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CAUSES OF DISCONTENT WITH THE CONDITIONS OF PERFORMANCE IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION WITHIN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

ABSTRACT. PISOŇOVÁ Mária, *Causes of Discontent with the Conditions of Performance in the Teaching Profession Within Pre-Primary Education* [Przyczyny niezadowolenia nauczycieli edukacji przedszkolnej z warunków pracy]. *Studia Edukacyjne* nr 41, 2016, Poznań 2016, pp. 403-424. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 1233-6688. DOI: 10.14746/se.2016.41.24

This article focuses on the identification of causes of discontent of teachers with conditions of performance of the teaching profession within kindergartens. The aim of this study is to clarify the characteristics and specific factors causing discontent of teachers within pre-primary schools. The article provides an analysis of key terms, it synthesizes and evaluates the results of research carried out in the Slovak Republic and abroad.

In the empirical part, the author focuses on the identification of causes of discontent with conditions of work in public kindergartens in Slovakia. The results of the survey are a descriptive interpretation of specific causes that hamper the effective work of the teaching staff. The end of the article proposes to implement specific practical recommendations, aimed mainly at strengthening the communication skills of teachers of pre-primary education, as well as directors of kindergartens.

Key words: teacher discontent, teaching profession, conditions of performance within the teaching profession, negative factors, kindergarten management, teacher salary, teacher status, workplace conditions, teacher motivation

Introduction

The need to learn is characteristic of every social structure since time immemorial, and the teachers are not an exception. Historically, their status changed constantly, which has led to the fact that, currently, the majority of

teachers, especially in kindergartens, are female. The reasons behind feminization of education are many but we won't go into detail here.

Nowadays, the media often talks about disgruntled teachers and about the crisis of the teaching profession. Are the teachers really experiencing a crisis or is it just a way to visualize and draw attention to themselves? Each period of time within the society brings various advantages and limitations or problems. Causes and solutions for discontent of teachers are addressed by many authors, especially from abroad (N.P. Ololube and others). Pedeutology and the teaching profession and substantially engaged in Slovakia by I. Pavlov, B. Kosová and B. Kasáčová operating at the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica.

The aim of this article is to define factors which cause the discontent of pre-primary teaching staff. We will therefore build on the concept of Profesiography and the term satisfaction, which in pedeutology is transformed into work satisfaction of teachers.

Work Discontent of a Kindergarten Teacher

N.P. Ololube¹ reported that some employees are satisfied with the least prestigious job, simply because they love what they do. The author also adds that their work has become a mission for them. For teachers it is doubly true that their work is also a mission. If not, it is accompanied by greater dissatisfaction. For those who enjoy their work, it may lead to dissatisfaction from a variety of objective and subjective reasons, but these problems are usually easy to deal with.

Nowadays, a lot of discussions are about the crisis of the teaching profession; teachers are on strike, fighting for better conditions, not just salary. B. Kasáčová² states that: "The 70s have begun a period deprofessionalization, or otherwise known as crises of the teaching profession..." These crises arising from various causes, in the opinion of many authors, and according to B. Kasáčová³, have external (aging and feminisation of the teaching staff, low wages, unattractives of the teaching profession) and other manifestations. Amongst the most common inner manifestations we include stress,

¹ N.P. Ololube, *Teacher Job Satisfaction and Motivation for School Effectiveness* [online], Essays in Education 2006, 18, 9, [cit. 2015-02-13]. Dostupné na: <<http://www.usca.edu/essays/vol182006/ololube.pdf>>.

² B. Kasáčová, *Kariérový rozvoj profesionality učiteľov*, [in:] *Kríza učiteľskej profesie – hľadanie riešení* – Zborník z medzinárodnej konferencie, Banská Bystrica 2006, p. 8.

³ Ibidem.

burnout, hopelessness, failure of adequate response to changes and their acceptance, and so on. To be able to identify the causes of discontent specific to pre-primary education, it is first necessary to characterize the personality of a kindergarten teacher.

Characteristic of a kindergarten teacher

According B. Kasáčová⁴ there is a teacher typology, according to which teachers can be classified to the type and grade of school (kindergarten teacher), as well as in terms of typology of personality (temperament, career stage). As reported by the legislation in force, the teacher falls amongst the teaching staff and carries out educational activities, that is a set of activities which are related to direct teaching activities and other professional duties related to administration, preparations for teaching and the like. The teacher has their rights and obligations given by the law. Kindergarten teachers, according to the Education Law, are responsible for the safety of the children during the whole period of their stay in kindergarten. The teacher has a designated maximum number of children, for which they are responsible, for various activities such as: tours (maximum of 21 children aged 4-5 years – 1 teacher employee), swimming lessons (maximum of 8 children). The binding document for all teaching staff in Slovakia, therefore the kindergarten teachers as well, is the law 317/2009 Coll. *the teaching staff and specialists*. Their rights and duties are determined by the Education Law. Educational and professional competence are also legislatively set. Failure to meet these obligations may lead to legislative causes of discontent. On the other hand, they define the obligations of teaching activities and should be beneficial, however, certain teachers may not be satisfied by some of these obligations and the burden they carry with them.

