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YOUNG AND MOBILE: POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME FOR DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

Abstract: *Education policies are taking new dimensions today. One of the most important ones is the international aspect and study mobility. Various strategies and programmes are emerging in the European Union aimed at combining these dimensions and providing an adequate framework for a broader, more inclusive and high-quality education of young people in Europe. The Erasmus programme is one of the options in this context and has reached great popularity among young people in higher education. This paper provides an overview of the effects of youth participation in study mobility within the Erasmus+ programme. A literature review on outcomes at the level of soft skills related to personal development and employability among young people with experience of study mobility concludes certain favourable benefits of the programme at the individual level. The Erasmus+ programme for the period 2021–2027 brings some substantive changes and a significantly larger budget. The programme will have greater coverage as study mobility would be further encouraged, so impacts on young people in the future should be closely monitored and researched.*

Keywords: *Erasmus programme, benefits of mobility, young people, mobility, education*

INTRODUCTION

Today, education and work are highlighted topics in the context of internationalisation, and this context is considered an expected component of the regular educational process and various training and lifelong learning programmes, especially in European Union countries (European Commission, 2020). The former stability and static provision of academic services and professional development have been replaced by the mobility and dynamism of educational processes and their performance, thus providing a wider range of benefits. The European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (hereinafter: Erasmus) is a programme that supports education, training, youth, and sport in Europe (European Commission, 2020), so this programme was selected as an example of the international environment of education that will be discussed in this paper.

This paper will present the specifics of the Erasmus programme and its possible impact on the academic and social development of young people, first and foremost students, who are participating in it. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of youth participation in Erasmus mobility and the possible impact of this programme on educational outcomes, employment, identity creation, and students' personal development components, especially soft skills. To better understand the purpose of international mobility in education as an added value for the overall educational process, we first note a few important remarks on the importance of education for the personal development of young persons.

Education, in the broadest sense of the word, is a constant process of connecting formal, non-formal, and informal education in overall individual development that lasts a lifetime. In a narrower sense, it is a process of acquiring knowledge and building different skills, habits, value systems and rules of conduct (Gvozdenović, 2011). According to the theoretical assumptions of functionalists, education is recognised as one of the most important institutional areas, i.e., segments in society (Lu, 2010).¹ They explain that education has a manifest and latent function – manifest function including socialisation, social control, social position, transmission of cultures and cultural innovation, while the latent function includes social networking, group work and support, political and social integration (Crossman, 2020). Suzić (2005) points out that educational outcomes can be monitored only through the prism of individual personality

¹ Functionalists interpret that one of the functions of education is the acquisition of a certain social position, so one of the methods used during education is social mobility, i.e., creating assumptions that an individual, through education, acquires a certain place in society and acquires social position (Lu, 2010).

development and its competencies, which involve different knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, and values. He states that the effects of investing in youth through generations can be observed through changes in society².

Šuran (2018) emphasizes that the curriculum of modern schools is more focused on practical subjects that should prepare young people for the world of work but should also be focused on the cognitive and emotional capacities of everyone to acquire contact skills. Ilišin and Radin (2007) state that, in addition to the above, the social competence achieved through education and maturation contributes to the formation of awareness and patterns of behaviour among young people.³

Nowadays, young people are taking on business, professional, public and family roles with a certain delay. Various reasons may cause it (such as extended schooling, unstable jobs, etc.), and it prolongs their youth status with limited participation in contributing to society (through work or public action). In the last few decades, however, young people have “benefited from the extension of education” because, through various opportunities, including international mobility, they have acquired specific and broader knowledge in certain areas and additional new opportunities for personal and professional affirmation (Ilišin and Radin, 2007, p. 19).

In this context, socialisation is one of the essentials of education, which implies the influence of society on young people, who are exposed to various influences from their environment to prepare for social roles and develop their own individuality (Gvozdenović, 2011). Therefore, education has a significant role in the overall development of a young person and their contribution to the economic and social development of society, so expectations regarding the outcome of education are multidimensional. First of all, education is expected to contribute to achieving a better quality of life for people, which includes a stable socio-economic status and favourable opportunities for their personal development. Young people also have such expectations from formal education, believing that it will provide them with employment in the desired activity, economic independence, and entry into the world of adults, but also the

² In this context, cognitive style is considered as an outcome of education, and a model of twenty-eight competencies for the 21st century is developed, which this author divides into four groups (cognitive, affective, social, and work-action), and then in each of them lists seven individual competencies in order for young people to be better prepared for their social roles (Suzić, 2001, pp. 292–303).

³ Similarly, Miljković (2017) states that during education, in order to develop the psychological resilience of young people, it would be necessary to introduce Penn’s Optimism Programme more consistently than before, so it can strengthen the cognitive and emotional functioning of young people, personal strengths of their character, and to develop good interpersonal relationships in private and work roles.

acquisition of the necessary competencies and abilities at the level of personal development (Baranović, 2002; Ruiz Lopez, 2016).

On the other hand, Irving and Williams (1999) state that personal development can be planned and structured, while personal growth cannot. Personal growth is a consequence of a person's effort invested in personal development, and it represents the elevation of a person's overall quality to a new level, while personal development is specified through certain characteristics of a person. Personal growth is one of the six dimensions that define psychological well-being and represents an individual's ability to implement certain strategies that lead to the full development of his or her potential (Ryff and Keyes, 1995; according to Páez Gallego et al., 2020). Regarding personal development processes, young people attach great importance to education in regard to interest in education, emotional attitude towards schooling and their transition to secondary and higher education (Bouillet, 2005).

Within the wider discussion on the benefits of education, the main argument of this paper is related to specific aspects of education practice (student mobility) and its contribution to different aspects of young people's lives. Therefore, the main goal of the paper is to give insights into the benefits of participation in study mobility within the Erasmus+ programme for young people in two relevant dimensions: soft skills and employment. Therefore, this study contributes to the relatively scattered literature concerning the impacts of the Erasmus+ programme on these aspects.

SHORT METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The method used is a literature review close to the systematic literature approach, which is defined as a method of "making sense of large bodies of information and a means of contributing to the answers to questions about what works and what does not – and many other types of questions too" (Petticrew and Roberts, 2005, p. 2). A systematic literature review summarizes the knowledge from a body of literature and uncovers "all" of the evidence relevant to a question, with a focus on research that reports data (Aromataris and Pearson, 2014). The process of a literature review undertaken for this paper follows the phases of collecting, analysing, and synthesizing the literature. It was based on two key steps, preliminary search/identification and selection of relevant papers, followed by analysis. First, we searched for all the papers related to the Erasmus programme from databases in which our faculty library has access to and publicly available databases (like Google Scholar) with the use of different topic-relevant keywords such Erasmus, Erasmus programme, Erasmus mobility, Erasmus experience, Erasmus youth, Erasmus soft skills, Erasmus skills development, Erasmus employability, and many others connected to the

topic of the paper⁴. The criterion for the search was also a time span as we searched for papers from the beginning of the programme until the year 2021 (when the new 2021–2027 programme perspective starts). In the second step, all the paper's abstracts were examined for relevance to the topic, sorted (with duplicates and papers that do not focus on the topic excluded), and those that were relevant for the scope of this paper were selected for review. In the end, 68 literature units were used in writing this paper, but those also included ones that were not only related to the main topics of analysis benefits of participation in study mobility within the Erasmus+ programme on soft skills and employment, but also wider aspects of the paper.

In the first part of the paper, we will provide an initial reflection on the development of the Erasmus programme to set the context and characteristics of youth mobility. After that, the paper will try to assess the benefits of participation in study mobility within the Erasmus+ programme for young people in two relevant dimensions: soft skills and employment. In the discussion and conclusion, the paper provides final remarks about programme characteristics, their role in policy, and young people's lives, as well as future outlooks.

ERASMUS PROGRAMME: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

How did it all start?

In the European Union, the Erasmus+ programme represents an additional opportunity for the education of young people in an international environment. Since its beginning, the Erasmus programme has predominantly promoted student mobility. The reasons for this lie in the realization that economic, social and political partnerships at the European Union level are based on the foundations of education and research. Therefore, one way to achieve this was to ensure student mobility in these areas, as well as the development of higher education and research that are most important for the development of science and technology (Mizikaci and Arslan, 2019).

The Erasmus+ programme arose from the need to strengthen a European identity in the context of the 1980s, when it was sought to increase the degree of European identification and integration (Adonnino, 1985). It was not until 1984 that the European Council decided to act in order to bring the European Union closer to the citizens and, for this purpose, a committee was created whose main task was to bring the EU closer to the citizenship of the Member States (Adonnino, 1985). The work of this committee and the implementation of its programmes by the European Commission were the beginnings of the development of today's Erasmus, but its beginnings are visible even earlier, in the so-called "Joint Study Programme" (JSP) from 1976. JSP can also be called

⁴ We used a synonyms of the keywords used in previous academic studies.

the forerunner of Erasmus, and its main goal was to strengthen the cooperation of universities from different Member States through the implementation of exchange programmes for students and professors (Pepin, 2006)⁵. JSP provided a framework through which, by upgrades and systematic redesign, the Erasmus Programme was created ten years later (Feyen, 2008).

Although all Member States primarily supported the idea of the Erasmus programme, certain aspects needed to be further elaborated on or changed. Divisions, the problem of harmonization and the impossibility of finding a “common language” (especially between the European Commission and the ministers of education) have almost led to the cancellation of Erasmus (Feyen, 2008). Yet, despite various disagreements and months of negotiations, a partial compromise was finally reached, and eventually Erasmus officially began to exist on July 1, 1987. Erasmus initially involved education, but today it includes vocational training and a variety of European Union programmes⁶, the aim of which is to improve and enhance the quality of education and training, primarily of young people, but also of other age groups within the education system and beyond (European Commission, 2020).

