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THE READINESS OF EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research was to focus on educators and their attitude towards international guidelines in education. A descriptive and causal non-experimental method was used. Using a representative sample (N = 525), we looked for correlations in the field of the holistic approach and the use of international guidelines. When searching for correlations between formal education and following the guidelines, 8 out of 10 correlations were statistically confirmed: imagination, creativity, memory, reasoning, respect for beauty, physical skills, communication/social skills and critical thinking, in favour of respondents with a lower level of education. Statistically significant correlations between knowledge of the holistic approach and adherence to the guidelines were not found.

Keywords: holistic approach, logopedagogy, educational professionals, UNESCO, European Commission

DISPONIBILITÀ DEGLI OPERATORI EDUCATIVI PER LO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE NELL'AMBITO DELL'ISTRUZIONE IN SLOVENIA

SINTESI

Lo scopo della ricerca era focalizzato sugli educatori e sul loro atteggiamento nei confronti delle linee guida internazionali in materia di istruzione. Abbiamo utilizzato un metodo descrittivo e causale non sperimentale di ricerca pedagogica. Su un campione rappresentativo (N = 525), abbiamo cercato correlazioni nel campo dell'approccio olistico e l'uso di linee guida internazionali. Nella ricerca di correlazioni tra l'istruzione formale e il rispetto delle linee guida abbiamo individuato e confermato come statisticamente significative 8 correlazioni su 10, ovvero: immaginazione, creatività, memoria, ragionamento, rispetto della bellezza, abilità fisiche, abilità comunicative/sociali e pensiero critico, per lo più a favore di intervistati con livelli di istruzione inferiori. In nessuna delle linee guida sono state trovate correlazioni statisticamente significative tra la conoscenza dell'approccio olistico e l'aderenza alle linee guida di cui sopra.

Parole chiave: approccio olistico, logopedagogia, educatori, UNESCO, Commissione Europea

INTRODUCTION

Today, our life is more global than at any time before. We can reach any country, person, information we want, at any time we want, from anywhere we want.

Throughout history, countries have developed their own systems over the years, including educational systems. Every country followed its own system and sometimes implemented it while incorporating some improvements from other countries, but educational systems have always been regarded as rigid. Change happened slowly and was usually not welcomed by teachers. Today we live our lives so fast. Everything is happening at lightning speed and rigid educational systems started to change, too.

First, the United Nations (UN) established that all the people of the world need education, which is very important, and that all countries should establish the 'intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind' (Republika Slovenija, 2021), so UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was formed in 1945. Its constitution establishes the goals and the founding mission, which is to advance peace, sustainable development and human rights by facilitating collaboration and dialogue among nations. Since then, UNESCO has pursued this objective through five major program areas: education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, communication and information (UNESCO).

The importance of a humanistic approach in education has been emphasised by the Faure Commission in the report Learning to Be (Faure et al., 1972) and almost 20 years later in the report Learning: The Treasure Within by the Delors Commission (Delors, 1996). Both of them also highlighted the concept of lifelong learning. Education is a continuous process of enriching knowledge and skills, and at the same time an exceptional tool for shaping personalities and relationships between individuals (Delors, 1996, 14). In the report they established 'the four pillars' of education, the importance of which will be apparent in the future: learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together.

All 192 countries in UNESCO are striving for better educational opportunities and possibilities for all children. So, when the European Union's Commission formed its General Directorate for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, it was expected to consider these guidelines in its documents. The need for better education was presented in Lisbon and known as the Lisbon Strategy (European Committee of Regions), and sustainable development is the global as well as the European goal in education. There are 17 sustainable goals to achieve until 2030 and one of them (goal number 4 – SDG4) is quality education (Sustainable Development Goals). This reaches from preschool education to university level degree. It means that all children across the world should have access to the best opportunities for quality education provided by quality teachers and educational professionals, quality content, materials, etc.

Global guidelines tend towards the holistic approach to education (Delors, 1996; Faure et al., 1972; UNESCO, 2002, 2014, 2015). UNESCO (2002, 24) explains: "The fundamental principle is that education must contribute to the overall development of each individual, mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense, personal responsibility and spiritual values". This recognised the importance of educating the whole person, not only physically and mentally, but also what is really important: spiritually. The spiritual dimension of a person has been left aside for a long time. Frankl (2014) says that all three dimensions of a person must be in balance and considered in educating a young person (Längle, 2013; Schechner & Zürner, 2013; Siller & Waibel, 2018; Waibel, 2017a, 2017b; Waibel & Wurzrainer, 2016).