The teacher, according to the law on teaching staff, is obliged to protect the children's personalities, respect their individuality, lead pedagogical and other documentation (personal notes, diagnosis and so on), participate in the creation of the school's educational program, prepare for fulfilling their work, participate in further education, inform the legal representatives of the children, provide personal expert assistance etc. International document that deals with the status of the teacher is the Teacher Charter. This document

⁴ B. Kasáčová, *Učiteľská profesia v trendoch teórie a praxe*, Prešov 2004.

defines the basic principles of the teaching profession, conditions and rules of undergraduate education, rights and obligations, and the salary conditions. State educational program ISCED 0 for pre-primary education⁵ emphasizes on the role of teachers in Slovakia as follows: "The teacher takes into account the various socio-cultural and socio-economical family backgrounds of the children. They approach each child appropriately." A preferred individual approach to the children, which is a challenging part of this profession, is set here.

The actual entry into employment is preceded by undergraduate training of kindergarten teachers. B. Kosova⁶ distinguishes between secondary, higher vocational, higher non-university and university training. Secondary training lasts at present for four years in Slovakia, ends with the school-leaving examination in the field of study 7649 6 – teaching profession for kindergartens and tutoring. Post-secondary school training (higher vocational education) lasts two years and is mostly external. Kindergarten teachers have the opportunity to get university type education in faculties of education in the field of teaching for pre-primary education (3-year bachelor degree education at Comenius University in Bratislava) or pre-school and elementary teaching education (bachelor degree at universities e.g. in Banska Bystrica, Nitra, Prešov, Trnava, Komarno). Some Slovak Universities (Prešov, Banska Bystrica) offer the possibility of a 2-year Master's degree in the above mentioned line of work. Field of Study 1.1.5 Pre-school (pre-primary) and elementary (primary) education, currently being implemented at all three university degrees, is standardized. V. Trubiniova et al.⁷ specifies a kindergarten teacher as a positively accepted and respected figure, who has a positive approach to children, whose integral creative personality is presented to children during the educational process. Their mission, according to V. Trubiniova et al.⁸ is to: "Protect the highest human values, dignity of a child of preschool age and their freedom on the road to education in the spirit of democratic principles." This requirement applies to the creation of conditions in which the child has the possibility of all-round development. The specificity of kindergarten teachers is the fact that, compared to teachers in the higher education level, they are with the children continuously. The

⁵ *Štatny vzdelavaci program ISCED 0 – predprimarne vzdelavanie* [online], ŠPU, Bratislava 2008 [cit. 2015-02-18]. Dostupne na: <http://www.statpedu.sk/files/documents/svp/ms/isced_0.pdf>, p. 6.

⁶ B. Kosova, *Predškolska vychova v medzinarodnom porovnanani*, Banska Bystrica 2001.

⁷ V. Trubiniova et al., *Predškolska pedagogika. Terminologicky a vykladovy slovník*, Ružomberok 2007.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 322.

program of the day in kindergarten does not include breaks, compared to primary or secondary schools. This presents a greater burden on the teacher's personality and higher demands on coping with long-term stress. The teacher's personality should be resistant to stress factors, which are amongst daily encounters such as noise, workload, high performance demands and so on.

According to B. Kosová⁹ in Central European countries, Slovakia included, two teachers are responsible for kindergarten classes, which work in two-shift operations: morning – afternoon. The class is therefore most of the time a responsibility of one particular teacher; only for a few hours (mostly at the time of lunch and walk) are both of the teachers present.

K. Guziová et al. (2011, p. 67) notes that:

A necessary premise for good and effective development of competencies of the pre-school age children is personal matureness of kindergarten teachers, their human and professional competencies that can not be separated.

The author divides core competencies of kindergarten teacher staff to *personal competencies* related to the development of the teacher's personality. K. Guziová et al.¹⁰ states that: "The teacher today is not only an intermediary of knowledge for children, but is also a supporter of children's activities." Along with all of this, they need to develop their own personal competencies.

Interpersonal competencies are related to the relationship and interactions at work. In that regard K. Guziová et al.¹¹ states the following: "The effectiveness of a kindergarten teacher's educational activities depends on the way how they approach children and how they can win their admiration."

Communicative competencies include capability to communicate well both verbally and nonverbally. Kindergarten teachers should communicate clearly, creatively and should apply paralinguistics.

Cognitive competencies are important for solving problems within education. Creative problem solving takes place in a discursive form, during which the teacher involves the whole group in creating solutions.

Teaching competencies, respectively – competencies linked with the processes of effective learning in teaching, with effective preparation for education and its evaluation.

⁹ B. Kosová, *Předškolská výchova*.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 62.

¹¹ Ibidem.

