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- III. **Brief outline:**
 1. Introduction
 - 1.1 Statement of the problem
 - 1.2 Summary of the thesis structure
 2. The teaching profession
 - 2.1 Reasons for choosing a career in teaching — Recruitment characteristics
 - 2.2 Unique features of the teaching profession, responsibilities, antinomies, and role expectations
 - 2.3 The particular significance and demands associated with teaching physical education and the physical education profession
 3. Stress, load and strain
 - 3.1 Stress
 - 3.2 Models of stress and strain
 - 3.3 Strain affecting teachers in general and physical education teachers in particular
 4. Coping with strain, stressors and conflicts
 - 4.1 Initial reflections on coping processes – Initiation of the research activities
 - 4.2 What is coping? — Definition of the term
 - 4.3 The (dispositional) nature of coping!?
 - 4.4 The formal characteristics of situations
 - 4.5 The characteristics of individuals
 - 4.6 Models of coping
 - 4.7 Classification of different forms and types of coping
 - 4.8 Instruments for measuring coping – Distinguishing between different types of coping processes
 - 4.9 Evasive coping behavior
 5. Derivation of the research questions and hypotheses
 - 5.1 Research focus 1: Personal characteristics and stage of professional development:
“Who uses evasive coping strategies when teaching?”

5.2 Research focus 2: Teaching characteristics: *“In what ways does the teaching of physical education teachers using evasive strategies differ from that of educators using invasive strategies?”*

5.3 Research focus 3: Behavior and experiences when teaching physical education: *“What are the typical characteristics of physical education teachers with strong evasive coping tendencies in terms of their behavior and experiences when teaching?”*

6. Methodology

6.1 Development of the Evasive Coping Behavior in Physical Education measure
(*Erhebungsinstrumente evasiver Sportunterricht – EESU*)

6.2 Interpretation of both factors

6.3 Reliability

6.4 Validity

6.5 Conducting the main study

6.6 Other measures used

7. Presentation of the results

7.1 The sample

7.2 A description of aspects specific to physical education

7.3 Research focus 1: Personal characteristics, stage of professional development, and evasive behavior: *“Who uses evasive coping strategies when teaching?”*

7.4 Research focus 2: Teaching characteristics: *“In what ways does the teaching of physical educators using evasive strategies differ from that of educators using invasive strategies?”*

7.5 Research focus 3: Behavior and experiences when teaching physical education: *“What are the typical characteristics of physical education teacher with strong evasive coping tendencies in terms of their behavior and experiences when teaching?”*

8. Discussion

8.1 A summary discussion of the results

8.2 Outlook, research desiderata, and concluding remarks

9. References

Appendix

IV. Abstract:

The everyday work of physical education (PE) teachers is characterized by great potential for stress. Among the factors named in surveys as being particularly stress-inducing are high noise levels, the multiple different demands faced as a result of the frequent change in class structure and activities, physical stressors, the constant risk of injury, a lack of pauses and breaks and, above all, the high potential for conflict arising from student misbehavior and motivation issues. The ability of PE teachers to adequately cope with conflicts and other occupational stressors is fundamental to ensuring their health. Constructive conflict management is also important for promoting pro-social cooperative behavior among their students. The particular stress faced by these educators, exacerbated by a lack of recognition for the work they perform, results in their need for routine and confidence in their actions.

The focus of this study was to examine evasive behavior as a coping mechanism in PE teachers. A person exhibiting evasive behavior does not react to conflicts, but instead ignores them, looks for ways to remove himself from such situations or preventively avoids difficult situations in advance. Evasion is essentially a neutral coping strategy, which is useful in many situations, even within the teaching profession. For educators, it is even advisable not to react to every little conflict or issue so as not to disrupt the flow of the class or to try and demonstrate that they are able to stick to their lesson plan despite such obstacles. While in this case there are pedagogically legitimate reasons for evasive behavior, such behavior may also be part of a *survival strategy* involving avoiding and ignoring conflicts in order to achieve some short-term relief. Most often, however, this merely results in putting off a conflict until a later time when it may then end up being worse than before. Motivational aspects, such as an attempt to conserve one's resources, can also be a reason for evasive behavior in PE teachers. Evasive coping behavior becomes problematic when it becomes excessive and has control over the educators' actions, thereby impacting their health and their ability to fulfill their work responsibilities.

In order to determine the extent to which PE teachers use evasive coping strategies when teaching, a questionnaire study (N=705) was conducted using a new measure developed based on Scherler's didactic model (2004). The measure, which assesses the individual evasive behavior of PE teachers, not only examines the educators themselves; it also takes students, class contents and external conditions into consideration as three additional factors having a potential impact on the education provided by these teachers. The three-

part study also involved the collection of selected data on educators' personal characteristics and stage of professional development as well as the use of a number of other measures (the AVEM, WIRKLEHR, FKK, BEL, SVF 120, OLBI, short version of the AMS, and UGTS) in order to examine associations with evasive tendencies. The first part of the study focused on determining who uses evasive strategies when teaching by examining the personal characteristics of the surveyed educators and their stage of professional development. The second focus was on the association between evasive behavior and teaching characteristics or differences in the way classes are taught. Finally, the study investigated the educators' behavior and experiences when teaching and their associations with aspects such as job satisfaction, the experience of stress, and health.

Analysis of the study data revealed that evasive behavior is counterproductive in the management of conflict and stressors. The greater the tendency toward evasive behavior, the greater the risk that educators will not achieve the goals associated with physical education's tasks of both developing students' physical and sports skills but also helping them develop personally and socially through sports and physical activity. In addition, educators exhibiting greater evasive behavior were found to experience more stress and less job satisfaction, which may ultimately be considered a risk to their mental and physical health.