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Pedagogues' Competencies for Encouraging and Developing Professional Development of Teachers

Extended summary

Pedagogues play an important role in changing and improving the educational process in all its forms, including the improvement of its overall quality. Apart from the pedagogues, teachers also play an important role in improving the educational process as they have a direct impact on the quality of students' education. It is crucial for both the pedagogues and teachers to be provided with a continual professional development in order to improve their work, and pedagogues are especially important in this process. The competencies for encouraging and developing teachers' professional development are only one of the elements of developmental and professional competencies of pedagogues. The results of the research conducted so far have shown that competencies are not sufficiently compatible with pedagogues' personal and professional needs. The research based on the pedagogues' self-assessment has shown that a great importance is attributed to the pedagogues' developmental competencies and to the encouragement of their professional development. The previous research indicated that the levels of development of teachers' developmental competencies had not been thoroughly explored. Therefore, it was a challenge to us to "break the ice" and investigate the levels of this competence. The aim of the research was to identify, based on the pedagogues' self-reporting (self-assessment), the differences in the levels of development of their competencies and in the levels of their involvement in encouraging and developing the professional development

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of teachers relative to certain socio-demographic characteristics of the pedagogues. Our main hypothesis was that there are statistically significant differences in the levels of development of the competencies and their involvement in the teachers' professional development. These variables were examined in the context of the pedagogues' working hours and relative to some specific socio-demographic characteristics of the pedagogues (years of service, the location of the primary school, and the level of school). The research was conducted by applying a survey as the research method and the scaling technique on a sample of 78 pedagogues. The instruments (two self-assessment instruments) were taken from a wider research (Branković et al., 2018) in which they served as subscales for measuring the level of the competence development and the level of participation in encouraging and developing teacher professional development. The instrument, along with the two subscales, has never been published before. The theoretical basis of the research, or the basis for constructing the subscales, was found in the papers dealing with the classification of the pedagogues' competencies, as well as the functions and areas of the pedagogues' work (Branković, 2004; Branković et al., 2018; Fejdetić, Šnidarić, 2014; Ledić et al., 2013; Staničić, 2004; Trnavac, 1996). The research results (one general and three specific hypotheses) showed that school pedagogues have a high level of competence and involvement in encouraging and developing the professional development of teachers, but that the differences in the levels relative to certain socio-demographic characteristics are not statistically significant. The key implications of the research are as follows: in planning their working hours, the high school pedagogues should give a priority to the development of the yearly professional development programme, participate more intensely in the implementation of the collective forms of professional development, raising the quality and content of the professional development programmes, as well as contemplate on the methodological justification for including teachers in investigating the pedagogues' competencies. The indirect implications of the research relate to the need to critically reconsider the development of the "pedagogues' work methodology" as a separate pedagogical discipline. The key implications of the research relate to the need to critically reconsider the curriculum of the pedagogy studies, the quality and content of the professional development programs as a methodological justification for involving teachers in the research of the pedagogues' competencies.

Keywords: pedagogue's competencies, developmental competencies, professional development, areas of pedagogues' work, self-assessment of competencies.

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