The role of the *information competence* is to develop expertise through appropriate literature, listening to new information on education, work with information and communication technologies and so on.

In this regard, I. Pavlov¹² states that the professional development and theoretical and practical work of teachers is reflected in pedagogical theory in many contexts. A solid base is bound to interdisciplinary relationships with related disciplines affecting the subject of investigations – teachers in a situation of professional development.

Permanent personal growth of a teacher and their competencies enables different types of continuous education. I. Pavlov also states that in the current time, higher quality of education is expected, therefore the demands for professionalism of teachers is much higher, causing them to experience workload. The development of these and other specific competencies of kindergarten teachers contributes to continuous education, which is followed by pre-graduate training. This should be, according to M. Miklošiková¹³, the object of extensive discussions, which should explore new avenues aiming to define new concepts in teacher training.

According to the current regulations, to perform the teaching profession, educational and professional competence is necessary. Pedagogical competence means knowledge in the field of pre-primary education, child psychology, didactics which are learned during undergraduate teacher training or additional study of pedagogy. Professional competence is, according to B. Kasáčová et al.¹⁴: “Qualification in any professional field, obtainable outside the teaching education as well.” B. Kasáčová et al.¹⁵ defines the dimensions of the teaching profession as a level of individual, social and vocational professionalism.

We distinguish 3 types of dimensions:

- Personal – includes motivation for the profession, which can include a positive relationship with the children in pre-primary education, experience with teachers during their own lives, and so on. The decision, however, is affected by several factors. It also includes certain personality prerequisites to teach pre-primary schools and cognitive prerequisites gained by studying.

¹² I. Pavlov, *Štandardizácia profesijných kompetencií učiteľov (východiská a perspektívy)*, Prešov 2013, p. 7.

¹³ M. Miklošiková, *Kreativita a učiteľství odborných předmětů*, Ostrava 2009, p. 9.

¹⁴ B. Kasáčová et al., *Profesijný rozvoj učitele*, Prešov 2006, p. 16.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

- Ethical – issues related to ethics and morals. It includes knowledge of ethical norms of a kindergarten teacher and interiorization, as well as love for children, empathy, altruism and the like.

- Professional – characterized by the career path of the kindergarten teachers (from motivation to professional burnout).

Kindergarten teachers along with other teachers therefore connect legislative conditions for the performance of the teaching profession, but on the other hand, they are also specified by their working environment, used methods and strategies, educational groups with which they work or daily routine. These factors affect the profession and contribute to the work and overall life satisfaction or dissatisfaction of kindergarten teachers.

The causes of discontent with the performance of the teaching profession

B. Kasáčová¹⁶ states that:

The teaching profession is studied with the aid of the theory of the teaching profession – Pedeutology. This term in an international context is not clearly defined and properly used.

The Czech educational dictionary¹⁷ defines the professionography of a teacher as a part Pedeutology

Description and analysis of activities that teachers use both at school and outside it in the context of their profession. Inferred knowledge of the workload of the teaching profession is gained from professionograms.

From here, you can also learn about the satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the performance in the profession and the causes of this.

The dissatisfaction of teachers, according to C.M. Moore¹⁸, is a complex system composed of variables that determine the overall satisfaction of teachers and their overall feelings regarding their profession. Since the dissatisfaction with profession is not a matter of one variable, but has a large number of other causes, it should be looked at individually within each sub-

¹⁶ B. Kasáčová, *Učitel'ská profesia*, p. 5.

¹⁷ J. Průcha, E. Walterová, J. Mareš, *Pedagogický slovník*, 4. vyd., Praha 2003, p. 180-181.

¹⁸ C.M. Moore, *The Role of School Environment in Teacher Dissatisfaction Among U.S. Public School Teachers* [online], *Sage Open*, 2012, 16 s. [cit. 2015-02-13]. Dostupné na: <<http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/2/1/2158244012438888>>.

system. Currently, many talk about the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Based on research¹⁹ conducted in primary schools, several causes of dissatisfaction of kindergarten teachers can be mentioned.

- Remuneration – lower salary compared to other professions.
- Material and technical conditions in kindergartens – lack of devices, materials and the like.
- Kindergarten environment – lack of space and low quality.
- Failure to meet work requirements – unfulfilled expectations.
- Other causes – M. Kačmárová²⁰ states that:

The problem is mainly the high psychological demands of the work, poor opportunities for professional development and career advancement, limited opportunity for teachers to grow professionally and institutionally increase their education, due to a real lack of funds in the schools.

As M. Kačmárová²¹ further states, causes of discontent of teachers can not be summarized in one study, therefore she divided the factors influencing work satisfaction to:

- *Exogenous* – can not be influenced by the teacher, for example – wage, material and technical equipment of the school, the quality of the environment in the kindergarten, management processes and more;
- *Endogenous* – influenced by the teacher, for example – subjective satisfaction of the individual, or so-called belief in their own abilities (self-efficacy).