Recent developments

Owing to the integration of different programmes into one, the structure of the Erasmus+ programme 2014–2020, like its previous versions, is comprehensive and complex. Therefore, to facilitate coordination and organisation, all programmes under the Erasmus+ umbrella are divided into 3 so-called “Key Actions”. Key Action 1 (hereinafter: KA1) refers to the mobility of individuals, and it includes: mobility of students and staff, joint graduate study Erasmus Mundus (integrated international study programmes) and loans for Erasmus+ graduate studies (European Commission, 2020)⁷. In addition to student and

⁵ As many as 600 JSP programmes later served as the basis for the Erasmus network and programmes. According to many parameters, JSP covered everything that Erasmus includes (one of the most significant differences was the lack of funding for such programmes / lack of scholarships).

⁶ Today Erasmus represents the integration of a range of separate programmes from 2007–2013. Like the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Youth in Action Programme, Erasmus Mundus, Alpha and other programmes implemented by the Commission (European Commission, 2020).

⁷ Student and staff mobility has a couple of sub-programmes, depending on the end users. Thus, for example, there is student mobility, which is divided into: university study exchange (at a partner higher education institution abroad) and vocational (student) internship abroad in a company or other relevant workplace. Staff mobility can take place during the teaching period and during the training period. Student mobility as well as staff mobility takes place in countries participating in the programme or in countries that have a contract that allows this type of mobility (partner countries) (European Commission, 2020). As a rule, student mobility lasts from 3 to 12 months (professional practice can last 2 months), and the mobility of teaching and administrative staff usually lasts from 2 days to 2 months.

staff mobility in higher education, KA1 also includes mobility projects for students and staff in vocational education and training. Furthermore, KA1 also includes mobility projects for educators and mobility projects for staff in adult education, both of which include teaching, structured courses or training abroad and work monitoring (European Commission, 2020). KA1 includes mobility projects for young people and people working with young people too. This type of mobility is not necessarily linked to academic status (student or pupil) but includes youth exchanges and the mobility of people working with youth⁸. This paper will focus on the specific part the KA1, students' mobility.

Key Action 2 (hereinafter: KA2), unlike KA1, focuses on cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practice and supports the following measures: strategic partnerships in the field of youth education and training; knowledge associations – European universities; sectoral skills associations; capacity building in the field of higher education; and capacity building in the field of youth (European Commission, 2020). Key Action 3 (KA3) is related to support for policy reform and refers to the following: knowledge in the fields of education, training, and youth; policy innovation initiatives; support for European policy tools; cooperation with international organisations; dialogue with participants and promotion of policies and programmes. These activities are carried out directly by the European Commission or are carried out through special calls for proposals managed by the Executive Agency (Paić, 2017).

Today, Erasmus+ is the European Union's programme in the fields of education (all levels), training, youth, and sport for the period 2014–2020 (European Commission, 2020). The Erasmus+ for the period programme 2021–2027 has similar objectives (European Commission, 2021) but an even higher budget (€26.2 billion for 2021–2027 in comparison to €14.7 billion for 2014–2020) suggesting the importance of the program for the future of the EU.

Given this development strategy, generous funding for student mobility has been provided since the beginning of the Erasmus programme, which has been strongly encouraged. From the introduction of Erasmus in 1987 to 2019, over 4 million students, trainees and academic staff across Europe have participated in the Erasmus mobility programme. During the 2013–2014 academic year, over €580 million was invested in the Erasmus Programme to fund the mobility of approximately 272,000 students, 57,000 teachers, and administrative staff (European Commission, 2015).

The Erasmus programme brings together more than four thousand academic institutions in more than 30 countries and focuses on international mobility

⁸ “Youth exchanges allow groups made up of at least two young people from different countries to meet and live together for up to 21 days. During the youth exchange, participants, with the support of the group leader, jointly implement a work programme (mix of workshops, exercises, discussions, role-plays, simulations, outdoor activities, etc.) designed and prepared before the exchange” (European Commission, 2020).

to better employ young people, and to promote the development of personal skills such as interculturality, adaptability, openness and flexibility (European Commission, 2014). The Erasmus student exchange programme, or KA1 activity, operates in all EU Member States and in several neighbouring regions, with approximately a quarter of a million individuals exchanging each year, creating a working example of cross-border cooperation and a tool to facilitate intercultural learning. The estimated duration of mobility is three to twelve months (Cairns, 2019).

The Erasmus programme contains various objectives and, directly or indirectly, promotes European values, social inclusion and equality. The programme contributes to the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training and the sustainable development of partner countries in the field of higher education and sport (European Commission, 2020) and the former goals of the European 2020 strategy but also the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training and the EU Youth Strategy (Nada and Legutko, 2022). It is considered to be an important part of European higher education area (European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Eurydice, 2020).

The key role in the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme is played by the European Commission, which manages the budget, determines the priorities, objectives and criteria of the programme, directs and monitors the overall implementation of the programme and its evaluation at the European level (European Commission, 2020). In order for the whole programme to work and be meaningful, the most important element is the cooperation of the various bodies of the European Union and European Commission bodies, as well as the cooperation of the Member States and their bodies and national agencies.

The entrusted national agencies actually form a “bridge” between the Commission and the participating implementing organisations at the local, regional, or national level (European Commission, 2020). Erasmus+ “actuators” can be divided into three stages/tiers. The first level includes the holder of the programme and the ultimately responsible institution – the European Commission. The Commission then coordinates the whole programme and manages it indirectly by delegating most of the duties to the national agencies. The national agencies form the second tier, and they directly manage the implementation of the programme, ensuring that all legal and other rules are respected. The last tier is composed of organisations, institutions, legal entities, and other entities that implement the programme themselves⁹.

⁹ Take the Erasmus internship programme in Croatia as an example. The planning, scope and content of the programme is developed by the Commission. The Commission then leaves the management of the programme to the relevant ministry and a national agency such as the Office for International Cooperation of the University of Zagreb, and the final implementers are then individual faculties of the City of Zagreb that have signed agreements for international cooperation.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATION IN ERASMUS STUDY MOBILITY TO THE PERSONAL OUTCOMES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Before describing in detail, the concrete benefits in terms of knowledge, skills and employability that participation in the Erasmus programme provides to young people, it should be briefly considered why and how young people are involved in this programme. The decision to participate in the Erasmus programme (study mobility) is mainly conditioned by the professional aspects and personal preferences of young people (Souto-Otero et al., 2013). Van Mol et al. (2014) explain that personal motivation to participate in a mobility programme should be viewed through the prism of a person's social environment, personal experience and the macroeconomic situation in the homeland. Jacobone and Moro (2015)¹⁰ find that young people participate in Erasmus more for personal than academic and professional reasons, i.e., more for leisure and cultural activities than for academic achievement¹¹. In their analysis of the motivation of the Erasmus student population, Lesjak et al. (2015) state that Erasmus participants are most often motivated to develop personal and professional skills and take advantage of career opportunities, but on the other hand, they have a strong desire for free time and relaxation (Lesjak et al., 2015) and entertainment (Asoodar et al., 2017). Hadis points out that Erasmus experiences that are often driven by personal development are not pointless in terms of academic and professional development and calls them "playful" motives (Hadis, 2005).¹² Often motivated by them, students choose universities in those countries that have natural beauty, rich culture, art and history and other similar features (Lesjak et al., 2015).

One of the ideas of the Erasmus programme is to make education accessible, especially for students from those countries where young people have limited access to social and economic sources of support. Therefore, it should fulfil the value of the programme through which student mobility has contributed to the development of social inclusion and social cohesion in the European Union and other countries in the region. Notably, students of lower socio-economic status

¹⁰ Longitudinal study on a sample of 505 Italian students.

¹¹ However, respondents who are more oriented towards professional and academic development showed greater satisfaction with the academic dimension (such as achieving academic success or gaining professional experience) while respondents who are more oriented towards gaining personal experience outside the academic field showed greater satisfaction with the social dimension (such as making new friendships or the acquisition of new cultural skills) (Jacobone and Moro, 2015).

¹² As an example, he points out that during the exposure to the culture and lifestyle of the country in which they live during Erasmus, the student develops various interests in terms of new ideas. This further results in greater interest in both academic and professional growth and development upon return to their country.

are largely underrepresented in Erasmus study programmes, so government policies should be geared towards initiatives that encourage this group's participation in international study mobility programmes (Iriondo, 2020).¹³

When looking at the Erasmus programme at a general level, Mizikaci and Arslan (2019) state that the advantages of KA1 activities include strong mobility of young people, economic well-being, the impact of cooperation between corporations and higher education institutions, academic and scientific development of universities, strong labour market development and more significant recognition of certain countries with developed higher education and colleges. Martínez-Usarralde et al. (2017) state that participation in this programme contributes to the development of their social, cognitive, emotional and professional skills and the capacity to recognise the meaning of the social context in which they find themselves and the capacity for active citizenship. The results of the study by Cotren et al. (2015) state that youth participation in mobility programmes improves their skills for organising, presenting, collaborating and directing.

