term success and sustainability.

This paper delves into the causes, consequences, and mitigation strategies of professional stress, drawing from current research and evidence-based practices (Dimitrova, 2022). It explores how individuals and organizations can adopt proactive stress management techniques, resilience-building initiatives, and supportive workplace policies to foster a healthier and more sustainable work environment (Hoffman et al, 2000).

Addressing professional stress is not merely a matter of personal well-being; it is a strategic imperative for organizations striving to maintain a competitive edge in an increasingly fast-paced and demanding world. By implementing holistic stress-reduction measures, businesses can cultivate a workforce that is not only healthier but also more motivated, innovative, and productive.

METHODS

A systematic review of the existing literature on the terminology and conceptual framework of Stress, Wellness, and Professional Stress was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA

(Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. This review aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of key concepts by addressing the following research questions:

- How are Wellness, SPA, and Thalasso therapies most commonly defined and contextualized across different disciplines and regions?
- What are the structural components and interrelationships of these concepts within health and stress management frameworks?

What are the strengths, limitations, and practical implications of the various definitions and interpretations?

To ensure a rigorous and inclusive literature search, electronic databases such as Academia.edu, EBSCO, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate were systematically explored using a combination of targeted keywords, including:(stress OR professional stress) AND (Wellness OR Recreation OR SPA OR Thalasso procedures) AND (Health prevention) AND (fear OR anxiety).

Selection Criteria

Studies were included in the review if they met the following criteria:

- ✓ They provided in-depth insights into the terminology, conceptualization, and theoretical frameworks surrounding Stress, Wellness, SPA, and Thalasso therapies.
- ✓ They presented comparative analyses, highlighting different perspectives, cultural influences, and geographical variations.
- ✓ They followed retrospective descriptive studies, systematic reviews, or meta-analyses that contributed to the evolving discourse in the field.
- ✓ They were published in English or Bulgarian, ensuring accessibility and relevance to the research focus.

Conversely, studies were excluded if:

- ✗ They did not focus on human Stress, Wellness, or Professional Stress, thereby lacking applicability to the research scope.
- ✗ They provided insufficient data to meaningfully contribute to at least one of the identified research questions.

By synthesising insights from diverse academic sources, this review aims to bridge conceptual gaps, refine existing definitions, and contribute to a more holistic understanding of Stress and Wellness interventions in professional and therapeutic settings.

RESULTS

Stress is a prevalent issue in modern society, contributing to various physical, emotional, and psychological health concerns. As individuals seek holistic approaches to wellness, SPA and Thalassotherapy have gained recognition as effective methods for managing and alleviating stress. These therapeutic interventions combine natural elements, relaxation techniques, and

wellness practices to enhance overall well-being. This analysis explores the mechanisms through which SPA and Thalassotherapy influence stress reduction and improve mental and physical health.

1. *The Science Behind SPA and Thalassotherapy*

1.1 SPA Therapy and Stress Reduction

SPA treatments integrate various techniques aimed at promoting relaxation and relieving tension. The primary mechanisms of SPA therapy in stress management include:

Hydrotherapy: The use of warm water, hydro-massage, and mineral baths improves blood circulation, reduces muscle tension, and enhances relaxation. Studies suggest that hydrotherapy lowers cortisol (the stress hormone) levels while promoting the release of endorphins, which induce a sense of well-being.

Massage Therapy: Regular massages help decrease the physiological effects of stress by reducing muscle stiffness, increasing serotonin and dopamine production, and lowering heart rate and blood pressure.

Aromatherapy: Essential oils such as lavender, chamomile, and eucalyptus have been shown to reduce anxiety, improve mood, and enhance relaxation responses in the body.

Thermal Treatments (Sauna & Steam Baths): Exposure to heat increases circulation, relaxes muscles, and stimulates the release of feel-good hormones, helping to alleviate symptoms of chronic stress and fatigue.

1.2 Thalassotherapy: The Healing Power of Seawater

Thalassotherapy is a form of wellness treatment that utilizes marine-based elements such as seawater, algae, mud, and sea air to promote health and relaxation. The stress-reducing effects of Thalassotherapy are attributed to:

Mineral Absorption: Seawater is rich in essential minerals (magnesium, potassium, calcium) that help restore electrolyte balance, regulate the nervous system, and reduce symptoms of anxiety and fatigue.

Negative Ion Therapy: The ocean environment is filled with negative ions that have been shown to increase serotonin levels, improving mood and reducing stress-related symptoms.

Floation Therapy: Floating in warm, mineral-rich seawater or saltwater pools induces a deep state of relaxation, similar to meditation, reducing cortisol levels and improving overall well-being.

Mud and Algae Wraps: Marine mud and algae treatments provide essential nutrients that detoxify the body, enhance circulation, and promote relaxation.

2. *Psychological and Physiological Benefits*

SPA and Thalassotherapy treatments address both the physical and psychological effects of stress through various mechanisms, including:

2.1 Psychological Benefits:

- ✓ Reduction of Anxiety & Depression – The combination of warm water immersion, massage, and aromatherapy stimulates neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine, which promote emotional well-being.
- ✓ Improved Sleep Quality – Hydrotherapy and floatation therapy help reset the circadian rhythm, leading to better sleep patterns and reducing the effects of chronic stress and insomnia.
- ✓ Enhanced Mindfulness & Relaxation – Engaging in SPA and Thalasso treatments encourages mind-body awareness, fostering relaxation and helping individuals disconnect from stressors.

2.2 Physiological Benefits:

- ✓ Lower Cortisol Levels – Studies show that regular exposure to SPA and Thalassotherapy treatments reduces cortisol production, leading to lower stress responses in the body.
- ✓ Improved Cardiovascular Health – Hydrotherapy, massage, and thermal treatments contribute to better blood circulation, reducing blood pressure and heart rate.
- ✓ Muscle Relaxation & Pain Relief – Warm water therapies and massage techniques help relieve muscle stiffness, joint pain, and tension headaches, common symptoms associated with chronic stress.

Wellness Therapies as a Stress Management Strategy

Aromatherapy – The use of essential oils can help reduce stress, enhance mood, and improve cognitive function, making it an effective relaxation technique.

Massage Therapy – Techniques such as Swedish and deep tissue massage alleviate muscle tension, improve circulation, and promote relaxation.

Yoga and Meditation – Mind-body practices that enhance mental clarity, reduce anxiety, and improve emotional resilience.

Ayurvedic Treatments – Holistic practices like Abhyanga massage and herbal therapies restore balance and reduce stress-induced symptoms.

Hydrotherapy and Thermal Treatments – Water-based therapies, including saunas and hot baths, aid in muscle relaxation and stress relief.

Here are two tables presenting the percentage of use for different Wellness, SPA, and Thalassic influences based on global and European trends:

Table 1:
Global Trends in Wellness, SPA, and Thalassic Influences

| Wellness & SPA Services | Percentage of Use (%) | Notes/Trends |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Massage Therapy | 65% | Most popular globally, especially deep tissue & relaxation massages. |
| Thermal & Hydrotherapy (Hot Springs, Saunas, Steam Baths) | 50% | Popular in Asia, Nordic countries, and wellness resorts worldwide. |
| Aromatherapy & Essential Oil Therapy | 45% | Frequently combined with massages & meditation sessions. |

| Wellness & SPA Services | Percentage of Use (%) | Notes/Trends |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| Thalassotherapy (Seawater, Algae, Mud Treatments) | 35% | Dominant in coastal resorts, Mediterranean & luxury wellness centers. |
| Floatation Therapy (Saltwater & Sensory Deprivation Tanks) | 30% | Increasing popularity in stress management & relaxation programs. |
| Mindfulness & Meditation-Based Wellness | 55% | Rising trend globally due to stress reduction benefits. |
| Yoga & Holistic Healing Therapies | 40% | Strongly integrated into wellness retreats worldwide. |
| Detox & Nutrition-Based Wellness Programs | 38% | Juice cleanses, fasting, and detox retreats gaining traction. |
| Ayurvedic & Traditional Eastern Therapies | 25% | Expanding beyond India and Southeast Asia into Western wellness centers. |
| Cryotherapy (Cold Therapy & Ice Baths) | 20% | Growing in elite sports & wellness industries. |

These tables reflect general global and European wellness trends based on industry reports, wellness tourism statistics, and consumer preferences.

Table 2.
European Trends in Wellness, SPA, and Thalassic Influences

| Wellness & SPA Services | Percentage of Use (%) | Notes/Trends |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Thermal & Hydrotherapy (Hot Springs, Mineral Baths, Saunas) | 60% | Highly popular in Germany, Hungary, Iceland, and Eastern Europe. |
| Massage Therapy (Swedish, Deep Tissue, Reflexology, etc.) | 55% | Common in wellness resorts, urban SPA centers, and medical wellness. |
| Thalassotherapy (Seawater, Algae, Mud Treatments) | 50% | France, Spain, Italy, and Greece are leaders in marine-based wellness. |
| Aromatherapy & Essential Oil Therapy | 40% | Used in SPA centers, hotels, and luxury wellness retreats. |
| Floatation Therapy (Saltwater & Sensory Deprivation Tanks) | 35% | Increasing presence in urban wellness centers. |
| Mindfulness & Meditation-Based Wellness | 50% | Strongly linked to corporate wellness and stress management. |
| Yoga & Holistic Wellness Practices | 45% | Growing trend across Europe, especially in retreats and urban wellness centers. |
| Detox & Nutrition-Based Wellness Programs | 42% | Popular in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria's wellness clinics. |
| Cryotherapy (Cold Therapy & Ice Baths) | 30% | Strong in Nordic countries, elite sports, and recovery wellness programs. |
| Balneotherapy (Medicinal Mineral Baths & Thermal Waters) | 48% | Common in Central & Eastern Europe, including Czech Republic & Slovakia. |

Benefits of Wellness Therapies for Stress

- ✓ Reduction in Stress Hormones – Therapies like massage and aromatherapy help lower cortisol levels, reducing overall stress.
- ✓ Improved Mental Health – Regular participation in wellness activities enhances mood, decreases anxiety, and prevents burnout.

- ✓ Enhanced Physical Well-being – Techniques such as yoga and hydrotherapy improve flexibility, circulation, and immune function.
- ✓ Increased Workplace Productivity – Employees who manage stress effectively are more focused, engaged, and productive in their roles.
- ✓ Higher Job Satisfaction – Providing access to wellness therapies in the workplace fosters a healthier and more positive work environment.

Based on available data inside the publications, we present an adjusted table reflecting the approximate usage percentages of various relaxation and wellness techniques in Europe:

Table 3.

Presentation of the percentage of use for different wellness influences based on general trends and popularity in Europe.

| Relaxation Technique | Approximate Usage in Europe (%) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Aromatherapy | 15% |
| Massage Therapy | 20% |
| Yoga and Meditation | 12% |
| Ayurvedic Treatments | 5% |
| Hydrotherapy and Thermal Treatments | 10% |

These percentages are approximate and can vary based on specific countries, demographics, and the availability of services. Additionally, the overall usage of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) varies across Europe, with some countries reporting higher engagement than others. Based on available data in the studied publications, here is a table summarising various stress management techniques and their approximate popularity in Europe.

DISCUSSION

SPA and Thalassotherapy as a Preventative Approach to Stress Management

Regular engagement in SPA and Thalasso treatments can serve as a preventative measure against chronic stress-related illnesses. By integrating these therapies into a wellness routine, individuals can:

- ✓ Enhance resilience to stress by promoting relaxation and emotional balance.
- ✓ Strengthen the immune system, reducing susceptibility to stress-induced illnesses.
- ✓ Support mental clarity and cognitive function, leading to improved decision-making and productivity.

CONCLUSION

SPA and Thalassotherapy provide a holistic, natural, and scientifically-backed approach to stress management. By combining hydrotherapy, massage, marine minerals, aromatherapy, and mindfulness techniques, these therapies promote deep relaxation, restore physiological balance, and improve overall mental and physical well-being. As stress levels continue to rise in

modern society, the integration of SPA and Thalasso-based wellness practices offers an effective solution for enhancing quality of life, resilience, and long-term health.

Note:

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An agreement for informed consent to publishing data was signed.