B. Kasáčová²² divides the work conditions of teachers similarly to:

- *External* (primary), outside of the school environment, can not be influenced by the teacher, for example – legislation, career system, prestige of the teacher profession, finances, etc.
- *Internal* (secondary), within the school, completely or partially influenceable by the teacher, for example – number of children in the class, qualification and relationships of pedagogical staff, professionalism of the school director, etc.

Classifications of M. Kačmárová and B. Kasáčová are considered to be partially negating each other, but the authors have worked in different conditions, which could cause a difference between individual findings. Two

¹⁹ M. Kačmárová, *Pracovná spokojnosť učiteľov základných a špeciálnych základných škôl*, [in:] *Psychologické poradenstvo na celoživotnej ceste človeka*, S. Vendel [online], Prešovská univerzita, Prešov 2011, s. 89-97 [cit. 2015-02-13]. Dostupné na: <<http://www.pulib.sk/elpub2/FF/Vendel1/index.html>>.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 90.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² B. Kasáčová, *Kariérový rozvoj profesionality učiteľov*.

distinctions, however, make sense. The first is based on what can and can not be influenced by the teacher, the second emphasizes the environment of the school. J. Průcha within the pedagogical Encyclopedia (2009) also distinguishes between the working conditions of teachers on the basis of individual differences in categories of teachers, regions or education systems. He divides the conditions (similar to M. Kačmárová) into two categories:

- *Exogenous* – based outside the school;
- *Endogenous* – based on the environment of kindergarten.

C.M. Moore²³ mentions factors influencing satisfaction:

- *Factors decreasing dissatisfaction* - teacher autonomy, school directorship (the presence of the director), etc.

- *Factors increasing dissatisfaction* - children, community problems, etc.

However, not all these causes of discontent can be classified into one of two groups. Substantive discussion developing pedagogical science is therefore in place.

The following content of the article focuses on the characteristics of those factors which affect the work comfort of kindergarten teachers the most.

We will address the internal and external factors that determine work performance the most. They are: work satisfaction, attractiveness of the teaching profession and other real causes of dissatisfaction.

Work and overall life satisfaction. B. Kasáčová et al.²⁴ characterizes the most common negative causes of performance of the teaching profession as follows: low and inadequate salary, material and technical conditions in schools, the workplace, limited opportunities for continuous education, high workload, all of which leads into inability to fulfill the professional expectations of teachers. M. Kačmárová²⁵ adds that work satisfaction is related to the overall life satisfaction, so if the teacher has problems at work, and is naturally concerned by them, they transfer them into other areas of their life. The causes of dissatisfaction are thus not only related to the actual performance of the profession, but overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction in non-work environments.

Remuneration of kindergarten teachers. In order to secure one's life, they need, amongst other things, finances. The quality of the performance of the teaching profession is in some cases dependant on the teachers' wages. A question has arisen in Slovakia – are the wages adequate to the perform-

²³ C.M. Moore, *The Role of School Environment in Teacher Dissatisfaction*.

²⁴ B. Kasáčová et al., *Profesijný rozvoj učiteľa*, Prešov 2006.

²⁵ M. Kačmárová, *Pracovná spokojnosť učiteľov*.

ance of the teaching profession? Remuneration of teachers is composed of a fixed part (on the salary scale), but on the other hand, there is the possibility of continuous education and career system that makes it possible for a salary increase to be made. Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic created the pay scale of the teaching staff, through which it classifies preschool teachers in the respective tiers. In 2015, however, the gross monthly income of teaching staff increased by 5% and, within the next few years, it is expected to gradually further increase. Although we are not at the tail of salaries in the European Union, teachers expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with their pay, which is confirmed by M. Zelina in: S. Kariková.²⁶ She notes that more than half of the teachers demonstrate dissatisfaction with their remuneration. The author further writes that low wage is one of the most serious causes of work stress.

Stress and workload as discontent factors. Another problem, which significantly affects the performance of the teaching profession is stress, which is related to the total workload. We placed it between both the external and internal problems because stressors may arise in uncontrollable situations (external factors), but also from the very personality of the teacher. C. Henning and G. Keller²⁷ indicate that teachers are confronted with stress so much, that they have been classified as being part of the riskiest stress category. As reported by Kyriacou²⁸, teachers who work in high stress levels are more likely to be absent at work, which can cause lagging behind the updates in curriculum. As reported by S. Babiaková²⁹: "The work of teachers in pre-primary and primary school level is specific in terms of workload."

Threatening factors for new teachers. B. Kasáčová³⁰ examines the causes of problems, meaning dissatisfaction of new teachers as well. According to her, these may result from either the personalities of the teachers themselves, from their professional competencies or because of various situations that occur in schools. According to the author, initially, the teachers have great difficulties with discipline of the children, which is related to "the resistance of the voice," communication with parents or colleagues and administrative activities related to their profession. A newly graduated teacher should be aided by an induction teacher whom helps eliminate these problems and

²⁶ M. Zelina, 1994 in: S. Kariková, *Špecifiká profesijnej dráhy učiteľiek*, Prešov 2004.