The effect of youth participation in the Erasmus programme is manifested in various ways, which Jacobone and Moro (2015) present in their research on three levels: personal experience, different outcomes (acquisition of language, intercultural skills, academic and professional competencies) and special influences (European and national identity) (Jacobone and Moro, 2015). These potential contributions of participation in KA1 will be considered below through the perspective of contributions to the development of different skills of young people, as well as their employability, primarily looking at the individual level of outcomes.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS: A) DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT SKILLS OF YOUNG PEOPLE DURING PARTICIPATION IN ERASMUS STUDY MOBILITY

Studies show that several different skills of young people are developed and strengthened during Erasmus study mobility. Castello (2019) reported that young people after this experience have a stronger (self) critical approach, a higher level of self-awareness, commitment to academic obligations, communication skills and a sense of interculturality. The outcomes of international mobility have results in the acquisition of personal, linguistic, and intercultural skills and employability, i.e., the professional aspect (Jacobone and Moro, 2015). The Erasmus programme is perceived as a programme during which its participants have the opportunity to develop the ability to adapt to different social situations

¹³ It has also been identified that lack of financial resources and insufficient knowledge of the foreign language of programme are obstacles to the inclusion of high school students in international mobility (MECD 2012, according to Iriondo, 2019).

and challenges. The experiences gained during a stay in a foreign country and university increase students' capacity for open-mindedness and strengthen their sense of freedom and autonomy during different phases of their lives, and the need to successfully adapt to different social environments (Martínez-Usarraldea et al. 2017). Ballatore and Ferede (2013) research suggests that Erasmus participants (compared to non-participants) are engaged in more academic and leisurely travel and are more open to international opportunities. During participation in study mobility, students more often use personal responsibility skills because they are exposed to new and sometimes demanding situations (such as making decisions regarding academic plans, placement, paying utility bills on time, medical care, daily meals, laundry etc.) without the direct support of their parents and other family members. These experiences enhance their communication skills and adoption strategies, which are important benefits for students resulting from participation in the Erasmus programme, especially for adapting and achieving personal well-being in new social situations (Martínez-Usarraldea et al. 2017).

It is therefore not surprising that a certain level of independence is recognised as one of the elements of personal experience. More than 60% of respondents in Jacobone and Moro's research (2015) believe that this aspect is important. Independence proves to be the most important element in the research of Asoodar et al. (2017) on the "successful Erasmus experience".¹⁴ Sigalas (2010) reports that students with experience participating in the Erasmus programme from different countries have recognised that their self-confidence has increased, that they have improved social skills, strengthened skills to adapt to new situations and leadership skills. Corten et al. (2015) compared the development of competencies of internationally mobile students while abroad with their peers staying at their home university and found that mobile students develop more organisational, presentation, collaboration and self-direction competencies.

In his qualitative study, Costello shows how returnees from Erasmus express a desire for new international experiences (Costello, 2019). The same results are obtained by Bammer et al. (2017) in a large British study¹⁵ where respondents significantly agree that, after participation in a certain mobility programme, they can move and engage independently more easily, whether it is a job, volunteering, professional practice or something similar (Bammer et al., 2017).

¹⁴ Their results show that "becoming a more independent person" is the most important aspect for respondents before, during and after the Erasmus experience (Asoodar et al., 2017).

¹⁵ The research was conducted through the online questionnaire during 2015/16 on a sample of 16,373 participants.

In addition to educational requirements, while participating in study mobility programmes students are exposed not only to various challenges of adapting to new living and studying conditions, but also travelling and learning about new cultures, as well as interpersonal relationships in this cultural context (Užpalienė and Vaičiūnienė, 2012, according to Mizikaca and Arslan, 2019). This is especially true for the community of incoming students from different countries and cultures who have gathered at a foreign (host) university and who share academic commitments and new social situations during university activities and informal events. Such experiences, according to student statements, have contributed to increasing awareness of the importance of respecting the diversity of cultures from which students come and increasing tolerance of diversity among people in general (Sigalas, 2010). Therefore, one of the more significant dimensions of personal growth and development during participation in international mobility is the aspect of intercultural competencies, where differences are more frequent and emphasised due to the contacts that take place.¹⁶ Nada and Legutko (2022) show that Erasmus's experience can partly contribute to more internationally oriented aspirations, a better understanding of cultural diversity, or an interest in engaging with new international experiences.

Exposing students to different cultures during mobility through frequent contacts with other Erasmus participants leads to the development of cultural intelligence, and this is an indispensable part of the Erasmus experience (Gökten and Serap, 2018). For example, research with the Erasmus population in Turkey has shown that Erasmus encourages greater sensitivity to other cultures (Turhan, 2016). The already mentioned study by Bammer et al. shows that the perception of certain values changes after Erasmus, so more than 50% of respondents (Erasmus students) believe that even after Erasmus, some values such as equality, individual freedoms, human rights, interpersonal solidarity, etc. have become more important (Bammer et al., 2017). A Romanian study on this dimension of the Erasmus programme¹⁷ showed that more than 85% of students believe that Erasmus has had a positive impact on their interpersonal abilities, and 83% believe that their interpersonal relationship with foreigners has improved (Dolga et al., 2015). Sigalas also (2010) states that young people participating in mobility programmes have gained awareness of the importance of respecting diversity, and have strengthened their tolerance towards different cultures.

¹⁶ A particularly significant theory is Allport's *contact hypothesis*. As early as 1954, Allport argued that direct personal contact between members of different groups under certain circumstances could lead to a reduction in prejudice and the development of intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; according to Sigalas, 2010).

¹⁷ The research was conducted through a questionnaire on a sample of 89 students, students of the Technical University of Timisoara.

Linguistic expression is crucial for the development of intercultural and interpersonal skills during the Erasmus Programme. Learning a particular language in its native language area contributes to greater language comprehension, faster acquisition, and better pronunciation of that same language (Hessel, 2016). Erasmus essentially provides an environment with ideal conditions for the development of language skills. In her research, Dolga points out that almost 90% of young people agree with the statement that Erasmus has had a positive impact on the development of foreign language skills (Dolga et al., 2015). Some Erasmus programmes, such as youth exchanges, are focused and specialised in the development of language skills (European Commission, 2020), by socialising and planning joint activities of participants from different countries. Kratz and Netz (2016) report that 68% of German students with experience of international mobility have achieved a high level of foreign language use. A significant improvement in foreign language competence in speech and writing was also confirmed by Rodrigues (2013) for students with experience of international mobility (Iriondo, 2020).

A potentially significant aspect to be considered is also the role of Erasmus in the development of European identity, which can be considered individual but also societal level outcomes. During the early development of the Erasmus programme, one of the main ideas was to develop a European identity among young people and thus contribute to European integration. This goal is considered to be one of the best and most often defined when it comes to programmes involving studying abroad that show the creation of more positive attitudes towards other European countries and strengthen the sense of belonging to Europe (Jacobone and Moro, 2015). The most relevant study on this topic, that of the European Commission (2019), confirms the thesis on strengthening European identity. Young people very often come into contact with other cultures, which is in line with their results, which show a higher level of European identity among Erasmus students (Souto-Otero, 2019). However, it is important to note that most participants also reflect “pro-European” attitudes before going to Erasmus, which become even more pronounced upon completion of the programme (Souto-Otero, 2019).¹⁸ A

¹⁸ Perhaps the best example of the impact of the Erasmus programme on European identification can be seen in the example of Turkey. As a partner country and a candidate for EU accession, Turkey has a very specific geopolitical position in relation to the Member States of the European Union, and in the case of mobility to Turkey, the intercultural aspect is even more pronounced. This difference in culture can often lead to certain prejudices. Historically, there are various stereotypes of Turkey fostered by European societies (Oner, 2015). The Erasmus programme is of great help in removing such prejudices and stereotypes through student exchanges which serve as a great opportunity to learn more about the culture of the country, which leads to cultural integration that ultimately contributes to the view of Turkey as a European country (Demirkol, 2013; according to Oner, 2015), what is in fact the very core of the European identity.

Finnish study also found that the Erasmus+ programme improves the sense of European identity among young people (Eronen et al., 2017). The importance of the acquired perception of students about belonging to the community of citizens of the European Union and a positive attitude towards the EU after the experience of the Erasmus programme is further emphasised. Golubeva et al. (2018) conducted a survey with students from 23 countries who participated in mobility programmes in Hungary and Spain. They conclude that studying abroad is considered a potential means of strengthening the European identity and fostering civic identity by experiencing a different cultural, political and social environment, which encourages intercultural understanding, flexibility, cooperation, openness to change and respect for cultural diversity.

On the other hand, Sigalas (2010) finds that there are no statistically significant data that support the fact that youth participation in the Erasmus programme (KA1) leads to a higher degree of European identity among young people. He cites insufficient contact between young people of different nationalities as one of the potential reasons (Sigalas, 2010).¹⁹ In the research on European identity after the experience of KA1, Oborune (2013) also obtains the results that suggest that the growth of European identity does not necessarily mean a decline in national identity. On the other hand, Pozzoni (2018) in his research states that with the development of European identification, young people feel more connected to their home country and culture (Pozzoni, 2018).

Another interesting element in the development of academic competencies is the diversification of university programmes, learning methods and practices. Geopolitically speaking, the greatest impact of Erasmus on studying is noticeable in students from less developed Member States and partner countries (Souto-Otero, 2019), as for them it is opening new opportunities that are often missing in their own countries.²⁰

¹⁹ He states that contrary to certain assumptions that Erasmus participants often move in international groups, they more often remain in the circles of people of the same nationality. Cristina Cojocaru also referred to Sigalas' research in her work. She argues that its results can be partly explained by the fact that the survey was conducted in the UK which is one of the countries with the highest level of Euroscepticism (Cojocaru, 2019).

²⁰ That is why, but also in an effort to sensitize certain cultures and groups, a large number of Erasmus youth exchanges such as the Youth Exchange or Training Course programmes take place in less developed countries. Italian research on short-term projects such as Youth Exchanges shows how these programmes also lead to positive outcomes on the professional and academic aspects of young people, but also points to certain potential problems such as insufficient distinction between formal, non-formal and informal learning / education that is very often used in those short-term Erasmus mobility projects (Merico et al., 2019).

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS: B) CONTRIBUTION OF ERASMUS STUDY MOBILITY TO THE EMPLOYABILITY OF PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

The question is whether and in what way Erasmus programmes potentially strengthen the employability of young people. In general, universities, governments, employers and students assume that international study mobility has a positive impact on employment benefits (Waibel et al., 2017; Iriondo, 2020). However, several studies have focused specifically on the potential contribution of Erasmus study mobility to youth employability. DiPietro (2015) finds that graduates who have studied at a foreign university have 22.9% greater employment opportunity within three years of graduation. Compared to students who were not part of the Erasmus+ programme, the study shows that programme participants find a job faster after graduation, they are more satisfied with their job and they are more often employed abroad. Employers are also more satisfied with Erasmus students and their competencies. These results are partly supported by several studies (Dolga et al., 2015; Martínez-Usarralde et al., 2017; Costa, 2018; Jansone and Dislere, 2018; Savić et al., 2017; Soares and Mosquera, 2019).