Logopedagogy, derived from Frankl's logotherapy and existential analysis (Frankl, 2014), considers upbringing and education as something personal and holistic. The relationship between the person of the teacher and the person of the child is mutual, interactive and respectful. The child is a subject, which in the context of logopedagogy means that each person should be accepted and taken seriously as a thinking and feeling being. We adapted the basic characteristics of the holistic and logopedagogical approach from Forbes and Martin (2004), after Frankl's 10 theses on the person and the 10 theses of logopedagogy (Schechner & Zürner, 2013): the ability to be free and responsible, ability to discover and improve values, ability to make good judgments, ability to see the meaning of one's own existence, meta learning and social skills.

In the educational process, the student, the teacher and the learning content are in a mutual relationship at all times. In the learning process itself, we must start from a person (student) and work for a person (student), while building on relationships with ourselves, the world and life. Just as the dynamics of relationships are constantly changing, so are the meanings. Frankl says that there is no universal meaning of life, but only the unique meanings of individual situations (Frankl, 2014, 54). Some of them relate to the human condition and that is what we have as values. Frankl goes on to say that values cannot be taught, values must be lived. Even meaning cannot be given; the teacher cannot give meaning to their students, but can offer an example, a personal example of their own devotion to research, truth and science (Frankl, 2014, 80).

According to multiple intelligences theory, Ramos-Ford and Gardner (1997) state that teachers, among some other professionals, have interpersonal intelligence in a more developed form than others. We know that some students are more sensitive towards deeper questions, especially about the meaning of life, our existence, why we live or die, etc. Gardner named this existential intelligence (Marenus, 2020) instead of spiritual intelligence, which is difficult to measure. Ferbežer (2011) asserts that spiritual sensitivity describes multiple children, some of them very young, with deep insight and some serious questions about life, the universe, God, suffering, empathy, etc. From our

perspective, it is very important for teachers to be aware of this and live through existential questions and terms to be an example for students and for all to strive for self-actualisation and self-transcendence.

One of the objectives of our survey was to ascertain whether teachers and other educational professionals are devoted to their values and the meaning of education. If we can pass some of that love for content to children, we do not need extensive and complicated methods. The learning process will start by itself. That requires a person. A person to teach a person (Waibel, 2017a). This is especially important when we work with more sensitive students at a personal level, because it can be communicated to all other levels.

It usually happens in traditional or transmission teaching and cognitive-constructivist teaching. This method of teaching considers just the cognitive part of a person and is certainly not a holistic approach. More able students were bored and oppressed by this form of teaching, which is why the forms began to change to constructivist forms (Plut Pregelj, 2008, 16) which emphasise the process of acquiring knowledge (Marentič Požarnik, 2008, 32-34) and should be more suitable for teaching able students. Neither of them considers the person of a student as whole or from a holistic perspective and this clearly indicates the need to change the approach.

Teachers still mostly occupy able and faster students with more and more tasks. In solving these tasks, they are left to their own devices, and this is not the most appropriate approach for them, as they may become bored and start to distract other students and teachers (Feldhusen, 2005; Ford, Alber & Heward, 2005; Galbraith, 1992; Reis, 2004; Sapon-Shevin, 1994; Sousa, 2003). Such students say that school is too easy for them and that they would prefer to read more interesting books during class, learn future material, and most of them said that they are bored and that they wish they could learn things that are interesting to them, and do so at their own pace (Gallagher, 2000, 686; Galbraith, 1992). From boredom some students can easily fall to depression or other health problems, which is another field research of our research group. Considering the person of a student means respecting him or her with all his or her needs.

Research into holistic approaches to develop sustainability show that all the participants in the research developed competencies in sustainability and the research competency (Albareda-Tiana et al., 2018). After they used project-oriented learning, which is based on holistic principles, the communication (oral and writing) and teamwork improved and they developed the competency to apply ethical principles related to sustainability values in their personal and professional behaviour (Albareda-Tiana et al., 2018, 13). Badjanova & Iliško (2015, 138) state that the holistic approach to education can significantly affect the quality of the teaching and learning process in primary school. They asked the teachers about the use of a holistic approach in their everyday situations and found that the principles of the holistic approach can be successfully introduced even in schools which are not based on a holistic paradigm. Gültekin et al. (2013, 59) researched the principles of holistic education and they state that individuals should search for meaning as an intrinsic aspect of their full development, and that the holistic curriculum should be dynamic and create an awareness of the learner's wholeness, and that learning is an inner process of self-discovery and a cooperative activity. Holistic learning, in the sense of teaching for life, has created management structures that have successfully fostered healthy, happy, and responsive organisations. Holistic schools are flexible and have mixed ages and abilities; they can create a pathway for class transfer at different times, which is reflected in performance and provision of the life-related solution and not just in assessments such as examinations (Idapalapati, 2017, 291). Hare (2006) points out the importance for understanding the representation and output of the holistic approach in education. He states that the actions require sophisticated judgment and maturity of teachers and students, which is a part of a dynamic programme, and they can collaboratively build up a wide range of skills and attributes that will serve them well in the future (Hare, 2006, 321).