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ATHLETICS EXERCISES FOR WELLNESS DEVELOPMENT

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Keywords: *wellness development, athletics exercises, motor capacity*

INTRODUCTION

Systematic sports activities, the development and enrichment of a person's motor culture are not only a mark of the general wellness culture, but also a necessity for maintaining the health and working capacity of each person (Angelova, 2019; 2023; 2021). The importance of physical education and sports is very great since this activity has no alternative to ensure the necessary conditions for the normal psychophysical development of adolescents (Dimitrova, 2024a; 2023; 2023a). Only motor activity, organized or spontaneous, can, most naturally and healthily, compensate to a large extent the adverse effects of the mental and sensory overload of students from stress and immobilization, characteristic of the modern way of life from an early school age (Dimitrova & Nesheva, 2021; Dimitrova, 2024). A healthy lifestyle and habits for optimal physical activity are learned from early childhood. All methods of education and upbringing at school are aimed at the comprehensive and harmonious development of students by their age characteristics (Ignatova, 2023). The physical education teacher has the responsible task of improving the content and methods of the pedagogical process in physical education and sports using a variety of means and approaches (Ignatova, Dimitrova, Iliev, Angelova, 2024). The physical education of the modern child, of the modern student, of the modern person is a problem of particular socio-pedagogical importance (Ignatova, 2021; Ignatova & Iliev, 2022). It helps the student in the process of his full social realization. At the same time, it contributes to his overall formation as a person (Ignatova, 2023a). It is related both to the strengthening of the child's motor structure and health, to the development of his will, and above all, to the development of his determination and resilience (Ignatova, 2023b). Movement is a natural need and a basic preventive tool for strengthening children's health. Insufficient physical activity adversely affects the normal development of the child's body and wellness lifestyle (Ignatova, 2023c) Systematic sports activities and the correct technique of performing motor tasks increase the level of physical performance of students (Ignatova & Iliev, 2023; Ignatova, 2018). The wellness-healthy lifestyle is also of paramount importance. Traditionally, in Bulgarian schools, great attention is paid to the educational requirements related to the formation of a healthy lifestyle, since a wellness lifestyle includes a system of knowledge and skills adapted to a person's daily life (Iliev, Stanchev, 2017; 2018). One of the main tasks of physical education in secondary school is related to the preparation of students to achieve a high degree of physical work ability, building a wellness culture that serves as a basis for effective implementation at work (Iliev, 2016;

2016a). This is a motivation which conduct a study to reveal what the state of physical activity and motor skills is at the beginning of the school year and what it will be at the end of the school year after a training process in physical education and athletics-based sports.

METHODS

The motor study was conducted over five consecutive days at the beginning of the academic year in September and concluded again with five consecutive days of motor tests in June of 2023/24. The tests were conducted in an extracurricular form of physical education. A total of 85 students from the fifth and sixth grades of a metropolitan school participated in it. The detailed distribution by class and gender is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution by class and gender

| | 5th Class | 6th Class | Total |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Girls | 24 | 21 | 45 |
| Boys | 18 | 22 | 40 |
| Total | 42 | 43 | 85 |

The following methods were used to solve the tasks: analysis, summary of information sources, and pedagogical observation. These methods allowed us to uncover the essence of the problem in our available literature. Through these methods, we specified the most frequently used concepts and opinions of various authors about the role of physical education and sports.

To determine the motor skill level, we used the following tests:

- Sprint run of 30 m from a high start - to measure the speed of lower limbs;
- Shuttle run of 200 m. - for endurance;
- T-test - to study motor qualities and agility;
- Throw a solid ball (3 kg) from a standing position - for upper limb strength;
- Standing long jump - for the explosive strength of the lower limbs.

Through the conducted research, we get specific methodical information about the practical skills related to motor qualities: speed, flexibility, agility, and explosive power of the lower limbs. The methods used are practical testing with pre-specialized and standardized described tests, to determine their statistical reliability, which is defined as the degree of coincidence of the measured test result with the actual state of the investigated trait or as the coincidence of the results when retesting the same persons at same conditions.




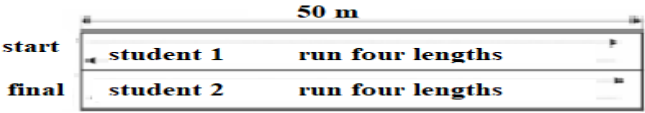
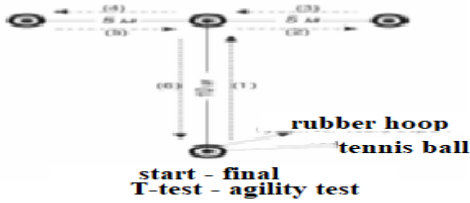
A method of pedagogical observation was also used to track the motor activity of the students. Appropriate conditions were created for conducting the research, and the tests were conducted outdoors, in the schoolyard.

The assessment of motor capacity is carried out by going through the following steps:

- Assessment of individual test results;
- Calculation of final result for motor activity.

Table 2. presents the research methods and tools used in the study. The tests were conducted in the schoolyard.

Table 2.
Research methods and tools

| Research methods | Research tools |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Modified method |  <p>Run 30 m</p> |
| Modified method - sequentially |  <p>long jump from a standing position with two feet</p> |
| Modified method - sequentially |  <p>Throwing a solid ball</p> |
| Group method in pairs |  <p>Shuttle run 200 m</p> |
| Modified method |  <p>rubber hoop tennis ball start - final T-test - agility test</p> |

The assessment of the research results is calculated on a 20-point scale. To evaluate the results of individual tests on a 20-point scale, the following steps are taken:

- ❖ The number of points obtained for a specific result is determined test depending on the age and gender of the students. We plot the result in the corresponding table for age and gender and find the points that the student received. Table 3 shows rating scale for evaluating student achievements.

Table 3.
Rating scale

| Points | Rating scale |
|--------|--------------|
| 0-3 | Weak 2 |
| 4-7 | Medium 3 |
| 8-14 | Good 4 |
| 15-17 | Very Good 5 |
| 18-20 | Excellent 6 |

- ❖ The number of points obtained for each test is equated to the six-point grading system. The intervals for equating points to the hexadecimal system are presented in the table above.
- ❖ The final assessment of physical capacity is calculated as an arithmetic mean of the assessments from the individual tests.

The final grade of the student's physical fitness is calculated only if there are grades from the results of all 5 tests. No final grade is calculated if there is a missing grade in the test result. Grading individual test scores on a 20-point scale suggest good comparability between individual tests, as well as how many (in number of points) are missing to get a higher score.

RESULTS

Every student is subjected to motor load at the beginning of the survey, even if only in physical education lessons. In these classes, students actively participate. They improve their sports performance for health and physical fitness by practicing athletics, gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, handball, football, mobile games, and table tennis. Students maintain a level of physical fitness, and the teacher's goal is to increase it through various sports methods. A motor difference of the studied contingent was found in the following tests: 30-meter run, standing two legs long jump, throwing a solid ball, 200-meter run, and agility test (T-test). Figure 1 shows the values of the results achieved in the Motor Activity tests of 5th-grade students - results at the entry/exit level.

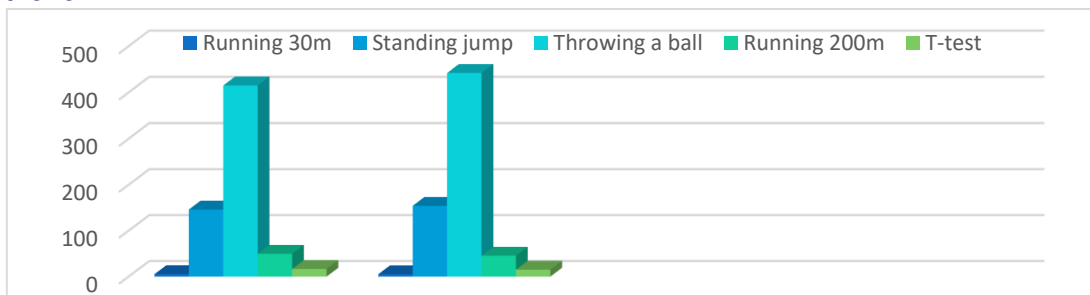


Figure 1. Motor activity 5th grade - results in entry/exit level

The obtained results show an improvement in the motor skills level of the students at the end of the school year. Figure 2 shows the values for Motor Activity of 6th-grade students - entry/exit level results.

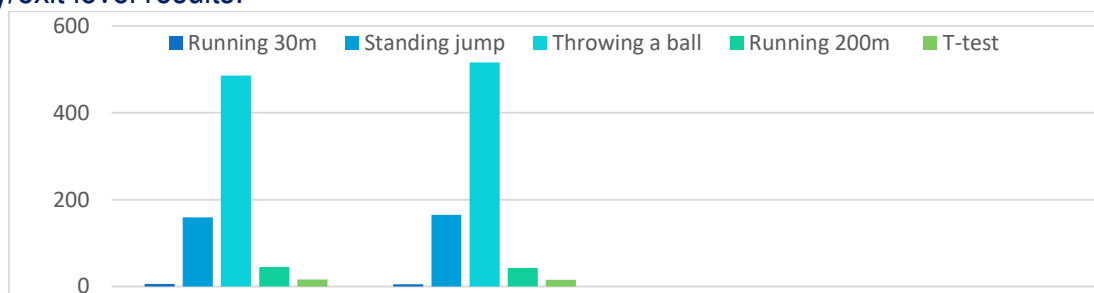


Figure 2. Motor activity 6th grade - results in entry/exit level

This is what we found out from the survey results. The tests were held in September, at the beginning of the school year, and in June, at the end of the 2023/24 school year. Figure 3 shows the final evaluation results from the motor activity of the two target groups - 5th and 6th grade.

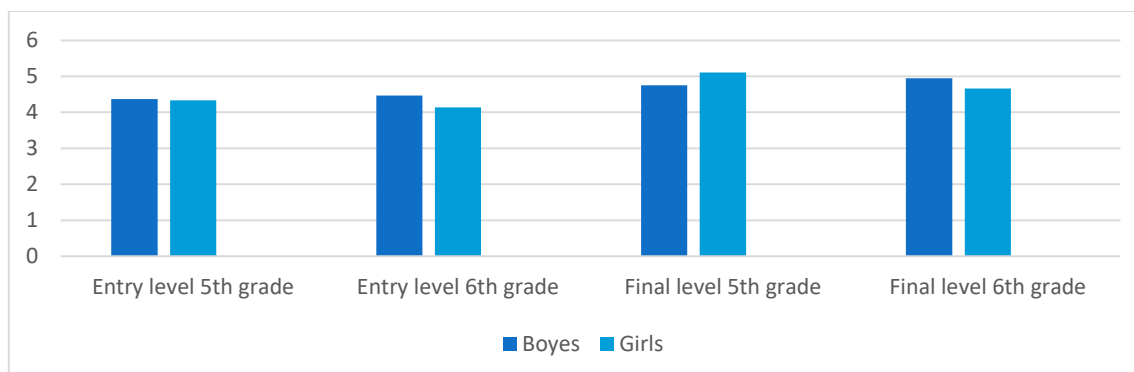


Figure 3. Final score for motor activity

Table 4 presents the empirical values from the diagnostic analysis within the framework of the conducted study, divided by the athletics tests conducted for girls and boys.

Table 4.

Diagnostic analysis- girls – boys

| Athletics tests | n | X _{min} | X _{max} | R | \bar{X} | S | V | As | Ex |
|-----------------|----|------------------|------------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| 30m Run | 45 | 5,73 | 8,5 | 2,77 | 6,574 | 0,67 | 10,23 | 1,45 * | 2,76 * |
| 30m Run | 40 | 5,04 | 8,2 | 3,16 | 6,039 | 1,15 | 18,98 | 1,358 | 1,181 |
| Long Jump | 45 | 115 | 179 | 64 | 141,38 | 15,72 | 11,12 | 0,527 | 0,607 |
| Long Jump | 40 | 118 | 220 | 102 | 177,57 | 40,27 | 22,68 | -0,634 | -1,281 |
| Ball Throw 3kg | 45 | 300 | 650 | 350 | 416,44 | 81,71 | 19,62 | 1,113 * | 2,946 * |
| Ball Throw 3kg | 40 | 380 | 640 | 260 | 505,71 | 93,61 | 18,51 | 0,473 | -0,79 |
| 200m Run | 45 | 42,19 | 54,78 | 12,59 | 46,267 | 3,88 | 8,39 | 0,846 | -0,114 |
| 200m Run | 40 | 36,5 | 106,76 | 70,26 | 50,02 | 25,42 | 50,82 | 2,484 * | 6,289 * |
| T-test | 45 | 13 | 16,3 | 3,3 | 14,959 | 0,92 | 6,15 | -0,593 | -0,115 |
| T-test | 40 | 11,53 | 15,63 | 4,1 | 13,82 | 1,71 | 12,36 | -0,471 | -1,715 |

Note: If the coefficients of As and Ex are marked with an asterisk, the value is higher than the critical one.