From a student perspective, a recent study (Souto-Otero et al., 2019) shows that Erasmus+ students hold that mobility has helped their careers, especially those students coming from the southern and eastern Member States, as well as those from partner countries.

In addition, some data suggest that (Rodrigues, 2013) participation in international exchange programmes has an impact on the higher amount of salary (approximately 3%) in relation to those employees who do not have this experience, although there are also results that do not find differences in salaries (Netz, 2016). Data on the impact of mobility on salary vary depending on which country the students are from. Positive trends in this regard are recorded by employees in Germany, France, Great Britain, and Scandinavian countries. In Spain, for example, it was found that six years after graduation, Erasmus mobility had the effect of increasing wages between 10% and 12%, so for Spanish people the Erasmus Programme could be considered a good investment (Iriondo, 2020).

The situation is similar with academic competencies that are directly related to professional competencies (some research equates them and some separates them). A study by the European Commission (Souto-Otero, 2019) shows that Erasmus+ participants are more likely to enrol in a higher level of study and that most of them claim that their mobility experience has helped them in further professional reorientation. Kehm (2005) also reports that international study mobility contributes to human development in general and to the understanding of the importance of higher education institutions and opportunities to acquire

knowledge abroad. Croatian research on the topic of the Erasmus programme also points to a positive learning environment. The elements that stand out in particular are subjects in English (where the connection between linguistic and professional aspects is visible once again); individual consultations; extracurricular activities; participation in projects and joint tasks (Vidacek-Hains and Parlaj, 2020). In his analysis, Engel (2010) points out that Erasmus students self-evaluate much better than non-Erasmus students when it comes to international competencies such as knowledge of other countries, foreign language proficiency and intercultural understanding, where they feel more ready for future employment and can provide more specific knowledge and skills (Engel, 2010)²¹.

In addition, the broader Erasmus programme offers a range of mobility programmes, some of which are directly related to work or internships in the profession (European Commission, 2020). The aim of these programmes is to provide a framework for the advancement, growth and development of the youth and organisations, and to diversify in terms of greater opportunities for youth employment. Evaluation during the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020 in Finland showed that professional growth at the level of organisations and at the individual level in this period is associated with Erasmus+ activities (Eronen et al., 2017). In this aspect, professional internship programmes are especially important, because they guide young people and additionally specialize them in the field of their profession. Dwyer and Peters (2004) found that as many as 70% of trainees stated that studying and doing an internship abroad gave them an additional impetus within their profession. A large proportion, as many as 83% of trainees, stated that professional practice helped them acquire the competencies needed to work in the profession (Dwyer and Peters, 2004). While certain personal aspects, such as language or intercultural competences, are adopted actively and passively, professional and academic aspects require a much higher degree of engagement and involvement. Nevertheless, despite the need for a higher level of activity, a large number of young people claim that Erasmus experiences have a positive impact on these aspects (Bracht et al., 2006). In their research, Jacobone and Moro emphasise the positive effects on aspects such as: knowledge of professional subjects and understanding, as well as abilities regarding employment (Jacobone and Moro, 2015).

²¹ The VALERA study shows that employers believe that young graduates who have attended student exchanges are superior when it comes to international competencies, soft skills and professionally related abilities (Engel, 2010).

DISCUSSION – KEY ASPECTS OF THE ROLE OF ERASMUS IN YOUNG PEOPLE’S LIVES

Education policy is an area in which the Member States of the European Union have significant autonomy, which they delegate to supranational bodies (Feyen, 2008) very rarely and only to a limited extent. The European Commission is becoming increasingly important in creating and implementing education policy pursued by public, as well as private bodies of Member States, expanding the scope of its influence vertically and horizontally (Ceri Jones, 2017). Education can be considered as a part of social policy, which brings with it issues of different aspects of coordination between beneficiaries of two systems, which can include certain benefits and financial aspects. For example, for Erasmus students, these are subsidies. Subsidies were the main dispute point between the European Commission and the Member States when planning the implementation of Erasmus (Feyen, 2008).

Nevertheless, despite the difficult goals, Erasmus seems to have become a successful programme within the EU. Therefore, this paper looks at different aspects of how it, as an integral part of the education system, affects the lives of young people through the development of their skills and strengthening their employability. The European Commission emphasises the important role of young people in the future of Europe and states that ensuring economic well-being and maximizing opportunities for young people to participate in employability systems is a significant step in developing successful, socially inclusive societies whose aim is a better future (European Commission, 2009).

The basic idea of the Erasmus programme was to strengthen links between European citizens by promoting student mobility and, in the field of career development and mobility, to connect future workforces in the European labour market, thus contributing to the development of a European identity in the European Union (Van Mol, 2014). For four decades, the European Union has focused on the integration of Member States’ higher education institutions in order to improve the quality of a highly skilled workforce, promote stronger cultural integration and foster a sense of European identity. Erasmus student mobility plays a key role in achieving these goals and is highly dependent on financial support coming from the European Union budget, so the more generous it is, the more fluid the mobility will be (Gonzalez et al., 2011).²²

²² Another way to increase student mobility, these authors argue, is to involve new higher education institutions from the neighbouring countries through contractual cooperation and through promoting Erasmus programmes by presenting Erasmus students’ experiences to their home university colleagues who do not yet have the experience for the purpose of sensitizing them to consider it and make a decision to study in one of the countries of the European Union for one to two semesters (Gonzalez et al., 2011).

When it comes to motivation to participate in Erasmus, young people often point out personal reasons, for example, leisure (Jacobone and Moro, 2015). Nevertheless, this paper shows that different segments of personal development are connected and that development in one area can very often result in development in another area, as Hadith (2016) points out in his paper. The perspective of the Erasmus programme focuses on the personal development of the individual, which can be achieved not only through the professional aspect, but also through a form of entertainment aimed more at intercultural rather than academic and professional elements. Taking as a frame of reference the explanation of personal growth and development of Irving and Williams (1999), it can be said that, in the context of Erasmus, personal development occurs on many levels and through a number of aspects. For example, we have three different aspects, such as linguistic development, personal development in terms of communication and interaction and personal development in a higher level of independence. The Erasmus programme connects this set of elements of personal development in a unique way, which favourably contributes to the overall personal growth of the individual. Wider benefits of the programme recognized in this paper related to soft skills and employability can promote social mobility as one of the important functions of education from the functionalist perspective (Lu, 2010).

In addition to personal growth and skills development, it is important to mention the influence of the environment, i.e., the sociological aspect, which is especially important in the context of Erasmus (KA1). While the psychological approach is focused on the individual and his “ability” as the primary source of personal growth and development (Páez Gallego, 2020), the sociological approach is as important because it emphasises the environment and shows how significant it is owing to the constant interaction of the individual with it.

This paper presents mostly the broader aspect of the personal growth and development of individuals in the context of Erasmus and the international environment. Erasmus symbolises great opportunity for the youth and their education. However, some research (Cairns, 2017; Ballatore and Federe, 2013; Costa, 2018) show that socioeconomic opportunities are an important factor in Erasmus participation and can be a significant barrier to the participation of young people with lower economic status. As some of the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme are directly or indirectly related to values such as solidarity, equality and generally, improving the quality of young people’s academic opportunities (European Commission, 2020), and although there are financial adjustments to scholarships for countries with high economic

standards, this aspect may be called into question²³. In addition to financial opportunities, various studies have shown that other aspects of the educational, economic and other life contexts of young people also play major roles in their participation in the Erasmus programme. Erasmus participants have a greater degree of European identity before they participate in a mobility programme, as does multiculturalism and other elements that are additionally influenced by the experiences of young people with Erasmus (Oborune, 2013).

In addition, wider aspects that pose a challenge to Erasmus students' mobility (some explicated in Lopez- Duarte at al., 2021; Juškevičienė et al., 2021) should be further explored, as should the performance of the different countries regarding the students' mobility (Breznik at al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

The Erasmus programme was designed at a time when the European identity was very vague and the trust in the institution that spreads it was extremely questionable. One of the primary goals of Erasmus was therefore "Europeanisation", i.e., the spread of European identity (among young people), which research shows that mostly succeeds (Eronen et al., 2017; Souto-Otero, 2019). Published documents show that the experience of international mobility within the Erasmus programme contributes to the educational, cultural and personal development of the programme participants (Eronen et al, 2017; Souto-Otero, 2019). From the analysis shown in this paper, it is clear how Erasmus significantly affects the individual lives of young people.

This impact is exerted directly and indirectly and can take various forms, from personal development through the acquisition of and work on certain skills and competencies to cultural advancement and professional and academic orientation. Personal growth and development have been analysed through various elements of the paper, and the analysis shows that language skills, interculturality, a greater level of independence, academic and professional competencies and a sense of belonging to Europe form very important parts of the personal development of the Erasmus population. Research also shows that such personal development processes can lead to other positive consequences, such as strengthening the opportunities of young people in the labour market or strengthening further education (Waibel et al., 2017; Iriondo, 2020).

We can also conclude that the Erasmus experience creates not only a kind of "snowball effect", but also the so-called "virtuous circle". Namely, the motivation and desires of an individual's nature, such as the desire for greater independence, for example, can encourage young people to participate in the

²³ Ballatore and Federe conclude that therefore the outcomes of Erasmus can be seen simply as an additional uplift and development of the majority group of young people or as they call them "elite" (Ballatore and Federe, 2013).