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The research was conducted mainly because we wanted to determine whether educational professionals follow the global and European guidelines in education.

Our research question focuses on exploring the relationship between the level of formal degree of educational professionals and the consideration of European and UNESCO guidelines in education. Furthermore, we want to address the issue of whether guidelines related to the traditional approach in education are highly regarded by educational professionals compared to holistic approach guidelines. We are mainly interested in whether the educational professionals are aware, understand or/and consider international documents pertaining to a holistic approach to education in their daily practice.

By identifying obstacles in the implementation of holistic approach guidelines in the practice (UNESCO, OECD, European Union Commissions and other international institutions' efforts) a step forward could be made in adopting a holistic approach in Slovenian public schools. The holistic approach is related to Frankl's logotherapy (Frankl, 2014, 2015), logopedagogy (Forster-Benkler, 2019; Schechner & Zürner, 2013), existential analysis (Längle, 2013) and existential pedagogy (Waibel & Wurzrainer, 2016; Waibel, 2017a, 2017b). These are based on the personality traits and character of a person, but there could be a correlation with the level of formal degree. Educators should be a powerful pillar of society; however, teaching is not always seen as an attractive career.

Because of the complexity of the whole study, only one aspect of the study will be presented in this paper. We observed the ten most important variables, in a holistic

way of teaching, for a holistic approach to education. The observed variables are guidelines set by UNESCO and the European Union's Commission: stimulating the imagination of children/students; encouraging creativity in children/students; developing and strengthening of memory, reasoning, appreciation of beauty, physical skills, communication/social skills; developing critical thinking and independent judgment; acquisition of general human values; developing personal commitment and responsibility.

Our motivation for this study derives from UNESCO's theoretical background. Since the Faure Report, followed by the Delors Report, the fundamental aim of education was and still is to integrate the physical, intellectual, emotional, and ethical aspects of the individual into a complete person (UNESCO, 2002, 23; UNESCO 2015). UNESCO believes that the human person's individual and social development is anchored in eight core values: Health and Harmony with Nature, Truth and Wisdom, Love and Compassion, Creativity and Appreciation of Beauty, Peace and Justice, Sustainable Human Development, National Unity and Global Solidarity, and Global Spirituality, and related values and all these values converge around the central value of respect for Human Dignity. Further, they state that education must contribute to the total development of the whole person—body and soul, mind and spirit, intelligence and emotion, creativity and sensitivity, personal autonomy and responsibility, social conscience and commitment, human, ethical, cultural, and spiritual values. A definition and explanation of these fundamental and dominant values serves as a basic guideline for a holistic approach to learning, utilising a valuation process which takes into consideration the cognitive, affective, and behavioural powers of the learner (UNESCO, 2002, 24-25). Nan-Zhao (2004), a director at the International Centre of Teacher Education, former Vice President for Networking, Asia-Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education (APNIEVE) and a member of the International Commission of Education for the Twenty-first Century, states that national curricula should aim at cultivating the qualities of imagination and creativity; acquiring universally shared human values; developing aspects of a person's potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacity and communication/social skills; developing critical thinking and exercising independent judgment, and developing personal commitment and responsibility. These are also the essence of pillar learning as outlined in the Delors Report (Delors, 1996; UNESCO, 2002; 2014). The Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015) commits all countries to promote quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education to ensure that all learners acquire by 2030 the knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among other aspects, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles. The main idea is embedded in a holistic and humanistic vision which contributes to a new model of development, based on the principles of human rights and dignity, social justice, peace, inclusion and protection, as well as cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, shared responsibility and accountability (UNESCO, 2015, 7-8, 24-26, 48-49). The European Union and UNESCO share values and objectives and are joining efforts to support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which also covers the field of education (UNESCO). European strategies are based on promoting competencies for quality lifelong learning and especially on supporting teachers and school leaders regarding excellent teaching and learning (European Commission, 2013; 2017; European Union, 2019), which is important for realising the goals mentioned above, by themselves and by the students. By deciding on the content of the questionnaire, in addition to the already mentioned literature, we also took into account the guidelines from Eurydice Slovenia (Eurydice Slovenija), Eurydice Europe (European Commission), EU legislation (European Union) and some other relevant literature.