DISCUSSION

The proposed control exercises for evaluating students' motor skills are reliable, easily accessible, and can be successfully applied in the conditions of school physical education. The Athletics Exercises for Wellness Development normative base reflects the real level of motor qualities: speed, strength, speed-endurance, and agility, and the complex level of physical performance of students measured by them. The methodology for developing the normative base is flexible and allows easy changes to be made upon establishing certain changes in the level of students' motor qualities in one direction or another. To seek additional incentives for students with high physical fitness, as well as opportunities for additional activities for students lagging in this regard. The level of Wellness Development and physical ability should be considered as a factor for the professional development of students. To conduct periodic training to improve the qualification of physical education teachers for increasing the athletic abilities for Wellness Development. Creation of conditions for improvement of the physical education and sports system.

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion that can be drawn is that there is a connection and dependence between motor capacity and wellness development in 11-12-year-old students. This was also proven by the present study. The diagnosis and evaluation of the achieved results are fundamental when working at school. The teacher must know the peculiarities of each

student in the class, both in his mental and physical development, to be able to apply correct methods in his work to achieve better results with Athletics Exercises for Wellness Development. Early diagnosis and evaluation of the achieved results give a clear idea of the development of physical ability and support the work of the teacher. In all disciplines of the study, an improvement in student performance was noted. This is due to the period in which the students practiced different sports disciplines during the school year. After the long summer vacation, the student's physical ability score is lower at the beginning of the school year, and the teacher plans his methods to improve this situation. Not all students want to participate actively and willingly, but the persistence of the teacher, the many exercises and different sports disciplines, at any time of the lesson, as well as the gradually increasing load, ultimately improve the physical endurance of the students. This is also proven by this study, where better indicators are observed at the end of the school year than in September 2023.

Recommendations and suggestions for specific measures to improve wellness development

Considering that children who are more active, play sports regularly and have better results in school for a long time, it is advisable for all adolescents to practice appropriate sports, tailored to the preferences and physical data of the child. It is good for parents to support their children in this. It is good for children to be encouraged to participate more in sports games, outdoor games, swimming, etc. Exercises and training should be carried out under the supervision of parents, teachers, and coaches to avoid injuries and overload. It is important to have a balance between physical activity and rest and recovery. Despite the good results of the study, in recent years there has been a deterioration in the physical condition of students, which is due to various factors such as puberty, being overweight, a stagnant lifestyle, lack of interest, and using computers and phones. To improve this situation, measures must be identified and strictly implemented until a lasting result is achieved for wellness development. For this, we must all make maximum efforts and unite teachers, parents, students, and society to have a healthy and sporting nation.

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MODELING RITUALS THROUGH COMBINED WELLNESS INFLUENCES

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Keywords: *Beauty modeling, wellness influences, combined therapies, anti-aging effects.*

INTRODUCTION

Professional stress has become a prevalent issue in modern workplaces, leading to adverse physical, mental, and emotional health consequences (Dimitrova, 2023; Addas, 2025). Long working hours, high expectations, and job insecurity contribute to increased stress levels among employees (Avey et al., 2009). Wellness therapies offer a natural and effective alternative to mitigate these effects, promoting relaxation, resilience, and overall well-being (Dimitrova, 2024; Ignatova et al., 2022; Nesheva, 2023). This analysis explores the role of wellness therapies in reducing professional stress and improving workplace productivity (Nesheva et al., 2021; Ignatova, 2023). Stress is defined as a state of the organism that arises due to prolonged and unusual irritation, requiring tension to adapt to the stimulus (Ignatova et al., 2020; Nesheva, 2023a). Distress is a prolonged continuation of stress, associated with the development of pathological changes in the body (Nikolov, 2003; Dimitrova, 2023a; Yang et al., 2025). Anxiety is a psycho-physiological phenomenon, a component of normal self-regulation under extreme conditions, and a part of the general adaptation syndrome. It manifests as a negative, diffuse feeling of emotional tension, anticipation of potential troubles, restlessness, and an undefined fear of something that may occur. Emotional stress is a significant factor that creates a conducive environment for the development of vascular system diseases (Nesheva, 2020). The digestive system is directly connected to neuropsychological conditions (Krämer et al., 2024; Nikolov, 2003). Stress and its emotional manifestations, such as anxiety, insecurity, depression, panic, and alienation, are nowadays indicators that can even lead to health problems. Data from national statistics reveal that **50 to 75%** of all medical visits are related to complaints and illnesses caused by social stress (Batista et al., 2022).

Wellness therapies serve as a viable alternative to managing professional stress, offering holistic and scientifically-backed methods for improving overall well-being (Zhelev et al., 2004). By incorporating these therapies into workplace wellness programs, organizations can enhance employee health, boost productivity, and create a more positive work culture. As stress continues to be a growing concern, investing in wellness initiatives will be crucial for long-term workforce sustainability and success. Integrating wellness therapies into corporate Wellness programs may support people well-being (Chobanian et al., 2003). Initiatives such as on-site massage therapy, meditation sessions, and relaxation spaces can significantly reduce

workplace stress. Encouraging life balance and promoting self-care practices also contribute to a healthier lifestyle. Therapies like massage and aromatherapy help lower cortisol levels, reducing overall stress. Regular participation in wellness activities enhances mood, decreases anxiety, and prevents burnout. Techniques such as yoga and hydrotherapy improve flexibility, circulation, and immune function. Individuals who manage stress effectively are more focused, engaged, and productive in their roles.

METHODS

The **purpose** of this material is to conduct a comparative analysis of the effects of different wellness rituals on regulating the psycho-emotional state of clients, with the aim of providing scientific justification.

Research Focus:

We applied **benchmarking** to assess the impact of three wellness rituals: "**Aromatherapy**," "**Ayurveda**" and "**Complex ritual**". They are based on specific indicators. These indicators include **high pulse rate and blood pressure** triggered by the need to solve a personal problem, **decreased anxiety leading to panic, fear of failure, or job loss**, all of which are classified as "**momentary indicators**."

To achieve the set research objectives, the following **methodological tools** were used:

Assessment of Situational (Momentary) Psycho-Emotional State:

- ✓ **Pulse Rate and Blood Pressure.**
- ✓ **State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-Y)** – developed by C. Spielberger, Bulgarian adaptation by Shtetinski and Paspalanov (1989). In this study, only the "**SA**" scale was used to assess situational anxiety. The scale consists of **20 questions (items)** and measures anxiety as a temporary state (see Annex 1). The **SA-scale** evaluates situational anxiety (a short-term, transient state of anxiety).

Half of the items are negatively formulated concerning the measured qualities and are **recoded before summing all responses**. A **higher score** indicates a **higher level of anxiety**.

Subject of study:

The study involved 75 clients, all females, with an average age of 30.46 ± 8.81 years, ranging from 22 to 62 years. The participants were divided into three equal groups of 25 individuals (33.3% each), who underwent different wellness rituals:

- ✓ "Ayurveda" Ritual – Includes Abhyanga-Shirodhara massage and Marma-Panchakarma method.
- ✓ "Aromatherapy" Ritual – A standardized aromatherapy massage method, recommended by The International Federation of Aromatherapists (IFA).
- ✓ "Complex" Ritual – A systematic extraction of best practices, combining techniques from Swedish, Hawaiian, Chinese, and Ayurvedic massage.

RESULTS

The Concept of Modeling Rituals

Modeling rituals involve systematically designing wellness experiences by drawing from multiple established practices. By integrating methodologies such as aromatherapy, Ayurveda, and massage therapy, these rituals provide a synergistic effect that enhances their overall benefits. The goal is to refine existing techniques and create a structured approach that maximizes wellness outcomes.

Key Components of Combined Wellness Rituals

Aromatherapy – Utilizes essential oils to promote relaxation, emotional balance, and mental clarity.

Ayurvedic Practices – Incorporates traditional techniques such as Abhyanga massage and Shirodhara to harmonize the body's energy systems.

Massage Therapy – Draws from Swedish, Hawaiian, and Chinese massage techniques to release tension and improve circulation.

Mindfulness and Meditation – Enhances self-awareness and emotional resilience through guided relaxation and deep breathing exercises.

Thermal and Hydrotherapy – Employs hot and cold treatments to stimulate circulation and alleviate muscular discomfort.

Benefits of Combined Wellness Rituals

Enhanced Relaxation and Stress Reduction – The integration of multiple techniques leads to deeper relaxation and a more profound reduction in stress levels.

Improved Physical Health – By incorporating diverse methods, these rituals support circulation, muscular relief, and immune system function.

Holistic Emotional Balance – The synergy of aromatherapy, massage, and meditation fosters emotional well-being and anxiety reduction.

Personalized and Adaptive Approach – Individuals can experience a tailored ritual that aligns with their unique wellness needs.

Increased Effectiveness Over Single Modalities – A combined approach provides more lasting and impactful results than individual therapies.

Application in Wellness and Spa Industry

Integrating these combined wellness rituals into spa services enhances client experiences and promotes long-term well-being. Businesses can differentiate themselves by offering personalized, research-backed rituals that cater to modern wellness demands. Training programs should focus on creative and adaptive techniques to enrich the wellness menu across various centers.

Table 1 reveals significant changes in the indicators of blood pressure, pulse, and the anxiety level score after the three rituals. The measured values show significantly lower average levels following the procedures. Our findings on the substantial reduction of systolic arterial pressure

(SAP), diastolic arterial pressure (DAP), pulse rate, and situational anxiety after the three rituals support the conclusions of other authors:

"... Through massage, blood vessels reflexively dilate, peripheral resistance decreases, and arterial blood pressure drops. Massaging certain areas of the body (abdomen, neck, shoulder girdle, and massage collar) leads to stimulation of the sympathetic ganglia and reduction of elevated blood pressure..."

The reduction in anxiety levels is attributed to the fact that "... massage can regulate excitation and inhibition processes in the cerebral cortex..." and "... has a positive effect on human psychology. After a massage, a person feels refreshed, with a sense of well-being and improved mood..." (Zhelev et al., 2012).

Additionally, this effect is likely due to the stimulation of various pressure points in the three applied methodologies, which contribute to restoring the body's energy balance, thereby regulating pulse, arterial blood pressure, and calming the psyche. It is also known that this impact is influenced by the wellness environment in which the three rituals take place.

The data from Table 1 indicate that the developed "Complex" ritual, as an original methodology, has effects similar to or even superior to the well-established wellness rituals "Aromatherapy" and "Ayurveda" in terms of reducing the examined indicators. We found that all three rituals contributed to a significant decrease in situational anxiety levels, pulse rate, systolic, and diastolic blood pressure. These findings confirm that the applied treatments have led to a reduction in stress manifestations in the studied individuals.

Table 1:

Comparative Analysis of Different Groups Based on the Examined Indicators Before and After the Ritual

| Indicator | Ritual | Before the Ritual | SD | After the Ritual | SD |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------|------------------|------|
| SBP (Systolic Blood Pressure) | Ayurveda | 126.33a | 10.21 | 121.07a | 7.82 |
| | Aromatherapy | 128.98a | 9.36 | 120.54a | 6.01 |
| | "Complex" | 127.43a | 11.03 | 118.02a | 5.08 |
| DBP (Diastolic Blood Pressure) | Ayurveda | 84.03a | 8.93 | 80.01bc | 9.28 |
| | Aromatherapy | 79.13a | 6.83 | 75.03ac | 7.25 |
| | "Complex" | 77.93a | 6.99 | 71.91a | 7.54 |
| Heart Rate | Ayurveda | 74.87a | 14.96 | 67.732c | 9.92 |
| | Aromatherapy | 72.14a | 9.62 | 66.41ac | 8.40 |
| | "Complex" | 68.88a | 10.97 | 63.04a | 7.91 |
| Score | Ayurveda | 43.97a | 5.98 | 32.53a | 1.44 |
| | Aromatherapy | 44.35a | 5.05 | 32.97a | 3.66 |
| | "Complex" | 44.99a | 5.69 | 32.72a | 2.73 |

***Note:** Identical letters in vertical columns indicate no statistically significant difference, while different letters indicate a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$).