Erasmus programme. Achieving the expected results and personal growth and development upon return from Erasmus leads to empowerment and thinking about new participation in international and other programmes, which again leads to an even greater degree of individuality and independence. Erasmus mobility “culture” and what it creates is vital for economic development, social inclusion, motivation for further education, as well as intercultural openness, tolerance (Souto-Otero, 2019) and many other areas within the social policy through which the European Union is “activating” a young population. In addition, the Erasmus programme can have a “catalyst” effect.²⁴ This allows young people to make strides with positive consequences, whereby these positive outcomes can indirectly affect people in the immediate vicinity of young people with mobility experience (Oner, 2015).

This paper is a small contribution to clarifying the outcomes of the Erasmus+ programme. Future monitoring and research on the effectiveness of the program may challenge the reach of some of the positive outcomes that this paper partly highlighted. They need to be closely monitored and researched in the future as the scope and funding of the programme are widening, and can have a significant impact on both individual and societal levels, shaping European identity and policies (especially educational), enhancing labour market inclusion and shaping the individual life trajectories of participants.

²⁴ So often family and acquaintances and other young people who interact with an Erasmus participant also indirectly receive the positive impact of a person with mobility experience (Oner, 2015). This influence is spread mostly by transferring the acquired experience of the participants to others.

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MLADI I MOBILNI: POTENCIJALNE KORISTI ERASMUS PROGRAMA U RAZLIČITIM ASPEKTIMA ŽIVOTA MLADIH

***Sažetak:** Obrazovne politike danas poprimaju nove dimenzije. Jedan je od najvažnijih aspekata međunarodni aspekt i korištenje mogućnosti studijske mobilnosti. U Europskoj uniji nastaju različite strategije i programi usmjereni na kombiniranje ovih dimenzija, pružajući odgovarajući okvir za šire, inkluzivnije i kvalitetnije obrazovanje mladih ljudi u Europi. Program Erasmus jedna je od mogućih opcija u tom kontekstu, a danas je stekao veliku popularnost među mladima u visokom obrazovanju. Ovaj rad daje pregled učinaka sudjelovanja mladih u studijskoj mobilnosti u okviru Erasmus+ programa. Pregledom literature o ishodima na razini mekih vještina povezanih s osobnim razvojem i zapošljivošću među mladima s iskustvom studijske mobilnosti, dolazi se do zaključaka o određenim koristima programa na individualnoj razini. Program Erasmus+ za razdoblje 2021. – 2027. donosi značajne promjene i značajno veći proračun. Program će imati veću pokrivenost kako bi se dodatno poticala studijska mobilnost. Stoga bi utjecaje na mlade u budućnosti trebalo pomno pratiti i istraživati.*

***Ključne riječi:** Erasmus program, koristi mobilnosti, mladi, mobilnost, obrazovanje*

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OČEKIVANJA DIJASPORE OD HRVATSKE NASTAVE U INOZEMSTVU

Sažetak: *U radu su predstavljeni rezultati istraživanja očekivanja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu i stavova o takvoj nastavi iseljenika-roditelja čija djeca pohađaju hrvatsku nastavu u inozemstvu. Istraživanje je realizirano na prigodnom uzorku roditelja-iseljenika u većem broju europskih zemalja pomoću online ankete, a obuhvatilo je 261 roditelja s 341 djetetom. Rezultati istraživanja upućuju na visoko zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu. Nastavu hrvatskoga jezika smatraju nešto važnijom od nastave hrvatske baštine. Usporedbom dviju izdvojenih komponenti Kurikuluma utvrđeno je da se edukativno-nastavna komponenta nastave pokazala nešto značajnijom od nacionalno-integrativne. Kao najvažnije ciljeve nastave hrvatskog jezika i kulture roditelji su istaknuli sporazumijevanje na hrvatskom jeziku te upoznavanje hrvatskih običaja i tradicije. Očekivanja od nastave ispunjena su im, dok su mišljenja o potrebi povećanja broja nastavnih sati za nastavu hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti i hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine podijeljena. U radu se naglašava važnost hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu te se daju smjernice za razvoj novog kurikuluma i usmjeravanje javnih politika Republike Hrvatske prema dijaspori.*

Ključne riječi: *dijaspورا, hrvatski identitet, javne politike RH prema iseljeništvu, Kurikulum hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu*

UVOD

Od početka ekonomske krize 2009. – 2013., prema različitim procjenama, iz Hrvatske se u zemlje Europske unije iselilo između 300 i 400 tisuća građana (Jurić, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Pokos, 2020; Burić, 2024). Prema Državnom zavodu za statistiku najviše ih se iseljavalo u Njemačku¹, ali i u Austriju, Švicarsku, Italiju i Irsku. Najintenzivnije se iseljavalo iz Slavonije i drugih slabije razvijenih regija, npr. iz Sisačko-moslavačke, Virovitičko-podravske i Bjelovarsko-bilogorske županije. Iako ne postoje u potpunosti precizne procjene demografskih obilježja iseljenih građana, prema pojedinim autorima (Burić, 2024, str. 75), u novoj iseljeničkoj populaciji podjednak je broj muškaraca i žena, prevladavaju osobe mlađe i srednje životne dobi, kao i osobe sa završenom srednjom školom. U skladu s navedenim, u ovom iseljeničkom kontingentu prevladavaju osobe u fertilnoj dobi među kojima je značajan broj onih koji su već oformili obitelj (Jurić, 2018a). Posljedično, jedna od specifičnosti najnovijeg vala iseljavanja iz Hrvatske ogleda se u tome što je u ukupnom kontingentu iseljenih iz Hrvatske u veliki broj i maloljetne djece, što govori u prilog činjenici da se iseljavaju cijele obitelji (Jurić, 2017, str. 348; Župarić-Iljić, 2016, str. 9). Osim toga, posljednji iseljenički val razlikuje se od prethodnih po nizu drugih obilježja. Primjerice, u odnosu na prošle valove iseljavanja iz Hrvatske, proces iseljavanja u ovom valu vjerojatno je manje standardiziran zbog nepostojanja administrativnih prepreka, bolje prometne povezanosti, relativno niskih troškova putovanja te lake dostupnosti informacija o ponudi poslova i uvjetima na tržištu rada u željenim destinacijama. Stoga je prisutan i veći broj nepoznanica po pitanju planova o stalnosti boravka u novoj sredini, željenoj dubini integracije u novo sociokulturno okružje, željom za povratkom, planovima o razvoju profesionalne karijere, kao i planovima po pitanju obrazovanja, a kasnije i života djece.

Briga o hrvatskim državljanima koji žive u inozemstvu regulirana je Ustavom Republike Hrvatske. Nastavno na ovaj dokument *Zakon o odnosima Republike Hrvatske s Hrvatima izvan Republike Hrvatske* (NN, 124/11, 16/12, čl. 7) navodi da se Republika Hrvatska između ostaloga zauzima za očuvanje i jačanje položaja i identiteta Hrvata izvan Republike Hrvatske kroz učenje jezika, kulture, obrazovanje, znanost i dr. te da oni ostvaruju sva prava i obveze propisane posebnim zakonima iz područja školskog i visokoškolskog obrazovanja, zapošljavanja, natječaja i stipendija i dr. Nadalje, kao važan cilj u smislu brige za

¹ Primjerice, u Njemačku se 2009. uselilo 46,7 %, a 2016. 71,2 % ukupnog broja stanovnika Hrvatske iseljenih u države članice Europske unije (Pokos, 2017, str. 17). Do ulaska Hrvatske u Europsku uniju bilježeni su minimalni brojevi hrvatskih iseljenika u Irskoj, premda je irskim popisom stanovništva 2011. godine utvrđeno 980 stanovnika rođenih u Hrvatskoj. Irskim popisom stanovništva iz travnja 2016. zabilježena su 5 202 stanovnika rođena u Hrvatskoj, što je u odnosu na 2011. porast od 430,8 % (Pokos, 2017, str. 19).

hrvatske državljanke u inozemstvu u *Zakonu o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi* (NN, 125/2012, čl. 47) regulirano je dodatno školovanje djece državljanke Republike Hrvatske u inozemstvu organizacijom nastave hrvatskog jezika i kulture koja se provodi prema *Kurikulumu hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu* (dalje: Kurikulum) (NN 194/2003) u ingerenciji Ministarstva znanosti, obrazovanja i mladih. Kurikulum² je namijenjen djeci hrvatskih državljanke koja privremeno ili stalno žive u drugim zemljama, odnosno djeci u inozemstvu kojoj je hrvatski jezik obiteljski jezik (Kurikulum, 2003, str. 1). Također, *Strategija nacionalne sigurnosti Republike Hrvatske* (NN, 73/2017) u točki IV. kao jedan od strateških ciljeva navodi zaštitu, jačanje i promociju najviših vrednota ustavnoga poretka i hrvatskoga nacionalnog identiteta. Zaštita, jačanje i promocija hrvatskoga nacionalnog identiteta u inozemstvu razvija se upravo putem odgojno-obrazovnih sadržaja Kurikuluma. Načelima³ Kurikuluma koja predstavljaju osnovna vrijednosna uporišta (Kurikulum, 2003, str. 4), planira se ostvarivanje ciljeva u različitim obrazovnim situacijama. Naglasak je Kurikuluma na odgojno-obrazovnim postignućima, stoga su definirani opći i operativni ciljevi i njihova konkretizacija kroz znanja, vještine i stajališta koje učenici trebaju usvojiti. Integrativan je, jer uz hrvatski jezik i književnost uključuje i stjecanje znanja o povijesnoj, kulturnoj i prirodnoj baštini Hrvatske kroz zemljopis, povijest, glazbenu i likovnu kulturu. *Opći su ciljevi Kurikuluma*: naučiti hrvatski jezik i književnost te se uspješno služiti hrvatskim jezikom u nizu različitih neformalnih i formalnih situacija (obitelj, škola, rad, slobodno vrijeme razonoda itd.sl.); upoznati i razumjeti povijesnu i kulturnu baštinu Hrvatske te osnovna obilježja suvremenog hrvatskoga društva; upoznati i razumjeti geografska obilježja Hrvatske; razviti pozitivan odnos i osjećaje učenika prema hrvatskom jeziku i književnosti, povijesno-kulturnoj i prirodnoj baštini Hrvatske kao zemlji podrijetla učenika/-ica i odrednicama razvoja njihova nacionalnog identiteta; razviti interes i motivirati učenike/-ice da nauče i njeguju hrvatski jezik i književnost, povijesno-kulturno naslijeđe i prirodnu baštinu Hrvatske; omogućiti učenicima/-ama da učenjem hrvatskog jezika i književnosti, povijesno-kulturne prirodne baštine usvoje znanje, vještine i vrijednosti koje će im omogućiti da se dalje obrazuju na hrvatskom jeziku i da ga izučavaju ako to žele; omogućiti učenicima/-ama da učenjem hrvatskog jezika i kulture u komparaciji s jezikom i kulturom u zemlji boravka oblikuju osobni identitet i uspješno se razvijaju i žive u multikulturalnom socijalnom kontekstu; omogućiti učenicima da razvijaju višejezičnost i interkulturalnost kao način života u suvremenom društvu (Kurikulum hrvatske