METHOD

Research Model

To address our research question, we used a descriptive and causal non-experimental method of pedagogical research (Cenčič, 2009; European Union, 2019; Sagadin, 1993). We designed a survey to explore the causes of the existing situation in Slovenian nurseries, primary and secondary schools regarding holistic education.

Data collection

The questionnaire was designed by the members of the research group (authors of this paper). It was designed in the open-source tool 1KA (Version 20.12.03, 2017), which provides an online survey service. The application also allows the saving of the data from completed and partially completed questionnaires. The link to the survey was sent to all educational professionals employed by any of the institutes of the Registry of Educational Institutions and Educational Programs, available from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Republic of Slovenia (Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport). A cover letter explaining the aims and objectives of the research was sent along with the invitation to participate. The survey was active from April to June 2020.

Of approximately 40,000 educational professionals, 525 completed the survey, of whom 89.6% were female. The percentage of females was expected due to the high number of female teachers in Slovenian schools.

The questionnaire included five demographic questions (gender, age, length of service in education, highest formal education achieved and current job) and nine questions pertaining to the research problem (knowledge of the Delors Report; the importance of pillars in the future; the

concepts defining each pillar; knowledge of the Incheon Declaration; knowledge of the holistic approach; terms which characterise the holistic educational process; the level of consideration of these concepts in their own work and the level of implementation of European and UNESCO guidelines in their work).

The questionnaire was piloted within a smaller group of co-workers at the Alma Mater Europaea - ECM. Appropriate changes and further refinement of the questionnaire followed this stage. There was no validated questionnaire available nor previous results with which to compare our data.

Reliability and Validity

For the questions in which the respondents decided on the level of knowledge of the documents, the discrimination of the scales was ensured by a four-level Likert scale. We used a four-point scale at the level of adherence to guidelines in respondents work. We chose a four-point scale specifically to avoid mid-range responses, which usually indicate I don't know, or I can't define myself. This was one of the ways to ensure the good validity of our research.

In the absence of a previously validated measurement tool, this was the first attempt to measure the reliability of the tool. Validity can be determined by construct validity, content validity, face validity and/or criterion validity (Middleton, 2020). We ensured the construct validity with questions that effectively measured our construct about holistic education, and they were carefully developed on the existing knowledge base. We also ensured content validity by measuring only holistic education connected content.

Data analysis

The data were processed with a computer program for statistical analysis SPSS, version 21 and were first coded, and then descriptive statistics were performed for the obtained data, where parameter estimates (structural percentages) were calculated by frequency analysis (Sagadin, 2003, 16-19).

Correlations between ordinal variables were checked with the chi-square ($\chi 2$) test. The risk was considered at a level of 0.05.

Procedure

The procedure of the research was followed by steps. Because our research is part of a larger national project entitled Holistic educational process and mental health strengthening, the research group started with a theoretical frame. Only the holistic educational process will be described here.

We studied the relevant literature from the field of holistic education. We were especially sensitive to literature claims about the aspect of wholeness in students. Logotherapy, logopedagogy, existential pedagogy, and Holistic Educational Process literature were the basis upon which we developed our theoretical framework and a survey questionnaire for this research. The data were gathered using a web survey that invited educational professionals to participate in the study.

RESULTS

The reliability of Likert scales for measuring attitudes was checked by the method of analysis of internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) (Sagadin, 2003). The high value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for 20 items in our questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.985$) shows the good quality and high reliability of rating scales.

Participants

The distribution of respondents by age is fairly even. 31.5% of participants were between 51 and 60 years old, followed by age groups between 41 and 50 years (30.8%) and 31 and 40 years (24.2%). 8.3% of respondents were below 30 years old and just 5.2% were 61 years old or over.

Close to one third (28.7%) of respondents had 11 to 20 years of service in education, and 26.2% had 31 or more years of service in education. 22.6% had up to 10 years of service and 22.4% of all respondents had 21 to 30 years of service in education. All these groups are evenly distributed, and this is very good for work experience distribution.

The majority of respondents achieved a university degree (2nd Bologna level) or college degree, specifically 51.9%, followed by respondents with a 1st Bologna or bachelor's degree (34.7%). 7.5% of respondents had completed secondary education, and 5.8% had a specialisation, scientific master's, or doctoral degree. Such a structure of the sample is expected due to the qualifications required for teacher or other educational work with students.

