

Заклучение. Необходимо рассматривать преемственность учреждения дошкольного образования и начальной школы в единстве с семьёй ребёнка дошкольного и младшего школьного возраста как связь и согласованность каждого компонента образования. Это должно обеспечить эффективное развитие ребёнка на разных возрастных этапах его жизни от 0 до 10 лет. При таком подходе реализация преемственности станет одним из условий непрерывного образования детей.

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PRESCHOOL TEACHER’S ATTITUDES TO THEIR OWN AUTHORITY

This article presents the results of a study of preschool teachers’ attitude to their own authority. The attitudes towards authority are considered as a specific perceptions of teachers about the capabilities of the authoritative teacher, as well as the factors affecting his authority. The survey has involved 50 preschool teachers, working in Bulgarian educational system. For the survey’s aims a short questionnaire and focus group method have been used. The results have indicated that the preschool teachers consider themselves as authorities and accept their work as a mission, despite difficult conditions. Some main problems that are associated with their low authority, preschool teachers identify as: the inadequate behavior of children and their parents; the high administrative pressure that interfere the teacher from being effective in his work; some significant irregularities in the educational legislation, as well as teachers’ reward that does not correspond well to the work done.

Key words: preschool teachers; teacher’s authority; attitude to authority.

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ОТНОШЕНИЕ ПЕДАГОГОВ К СВОЕМУ АВТОРИТЕТУ

В статье представлены результаты исследования по отношению педагогов дошкольных учреждений к своему авторитету. Отношения к авторитету рассматриваются как особые представления педагогов о способностях авторитетного учителя, а также о факторах, влияющих на его авторитет. В исследовании приняли участие 50 педагогов, работающих в болгарской образовательной системе. Для осуществления исследования использовался метод короткой анкеты и фокус-группы. Результаты показали, что педагоги дошкольных учреждений считают себя авторитетными и принимают свою работу в качестве миссии, несмотря на сложные условия её осуществления. В качестве проблем, способствующих снижению авторитета дошкольных педагогов, выделены следующие: неадекватное поведение детей и их родителей; высокое административное давление, которое мешает педагогу быть эффективным в своей деятельности; некоторые несоответствия законодательства в области дошкольного образования, а также размер вознаграждения педагогов, который не соответствует объёму и сложности выполненной работы.

Ключевые слова: дошкольные педагоги; авторитет педагога; отношение к авторитету.

Introduction. “Authority” is a concept widely used in the social and humanitarian sciences. As a specific status of a person, “authority” means the right to demonstrate power and influence [1; 2]. In this sense, “authorities are persons who are important to other people in terms of their attribution to certain qualities — knowledge, skills, abilities. They are expected to fulfill others expectations and they are highly valued by others. Authority is an expression of respect, regard and recognition” [1, p. 105].

Authority has two aspects — formal (formal authority) and informal (informal authority). Formal authority is determined by the position taken and its obligations and rights. Informal authority depends on the extent of which the others, stakeholders, recognize special knowledge, skills, abilities of the authority holder. In today’s humanitarian-oriented social environment, the informal aspect of authority is crucial to the recognition, respect and homage of the leader. Authority has a functional character and it is expressed in behavior through

“... the ability to profess influence” and manifests in a particular situation, depending to a great extent on the social roles that the subject fulfills in this situation [1, p. 105—106].

From this point of view, the authority of the teacher in the contemporary educational environment could be considered as a specific professional role, which is “a complex of functions that a person performs in order to enter a concrete job’s position”, from which “... follow the requirements for specific norms, specific behavior” [3]. As a professional role, the authority of the teacher is internalized, respectively manifests itself, in teacher’s behavior in the educational environment in accordance with her/his own attitudes.

In research terms, it is quite interesting to follow up the teacher's attitude to his or her own authority in conditions of attributes that are assigned to the authoritative teacher, as well as teacher's opinion of the factors that influence his

The empirical background of this article is the research conducted during the period 2009—2011. As a result of these studies, the role of authority was identified among the top five most preferred professional roles by teachers. They understand authority as a traditional role for direct mentoring and support, and this role is leading in the internalization of the status of tutor, manager and consultant [3—5].

Main part. The present study aims to identify the attitudes of preschool teachers to their own authority by describing on their perceptions of the capability of the authoritative teacher, as well as of the factors that influence his authority.

The survey involved 50 preschool teachers from different Bulgarian regions. 30 teachers work in big towns and 20 are from smaller settlements. 5 teachers have pedagogical experience of 1 to 5 years and are up to 30 years age; 13 teachers are with pedagogical experience of 5—10 years and are up to 40 years age; 21 are teachers with pedagogical experience of 10—20 years and are up to 50 years age, 11 teachers are with pedagogical experience over 20 years and are over 50 years age. All respondents are women. 45 respondents have a master’s degree and 5 have a bachelor’s degree. 47 of the subjects have a professional and qualification degree, according to regulatory documents in educational sphere in Republic of Bulgaria. All explored teachers have other additional professional qualifications [6].