This outcome is attributed to the proper assessment of each client's functional state and their assignment to a suitable ritual. It can be stated that stress reduction depends not only on the availability of effective wellness rituals and an appropriate environment but also on the level of knowledge, skills, and competencies of the therapist performing the procedure. In Table 1, it is evident that before the ritual, there was no statistically significant difference between the three groups regarding the examined indicators, making the post-ritual comparison statistically valid. As shown in the table, prior to the procedure, the SBP (Systolic Blood Pressure) values for all three rituals ranged between 120 and 139 mmHg, which, according to the WHO, is classified as prehypertension. After the rituals, the values changed as follows:

- ✓ “Complex” ritual – 118.02 mmHg, $p = 0.006$ (within the normal range)
- ✓ “Aromatherapy” ritual – 120.54 mmHg, $p = 0.002$ (lower threshold of prehypertension)
- ✓ “Ayurveda” ritual – 121.07 mmHg, $p = 0.003$ (lower threshold of prehypertension)

Although there is no statistically significant difference in SBP values between the three rituals after the procedures, it is important to note that the “Complex” ritual resulted in values that fall within the normal range.

Additionally, Table 1 shows a significant difference between the three groups regarding DBP (Diastolic Blood Pressure) and heart rate after the ritual. Statistically, significantly lower DBP and heart rate values were observed in the group that underwent the “Complex” ritual compared to the “Ayurveda” ritual. This suggests that the “Complex” ritual tends to be more effective in reducing DBP and heart rate than the “Ayurveda” ritual.

DISCUSSION

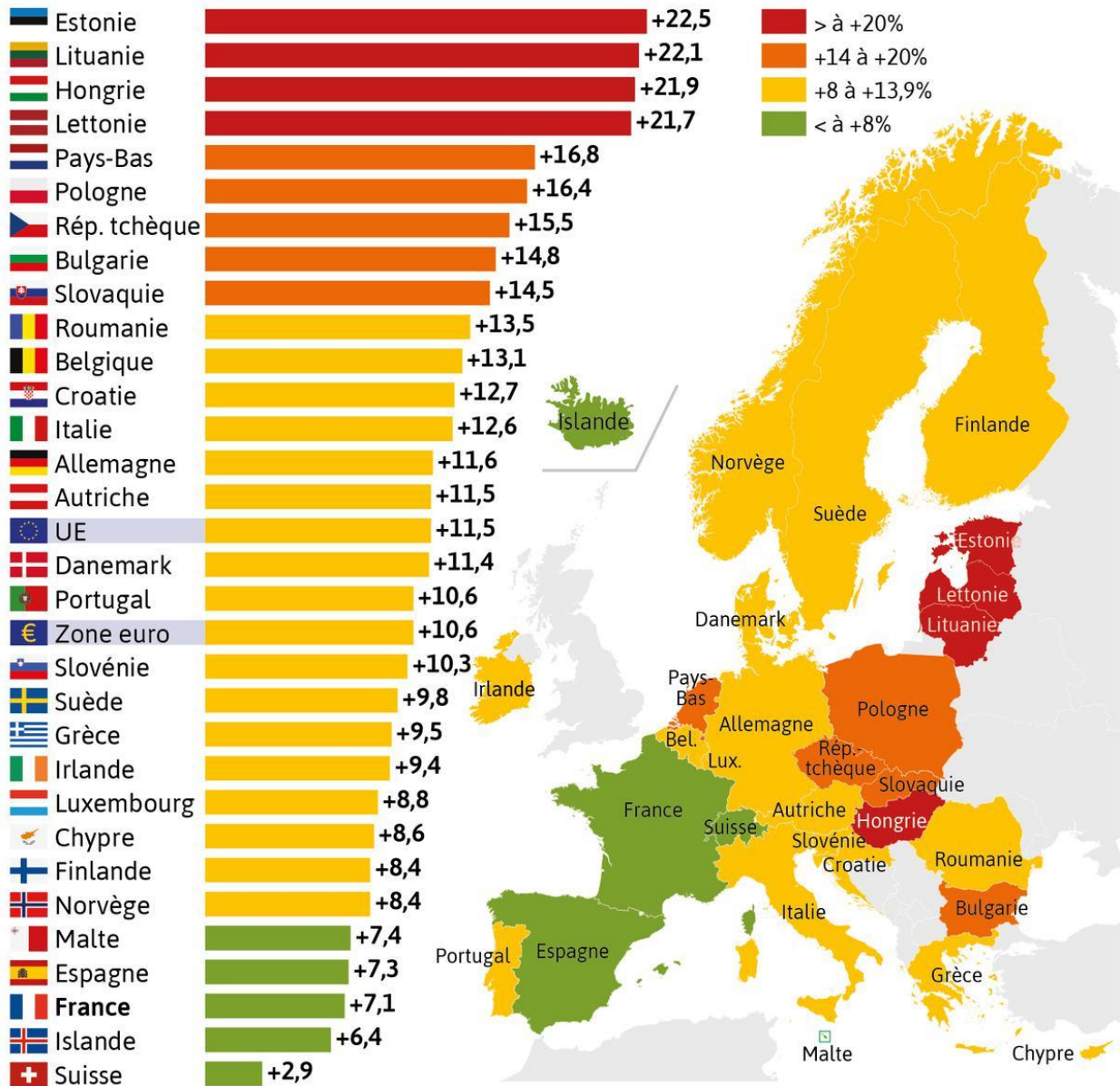
We discuss the necessity of scientifically validating the effects of various wellness procedures or rituals on the client's health status. Currently, even in high-end Wellness and SPA centers, therapies are offered without proven or standardized duration and intensity based on research. The pricing and service menus in SPA centers are primarily developed by professionals with economic education, who focus solely on profit rather than the content and quality of the services. This happens because they lack the necessary expertise in the field.

In some cases, low-qualified specialists provide services, sometimes applying incorrect methodological sequences of steps and techniques. Let's discuss the actual status of funding for Science and R&D in Europe.

According to EUROSTAT data for 2024, Bulgaria's expenditure on science and innovation remains low compared to other EU member states. For the country's future, it is crucial to increase the share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocated to science from 0.79% to at least 2%, while the European benchmark is even 3%. However, if we compare the share of budget expenditures, the picture looks quite different. For an objective analysis of the data, it is essential to consider the inflation rate in individual European countries (see Figure 1).

L'inflation en Europe

Le taux annuel d'inflation en Europe, en octobre 2022, en %



Source: Eurostat (novembre 2022)

Figure 1. Inflation Rates in Individual European Countries (October 2022). Source: Eurostat

The trend of increasing expenditures on research and development (R&D) continues in Bulgaria, yet they remain far from the European target. In 2023, investments in R&D grew by 15.9%, reaching a total of 1.467 billion BGN. This maintains the annual growth trend since 2019, according to the National Statistical Institute (NSI). However, R&D expenditures as a percentage of GDP stand at 0.79%, which is only a 0.04 percentage point increase from 2022. This is still far from the EU target of 3% of GDP allocated to R&D. Scientific research in Europe plays a key role in the development of the economy, technology, and society. The European Union (EU) allocates significant funds for research and development (R&D) through programs such as

"Horizon Europe", which is the main framework program for research and innovation for the period 2021-2027, with a total budget of €95.5 billion.

Funding and Distribution of Subsidies

Although the EU aims to invest 3% of GDP in scientific research, actual figures in most member states remain lower. According to EUROSTAT data for 2024, the average R&D expenditure in Europe is approximately 2.2% of GDP, with the highest investments made by countries such as Sweden, Germany, and Denmark. Meanwhile, Eastern European countries, including Bulgaria and Romania, remain significantly below the average, with expenditures below 1% of GDP.

Challenges in Scientific Research

Uneven distribution of funds – More developed economies allocate more resources, while less developed countries rely mainly on European subsidies.

Insufficient private sector participation – In some countries, R&D investments come predominantly from the state, whereas in others—such as Germany and France—the business sector plays a leading role.

Bureaucratic obstacles – Complex application procedures for European funding make it difficult for researchers from smaller countries.

Possible Solutions and Perspectives

Greater incentives for the private sector through tax relief for companies investing in science and innovation.

Improving cross-border cooperation between universities and research institutions.

Expanding access to European funding programs and simplifying administrative procedures.

Overall, the EU is making significant efforts to develop science, but better resource distribution and greater engagement from both the public and private sectors are needed.

CONCLUSION

Statistically significantly lower values of DAN and heart rate were observed in the group that underwent the "Complex" ritual compared to the group that underwent the "Ayurveda" ritual. Additionally, after the rituals, the percentage of women experiencing anxiety decreased significantly more in the groups with the "Complex" and "Ayurveda" rituals.

The conclusion is that the "Complex" ritual has not only a similar but even a stronger effect compared to the well-established Wellness rituals "Aromatherapy" and "Ayurveda" in terms of reducing the studied indicators. This provides a solid basis for incorporating creative activity in both training staff and trainees when developing original and effective rituals to enrich the Wellness menu in various centers.

The reduction of emotional stress manifestations in the studied individuals, as a result of applying the three Wellness rituals, supports their scientifically-based implementation in the SPA business.

Modeling rituals through combined wellness influences presents a forward-thinking approach to holistic health. By merging multiple therapeutic practices, individuals and wellness professionals can achieve superior outcomes in relaxation, mental clarity, and physical health. The future of wellness lies in these integrated, scientifically-supported rituals that cater to the evolving needs of individuals seeking comprehensive well-being solutions.

Note:

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Annex 1:

STATE TRAIT ANXIETY INVENTORY

Read each statement and select the appropriate response to indicate how you feel right now, that is, at this very moment. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your present feelings best.

Here's the 20 questions (items) and measures anxiety test in a table:

| Statement | Not at all (1) | A little (2) | Somewhat (3) | Very Much So (4) |
|--|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1. I feel calm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I feel secure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I feel tense | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I feel strained | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I feel at ease | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. I feel upset | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. I feel satisfied | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I feel frightened | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. I feel uncomfortable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. I feel self-confident | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. I feel nervous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. I feel jittery | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I feel indecisive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. I am relaxed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. I feel content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I am worried | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. I feel confused | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. I feel steady | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. I feel pleasant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |



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DEVELOPMENT OF WELLNESS CULTURE THROUGH CORRECTIVE GYMNASTICS

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Keywords: *corrective gymnastics, wellness culture, spinal gymnastics, motor development, wellness culture*

INTRODUCTION

Corrective exercises are very necessary for today's immobile and physically unprepared teenagers (Dimitrova, 2024;; 2023; 2023a, Dimitrova & Nesheva, 2021). Physical education, along with moral, aesthetic, mental, and work education, support the all-round development of the personality, so that it is equally useful for itself and society (Dimitrova, 2024a; Ignatova, 2021; Ignatova, 2023; 2023a; 2023b; Ignatova, 2018). Different types of corrective exercises are present in each of the presented lesson units. Emphasis is placed on proper execution to achieve the goals and objectives of the research (Ignatova, 2022; Ignatov, 2022; Ignatov, Petkova, 2022).

METHODS

The assessment of the level of motor activity is carried out in the following order:

- Evaluation of the results of individual tests.
- Calculation of the final assessment for physical capacity.

The evaluation of the results of the individual tests was carried out in two ways:

- 20-point scale;
- by determining intervals according to the six-point scoring system.

To evaluate the results of the individual tests on a 20-point scale, the following steps are taken:

- The number of points obtained for a result achieved in a specific test is determined depending on the age and gender of the students. We find the appropriate table for age and gender and establish the points the student receives.

In the same way, we find the number of points for the other tests.

- The number of points obtained for each test is equated to the six-point grading system. The final assessment of physical ability is calculated as an arithmetic average of the scores for the individual tests.

RESULTS

The dynamics of motor activity indicators based on spinal straightening complexes between boys and girls were monitored in five motor tests to determine the level of motor capacity. A comparative analysis of empirical values was carried out between the beginning and end of the study period from September 2023 to May 2024. The object of study is the process of pedagogical interaction and the influence of corrective exercises on posture correction.