Slightly more than half of the respondents (50.4%) are primary school teachers, followed by other professionals (pedagogue, psychologist, special or rehabilitation pedagogue, special educator, etc.) (18.4%), preschool teachers (11.8%) and their assistants (7.9%). The survey covered 6.6% of secondary school teachers, and 4.8% head teachers.

Data analysis

Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they take into consideration the European and UNESCO guidelines in their work. These guidelines suggested stimulating the imagination of students; encouraging creativity in students; developing and strengthening memory, reasoning, the appreciation of beauty, physical abilities, communication/social skills; developing critical thinking and independent judgment; acquisition of universal human values and developing personal commitments and responsibilities in the educational process.

They were asked to indicate to what extent they comply with and/or implement the guidelines. A choice between not consider at all, rarely consider, sometimes consider and

always consider was presented. The respondents chose mostly between sometimes consider and always consider, so we combined not consider at all and rarely consider and labelled it 'does not consider'. We labelled sometimes consider and always consider as 'always consider'.

A chi-square value was calculated for each guideline.

The level of compliance within each guideline is very high, as we can see in Table 1. Acquisition of universal human values ($\chi2 = 2.686$, $p = 0.444$) and developing personal commitments and responsibilities ($\chi2 = 1.499$, $p = 0.682$) are the only two guidelines for which we did not find statistically significant differences. All groups of educational professionals take values into account and more than 85% of the respondents always do so. We can conclude that human values are in the highest place of all EU/UNESCO guidelines listed before and in the survey. Responsibility is also one of the guidelines that is highly ranked by educational professionals and there are no significant differences between degrees of education groups. They always take responsibility into account in more than three-quarters of all answers they gave.

According to the values, developing and strengthening the communication/social skills are least important to educational professionals with the highest degree of education (61.1%), while 87.8% of all educational professionals with the 1st Bologna level consider communication and/or social skills in their work. The chi-square values show us statistically important differences between groups of the formal degree of education ($\chi2 = 11.370$, $p = 0.010$).

We also found a statistically significant correlation between the degree of formally acquired education and consideration of encouraging creativity at their work ($\chi2 = 19.703$, $p = 0.000$). More than 82% of educational professionals with the 1st Bologna level of educational degree always consider creativity at their work, compared to only 55.7% of educational professionals with the 2nd Bologna level. Educational professionals with the 2nd Bologna level are mostly teachers in elementary and secondary school. The question that immediately arises is how they are performing their lessons in class. Creativity is a very important category of human personality and the holistic educational approach.

Developing critical thinking and independent judgment is on the other hand more important to educational professionals with a higher degree of education (specialisation, master's, PhD – 88.9%). The chi-square value ($\chi2 = 10.424$, $p = 0.015$) shows us statistically significant differences between the degree of education groups, especially between the group mentioned before and the 2nd Bologna level or college degree group, which considers this guideline only at 54.3%.

Stimulating the imagination of students shows an interesting association between the degree of formally acquired education and consideration of imagination in the respondents' work. The value of the chi-square ($\chi2 = 23.116$, $p = 0.000$) shows us a statistically significant association between the degree of formal acquired education and this guideline. The lower the degree of education, the more the educational professionals involve imagination in their work: educational professionals with high school degrees always consider imagination at almost 87%, educational professionals with a specialisation, master's or PhD are 20 per cent lower (66.7%). The differences can be attributed to preschool educators. They need the lowest formally acquired education for work, but on the other hand, they have to work with a child's imagination, which at this point in their development (from 1 to 6 years old) is extremely rich and fruitful.

Memory training has always been a special category of the educational system. Teachers and educational policymakers usually call it knowledge. The chi-square value $\chi2 = 15.175$, $p = 0.019$, shows us statistically significant differences between the educational groups. The values considered are lower than in imagination and creativity. Less than half (44.4%) of educational professionals with the 2nd Bologna level and with specialisation, master's or PhD, always consider the developing and strengthening of memory at their work. Some of them do not consider it at all. Memorising is one of the important and always present features of teaching and learning. If we only think of multiplication tables, letters, poems, periodic systems, definitions and equations, etc. that children need to learn, we know that they probably did not think well of their statement in the survey.