² Kurikulum je pisani dokument koji podrazumijeva sveobuhvatnost procesa odgoja i obrazovanja: cilj, zadaće, sadržaje, ishode, organizaciju, metode i evaluaciju.

³ Načela su kurikuluma sljedeća: uravnoteženost, koherentnost i kontinuitet, otvorenost, fleksibilnost, interkulturalnost, inkluzivnost i učeniku usmjeren pristup (Kurikulum, 2003, str. 5–6).

nastave u inozemstvu, 2003, str. 14). Ovih osam općih ciljeva odgojno-obrazovnog procesa navedenih u Kurikulumu razrađeni su kroz *operativne ciljeve u tematskim cjelinama* (to sam ja – osobni identitet; učenje-rad-slobodno vrijeme; ljudi u prostoru i vremenu; vrijeme-promjene-kontinuitet; kultura i društvo; suvremeno društvo; jedan svijet za sve-globalna povezanost i međuovisnost). *Operativni ciljevi za hrvatski jezik i književnost* podrazumijevaju *komunikacijsku osposobljenost*, što podrazumijeva osposobljenost za slušanje, govorenje, čitanje i pisanje hrvatskoga jezika, zatim *jezičnu osposobljenost* u pravogovoru, pravopisu, gramatici i leksikologiji te *književnost* kojom se želi razviti pozitivan odnos prema hrvatskom jeziku i književnosti i poticati kulturu čitanja i estetskog doživljaja (Kurikulum, 2003, str. 25). *Za hrvatsku povijesnu, kulturnu i prirodnu baštinu navedeni su sljedeći operativni ciljevi*: razvijati interes učenika/-ica za vizualne izraze i stvaralaštvo u sklopu kulturne baštine Hrvatske, razvijati interes učenika za glazbene i plesne izraze i stvaralaštvo, uvojiti osnovna prirodna, društvena i gospodarska obilježja zavičaja i osnovne procese povijesnog razvoja u Hrvatskoj kao zemlji podrijetla učenika i u svih osam tematskih cjelina. Kulturna dimenzija ima presudnu ulogu u očuvanju identiteta, pa je naglasak na njegovanju nacionalne i regionalne posebnosti, kao i stimuliranje zajedničkih kulturnih vrijednosti važno obilježje ovog Kurikuluma. S obzirom na to da su učenici hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu različitog predznanja, ciljevi su određeni kroz tri razine: prva razina obuhvaća razdoblje 1. – 4. razreda osnovne škole (niži razredi osnovne škole), druga razina obuhvaća razdoblje 5. – 8./9. razreda (viši razredi osnovne škole), a treća razina odgovara četirima razreda srednje škole: razdoblje 9./10. – 12. razreda.

U dokumentu Kurikuluma, osim ciljeva, definiran je katalog znanja, vještina i vrijednosti koje učenici trebaju usvojiti, navedena je literatura i izvori za pripremu i izvođenje nastave, navedene su didaktičko-metodičke smjernice, kao i kadrovski i prostorni uvjeti te način evaluacije odgojno-obrazovnih postignuća učenika.

Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i mladih hrvatsku nastavu u inozemstvu trenutačno provodi u 24 države svijeta (Bušljeta Kardum i dr. 2022). Poučavanje i učenje hrvatskog jezika i kulture u inozemstvu provodi se u iznajmljenim prostorima nakon redovite nastave učenika ili petkom/subotom poslijepodne. U nekim državama nastava hrvatskog jezika integrirana je u odgojno-obrazovni sustav zemlje primateljice, dok u drugima postoje tzv. *kombinirani modeli* – preklapanja (Bošnjak, 2024, str. 200–201) oba oblika organiziranja nastave. Nastava se provodi dva sata tjedno u heterogenim grupama kreiranim prema dobi i predznanju učenika (70 sati godišnje po predmetu).

Za provođenje Kurikuluma Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i mladih bira javnim natječajem učitelja razredne nastave; učitelja hrvatskoga jezika; učitelja povijesti ili nastavnika hrvatskoga jezika/nastavnika povijesti prema Zakonu o

odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi.⁴ Navodi se da učitelji hrvatskoga jezika i kulture trebaju imati cjelovito znanje o kulturnoj i prirodnoj baštini Republike Hrvatske, kulturološki okvir hrvatske književnosti, glazbene i likovne umjetnosti te stručne kompetencije i obvezu trajnog stručnog usavršavanja (Kurikulum, 2003, str. 96). Prije nego što učitelji krenu održavati hrvatsku nastavu u inozemstvu, Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i mladih za njih organizira jednodnevne ili dvodnevne seminare s tematskim predavanjima iz područja didaktike i relevantnih metodika kako bi ih se stručno, pedagoški, didaktički i metodički prilagodilo specifičnostima rada koje takva nastava uključuje.

Prema aktualnom Kurikulumu (NN 194/2003), hrvatska nastava u inozemstvu provodi se dvadeset godina. Tijekom tog razdoblja došlo je do značajnih promjena i novih spoznaja u području odgoja i obrazovanja, kao i do velikog napretka u digitalnim tehnologijama. Pedagoški su se standardi unaprijedili, a strategije održivog razvoja kao npr. obrazovanje za ekološku svijest, odgovornost, ljudska prava, socijalnu pravdu i dr., implementiraju se u nove kurikulume i time postaju ključan dio obrazovnog procesa. U tom kontekstu, Republika Hrvatska u Nacionalnom planu razvoja sustava obrazovanja do 2027. godine prepoznala je važnost prilagodbe obrazovnih politika ovim novim uvjetima te planira *donošenje novog Kurikuluma hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu i izradu odgovarajućih obrazovnih materijala*. Pri izradi novog kurikuluma ključno je uzeti u obzir specifične potrebe, stavove i očekivanja hrvatske dijaspore, stoga je ovo istraživanje usmjereno na analizu njihova zadovoljstva aktualnim Kurikulumom, odnosno hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu.

Budući da hrvatska nastava u inozemstvu predstavlja vezu između djece i mladih hrvatskih iseljenika s hrvatskim jezikom i kulturom, a hrvatske škole svojevrsno su inicijalno mjesto okupljanja, suradnje, komunikacije i zajedničkih aktivnosti učitelja, djece i roditelja hrvatskoga podrijetla (Bušljeta Kardum i sur., 2022, str. 88), glavni cilj ovog istraživanja usmjeren je prema učinkovitim javnim politikama Republike Hrvatske spram iseljeničtva, posebice onih koji se referiraju na sferu obrazovanja i očuvanja nacionalnog identiteta. Provedenim istraživanjem željelo se dobiti uvid u očekivanja, stavove i planove roditelja iseljenika po pitanju budućnosti obrazovanja njihove djece od strane Republike Hrvatske putem hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu.

METODOLOGIJA

Ciljevi istraživanja

Utvrđivanje očekivanja i stavova roditelja čija djeca pohađaju hrvatsku nastavu u inozemstvu o budućnosti obrazovanja njihove djece u organizaciji Republike Hrvatske putem hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu te utvrđivanje

⁴ Pravilnik o uvjetima i postupku izbora učitelja za rad u hrvatskoj nastavi u inozemstvu, NN 87/08.

njihova zadovoljstva određenim aspektima hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu (ostvarenost ciljeva i poznavanje kurikuluma hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu) i nacionalnoj komponenti u odgoju i obrazovanju postavljeno je kao generalni cilj istraživanja.

Polazeći od toga, definirana su i sljedeća četiri specifična istraživačka cilja:

1. Utvrditi u kojoj mjeri roditelji procjenjuju ostvarenost pojedinih općih i operativnih ciljeva Kurikuluma.
2. Utvrditi važnost edukativno-nastavne i nacionalno-integrativne komponente Kurikuluma za zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu.
3. Utvrditi zadovoljstvo roditelja i njihove stavove prema pojedinim obilježjima nastave hrvatskog jezika i književnosti i hrvatske prirodne, povijesne i kulturne baštine.
4. Utvrditi važnost pojedinih operativnih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti i nastavi hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine (zemljopis, povijest, glazbena i likovna kultura) koja se provodi putem Kurikuluma.

Metoda istraživanja i mjerni instrument

Podatci u istraživanju prikupljeni su metodom ankete, tehnikom *online* anketiranja. Anketa je izrađena i prosljeđena sudionicima putem alata Lime Survey u Facebook grupama hrvatskih iseljenika i putem MZOM-a koordinatorima i učiteljima hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu, koji su anketu uputili roditeljima učenika diljem Europe. Poveznica s pozivom na ispunjavanje anketnog upitnika posredstvom MZOM-a dva je puta prosljeđena koordinatorima i učiteljima hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu (Europa), 30. travnja i 27. svibnja 2024. godine, i u istom razdoblju oglašena u 57 Facebook grupa Hrvata na europskom području.