The study was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, teachers respond in writing, anonymously, to three questions about teacher’s authority and to five information questions as well.

Questions about teacher’s authority are as follows:

1. Do you feel like an authoritative teacher:
 - a) yes, because;
 - b) no, because.
2. In Your opinion, who is responsible for the authority of the teacher (more than one answer):
 - a) the teacher;
 - b) the institution where he/she works;
 - c) the state;
 - d) society;
 - e) other.
3. What are your requirements for the educational environment in order to be an authoritative teacher:
 - a) to the institution;
 - b) to colleagues;
 - c) towards parents;
 - d) towards the students;
 - e) to the society.

The information questions relate to job position, gender, age, teaching experience, educational qualifications and the availability of additional professional qualifications.

In the second stage, based on the results obtained from the first stage, a focus group study was conducted to broaden and deepen the scope of the responses. Respondents discuss the following problems:

- Why do you think parents have a leading responsibility for the authority of the teacher?
- How should parents protect the authority of the teacher?
- How should the media protect the authority of the teacher?
- Who and how in the educational institution where you work, in particular, is responsible for your authority?
- Suggest concrete measures to protect the authority of the teacher — at governmental and institutional levels!

The results of the first part of the study show that 74 % (37) of the surveyed teachers identified themselves as authoritative. These are principally a middle-aged teachers (over 30 and up to 50) and those with over 10 years of experience in the education system.

The tendency that teachers from smaller settlements consider themselves as more authoritative is confirmed — 90% of them gave a positive answer. For comparison, this tendency is also observed in school system teachers.

Teachers who have identified themselves as authoritative indicate the following skills of an authoritative preschool teacher:

- to interact with parents — 86 %;
- to control and manage the child group — 82 %;

- to act adequately in critical and problematic situations — 74 %;
- to communicate with children — 52 %;
- to apply innovations in the educational process — 38 %.

According to the respondents, the capabilities of an authoritative teacher are:

- dedication — 92 %;
- responsiveness — 90 %;
- empathy — 70 %;
- patience — 68 %;
- stoicism — 58 %.

Preschool teachers, who consider themselves not sufficiently authoritative, attribute this primarily to external factors. These factors are similar to those indicated by school teachers, but with a different priority. An exception is the first factor that is also leading in school teachers:

- low parental culture and upbringing, respectively their children — 88 %;
- poor image created by the media of the teacher and the Kinder garden — 84 %;
- poor governmental policy in defense of teacher authority — 72 %;
- the lack of care by the institutions in protecting the authority of the teacher — 64 %.

39 or 78 % of the surveyed teachers pointed “other” when answering the question “Who do you think is responsible for the authority of the teacher?” Most of them have specified that they understand “other” mostly as parents. Also, not many references to this answer were given by primary school teachers. They also believe that parents are basically responsible for asserting their authority.

Preschool teachers, who believe that the teachers are responsible for their authority, are the biggest group compared to the other respondents — 13 teachers or 26 % of respondents. Preschool teachers and high school teachers are those who believe that society should take care of the authority of the teacher.

Asked in the focus groups, “Why do you think parents have a leading responsibility for the authority of the teacher?”, teachers respond that many of today's parents are arrogant and uneducated. They inspire their children, respectively form a negative social attitude towards the teaching community. In search of sensations, the media first pay attention to parents and broadcast negative news and information about teachers. This information is often misleading or false.

Preschool teachers, like their colleagues in the school system, believe that the government and institutions do not take the necessary care for the authority of teachers. This view is shared by all teachers, even those (26 %) who believe that the teachers are responsible of their authority. They all emphasize the strong administrative pressure of the system, the restrictions against teachers, the inability to practice their rights — especially when dealing with parents; the child aggression that becomes unmanageable.

Conclusion. The study of preschool teachers' attitudes toward their own authority are a good reason to the following conclusions:

- preschool teachers consider themselves to be authorities and accept their work as a mission despite difficult job's conditions;
- preschool teachers believe that the parents are basically responsible for protecting the authority of the teacher, which should be treated with respect for his work. That, according to the preschool teachers, will help to strengthen the authority of the teacher at all levels, incl. governmental and institutional. From other site, this conclusion means that teachers are not able to transform their attitudes and still rely on the formal authority imposed by the professional position that they occupy;
- among the main problems associated with their low authority, preschool teachers identify the inadequate behavior of children and their parents; the high administrative pressure that interfere teacher from being effective in his work; some significant irregularities in the educational legislation, as well as teachers' reward that does not correspond to the work done;
- conclusion, indirectly settled, is that teachers need support to form, assert, and transform their authority in a dynamic environment.

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