²⁷ C. Henning, G. Keller 1996 in: S. Kariková, *Špecifiká profesijnej dráhy učiteľiek*, Prešov 2004.

²⁸ Kyriacou 1980 in: C.M. Moore, *The Role of School Environment in Teacher Dissatisfaction*.

²⁹ S. Babiaková, *Pracovná záťaž slovenských učiteľov predprimárneho a primárneho vzdelávania počas týždňa*, *Pedagogické rozhľady*, 2012, 21, 1-2, p. 32.

³⁰ B. Kasáčová, *Učiteľská profesia*.

helps with the development of their capabilities. Personal and professional development of the teacher can reduce stress, as well as influence the causes of discontent. However, not only beginners, but also experienced kindergarten teachers are burdened by situations with which they can not cope.

Problems of undergraduate education. Dissatisfaction of the teaching profession can result from the level of undergraduate education. B. Kasáčová³¹ states the issues which are, within the undergraduate training, discussed: curriculum of pedagogical training faculties, the proportion of theory and practice during studies, the philosophy behind teacher training, type of institution (university/non-university college, high school, etc.). B. Kasáčová³² further states that:

An approach based on understanding skills as prerequisites for further development of personality itself stresses out the importance of undergraduate education for the teaching profession, i.e. professional, resp. qualifying dimension of professionalism.

Some characteristics regarding the teacher are universally applicable to teachers of various school types, but specific characteristics exist for conditions for pre-primary education.

Results of Conducted Research Aimed at Work Conditions of a Teacher's Performance

Comprehensive research on the subject area in Slovakia has not yet taken place. However there are some that focus on a specific cause of discontent. Of course, there are more of those that study the teachers' salary situation.

Slovak research focused on the issue of work conditions of teachers

In Slovakia, the issues of satisfaction of teachers are studied at the Pedagogical Faculty of Matej Bel University, namely by B. Kosová and B. Kasáčová. The causes of dissatisfaction are to be addressed nationwide by the Slovak education system. At the outset, we would therefore like to state

³¹ Ibidem.

³² Ibidem, p. 34.

the objectives of the National Programme of Education³³, according to which it is necessary to:

- Substantially increase the social and especially financial evaluation of teachers and tutors

- Improve pre-gradual education of teachers in universities.

- Improve further teacher training.

S. Babiaková³⁴ examined the workload of Slovak teachers in pre-primary and primary schools. The aim of the research is, according to S. Babiaková³⁵, to carry out basic research fulfilling professional activities of teachers' in pre-primary and primary schools. The results of this research are interesting because S. Babiaková³⁶ found out that teachers in pre-primary and primary schools does not work more compared to the regular standards. In particular, pre-primary school teachers dedicate approximately 42 hours a week on average to work activities. Feeling of greater burden compared to other professions is brought upon them by themselves. Teachers, thanks to auto-observation, recorded their own educational activities for two weeks at certain intervals (weekdays at work and at home over the weekend). Sample of respondents consisted of a total of 641 teachers of pre-primary schools from Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland.

M. Kačmárová³⁷ researched job satisfaction related to overall life satisfaction among primary and special schools. She found out that work and the life outside of it influence each other. Thus, when a person is satisfied at work, they are also satisfied in the environment outside of it. Based on the survey, she found out that women have a more positive relationship with colleagues and superiors, but it was statistically insignificant. Conversely, a significant difference was demonstrated in salaries, where men show greater dissatisfaction with their wages. The least satisfied were the respondents whom felt their years of experience and knowledge were inadequately financially evaluated.

Evaluation Team of B. Kasáčová³⁸ conducted an international (Slovakia-Czech-Poland) project APVV-0026-07 *Pre-primary education teacher's profession and primary education teacher in a dynamic concept*. The main objective of the project, according to Kasáčová, is

³³ V. Rosa, I. Turek, M. Zelina, *Milénium : Národný program výchovy a vzdelávania v Slovenskej republike na najbližších 15 až 20 rokov*, Bratislava 2001, p. 17.

³⁴ S. Babiaková, *Pracovná záťaž slovenských učiteľov*.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

³⁷ M. Kačmárová, *Pracovná spokojnosť učiteľov*.

³⁸ B. Kasáčová, *Profesijný rozvoj učiteľa*.

To identify the specific professional activities of teachers of pre-primary and primary education in terms of teaching and life reality of the teacher, record them professionally, reveal their structure, determine the ratio of various activities in relation to the entire vocational performance in Slovakian, Czech and Polish educational reality.

The results show that a pre-primary education teacher in Slovakia works, on average, 34.3 hours a week during working hours; workload during the later years of experience remains almost unchanged, the highest is in Spring and on Mondays; during the morning session of the working phase it seems to be higher than in the afternoon. Workload also varies within the working time. In this project, the author presents the results of research conducted by D. Husler³⁹, who examined satisfaction along with continuous training of teachers. The questionnaire (2500 respondents) and case studies (22 schools) confirmed the satisfaction of the majority of teachers with completed continuous education.