Zadovoljstvo roditelja-iseljenika aktualnom hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu odlučili smo ispitati polazeći od određenih općih i operativnih ciljeva Kurikuluma hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. Imajući u vidu specifičnosti Kurikuluma, tj. njegov integrativni karakter koji pretpostavlja nastavu hrvatskog jezika i književnosti i stjecanje znanja o povijesnoj, kulturnoj i prirodnoj baštini Hrvatske kroz zemljopis, povijest, glazbenu i likovnu kulturu, pošli smo od ideje da u stvaranju upitnika krenemo od općih i operativnih ciljeva odgojno-obrazovnog procesa iz područja hrvatskog jezika i književnosti i hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine. U skladu s time, upitnikom su obuhvaćene dvije temeljne grupe pitanja.

Prva grupa sadržavala je pitanja kojima se procjenjivalo zadovoljstvo sudionika istraživanja općim ciljevima Kurikuluma. U tu svrhu konstruirana su tri pitanja kojima je procijenjena upoznatost i ispunjenost očekivanja roditelja

aktualnim Kurikulumom te dvanaest čestica posredstvom kojih je procijenjena realizacija određenih odgojno-obrazovnih ciljeva Kurikuluma⁵.

Druga grupa pitanja sadržavala je pitanja kojima se procjenjivala upoznatost sudionika istraživanja sa sadržajem nastave i nastavnim temama koje se obrađuju u nastavi hrvatskog jezika i književnosti, kao i u nastavi hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine. Uz to, uključivala je i pitanja kojima su roditelji procjenjivali važnost pojedinih operativnih ciljeva Kurikuluma hrvatskog jezika i književnosti (7 čestica) i hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine (9 čestica)⁶.

Također, uz devet pitanja o demografskim obilježjima, upitnik je sadržavao i pitanja kojima se ispitalo mišljenje roditelja o zainteresiranosti djece za pohađanjem nastave te o postojanju potrebe za povećanjem nastavnih sati iz obaju područja, hrvatskog jezika i književnosti i hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine.

Uzorak

Istraživanje metodom ankete provedeno je na neprobabilističkom prigodnom uzorku dijaspore naseljene na području Europe. Iako ovi uzorci ne omogućuju u potpunosti valjanu generalizaciju rezultata istraživanja, omogućuju bazične eksplorativne uvide u istraživanu problematiku, čime je ovo istraživanje ispunilo svoju osnovnu svrhu. Realizirani uzorak uključivao je 261 roditelja u inozemstvu s 341 djetetom koje pohađa ili je pohađalo školu hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu: 1. – 4. razred: 195 učenika; 5. – 9. razred: 121 učenik i srednju školu: 25 učenika. Sudionici su većim dijelom bili predstavnici prvoga i drugoga stupnja obrazovanja hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu.

Prosječna dob sudionika istraživanja iznosila je 43 godine.

Istraživanje je obuhvatilo sudionike iz Njemačke: 54,3 %, Austrije i Slovenije: 5,4 %, Švicarske: 17,1 %, Irske i Engleske: 10,8 %, zemalja Beneluxa: 4,4 %, Italije i Španjolske: 4,6 % te iz ostalih zemalja: 3,4 %.

Statistički postupci

U procesu obrade podataka, uz deskriptivnu analizu frekvencija i postotaka odgovora, korištene su bivarijatne i multivarijatne statističke procedure. Od bivarijatnih statističkih procedura korišten je Hi-kvadrat, t-test zavisnih uzoraka i Z-test proporcija. Hi-kvadrat-test korišten je u svrhu testiranja statističke značajnosti razlika između različitih demografskih kategorija ispitanika, a s obzirom na njihovo poznavanje Kurikuluma kao i s obzirom na to da li su

⁵ Svakoj čestici pridružena je ljestvica raspona od 1 (uopće se ne postiže navedeni cilj Kurikuluma) do 5 (u potpunosti se postiže navedeni cilj Kurikuluma).

⁶ Važnost je procjenjivana na ljestvici raspona od 1 (nije nimalo važno) do 5 (izuzetno važno). Popis svih korištenih čestica nalazi se u Prilogu.

ispunjena njihova očekivanja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. T-test zavisnih uzorka primijenjen je kako bi se testirala statistička značajnost razlika u procjeni važnosti edukativno-nastavne i nacionalno-integrirajuće komponente Kurikuluma, kao i statistička značajnost razlika u procjeni važnosti operativnih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatskog jezika i književnosti i operativnih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatske baštine. Z-test proporcija korišten je kako bi se utvrdilo postoji li statistički značajna razlika u procjeni roditelja o interesu djece za nastavu hrvatskog jezika i književnosti u odnosu na nastavu hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine. Od multivarijatnih statističkih metoda primijenjene su eksploratorna faktorska analiza i višestruka regresijska analiza. Eksploratorna faktorska analiza upotrebljena je s ciljem uvida u strukturu latentnog prostora definiranog česticama koje su se rabile kako bi se utvrdilo mišljenje roditelja o realizaciji pojedinih ciljevi Kurikuluma. Višestruka regresijska analiza korištena je kako bi se posredno procijenila važnost pojedinih sadržaja Kurikuluma za ukupno zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu.

REZULTATI I RASPRAVA

Za utvrđivanje u kojoj mjeri roditelji procjenjuju ostvarenost pojedinih ciljeva Kurikuluma korištene su tri varijable: upoznatost roditelja s Kurikulumom, ispunjenost njihovih očekivanja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu te procjena roditelja o realizaciji pojedinih ciljeva Kurikuluma.

U svrhu mjerenja upoznatosti roditelja s Kurikulumom korištena je ljestvica s rasponom od 1 do 5, pri čemu 1 podrazumijeva da uopće nisu upoznati, a 5 da su jako dobro upoznati. Prikupljeni podaci ukazuju da više od polovine anketiranih roditelja (55,9 %) smatra kako je prilično dobro upoznato s Kurikulumom, a 44,1 % ih je malo ili srednje upoznato. Ovaj podatak govori da su roditelji aktivni sudionici obrazovnih aktivnosti u hrvatskoj školi, zainteresirani za program koji djeca pohađaju. S obzirom na to da roditelji imaju primarnu ulogu u odgoju djece, ovo sugerira da roditelji prate kvalitetu programa hrvatske nastave. Ovaj podatak ujedno ukazuje na to da ih zanima putem kojih sadržaja i tema učitelji djeci prenose hrvatske nacionalne vrednote i identitet. Pri interpretaciji ovih podataka treba uzeti u obzir **činjenicu** da djeca sudionika u najvećoj mjeri pohađaju niže razrede osnovne škole, tj. da su uključeni u 1. stupanj obrazovanja hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. Naime, 75 % roditelja ima djecu koja pohađaju 1. stupanj obrazovanja, a 46 % roditelja ima djecu koja pohađaju 2. stupanj obrazovanja (5. – 8./9. razred osnovne škole). Najmanji broj sudionika istraživanja (9,6 %) ima djecu koja pohađaju 3. stupanj obrazovanja (srednja škola)⁷. Dakle, odgovori roditelja-iseljenika odnose se u najvećem slučaju na njihove stavove i uključenost te zadovoljstvo hrvatskom nastavom na 1. i 2. stupnju obrazovanja hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu.

⁷ Zbroj je veći od 100 % jer roditelji mogu imati djecu u svim trima razinama obrazovanja.

Smanjenje interesa za pohađanje hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu na višim stupnjevima obrazovanja može se izdvojiti kao jedan od uočenih problema u hrvatskoj nastavi u inozemstvu. Razloge toga možemo nagađati, no na nižem stupnju obrazovanja roditelji imaju veći utjecaj u poticanju djece na pohađanje hrvatske nastave. Drugi razlog mogu biti povećane obveze učenika na višim stupnjevima obrazovanja. U tom smislu, za zadržavanje učenika i poticanje na nastavak obrazovanja na hrvatskom jeziku trebalo bi se posebno usmjeriti na intrinzičnu motivaciju djece.

Što se tiče očekivanja roditelja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu, velika većina sudionika istraživanja (75,4 %) izjavila je da su njihova očekivanja ispunjena, dok jednoj četvrtini očekivanja ili nisu ispunjena ili su malo ispunjena. Očekivanja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu mogu uključivati sve elemente koje čini Kurikulum hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu, od ostvarenja ciljeva, zadaća, sadržaja do materijalno-tehničkih uvjeta, organizacije, metoda kojima se učitelji koriste u nastavi pa do same osobe učitelja. Uzevši u obzir sve čimbenike ove dimenzije, može se zaključiti da je veliki broj anketiranih roditelja zadovoljan hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu.

Analizirane su razlike između demografskih kategorija roditelja (spol, generacijska pripadnost i obrazovanje) po pitanju njihova poznavanja Kurikuluma te u odnosu na procjenu ispunjenosti očekivanja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. Razlika je utvrđena samo u slučaju generacijske pripadnosti, i to na varijabli koja mjeri ispunjenost očekivanja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. Mlađi sudionici, pripadnici generacije Y (u dobi do 43 godine) u većem broju od pripadnika generacije X (u dobi od 43 godine i više) navode da su im se očekivanja od hrvatske nastave ispunila.

Tablica 1.