At 88.9%, educational professionals with the highest levels of formal degree of education (specialisation, master's, PhD) apparently always consider developing and strengthening of reasoning, compared to educational professionals with the 2nd Bologna level or college degree, which do so in less than half (45.7%) of cases. Even preschool teachers do so more frequently (high school degree in 73.3% and more than one-third of 1st Bologna level educational professionals). The reason should be important because it is an indicator of thinking activity, which is (or it should be) a desirable trait in most school subjects, especially in science, mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer science, informatics, etc. The differences between degree groups are significant at $\chi2 = 21.832$, $p = 0.000$.

The chi-square value of developing and strengthening the appreciation of beauty ($\chi2 = 32.367$, $p = 0.000$) points us again to statistically significant differences between groups, where we have the highest values with preschool teachers (high school with 93.3%) and the lowest values at the level of primary and secondary school teachers (2nd Bologna level, college degree with 37.2%). This is a particularly significant difference between groups. Some of them stated that they do not consider the appreciation of beauty at all in their work. Such decisions are probably attributed to the higher proportion of all kinds of handicrafts in kindergartens, but the appreciation of beauty is much more than just making products.

Developing and strengthening physical abilities are least considered by educational professionals with the highest level of formal degree. All high school education

Table 1: Differences in degree of education and always consider each EU/UNESCO guideline - percentages within each guideline.

	High school	1st Bologna level	2nd Bologna level, college degree	Specialisation, master's, Ph. D.	Total within each guideline
Human values	80%	87.8%	83.5%	94.4%	85.4%
Personal commitment and responsibility	73.3%	82.2%	77.4%	72.2%	78.4%
Communication/ social skills	80%	87.8%	72%	61.1%	76.7%
Creativity	66.7%	82.2%	55.7%	77.8%	65.9%
Critical thinking	66.7%	66.7%	54.3%	88.9%	61%
Imagination	86.7%	72.2%	45.7%	66.7%	57.5%
Memory	60%	66.7%	42.7%	44.4%	51.2%
Reasoning	93.3%	63.3%	37.2%	61.1%	49.8%
Appreciation of beauty	93.3%	63.3%	37.2%	61.1%	49.8%
Physical skills	100%	62.2%	36.6%	38.9%	48.1%

degree groups always consider physical skills, compared to barely above one-third 2nd Bologna level, college degree, specialisation, master's or Ph. D. Chi-square values $\chi 2 = 42.323$, $p = 0.000$ indicate significant differences between the degree of education groups. And again, we see that some of the 2nd Bologna level degrees do not take this guideline into account in their work at all (3%). If we talk about a holistic education approach and the guidelines towards that, then it is clear that physical skills are as important as the cognitive and spiritual.

The degree of formally acquired education is not the only aspect in which we were interested. In the survey, respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they are familiar with the holistic approach in education. Only 10.1% of respondents state that they are very familiar with this approach. Almost half (48.5%) are somewhat familiar, 33.8% slightly familiar and 7.6% state that they are not familiar with the holistic approach at all. In the continuation of the questionnaire, they were asked to write six terms that, in their opinion, define a holistic approach. In this way, we gained a deeper insight into who our respondents are and how they think about the topic of a holistic approach. After the process of coding the answers, the answers were divided into two categories on the basis of whether their response falls under the understanding of a holistic approach, or not.

The research group determined the appropriate categories that adequately define the term holistic approach. Terms/keywords were classified into the following categories: values, freedom, responsibility, autonomy, independence, imagination, creativity, play, appreciation of beauty and experiential values, empathy, conscience and intuition, the meaning, development of identity, self-transcendence, and self-distance, relationships (to oneself, to the world, to others, to life), self-image, self-esteem and self-confidence, dignity, attitude to the superfluous and religion, ethics, and personalisation. The terms were coded as 1 if a term belongs to the holistic educational process, while 0 was assigned to terms that do not belong to the holistic process. A new variable, Respondents' Answers, was constructed to count the number of concepts that define the holistic educational approach. If no such concept was reported by the respondent, the value of the new variable was set to zero. This variable was then used for further statistical processing regarding the holistic approach. Within each guideline, we compared whether there are differences between the values obtained in the new variable Respondents' Answers (see Table 2).

We found no differences within each guideline. The values of the chi-square test are not statistically significant, which means that the respondents were quite consistent in their answers in terms of compliance with international guidelines and the level of knowledge of the holistic approach. The level of compliance with EU/UNESCO guidelines is extremely high. In almost every guideline more than half of the respondents stated that they always consider the guideline in their everyday work. This is encouraging because, despite their false awareness about

Table 2: Chi-square values and significance - differences in compliance the EU/UNESCO guidelines and variable Respondents' Answers.