V. Kuban and P. Kandrík⁴⁰ investigated the work satisfaction with the target group: teachers of I. and II. grade in Slovak primary schools. Specifically, 92 teachers participated in the research, 36 of which were I. grade teachers. The result is an overall evaluation of Slovak teachers, vastly being labeled "rather satisfied", which is proof of higher satisfaction than Czech teachers. However, teachers of first grade showed lower job satisfaction than their Czech colleagues.

The above research shows the fact that European teachers, including teachers of pre-primary education do not feel such an excessive workload, as it is often described in the media. We also think that the Slovak kindergarten teachers show a higher level of dissatisfaction with other conditions, rather than the salary ones, which means that the salary is not such a major factor influencing job satisfaction, rather complements other factors. However, given the deficiencies in undergraduate training, for example – excessive theorization of the department, it is reflected in the lack of experience to be applicable in practice. On the other hand, not only implemented research, but also theories refer to work stress in the teaching profession, which is a common thing of Slovak and foreign researches.

³⁹ D. Husler 2003 in: B. Kasáčová, *Kariérový rozvoj profesionality učiteľov*.

⁴⁰ V. Kuban, P. Kandrík, *Pracovná spokojnosť učiteľov v kontexte kvality života*, [in:] *Psychologické dimenzie kvality života*, J. Džuka [online], Prešovská univerzita, Prešov 2004, s. 358-369 [cit. 2015-04-06], Dostupné na internete: <<https://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Dzuka3>>.

Slovak research focused on the issues of working conditions of teachers

A large part took place in the USA. V. Strauss⁴¹ published the results of the satisfaction of teachers in the newspaper "The Washington Post", which confirms the fact of decreasing satisfaction in Schools. In 2013, the lowest satisfaction of teachers was recorded in the US (39%) in the last 25 years. Approximately half (51%) of teachers work under large amounts of stress for several days a week, which reduces the level of their work and life satisfaction.

In the University of Helsinki, N.P. Ololube⁴² rated the job satisfaction and motivation of teachers in relation to school effectiveness in Nigeria. With the aid of a questionnaire, he found out that the causes of job satisfaction, connected to the teacher's personality, have a greater impact on teaching than salary or conditions related to the school and its material and technical equipment. 680 randomly selected teachers participated (286 men, 394 women). Specifically, the questionnaire investigated the working conditions, work itself, work autonomy, salary benefits, career possibilities, and the like. The most influential variable of job satisfaction were the working conditions and the least influential was status and independence of the profession. Remuneration was ranked on 10th place (out of 12). On the other hand, as the most fundamental cause of discontent, educational system and administration appeared on the top, while time for family and household was at the bottom of the list, similar to inadequate status. Not only N.P. Ololube, but also other foreign researchers choose to use the TEJOSAMQ questionnaire, which stands for questionnaire of job satisfaction and motivation of teachers.

As mentioned above, an important factor influencing job satisfaction of the teaching profession are, based on the researches conducted, stress and stressors. This means, that the job satisfaction of teachers is in a higher degree influenced by internal, rather than external conditions.

Research Aimed at Identifying the Factors Causing Dissatisfaction with the Performance Conditions of the Teaching Profession at Kindergartens in Slovakia

In the theoretical part of this article we recorded workload as one of the causes of dissatisfaction of teachers, which is associated with stress, and

⁴¹ V. Strauss, *U.S. teacher's job satisfaction craters - report*, „The Washington Post“ [online]. February 21, 2013 [cit. 2015-02-18]. Dostupné na: <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/02/21/u-s-teachers-job-satisfaction-craters-report/>>.

⁴² N.P. Ololube, *Teacher Job Satisfaction and Motivation*.

possibly the burnout syndrome. *The main objective of our research is therefore to identify the causes of problems related to the performance conditions of the teaching profession that cause dissatisfaction of teachers in kindergartens.* Specifically, we focused on workload and stress as a possible threat to the teaching profession. We assume that some specific stressors are work discontent triggers for kindergarten teachers. Based on the results of research in connection with the aim of this research, we will try to propose measures that would eliminate the causes of dissatisfaction of teachers working in pre-primary schools. To achieve the above goal, we used the *descriptive research problem solving*.

Since from the theoretical analysis of the studied problem workload emerged as one of the most frequent causes, we decided to examine that factor in Slovak public kindergartens. We decided to search for answers on what causes the workload in work situations that can be stressful for kindergarten teachers and whether these factors cause work dissatisfaction.

To this end, the following *research questions* were created:

1. What is the rate of occurrence of disproportionate workload of teachers in kindergartens in Slovakia?
2. Which stressors affect work dissatisfaction of kindergarten teachers?
3. What work situations kindergarten teachers consider as stressful?
4. What are the internal factors of dissatisfaction with the conditions of performing the profession will affect Slovak kindergarten teachers?
5. What is the dominant factor of work discontent for kindergarten teachers?