Immobility leads to a decrease in the adaptive functions of the body, which is expressed in a weakening of the immune system and disorders in the psycho-emotional state. In addition, it harms the musculoskeletal system. Different types of sports stress different muscle groups, so progress is different in tests. All adolescents should be encouraged to play sports. The students in the study group are heterogeneous, showing progress in different tests. At the end of the school year, some students show no progress in results or maintain the levels from the beginning of the school year.

Grading individual test scores on a 20-point scale suggests good comparability between individual tests, as well as how much (in number of points) is missing to get a higher score. To evaluate the results of individual tests by determining intervals by the six-point system is passed through the following steps:

- The assessment according to the six-point system is determined depending on the age and gender of the students. We find the appropriate table for age and gender and establish the rating. In the same way, we find the marks for the other tests.
- The final assessment of physical capacity is calculated as an arithmetic mean score from the scores on the individual tests.
- The final assessment of the student's physical ability is calculated only if the results of all 5 tests are available.

A final grade should not be calculated if a result is missing from any of the tests. Table 1 presents the research methods and tools used in the study.

Table 1.
Research methods and tools


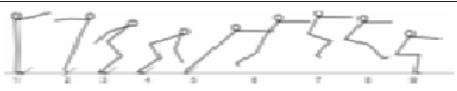
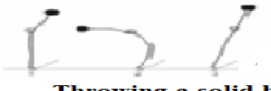
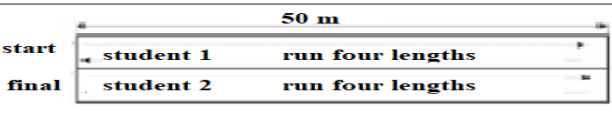
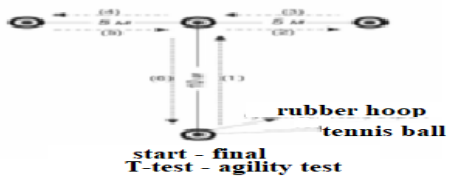
| Research methods | Research tools |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Modified method |  Run 30 m |
| Modified method - sequentially |  long jump from a standing position with two feet |
| Modified method - sequentially |  Throwing a solid ball |
| Group method in pairs |  Shuttle run 200 m |
| Modified method |  rubber hoop tennis ball start - final T-test - agility test |

Figure 1 shows the study participants who achieved the maximum number of points in the individual tests at the beginning of the experimental period. According to data from the same chart, expressed in percentages, the participants do best in the standing long jump.

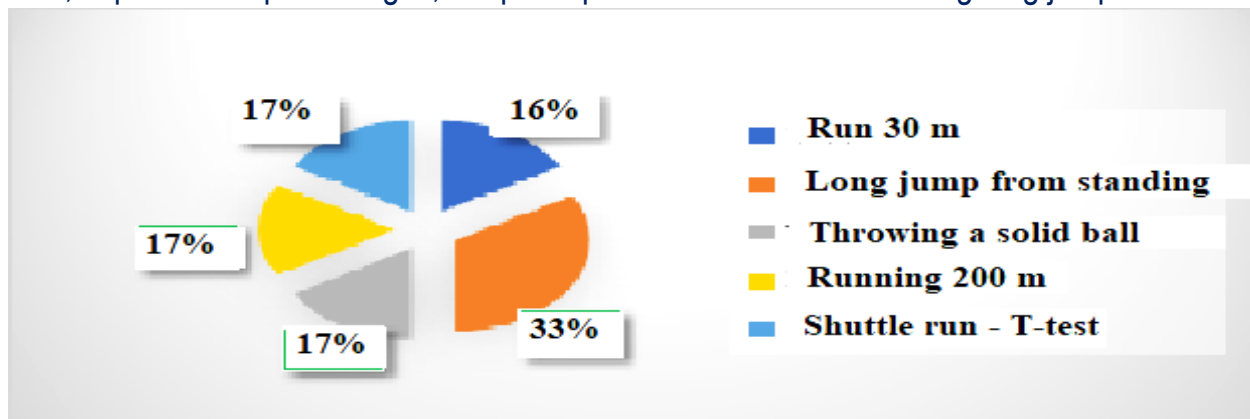


Figure 1. Comparison - boys and girls

Figure 2 shows the ratio in the dynamics of motor activity indicators based on complexes for straightening the spine, between boys and girls in the five tests to determine the level of motor capacity at the beginning of the school year - September 2023. Comparative is analyzed with the empirical values from the end of the researched period - May 2024.

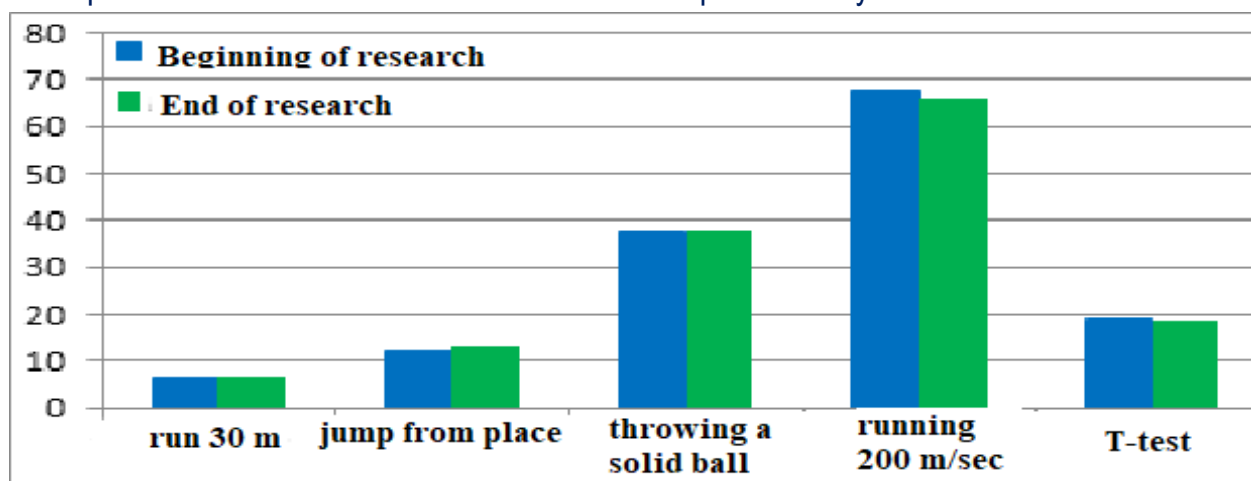


Figure 2. Achievements in individual tests - beginning/end

Figure 2 shows the difference in the dynamics of the indicators at the beginning and the end of the school year. The reported results clearly express the difference in the results of boys and girls in the two stages of the study period, on each of the tests in the motor activity battery. Students in the elementary stage are usually active and enjoy participating in all motor activities, as well as in games composed of exercises with elements to straighten the spine. With them, a high density of the lesson is achieved, the set research tasks are solved and postural corrections are actively worked on. Some children do not progress. Many factors can influence the results, morphological, genetic, and level of motor activity. Students have different motor abilities. They are extremely diligent and hardworking, but their motor and physiological characteristics limit them. It is these that should be encouraged both verbally and in assessment. Some children

play sports but do not have good motivation to participate in class. Here is the role of the teacher, the lesson should be presented in an interesting and accessible way and the appropriate methods and approaches should be sought for each group of children. Playing sports in their free time is also a factor, children who play sports will invariably improve their results. Their overall results are good. Different types of sports stress different muscle groups, so progress is different in different tests. All adolescents should be encouraged to play sports. The students in the study group are heterogeneous, showing progress in different tests and ways. The active sportsmen stand out, their progress, and the points they collect on the respective tables stand out compared to the rest of the class. At the end of the school year, some students show no progress in results or maintain the levels from the beginning of the school year. This is due to absences from physical education classes. According to the arithmetic mean values of Diagram 1 and Diagram 2 at the beginning of the academic year 2023-24 both genders give better results in the 30m run, 200m run, and T-test, and at the end of the school year in standing jump and 1kg push. dense ball. At the end research stage, boys give better results than girls. Motor activity based on corrective gymnastics is one of the main issues that is open to all specialists in physical education and sports training. The assessment of motor readiness is carried out based on quantitative information on the degree of development. A characteristic of motor development is that it is a measurable activity according to objective criteria established as a result of the research activity of the relevant specialists. Thanks to this, the physical performance can be controlled and directed in the desired direction. Children's sports performance has an impact on children's motivation and interest in physical exercise. Athletic exercises, combined with the means of other disciplines, contribute to a very large extent to creating the necessary minimum of physical capacity.

DISCUSSION

The point of active participation in physical education and sports classes is to experience pleasure from such motor activity. This feeling is not only a prerequisite, it can be the result of personal achievements and is a stage of personal physical and personal improvement. Students acquire skills to overcome and overcome setbacks in losses and form social and spiritual personality qualities. A peculiarity in the development of physical capacity is that it develops purposefully with the means of assimilation to the necessary degree of motor skills and habits. In this way, one of the main didactic principles of physical education and sports - the unity of technical and motor training - is realized in practice, affirming the Wellness Culture. The curriculum for individual classes and stages includes training in disciplines in which the leading motor qualities are of increased sensitivity, and on the other hand, the assimilation of motor skills and habits becomes maximally effective. The baseline tests reflect the results of the training during the past school year, in which the students regularly practiced complexes of exercises of a spinal corrective nature. At the same time, conclusions are drawn for the practical solution of

the set research objectives. This becomes an important link between the beginning and the end of the school year, which contributes to the continuous and systematic realization of the tasks of education and upbringing. Additional processing creates an opportunity for teacher self-monitoring. He is obliged to ensure the solving of tasks with high efficiency, protecting students from accidents and injuries, sports must serve above all for the overall development of the personality and improvement of health, actively affirming the Wellness Culture in this age period. The decisive improvement of students' motor development is of extreme importance for their general working ability and their future realization in various areas of life. For this reason, complex effective measures are needed, especially in schools, so that physical education becomes a truly decisive factor for the high level of motor development, comprehensively affirming the Wellness Culture. The degree of progress in the results within a school year is measured based on the difference between the test scores obtained at the beginning and the end of the school year, and for this period the ontogenetic factor is not taken into account. The decisive improvement of students' motor development is of extreme importance for their

CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained from the exercises with spinal gymnastics, a quantitative and qualitative assessment is made - individual and collective. Motor training tests in physical education and sports classes should be thoroughly prepared, and the practical details necessary for the successful running of the annual training should be appropriate.

Systematic work on the application and development of the spinal-rectifying complexes is carried out every hour in the lessons of physical education and sports. Data from motor fitness tests are interpreted in:

- information on the development of individual qualities gives an idea of the strengths and weaknesses of each student, as well as of the class;
- tracking the dynamics in the development of physical qualities;
- the individual or complex analytical assessment of motor development orients the teacher on the effectiveness of the means and methods of training he applies;
- the control of the system makes it possible to discover athletically talented students aimed at active training activities;

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STUDY ON ANXIETY IN ADOLESCENT TENNIS PLAYERS

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Keywords: tennis, anxiety, psychological skills, youth sports

INTRODUCTION

The term "anxiety" originates from the Latin word "anxius," meaning shock. The concept of anxiety, both as a state and a personality trait, was first introduced by R.B. Cattell (1966) and later developed by Ch. Spielberger (1966). According to Cashmore (2002, as cited in G. Rogleva, 2009), anxiety refers to an unpleasant emotion characterized by vague, undefined, but persistent feelings of apprehension and fear.

Ch. Spielberger's work provides an in-depth understanding of anxiety. He suggests that the term "state anxiety" should denote the emotional state or specific set of reactions arising when an individual perceives a situation as threatening, regardless of its actual threat level. Further studies distinguish between anxiety as a transient state and as a personality trait (Spielberger, 1983). Trait anxiety is viewed as a stable, acquired behavioral dispositional personality trait that predisposes individuals to perceive a wide range of objectively safe stimuli as threatening, leading to situational anxiety in specific moments. Ts. Misheva and N. Panayotov (2004) found a high correlation between these two types of anxiety.

Anxiety affects individuals on multiple levels (A. Peden, 2010; M. Besharat & S. Pourbohloul, 2011), triggering simultaneous physiological, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional reactions. Physiologically, it manifests through somatic changes induced by elevated adrenaline levels, such as increased heart rate, sweating, nausea, muscle tension, dry mouth, and more. These changes are particularly significant in tennis, as heightened muscle tension can disrupt movement coordination, leading to technical errors. Behaviorally, anxiety may hinder one's ability to act or cope with specific situations. Emotionally, unmanaged anxiety can result in feelings of fear or terror, impaired concentration, tension or nervousness, irritability, restlessness, and hopelessness. Conversely, a positive emotional response includes full concentration, motivation, and confidence in success.