	Chi-square value (χ2)	Significance (p)
Imagination	12.626	.397
Creativity	13.446	.337
Memory	8.274	.974
Reasoning	7.405	.830
Appreciation of beauty	11.510	.871
Physical skills	16.327	.570
Communication/ social skills	2.928	.818
Critical thinking	13.768	.316
Human values	13.703	.320
Personal commitment and responsibility	4.070	.982

this approach, they follow and work by the mentioned guidelines, but it can nevertheless indicate falsely high results. Overall, the most important three guidelines for the respondents are acquiring of human values, development of personal commitment/responsibility and development of communication/social skills. Obviously, there is a lack of these characteristics in children in preschool and schools and our data show that the respondents know how to recognise and develop them.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We were observing the ten most important variables in the holistic way of teaching for a holistic approach to education, as set by UNESCO and EU Commission. We wanted to know whether Slovenian educational professionals (from preschool to secondary level) consider or take these guidelines into account in their everyday work. We consider these guidelines as most important in attaining the global goals pertaining to sustainable development, in education and beyond. Teachers and other educational professionals should be familiar with these guidelines, and they should take them into account in their work in parallel with the national curriculum. This is (or should be) one of the main tasks in their work.

Global organisations (European Committee of the Regions; UNESCO, 2002) consider these guidelines as very important for teachers and learners in heading towards better education and sustainable development: stimulating the imagination of children/students; encouraging creativity in children/students; developing and strengthening of memory, reasoning, appreciation of beauty, physical skills, communication/social skills; developing critical thinking and independent judgment, acquisition of general human values and developing of personal commitment and responsibility. We would like to emphasise the importance for the children/students of considering these guidelines in their everyday work. These guidelines are very important for the development and wellbeing of children and young people. Today it is more important to develop certain personal and social characteristics in children than fill their heads with theoretical content, which is available in just a few taps on a smart device. Children are becoming lost in front of screens in a flood of information, while their inner person remains undeveloped, unrealised, and they cannot self-actualise.

The results show that the degree of formal education (of teachers and other educational professionals) influences the use of global guidelines in their everyday work. We expected that the higher the degree, the higher awareness of these guidelines and the consequent taking of them into account in their work. Conversely, we encountered a particular phenomenon. Respondents with the 2nd Bologna level, college or university level degree, gave the lowest scores of all. From all ten guidelines, very important competencies emerge, which educational professionals develop in students through the holistic approach. We found statically significant differences between the formal level of education and the use or implementation of eight guidelines in their daily work. The trend suggests the higher the education, the lower the consideration of the guidelines by respondents in their everyday work. The common point is level of educational degree. These give us reason to think again about the higher educational system in our country. The entrance level for elementary teacher is very loose. Since 2009 the average entrance limit levels to three Slovenian universities for the program Elementary Education (for teaching from 1st to 5th grade) were: 66.7 for University of Ljubljana, 53.4 for University of Maribor and 53.3 for University of Primorska (Fakultete in visoke šole v Sloveniji, 2020). It is most likely that some respondents who were students in the year 2009 were also captured in our survey.

We found no differences in terms of compliance with international guidelines and the level of knowledge of the holistic approach. Regardless of statistical significance, this is data that tells us a considerable amount about our respondents (preschool teachers, teachers, and other educational professionals). No matter what they think about knowing the holistic approach, and whether they really know it or not, many say they follow the international guidelines we have presented to them in their work. This may mean that they are not aware of the true meaning of a holistic approach. It can also mean that they are not familiar with the international documents that dictate the

guidelines in education, but it means they follow them intuitively. International (European and UNESCO) guidelines are not only the fruit of the imagination of some experts and scientists, but also reflect current needs and possible answers to them, which to a certain extent were also perceived by our respondents and which we also discovered with our research. Despite that fact, we have some concerns about the really high level of compliance for each guideline. This could mean that higher answers were given than could be reflected in reality.

Some studies pointed out that the holistic approach can be implemented in regular schools and that the quality of teaching rises if we do so (Badjanova & Iliško, 2015). It raises class dynamics (Albareda-Tiana et al., 2018) and employee relations (Idapalapati, 2017). If we understand the importance of the holistic approach, live and work by it, we can develop in children certain well needed skills and attributes in life which can help them find a sense of meaning (Gültekin et al., 2013; Hare, 2006). All these findings can be associated with our study and our educational system. We can implement holistic principles in the existing system if our educational professionals understand its main principles and the importance of its output.