Research methods

This research was conducted with the aid of quantitative methodology.

The chosen tool for this research is *the questionnaire regarding the causes of dissatisfaction of teachers working in kindergartens*, consisting of 17 entries. During the development of this product we were inspired mainly by foreign research, respectively – standardized questionnaire of job satisfaction, for example – from N.P. Oloolube⁴³ – questionnaire concerning job satisfaction and motivation of teachers (TEJOSAMOQ). The questions, which we were inspired by, were adapted to the specific conditions of the kindergartens. Since some of the work conditions in kindergartens often change in recent years, we decided to adapt existing theories and create our own research

⁴³ Ibidem.

tool - a questionnaire. Its validity is determined by the number of 102 respondents. We tried to achieve reliability by adding variation to the questions which, however, have the same objective.

The questionnaire was distributed randomly electronically via e-mail to public kindergartens. Respondents (teacher of public kindergartens in Slovakia) gradually answered, according to the instructions at the beginning of the questionnaire, to 17 questions, 15 of which were closed and 2 open. Questions 1 to 5 were focused on the characteristics of the respondents. The dichotomous question no. 6 to 9 and 11 to 14 had the teachers respond by choosing one of the options. Question no. 14 was intended to express the overall level of satisfaction with the performance of the teaching profession, respondents also had to respond by selecting one of the options. To identify the specific causes of occupational dissatisfaction, questions 10 and 15 were used. The respondents had a chance to express their own opinions more extensively in the last two questions (16 and 17).

For the purposes of this paper, we only present the relevant research findings directly related to its focus.

Characteristics of the research sample

Since we are not focusing on a comparison of data, but only on their descriptive, thus identifying the factors, we decided that the research should only be done in public kindergartens of Slovakia. All respondents who have correctly completed the questionnaire were included in the data processing of the research. The research sample consisted of 102 respondents from the total number of 152 respondents, who were teachers in public kindergartens in Slovakia.

The questionnaire was to be completed through an online form that we sent electronically to kindergartens according to available contacts. In search for particular schools, we used the document of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic - a network of schools and school facilities, practical training centers and workplaces of practical education (2014). Contacts for the randomly selected kindergartens of each self-governing region we subsequently found through web browsing.

We did not require the specification of attained education, as dissatisfaction with the performance of profession can be spoken about by teachers with different levels of achieved education.

Analysis and interpretation of research results

We analyzed 102 correctly filled-in questionnaire forms. The article states, however, only some of the most interesting findings.

In question 1 we asked about the age of the respondents. The average age was approximately 48 years, while the age range was between 20-63 years. Frequency (n) was, relatively, in the age groups, evenly distributed. Since the Slovak kindergartens mostly have female teachers, we consider it superfluous to indicate, within the questionnaire, the gender of the respondent, despite the fact that they can be filled in by male teachers of pre-primary schools. Differences between the genders are therefore considered statistically insignificant.

From the statistics shown below, it's seen, that within kindergartens, teachers have approximately similar ratio when it comes to age.

Chart 1

Age of respondents of the research

Age of respondents	n	%
20 - 30	26	25,49
31 - 40	25	24,50
41 - 50	24	23,52
51 - 60	26	24,50
61 a viac	1	0,99
Altogether	102	100,00

n = amount

Chart 2

Highest achieved education of respondents

Highest achieved education	n	%
a) Grammar school	0	0,00
b) High school with pedagogical specialization	21	20,58
c) University, I. grade	31	30,39
d) University, II. grade	43	42,16
e) University, III. grade	4	3,93
f) other	3	2,94
Altogether	102	100,00

The results in Chart 2 show the level of education of respondents, i.e. current kindergarten teachers. Most of them (42.16%) completed university education of II. degree. Approximately 21% of teachers have completed secondary education with a pedagogical specialization. Only three respondents mentioned the answer „f) other“, while two of them completed post-secondary qualification study and the last mentioned a degree in special education and counseling.

Chart 3 identifies satisfaction with the level of undergraduate education in the number of 74 teachers, i.e. 72.55% of respondents. We assumed that in connection with the average age of respondents, not a high number would be satisfied, since many of them studied during the validity of other legislative norms, or even a different political situation. This entry has rejected our assumptions and confirms the overwhelming satisfaction with undergraduate education.

Chart 3

Frequency of satisfaction with the level of undergraduate education

Satisfied with the level of undergraduate education	n	%
a) Yes	74	72,55
b) No	16	25,68
c) I don't know	12	11,77
Altogether	102	100,00

The results in Chart 4 show satisfaction, respectively dissatisfaction of respondents with the directorship of the kindergarten. It is interesting that 64 respondents expressed their satisfaction with management. Dissatisfaction with the way of management was declared by 28 kindergarten teachers, which is 27% of the total respondents.