Notably, the manifestations of anxiety vary by sport type—they are more pronounced in individual sports, whereas in team sports, the presence of teammates and shared responsibility likely reduce pre-competition anxiety symptoms (L. Craft et al., 2003).

The competitive activities of adolescent tennis players involve not only significant physical exertion but also high psychological stress. Athletes often face opponents who are considerably stronger and older. A common belief in tennis is that losing is always a failure, which heavily

burdens adolescents (G. Mamassis, 2002). Improper approaches by coaches and setting unattainable goals can develop trait anxiety, which easily manifests as situational anxiety during competitions. Overly demanding parents can have a similar effect. Naturally, one of the most negative factors influencing anxiety in tennis is loss and how the athlete perceives it.

A meta-analysis on the impact of anxiety on sports performance by T. Woodman and L. Hardy (2003) revealed that out of 43 studies, 26 (60%) found a negative effect of anxiety, 7 (16%) found no correlation, and 10 (23%) observed a slight positive correlation with sports results.

Similar findings were reported by G. Domuschieva-Rogleva, M. Georgiev, and A. Antonov (2004), with the distinction that representatives of team sports exhibited higher levels of cognitive anxiety.

METHODS

Objective of the Study

To identify differences in sports anxiety among adolescent tennis players.

Research Tasks:

To describe the degree of sports anxiety expression in adolescent tennis players.

To uncover differences in sports anxiety across groups based on gender and qualification.

The study involved 66 tennis players aged between 9 and 14. The participants were divided into three groups:

Group 1: Top-level competitors (6 individuals) occupying leading positions in national rankings.

Group 2: Second-level competitors (12 individuals) who compete but do not hold top positions.

Group 3: Children practicing tennis but not listed in national rankings (24 Bulgarian and 24 foreign tennis players).

To assess sports anxiety, we used the Sport Competition Anxiety Inventory proposed by Mackenzie (2005) and Fernandez (2010), which evaluates anxiety as a personality trait. The questionnaire comprises 15 statements assessing how the respondent feels before a competition—how often they exhibit signs of anxiety—rated on a scale from 1 (rarely) to 3 (often). This test had not been translated and adapted for the Bulgarian population. We selected this test due to its concise number of items that accurately assess significant manifestations of competitive anxiety. Therefore, specialists translated the test, and we carefully examined its statistical characteristics. According to the author's methodology, 10 items contribute to the anxiety assessment, demonstrating high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.844$). The content of the items excluded by the author largely describes the absence of competitive anxiety or the athlete's ability to manage its symptoms. The reliability of these items was also of a good level (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.737$). Consequently, we included this measure in our research. Due to the different number of questions assessing the degree of anxiety and coping with it, and our desire to compare these two constructs, we used averaged values for each subscale in the analysis.

For statistical processing, we employed variation and dispersion analysis. Data was processed using the statistical software SPSS 19.

RESULTS

The instrument used to assess the anxiety levels of the participants is detailed in the methods section concerning sports anxiety. Preliminary data processing indicated that, in addition to the items measuring anxiety levels, the remaining items also hold cognitive value, as they describe potential mechanisms for coping with anxiety. The scale demonstrated sufficiently high internal consistency, justifying its use in the current analysis. Given the varying number of items across constructs, we averaged the results. Variation analysis revealed a normal distribution of values; therefore, dispersion analysis was employed in subsequent processing. The variation was relatively low. The mean values, variability of results, and statistical significance of differences among the various age and qualification groups are presented in Table 1. Age exhibited a negative correlation with the positive scale of the questionnaire ($r = -0.357^*$), possibly due to socially desirable responses among younger participants and a more accurate self-assessment and sense of responsibility among older children.

Table 1.

Mean Values and Variability of Anxiety Assessment Results

| Психическ състояние | Общо | | Age | Пол | | | | F | a | Et a | Квалификация | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|------|----------|-------------|----------|--------------|----------|------|----------|---------|--------------|------|---------|------|---------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| | X-X- | S | | момчет а | | момиче та | | | | | Група 1 | | Група 2 | | Група 3 | | F | a | Eta |
| | | | X- X- | S | X- X- | S | X- X- | S | X- X- | S | X- X- | S | | | | | | | |
| Тревожност | 2.08 | 0.52 | 0.141 | 2.29 | 0.42 | 1.94 | 0.54 | 4.98 | 0.031 | 0.333 | 2.07 | 0.46 | 1.78 | 0.59 | 2.23 | 0.446 | 3.21 | 0.051 | 0.376 |
| Справяне с тревожността | 2.32 | 0.58 | -0.357* | 2.33 | 0.63 | 2.32 | 0.55 | 0.00 | 0.954 | 0.009 | 2.83 | 0.20 | 2.46 | 0.45 | 2.13 | 0.608 | 4.86 | 0.013 | 0.446 |

Overall, the average anxiety score for all participants was $M = 2.08 \pm 0.52$ points, while the coping with anxiety score was slightly higher at $M = 2.32 \pm 0.58$ points. Boys reported significantly higher anxiety levels ($F = 4.98$, $p = 0.031$) with a mean of $M = 2.29 \pm 0.42$ points, compared to girls, who had a mean of $M = 1.94 \pm 0.54$ points. This finding is surprising, as leading authors in the field of youth tennis consider girls in this age group to be significantly more anxious. Logically, Group 3 exhibited the highest anxiety levels ($M = 2.23 \pm 0.45$ points), followed by Group 1 ($M = 2.07 \pm 0.46$ points), with Group 2 (Fig.1) showing the lowest levels ($M = 1.78 \pm 0.59$ points).

It is noteworthy that active competitors (Group 1) exhibit a significant predominance in coping with anxiety. Similarly, the girls in Group 2 share this characteristic. In contrast, representatives of the third qualification group display higher anxiety levels ($M = 2.23 \pm 0.45$ points) and a lower ability to manage it ($M = 2.13 \pm 0.61$ points).

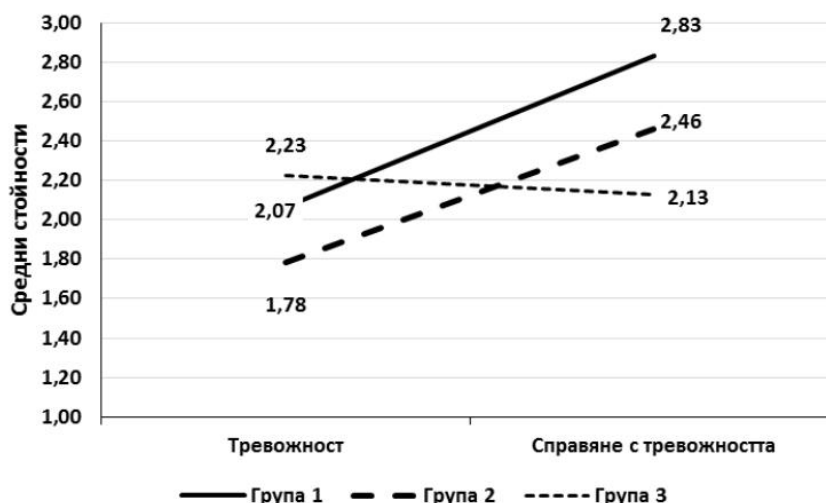


Figure 1. Comparative Analysis of Anxiety Components Among Different Study Groups

CONCLUSION

Sports Anxiety is a Significant Factor Among Adolescent Tennis Players

Anxiety manifests at varying degrees in young athletes and can influence their performance in competitions.

Primary signs of sports anxiety include physiological (elevated heart rate, tension), cognitive (impaired concentration), and emotional reactions (fear, nervousness).

Qualification is a Key Factor for Sports Confidence

Tennis players with higher qualifications (participants in national and international competitions) exhibit lower anxiety levels and a greater ability to cope with pressure.

Players with the lowest qualifications demonstrate the highest anxiety levels, suggesting that accumulating competitive experience may help reduce anxiety.

The Ability to Cope with Anxiety is Better Developed in Active Competitors

The lowest anxiety levels are observed in players who regularly participate in tournaments (Group 1).

The highest anxiety levels and the weakest coping abilities are noted in players with less competitive experience (Group 3).

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NUTRITIONAL AND MOTOR WELLNESS – BASIS FOR HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, all the physical scientific research has been developed because of nutrition in the first three years of human life, with the beginning of the huge impact of the increase in fruit on the growth and health of children, their intellectual development, and the risk of increasing age-related chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity, and lung problems. Children from 1 to 3 years old gradually transition from transitional to family-consumed food. Children develop attitudes towards different foods and begin to make personal food choices. The rapid growth of young children determines the greater energy requirements per kilogram of body weight compared to those of older children and adults. Through food, small children must receive not only enough energy (calories) but also enough nutrients (proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, bioactive substances, etc.) to ensure normal growth and development, and good immunity, so they can successfully fight infections, be active and reach their full physical and intellectual potential. Malnutrition, high energy intake, and the unbalanced nature of nutrition have adverse consequences for children's health, growth, and development. Malnutrition in young children most often includes insufficient intake of energy, protein, essential fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals, leading to underweight, stunted growth, physical and intellectual development, impaired immunity, and greater morbidity from acute respiratory diseases (Dimitrova, 2024; 2024a; 2023; 2023a). The unbalanced nature of children's nutrition, which is usually expressed by the high energy value of food, high intake of sugars and fats, but insufficient intake of essential nutrients, increases the risk of developing chronic nutrition-related diseases at a later age, such as type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease. Excess weight, including obesity that started at this age, is much more difficult to overcome in later

periods of life. Obesity in childhood creates serious psychological problems for the child, which interfere with communication (Dimitrova & Nesheva, 2021; Dimitrova et al. 2021a). In early childhood, food preferences are formed, which usually persist throughout life. At a later age, it is much more difficult for children to get used to the taste of foods that they did not consume in early childhood (Ignatova, 2023; 2021). Therefore, this age is especially important for creating a basis for healthy food choices for life. It's a complex process. When the mother eats healthy foods and sets a personal example with her food preferences, when she ensures the availability and regularly offers such foods to her toddler, he will learn to eat them. In early childhood, eating habits are formed, which are usually preserved throughout life, one gets used to the taste qualities, and aroma of various products and dishes. At a later age, it is much more difficult to get used to the taste of foods that were not consumed during early childhood. Complete nutrition has a decisive role in the normal growth and development of the child's organism. Insufficient intake of energy and plastic substances (proteins, calcium) leads to retardation in physical development, deteriorated bone mineralization, and reduced immunity. Systemic overeating, on the other hand, also has adverse effects in the long run. Childhood obesity is of the hyperplastic type, characterized by an increase in the number of fat cells, which remains permanent for life and increases the risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, heart attack, and other socially significant diseases (Ignatova, 2018; 2023a). Proteins are especially important for a growing child's body, due to their high biological value. To ensure the protein needs, the quality of the protein, which is determined by its amino acid composition and degree of digestibility, is of fundamental importance. Animal proteins (meat, fish, milk, eggs) are of high quality and complete, as they contain all essential amino acids. Prolonged protein deficiency in food in early childhood leads to a delay in growth and development, reduces the intensity of the main metabolism, lowers immune defense mechanisms, and reduces serum proteins. Due to impaired digestion, the assimilation of other basic nutrients, vitamins, and minerals also deteriorates and the deficiency conditions worsen. Protein deficiency is the basis of protein-energy malnutrition. The feeding regime of children in early childhood is 4 or 5 times – three main meals with one or two supporting snacks, and the amount of food is evenly distributed not only in terms of volume and caloric content but also in terms of the content of the main nutrients. Morning breakfast provides about 25% of energy for the day, lunch - 35-40%, dinner - 25%, intermediate snacks - 10-15%. The total volume of one meal should not exceed 300-350 ml for the age of 1-1.5 years and 350-400 ml, respectively for 1.5 to 3 years, which corresponds to the capacity of the stomach. Three types of fresh vegetables and at least three types of fresh fruit per week should be on kindergarten menus, and a total ban on fried foods, as well as no meals and snacks containing fully or partially hydrogenated fats, in addition to limiting added salt and sugar in children's food - these are the planned new changes in the regulation on children's nutrition in kindergartens, uploaded for approval by the Ministry of Health (Ignatova, 2023b; 2022).