Recommendations

Entering the faculties

Our recommendations are for a more rigorous entrance to all faculties of education and for all courses. First, we must raise the minimum points for entrance. The number of applications is not really a problem. The data for past years show that there are many more applications than places in the programs (Fakultete in visoke šole v Sloveniji, 2020; I.H., 2019;), meaning that these faculties can choose between them.

Moreover, teaching and raising a young generation must be the most responsible job. It means forming young personalities. Only a strong, solid personality can do that. A personality with a high value system, with clear goals and insight into what it means to be a teacher. Ramos-Ford and Gardner state that teachers need to possess more interpersonal intelligence and that they usually have this type of intelligence developed to a higher degree than do other people (Ramos-Ford & Gardner, 1997, 56).

We should certainly ask some questions of new applicants about how they feel about values, freedom, responsibility, autonomy, independence, imagination, creativity, etc. We recommend that interviews should be undertaken with applicants so we can determine whether they are truly capable of such studies and being a teacher. In that regard, we will finish this paper with an Erich Fried quote (Waibel 2017b, 251): "It is important that the human being can do a lot and know a lot. But a lot more important is that the one who can do a lot and know a lot is a human being."

Further study

Further studies should be made concerning how this affects children. We pointed out that they are not served properly in schools, so what would they say if we ask them - how does all that affect the students. Is there any connection between improper care from a holistic point of view (physical, psychological and spiritual) and children's mental health? Some groups of students are, because of their traits and discrepancies between personal, social, cognitive, and affective development, an endangered group. The issue of an increasing level of depression and use of medication in the field of mental diseases is being answered within our research group and is presented in other articles.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

There were some limitations of the study that we should mention. First, the structure of the sample. In the research plan, we wanted to capture all educational works, from preschool and day care workers to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other educational professionals in Slovenian schools (pedagogues, psychologists, specials education teachers, speech therapists, etc.). The respondents in our study are mostly teachers, so the sample structure of all respondents is not evenly distributed.

Second, there could be a larger sample size, although it was not planned in the research plan. The plan was made for the needs of the project (better understanding of the topics, teachers and educational professionals' attitudes, current situation in the field of holistic education in Slovenia, etc.).

Third, no studies have previously been undertaken regarding the application of holistic or logopedagogic guidelines among teachers, schools, kindergartens in Slovenia. We did not find any research dealing with the statements of educational professionals concerning the holistic or logopedagogic approach in Slovenia.

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PRIPRAVLJENOST VZGOJNO-IZOBRAŽEVALNIH DELAVCEV ZA TRAJNOSTNI RAZVOJ V ŠOLSTVU V SLOVENIJI

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POVZETEK

Osredotočanje na evropske in UNESCO-ve smernice v vzgoji in izobraževanju z upoštevanjem 4. cilja trajnostnega razvoja daje poudarek na vključujoče in pravično kakovostno izobraževanje. Ljudi naj bi opolnomočilo z znanjem, spretnostmi in vrednotami, da lahko živijo dostojno, gradijo svoje življenje in prispevajo k družbi. V okviru projekta Holistični izobraževalni proces in krepitev duševnega zdravja, ki ga financirata Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost (ARRS) in Mednarodni inštitut za psihoterapijo in aplikativno psihologijo v sodelovanju z Alma Mater Europaea – ECM, smo raziskovali v kolikšni meri respondenti udejanjajo mednarodne smernice pri svojem delu. Dobljene podatke smo povezali s stopnjo pridobljene izobrazbe, saj smo predvidevali, da bolj izobraženi tudi pogosteje upoštevajo omenjene smernice. Rezultati kažejo 8 od 10 statistično značilnih korelacij med formalno izobrazbo delavcev in uporabo smernic. Univerzitetno izobraženi respondenti se najredkeje poslužujejo sedmih smernic: domišljija, ustvarjalnost, spomin, sklepanje, spoštovanje lepote, telesne spretnosti in kritično mišljenje. Ugotovljeno lahko povežemo z dodiplomskim izobraževanjem, ki pri bodočih delavcih v vzgoji in izobraževanju ne razvije dovolj senzibilnosti za obravnavane smernice celostnega pristopa, čeprav respondenti skoraj soglasno navajajo, da zmeraj upoštevajo vse navedene smernice pri svojem delu. Razlik med tistimi, ki po ocenah raziskovalcev, dobro poznajo holistični pristop in med tistimi, ki ga ne, nismo našli.

Ključne besede: celostni pristop, logopedagogika, vzgojno-izobraževalni delavci, UNESCO, Evropska komisija

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