Chart 4

Satisfaction with management

Satisfied with management	n	%
a) Yes	64	62,74
b) No	28	27,45
c) I don't know	10	9,81
Altogether	102	100,00

In terms of focus of the article, chart 5 is very important. Respondents had several choices and even had the option of stating other causes. This question had multiple choices of answers.

The aim of question 5 is to identify and determine the frequency of specific causes of discontent. Total of 102 respondents marked 521 responses. The percentage is taken into account based on the number of participants in the research, not the number of responses. Up to 97.05% of teachers are dissatisfied with their salary. In practice, this means financial unappreciation of the teaching profession, which weakens the overall work incentives and teacher status in society, which is 60.78% of unsatisfied respondents. Chart 5 below also provides answers to internal causes dissatisfaction of teachers that focus on employee relations, cooperation with parents, the environment in the workplace, motivation, etc.

Chart 5

Identification of causes of discontent related to the performance of the teacher profession

Causes of discontent	n	%
a) Management of the kindergarten	34	33,33
b) Number of children in class	69	67,64
c) Kindergarten environment	29	28,43
d) Employee relations	26	25,49
e) Employee motivation	66	64,70
f) Cooperation with parents	40	39,21
g) Cooperation with institutions	15	14,70
h) Length of working hours	4	3,92
i) Prestige of the profession (attractiveness of it in the society)	62	60,78
j) Material and technological provisions of kindergarten/class	37	36,27
k) Salary	99	97,05
l) Continuous education of the teachers	33	32,35
m) Other	7	6,86
Respondents altogether	102	from 100

Discussion

Based on the results and interpretation of survey, we can suggest some recommendations for practice, the introduction of which could help reduce or even eliminate some of the causes of discontent with the conditions of the

performance of the teaching profession. We are mainly basing this on the data which occurred most commonly.

Since it's probably not possible to permit a legislative adjustment to the number of children in kindergarten classes, to improve satisfaction with the number of children and to aid the elimination of stress caused by children we propose to adjust the placement of furniture in the classroom. Since in most Slovak kindergarten furniture is deployed around the perimeter of the room, the children don't have the opportunity even during the time of early games to "close themselves out" in some other part of the room. This would eliminate the noise in a class that is greater in the open. This would also allow the teacher a more individual contact with the children, whom would in turn be more independent in group activities. The reality of kindergartens, however, is still based on the theory of behaviorism, which mostly prefers to apply frontal activity, therefore, as a second suggestion, we introduce educational activities focused more on group activities of the children, but this may be more difficult for the teacher to prepare.

Another problem affecting the satisfaction of teachers that occurred was the management of the kindergarten. Directors are often in a management position for over 10 years, so we would highly suggest a more frequent replacement of the director, for example, by setting a rule that the same director can perform their duties no more than in two consecutive terms. The problem with applying this solution is however present in smaller kindergartens with a lower number of children, where the interest of the other teachers is low when it comes to the Director position. Therefore, we present you with a more realistic proposal - put the informal training of the teaching staff in practice, including the Director to improve the quality of kindergarten management, communication and relationships between employees. Trainings should ideally be reimbursed by the founder and would be aimed at confronting the current problems of kindergarten teachers, finding solutions to them, building open communication between the teaching staff, developing informal relations and so on. They should be carried out away from kindergarten.

The open questions of the questionnaire show that the one of the main causes of dissatisfaction with the performance of the teaching profession and the stress factor are parents and different situations connected with them (communication, requirements for teachers, lack of cooperation, dissenting views on raising children, etc.). The communication could once again be helped being dealt with by courses focused on interpersonal communication and conflict resolution, organized, for example, at the closest center of peda-

gological and psychological counseling and prevention. Another solution we can propose is to organize formal and informal meetings with parents or entire families together with teachers – it could be trips to which parents would be invited, barbecues/grilling in the summer, chats (parents have different professions which they could introduce) with children related to education, assignment of home work that could be shared with parents. Another option is organizing workshops for parents in the premises of primary schools, aimed at enhancing their parental capabilities, which would improve the open communication with teachers about educational problems (these are sometimes an impetus for discussion).

The survey implies that the teaching profession is filled with bureaucratic acts which burden teachers during their free time because often, during working hours, they fail to complete all of them. To reduce dissatisfaction with the administration and operations associated with it we suggest unification of the documentation of public kindergartens in Slovakia and create a guidance document, which contains the mandatory and optional administration, standard patterns / materials created for kindergartens with the aim to unify the documentation and to make things easier for teachers, so that they could dedicate more time to educating.

When it comes to dissatisfaction with financial evaluation and the corresponding lack of prestige of the profession, we offer the following: In the coming period of time, a gradual increase in staff salaries in the context of government's focus on education should take place, however, the average wage of the European Union is not so easily achievable.

We realize that it is not within our competencies to remove all causes of dissatisfaction with the conditions of performing the teaching profession, but with these recommendations we intend to at least encourage kindergartens to reduce the above-mentioned negative factors.

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