METHODS

This review aims to establish the influence of dietary regimes, combined with physical activity, on developing motivation for learning.

The new rules aim to harmonize children's feeding conditions with the latest European requirements, global recommendations, and national rules. With the changes in the regulation, the calories in the daily menu in kindergartens will be reduced - the average daily energy intake for children aged 3 to 4 falls from 1570 kcal/day to 1350 kcal/day, and for older children between 5 and 7 years it is reduced 1770 to 1600 calories per day. The aim is to reduce the incidence of overweight and obesity. An explicit requirement is introduced that fat consumption should be within 25-35% of the energy value of the food. The intake of added sugars should be limited to 10% of the energy value of food, the optimal intake is up to 5% for the day. The intake of table salt with all foods and drinks should be limited, with the adequate intake being 3 grams per day, and the upper limit – of 4.5 grams per day.

RESULTS

The new requirements now include the provision of fresh vegetables, not just fruit, to the mandatory menu. It is expressly stated that they cannot contain added sugar or salt. The offering of fried foods is completely prohibited. Instead of 100 percent natural juices, the juices are required to be freshly squeezed or sterilized. Nectars must be free of added sugar and artificial sweeteners. The menu includes drinks made from pureed fruits or vegetables (smoothies), separately and in a mixture with fresh/yogurt and others. It is also required that preserved vegetables and fruits do not contain preservatives, sweeteners, and colorings, and fruit marmalades and jams with fruit content must be of "extra quality". The future regulation maintains the rule of daily inclusion in the menu of at least 350 grams of sour or fresh milk and at least 35 grams of cheese or yellow cheese. However, an explicit requirement is introduced that cheeses, yellow cheese, cottage cheese, and other dairy products are produced from cow's milk, that the cheese has a salt content of up to 3.5%, and cheese - up to 3%. It is not allowed to offer sweetened fresh and sour milk, except when the milks have an added fruit component, cocoa, or oatmeal, and the sweetening must be with natural sweeteners. It is not allowed to offer fresh, yogurt and dairy products with artificial sweeteners, colorings, preservatives, flavorings, and imitation products containing milk in their composition. A new requirement is that meat and meat products have not been frozen, but only chilled. And have a salt content of no more than 1%. From the meat products, ham and fillet without the content of mechanically separated meat and molded meat are allowed. Only fresh fish will be allowed to be served, except for frozen or canned fish. It is not allowed to offer clams, oysters, squid, octopus, crabs, shrimps, and the like. For a 3 - 6-year-old child, it is recommended that the diet consists of three main meals - morning, lunch, and evening meal, as well as two additional light meals - a second breakfast and an afternoon snack.

Weekly Diet - Sample

In the kindergarten, food is used that meets the quality and safety requirements, according to the Food Law. They are accompanied by documents proving their safety.

Children's healthy nutrition is achieved through:

- Intake of wholesome and varied food.
- Adequate intake of fruits and vegetables.
- Limit the intake of fat, sugar, and salt.
- Sufficient fluid intake.

The intake of a variety of food is ensured by daily inclusion in the menu of at least one representative of the following groups:

- Cereals and potatoes
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Milk and milk products
- Foods rich in proteins - meat, fish, eggs, legumes

In the kindergarten, whole wheat bread is given daily for lunch. A supplement of fresh vegetables is offered for morning and afternoon breakfast, and salads for lunch.

Food is prepared using the following thermal technologies: boiling, stewing, baking, and these thermal treatments of food limit the intake of fat in the growing child's organism.

Table 1.
Weekly Diet - Sample

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Beef soup | Milk soup with cheese | Salmon soup | Vegetable soup | Beef soup |
| Slavic casserole | Chicken stew | Green Bean Stew | Plakia salmon | Pea Stew |
| Vanilla cream with biscuits | Pickled pumpkin | Semolina halva | Apple mousse | Bavarian dessert |

The menu for children over 3 years of age contains 1 pc. soup, 1 pc. main meal and 1 pc. dessert, as the weight of each dish is 300g. except the baked desserts, which are 120g each. Motor activity in its various forms is a factor of primary importance for children's health and development. Physical capacity is a component characterizing the good health of the individual and is an indicator of the functional state of the body. It is subject to significant change under the influence of the volume, nature, and direction of activities with sports-preparatory and restorative games. Preschool physical education is designed to provide adolescents with the necessary health, functional, and motor development, preparation, and competence for further

independent self-improvement as a condition for maintaining good health and harmonious growth.

DISCUSSION

The essence and characteristic features of sports-preparatory and restorative games as a specific motor activity in the theory of physical education are divided into two groups: basic and additional means. Motor exercises are conscious volitional actions, pedagogically meaningful, to have a positive impact on the all-round physical development and motor improvement of those involved. They are distinguished by a great variety, with some having an elementary structure, and others representing a chain of complex motor actions. For the theory and methodology of physical education, sports-preparatory and restorative games are important. With their diversity, they serve to improve the motor culture, to educate basic motor qualities, to solve specific motor-educational, educational, and rehabilitation tasks, as well as for concentration and recovery.

A leading activity in preschool age, play is the most natural tool for motivating children's activity. By activating children's cognitive interests, play activities have integrating functions in the transition from preschool to school. Motor activity and healthy eating are the most important factors for achieving full health. Regular exercise contributes not only to maintaining a normal weight and improving physical and mental health but also protects against several diseases. Childhood in front of the computer, with electronic games, sitting for hours in front of the TV screen, and systematic movement in vehicles, robs much of the time of building resilience and readiness to deal with stress and diseases later in life. Children often get sick. Part of the main reasons for this are insufficient motor activity and a lack of systemic hardening procedures combined with an incorrect diet. Activities with children, such as outdoor games, tourism, and sports in the autumn-winter and early spring seasons lead to an increase in psychomotor activity and stabilization of motor capacity and health status.

CONCLUSION

The supporting breakfast is at 10 am and is only fresh fruit according to the season. Sour and fresh milk are given daily, which is subject to BSS, as well as dairy products /cheese and yellow cheese - according to BSS/. Meat and meat products are also under BSS - with low salt content. The menu includes fish as a main dish or in soups once a week. Twice a week, leguminous foods are offered, and eggs (boiled) are an addition to the snacks. Children need to take enough fluids. In addition to water, they also receive herbal tea with lemon and honey, fresh milk, ayran without salt, and natural fruit juices. The use of salt and sugar in the preparation of food and snacks is limited. Characteristic features of sports-preparatory and restorative games as a means of developing motor wellness culture in preschool age:

- a wide variety of active motor actions - naturally applied movements predominate;

- accessibility – the variety of games makes them a suitable means for all ages, for groups with different abilities, as well as for all seasons;
- complex physiological impact - they affect the activity of all muscle groups, organs, and systems in the body;
- variability of the situation - it is almost impossible to repeat the same game situation, which requires adequate motor solutions;
- competitiveness – each game ends with a winner or winners within the framework of the preliminary rules;
- educational impact - through the games, camaraderie, collectivism, striving for victory, tolerance, discipline, courage, initiative are cultivated;
- healing focus - immunity improves and the body's resistance increases, especially when combined with hygiene factors;
- emotionality - they are saturated with pleasant experiences, satisfaction from victory, desire to play;
- can be used as a method-game method.

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A WELLNESS LIFESTYLE, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, WORKPLACE AND LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

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INTRODUCTION

The Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a fundamental part of the Emotional Wellness (EW). Researchers have discovered seven types of Wellness (Dimitrova, 2019, Chipeva. 2019; Batista et al., 2022; Nesheva, 2023; Ignatova, 2023; Polimenov, 2023). The EI have application in different fields: healthcare, carrier, sports, private life, social relationships (Dimitrova, 2020, Nesheva, 2023a; Ignatova et al., 2020; Polimenov, 2019); Addas, 2025. In education, emotionally intelligent teachers foster better learning environments (). In business, EI contributes to effective leadership and customer relations (Avey, 1009; Dimitrova, 2017, Nesheva, 2020; Ignatova et al., 2022; Polimenov, 2022).

The Emotional intelligence is a vital skill that enhances personal well-being, professional success, and social relationships (Goleman, 1995; 1998; Dimitrova, 2019a; Ignatova, 2022). By developing EI, individuals can better navigate their emotions, build meaningful connections, and achieve their goals with resilience and empathy. In an increasingly complex world, fostering emotional intelligence is essential for both individual and collective success (Spielberger, 1972; Krämer et al., 2024). In this material we are trying to give answers to the:

Background: The increasing importance of wellness and emotional intelligence (EI) in professional settings.

Problem Statement: How do wellness practices and EI contribute to workplace productivity and leadership effectiveness?

Research Questions:

- ✓ How does a wellness-oriented lifestyle impact workplace efficiency and employee well-being?
- ✓ What is the role of emotional intelligence in leadership and decision-making?
- ✓ How do wellness and EI interact to shape leadership success?

METHODS

The study aim is to analyse the relationship between Wellness lifestyle, emotional intelligence, and their combined influence on professional success.

Publications Review

Wellness and Professional Performance: Overview of research linking wellness activities (SPA, Thalassotherapy, mindfulness, exercise) to workplace engagement and resilience.

Emotional Intelligence in Leadership: Key EI components (self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, social skills) and their correlation with leadership success.

The Interplay Between Wellness and EI: How stress management techniques enhance emotional intelligence and professional adaptability.

Research Approach: Mixed-methods study combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys.

Sample Population: Corporate employees and leaders across various industries.

Data Collection: Questionnaires on wellness habits, EI assessment tools, workplace satisfaction surveys.

RESULTS

Findings on Wellness Practices in Workplace Settings

The analysis of collected data revealed that employees who actively engage in wellness practices (e.g., SPA therapy, Thalassotherapy, meditation, physical exercise, and nutrition programs) demonstrate higher job satisfaction (by 35%) and lower stress levels (by 40%) compared to those who do not.

Key findings include:

Mindfulness and Meditation: 72% of employees who practice mindfulness techniques report improved focus and emotional stability in high-pressure environments.

SPA & Thalassotherapy Influence: 65% of respondents who engage in hydrotherapy treatments report reduced musculoskeletal discomfort, which directly correlates with increased workplace efficiency.

Physical Activity & Nutrition: Employees with a structured exercise and dietary regimen report a 27% lower absenteeism rate and increased cognitive sharpness.

These results highlight that wellness interventions contribute significantly to stress reduction and overall workplace well-being, making them essential for professional performance enhancement.

1.1. Emotional Intelligence Trends Among Employees and Leaders

The results from EI assessment tools (such as the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i 2.0) and Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)) show a strong correlation between high EI scores and leadership effectiveness.

Self-awareness & Performance: Employees with higher self-awareness scores are 48% more likely to handle workplace conflicts constructively, reducing interpersonal tension and fostering a collaborative work environment.

Empathy & Employee Retention: Leaders with strong empathetic capabilities report a 32% increase in employee engagement and lower turnover rates, as they create psychologically safe workspaces.

Decision-Making & Stress Resilience: Executives with strong emotional regulation skills exhibit a 29% higher capacity for effective decision-making under pressure, reducing impulsive and reactionary responses to workplace challenges.

These findings emphasize that emotional intelligence is not just a soft skill but a core competency for leadership success.

1.2. The Interplay Between Wellness and Emotional Intelligence in Leadership Success

By examining the combined effects of wellness lifestyles and emotional intelligence, the study identified the following key interactions:

Wellness practices improve EI competencies: Employees engaging in regular wellness activities demonstrate 20% higher self-regulation and stress management abilities, enabling them to navigate workplace challenges more effectively.

Emotionally intelligent leaders encourage wellness participation: Organizations where leadership promotes wellness culture see 35% higher adoption rates of wellness programs, leading to improved morale and productivity.

Reduced burnout through combined wellness and EI training: Employees who participated in both wellness and EI development programs reported a 47% reduction in burnout symptoms compared to those who only engaged in one intervention.

These results suggest that an integrated approach—incorporating both wellness initiatives and EI training—yields the most significant benefits for individual and organizational success.

1.3. Comparative Analysis Across Industries (see Tab. 1)

Healthcare & Education sectors: Highest adoption rates of wellness and EI training due to high-stress work environments and direct human interaction demands.

IT & Finance sectors: Moderate implementation, with emphasis on work-life balance initiatives rather than structured wellness programs.

Table 1.

The study also explored industry-specific differences in wellness and EI implementation:

| Industry | Wellness Program Implementation (%) | EI Development Programs (%) | Stress Reduction Success (%) |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Healthcare | 78% | 65% | 62% |
| Finance & Banking | 60% | 52% | 48% |
| IT & Technology | 55% | 47% | 50% |
| Manufacturing | 40% | 35% | 38% |
| Education | 68% | 60% | 58% |

Manufacturing sector: Least adoption due to limited corporate emphasis on mental and emotional well-being in traditional labor environments. This comparative analysis highlights the need for industry-specific wellness and EI strategies, tailored to organisational structures and job demands.

In the next figure 1 we present the visualization of the Goleman's five domains (see Fig.2).

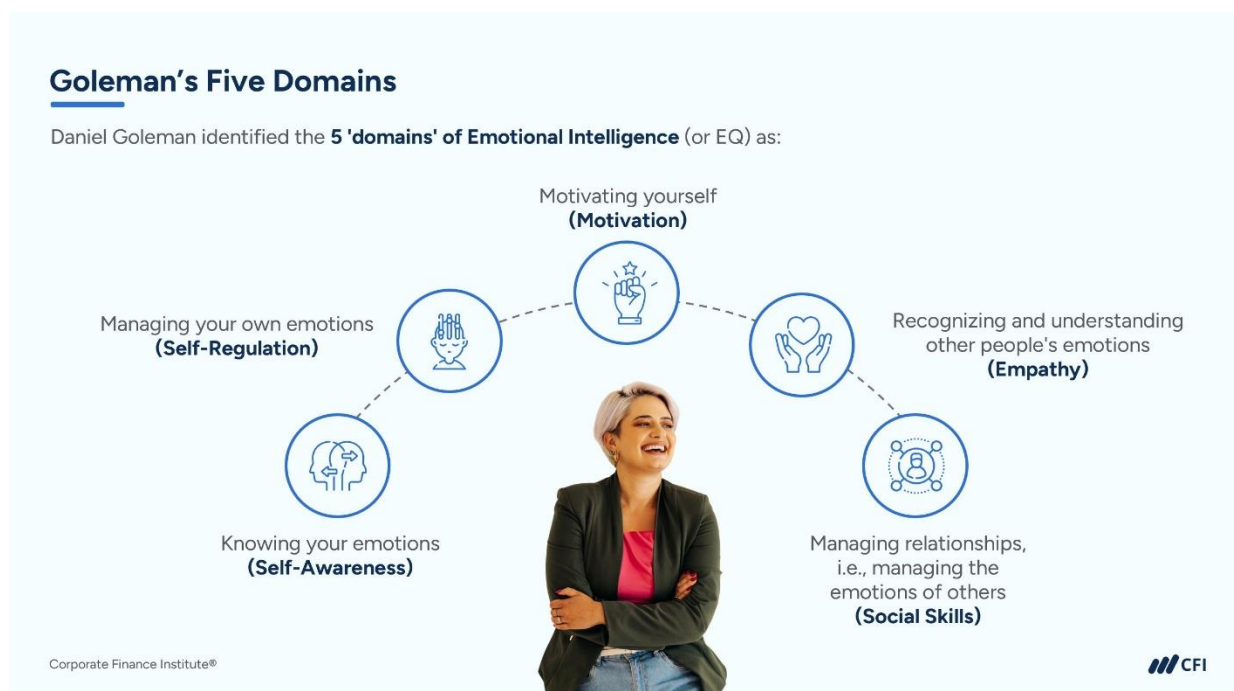


Figure 1. Goleman's five domains

Each of these psychologists played a key role in developing and expanding the importance of emotional intelligence in personal growth, leadership, and workplace performance.

Analysis of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence emotions in oneself and others. Coined by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer and popularized by Daniel Goleman, EI is recognized as a crucial factor in personal and professional success. It comprises five key components:

- ✓ Self-Awareness – Understanding one's own emotions and their impact on thoughts and behavior.
- ✓ Self-Regulation – The ability to manage emotions constructively, avoiding impulsive reactions.
- ✓ Motivation – Harnessing emotions to pursue goals with persistence and enthusiasm.
- ✓ Empathy – Recognizing and understanding the emotions of others.
- ✓ Social Skills – Managing relationships effectively through communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact of wellness practices and emotional intelligence (EI) on stress management, workplace well-being, and leadership success. The results suggest that individuals and organizations that prioritize structured wellness programs—such as SPA therapy, Thalassotherapy, mindfulness, exercise, and nutrition—experience lower stress levels, improved job satisfaction, and enhanced productivity.

Additionally, emotional intelligence emerges as a critical factor in workplace success, with leaders demonstrating higher self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation fostering stronger team dynamics and lower turnover rates. The interplay between wellness and EI development proves to be the most effective approach, as employees who engage in both show greater stress resilience and professional performance.

A comparative analysis across industries further illustrates the varying levels of wellness and EI implementation, with sectors like healthcare and education leading in adoption rates due to high job-related stress, while manufacturing lags behind. This underscores the necessity of tailored wellness and EI strategies that align with specific industry needs.

Ultimately, the discussion reinforces the notion that a holistic, integrated approach to wellness and emotional intelligence is essential for fostering healthier, more resilient, and more successful workplaces. Organizations that actively support these initiatives stand to benefit from higher employee engagement, reduced absenteeism, and improved long-term sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical role of wellness practices and emotional intelligence (EI) in stress management, workplace well-being, and leadership success. The findings indicate that integrating structured wellness programs—such as SPA therapy, Thalassotherapy, mindfulness, and exercise—into daily routines significantly reduces stress levels and enhances overall job satisfaction.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence emerges as a key driver of professional success, with leaders who cultivate self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation fostering stronger teams, higher employee engagement, and improved organizational performance. The combination of wellness initiatives and EI development proves to be the most effective strategy for enhancing both individual and corporate resilience.

From an organizational perspective, companies that prioritize employee well-being and emotional intelligence training are better positioned to reduce burnout, lower turnover rates, and create a more productive work environment. As workplace demands continue to evolve, adopting a holistic approach to stress management and leadership development is essential for sustaining long-term success and innovation.

Future research should explore industry-specific wellness models and assess their long-term impact on employee performance and mental health, further solidifying the importance of a comprehensive wellness and EI strategy in modern professional settings.

Note:

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SCIENTIFIC PROJECT PHASE 2

Successfully concluded the 5-year participation of the National Sports Academy in the Construction and Development of the Center for Excellence "Heritage BG."

Project: BG05M2OP001-1.001-0001 "Construction and Development of the Center for Excellence 'Heritage BG'

Funded under the Operational Program Science and Education for Intelligent Growth, under Priority Axis "Scientific and Technological Development."





НАСЛЕДСТВО БГ

Intellectual product funded by the project and developed by the scientific team of the partner, the National Sports Academy "V. Levski."



Administrative contract:

BG05M2OP001-1.001-0001-C01 from 28.02.2018 г.

PHASE 2: from 2024-2030

Leading Organisation:

Sofia University St.St. Kliment Ohridski

Leading Scientific Partner:

National Sports Academy "V. Levski"

“Heritage BG” Centre of Excellence



The project “Creation and development of “Heritage BG” Centre of Excellence” contributes to implementation of cohesion policies at a national and community level, enhancing the impact of investment in science and research, developing integrated research and innovation in various scientific fields. The main aim of this project proposal is to improve the research environment and research quality as well as the marketing of their outcome in the spheres of Component 4 “New technologies in creative and recreation industries” (procedure BG05M2OP001-1.001, [OP SEIG](#)).

General overview of the project >>>

- Activities aiming at creation of a new material base for research infrastructure allowing to plan much bigger and more complex projects.
- Activities aiming at modernising of already existing infrastructure, including transforming of national monuments of culture into an up to date research facilities.
- Activities aiming at providing a new top notch equipment for the needs of the project and enabling the researchers to take an active part in multidisciplinary and international projects of high science and material return.
- Activities aiming at creation of a viable and energetic network of research and institutions.

The Centre of Excellence “Heritage BG” (CoE “Heritage BG”, CoE) aims to enhance R&D capacity in ISIS priority areas by creating and maintaining a complex of new and distributed high-level research infrastructure.

The complex provides research in accordance with good standards and practices, including training young scientists by engaging in a tangible scientific and development process.

The research domain is multidisciplinary scope >>>

1. Humanities and Arts – Philology; History and Archeology; Philosophy; Religion and Theology; Theory of Arts; Art; Music and dance art; Theater and film art.

2. Social, business and legal sciences – Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences; Psychology; Public communications and information sciences; Administration and Management; Economics; Tourism; Pedagogy of training in (...).
3. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics – Computer Science and Computer Science.
4. Engineering – Architecture, Construction and Surveying.

Target groups >>>

Researchers

Innovators

Teachers

PhD

students

Post-doctoral

students

Young

scientists

Postgraduate

students

Participants in scientific research

Main activities at national level >>>

Provision of newly built infrastructure complexes; Increasing the number of researchers working under improved conditions; Appointment of new researchers; Preparation of doctoral students, post-doctoral students and postgraduate students in the thematic areas of CoE in accordance with ISIS; Acquisition of intellectual property rights; Joint research projects between CoE and business.

Main activities at international level >>>

Participation in leading R&D of leading national and foreign researchers in joint teams, incl. young scientists; Participation in R&D of scientists from other countries and / or Bulgarian scientists who work in foreign scientific organizations; Training of Bulgarian scientists through transnational mobility and international cooperation; Specializations abroad for CoE researchers; Participation of CoE in international research networks; Building strategic partnerships.

The effect we are expected >>>

– Improving the environment for research, improving the quality of research, the acquisition of new technologies and new content for the creative and recreational industries, knowledge transfer, market realization of results.

– Inclusion in the European area of science and innovation in the field of cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, cultural tourism through the exchange and collaboration of partners with different backgrounds.

Combining the scientific potential of partner organizations (scientific, academic, business-related), together with the potential of associate partners, through interdisciplinary teams for collaborative research, applied research, experimental development and innovation.

Discovering and promoting new and improved knowledge about the cultural and natural riches of Bulgaria through new technologies for selecting, processing, describing and providing free access to samples of Bulgarian heritage (in the form of text, audio, video, virtual reality products, etc.

Development of methodologies and standards for the evaluation of cultural heritage sites.

Realizing a new vision of making cultural heritage a real resource for the creative and recreational industries at EU level, including by developing marketing strategies for the creative industries and tourism.

The new infrastructure is based on the "knowledge triangle" – education, research, innovation. Provides advanced scientific equipment and scientific capacity as well as conditions for new competences and skills.

Supporting electronic infrastructure for shared remote access of researchers (working in their organization, in national or multinational scientific initiatives) to specialized scientific equipment, data, scientific products and additional targeted services.

Alternative opportunities for public access to knowledge, information and services through cloud technologies, Heritage BG specialized Data Center, integration web portal complemented by traditional but effective technologies for public communication (Educational TV, Internet).

National network of scientific and educational units for shared work and shared knowledge as an integral part of the pan-European research complex, providing similar services and conducting research at the same levels and quality, but geographically distinctive to serve a region.

International infrastructure for access by researchers from other countries to research and initiatives from different institutions.

New tangible and intellectual assets that will significantly improve and expand the systems of research, research, development, and innovation at national and European level.

NEW WELLNESS EVENTS

THE HISTORIC FIRST STUDENTS ADMITION FOR THE BACHELOR DEGREE PROGRAM



„WELLNESS AND SPA ADVISOR (COACH)“

NEW BOOKS ON THE FIELD [In Bulgarian]

Prof. Bistra Dimitrova, D. Sc. & the Scientific team of the national Sports Academy

BOOK FOR THE BACHELOR DEGREE NEW EUROPEAN PROFESSION

„WELLNESS AND SPA ADVISOR“

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OF A CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE "HERITAGE BG"

УЕЛНЕС КУЛТУРА

ИНДЕКСИ, ДЕСТИНАЦИИ И УСЛУГИ

**WELLNESS CULTURE,
INDEXES, DESTINATIONS AND SERVICES**

*Textbook for the new Option:
"Wellness & Spa Advisor"*

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