Ispunjena očekivanja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu s obzirom na dob

	Očekivanje se nisu / uglavnom nisu ispunila	Očekivanja su se uglavnom ispunila	Očekivanja su u potpunosti ispunjena
Generacija Y	17,9 %	47 %	35 %
Generacija X i stariji	28,1 %	56,3 %	15,6 %

$\chi^2(2) = 10,866, p=0.004$

Kako bi se procijenili stavovi roditelja o realizaciji pojedinih ciljeva Kurikuluma, korišteno je dvanaest čestica s pridruženim vrijednostima od 1 (uopće se ostvaruje ovaj cilj Kurikuluma) do 5 (u potpunosti se ostvaruje ovaj cilj Kurikuluma). U sljedećoj tablici prikazane su prosječne vrijednosti za svaku česticu.

Tablica 2.*Procjena roditelja o realizaciji pojedinih ciljeva Kurikuluma*

	Prosječna vrijednost	Standardna pogreška	SD
Potiče se višejezičnost i interkulturalizam.	4,20	0,057	0,888
Kod djece se razvija osjećaj nacionalnog ponosa.	4,17	0,059	0,931
Djeca se motiviraju da nauče hrvatski jezik i njime se uspješno služe u svakodnevnim situacijama.	4,12	0,054	0,860
Stvaraju se pretpostavke da djeca sklope prijateljstvo s vršnjacima u hrvatskoj zajednici u mjestu u kojem živimo.	4,10	0,059	0,926
Djeca se upoznaju s prirodnim i geografskim obilježjima Hrvatske .	4,04	0,058	0,912
Hrvatska nastava u inozemstvu omogućuje djeci da razumiju povijesnu i kulturnu baštinu Hrvatske.	4,03	0,058	0,908
Djeci se omogućuje bolja integraciju u hrvatsku zajednicu u mjestu u kojem živimo.	3,94	0,065	1,002
Djeca stječu vještine stvaranja na hrvatskom jeziku.	3,93	0,060	0,921
Djeca razvijaju sposobnost pronalaženja informacija na hrvatskom jeziku.	3,91	0,061	0,948
Djeca se upoznaju s osnovnim procesima povijesnog razvoja hrvatskoga društva, države i kulture.	3,84	0,058	0,900
Kod djece se razvija osjećaj za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj.	3,68	0,065	0,990
Kod djece se pobuđuje interes za nastavak školovanja na hrvatskom jeziku.	3,66	0,064	0,987

Prosječne vrijednosti prikazane u prethodnoj tablici upućuju na to da roditelji smatraju kako su svi testirani ciljevi hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu ostvareni, jer se nalaze iznad teorijskog prosjeka skale (vrijednost 3). Međutim, prema mišljenju ispitanih roditelja, hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu najviše se ostvaruju ciljevi usmjereni na višejezičnost, interkulturalnost, stvaranje nacionalnog ponosa kod djece te motivacija za govorenje hrvatskog jezika u svakodnevnim situacijama. Najviša ostvarena dimenzija usmjerena

na višjejezičnost i interkulturalnost potvrđuje poticanje višjejezičnosti i interkulturalnosti kao cilja na koji mnogi autori upućuju pri konstrukciji suvremenih Kurikuluma (Jajić Novogradec, 2017; Petravić, 2014; Sablić, 2014; Sablić, Migles, Rajić, 2021). Interkulturalna kompetencija pretpostavlja uspostavu održavanja međusobnih odnosa, poštivanje, strpljivost, fleksibilnost, otvorenost, radoznalost (Hrvatić i Piršl, 2005, str. 258) i jedno je od načela Kurikuluma, čime respektira multikulturalnu strukturu hrvatskoga društva i strukturu društva u kojem učenici žive, odnosno bikulturalnost kao način života učenika. Višjejezičnost i multikulturalnost specifičnost je iskustva učenika hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu.

Sljedeća po važnosti najviše rangirana vrijednost stvaranje je nacionalnog ponosa kod djece. Nacionalni ponos može se sagledati kao individualni osjećaj poštovanja i ponosa prema vlastitoj naciji. Motivirati učenike za učenje hrvatskoga jezika, ovladati temeljnim jezičnim djelatnostima, osposobiti učenike za uspješno komuniciranje i aktivnu uporabu hrvatskoga standardnoga jezika treći je najvažniji cilj za koji roditelji smatraju da se ostvaruje Kurikulumom. Jezik je ključni medij kojim se prenosi i njeguje kulturno i povijesno naslijeđe nacije. Jezik je jedna od odrednica nacionalnog identiteta i u Kurikulumu se u nastavi hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti provodi u kategoriji komunikacijske osposobljenosti (slušanje, govorenje, čitanje i pisanje) na svim trima razinama obrazovanja. Nasuprot toga, osvrnuvši se na ciljeve za koje se može utvrditi da su iz perspektive roditelja ocijenjeni kao oni koji se nešto manjoj mjeri ostvaruju Kurikulumom, ističe se pobuđivanje interesa za nastavak obrazovanja na hrvatskom jeziku. Iako ovaj cilj nije jasno definiran ni u jednom dijelu Kurikuluma⁸, očito je da bi upravo on mogao biti ključan za poticanje mladih na razmišljanje o nastavku školovanja na hrvatskom jeziku i povratku u Hrvatsku. Drugim riječima, očito je da bi poticanje mladih na nastavak školovanja u Hrvatskoj trebalo jasnije verbalizirati unutar samog Kurikuluma.

Također, kao nešto slabije ostvaren cilj prepoznat je razvoj osjećaja za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj. Razlozi tomu mogu biti dvojaki. Nastavu hrvatskoga jezika i kulture najčešće provode nastavnici i učitelji hrvatskoga jezika, zatim učitelji razredne nastave te učitelji ili nastavnici povijesti (neobjavljeni podatci autorice iz istraživanja pedagoških kompetencija i potreba učitelja hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu 2022.). Oni kompetencije u području vizualnog, likovnog i glazbenog stvaralaštva formalnim obrazovanjem nisu mogli steći u onoj mjeri koju zahtjeva specifičnost hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. Nešto više od ostalih, tijekom studija iz područja umjetničkih predmeta, u formalnom Kurikulumu imaju učitelji razredne nastave.

⁸ Republika Hrvatska raznim projektima potiče studiranje u Hrvatskoj, npr. stipendijama, smještajem u studentskom domu, posebnim kvotama na Sveučilišnim programima

Kompetencije iz tih područja učiteljima nastoje se prenijeti putem stručnih usavršavanja nadležnog Ministarstva ili ih oni samostalno nastoje steći dodatnim školovanjem. Kada bi u obzir uzeli ovo mišljenje i rezultate istraživanja Burai i sur. (2023) u kojem se u zaključku predlaže dopuna *Pravilnika o uvjetima i postupku izbora učitelja za rad u hrvatskoj nastavi u inozemstvu (NN 41/2009)* s mogućnošću da nastavnici geografije, glazbene i likovne kulture rade u hrvatskoj nastavi u inozemstvu s obzirom na integrativni koncept Kurikuluma, razvoj osjećaja za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj moglo bi se razviti u većoj mjeri kod djece polaznika hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. Za zainteresirane nastavnike navedenih predmeta mogla bi se organizirati dodatna edukacija, bilo kao specijalistički studij ili modularna nastavu na diplomskoj razini, kojima bi ih se pripremilo za provođenje svih sadržaja predmeta Kurikuluma i na odlazak na rad u hrvatsku nastavu u inozemstvu. Na taj bismo način ponudili kvalitetniju nastavu u iseljeništvu i ostvarivanje ciljeva usmjerenih na razvoj osjećaja za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj i općenito.

Drugim ciljem istraživanja utvrđivala se važnost pojedinih komponenti Kurikuluma za zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. U cilju dobivanja uvida u strukturu latentnog prostora, koji se mjerio s dvanaest korištenih čestica (tablica 2) te konstrukcijom mjera potrebnih za jednostavnije provođenje ostalih planiranih analiza, provedena je eksploratorna faktorska analiza⁹. Primjenom Guttman-Keiserova kriterija za zaustavljanje ekstrakcije faktora te kosokutne (oblimin) rotacije, izlučene su dvije latentne dimenzije¹⁰. Prva ekstrahirana dimenzija opisuje *edukativno-nastavnu*, a druga *nacionalno-integrativnu komponentu* Kurikuluma. Edukativnu funkciju opisuju devet čestica koje indiciraju ostvarivanje različitih obrazovnih ciljeva poput stjecanja vještina stvaranja na hrvatskom jeziku, interes za nastavkom školovanja na hrvatskom jeziku, razvijanje osjećaja za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo i sl. Tri čestice opisuju nacionalno-integrirajuću funkciju Kurikuluma, a odnose se na integraciju djece u hrvatsku zajednicu, kao i na razvijanje osjećaja nacionalnog ponosa.

⁹ Bartlettovim testovima testirana je značajnost korelacijske matrice, dok je prikladnost korelacijske matrice za faktorizaciju testirana Kaiser-Meyer-Olkinovim testom adekvatnosti uzorkovanja. Bartlettov je test značajnosti korelacijske matrice zadovoljavajući ($p < 0,05$). Također, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkinov indeks bio je viši od referentne vrijednosti (0,6), što ukazuje na to da su matrice korelacija varijabli prikladne za faktorizaciju.

¹⁰ Provedenom faktorskom analizom objašnjeno je ukupno 65 % varijance. Izlučena faktorska struktura u potpunosti zadovoljava zahtjeve konvergentne (čestice imaju zadovoljavajuća opterećenja na samo jednom faktoru) i diskriminativne faktorske valjanosti (imaju niska faktorska opterećenja na ostalim faktorima).

Tablica 3.*Matrica faktorskog obrasca*

	Edukativno-nastavna komponenta Kurikuluma	Nacionalno-integrativna komponenta Kurikuluma
Djeca razvijaju sposobnost pronalaženja informacija na hrvatskom jeziku.	0,892	-0,100
Djeca stječu vještine stvaranja na hrvatskom jeziku.	0,890	-0,010
Djeca se upoznaju s prirodnim i geografskim obilježjima Hrvatske.	0,843	-0,022
Hrvatska nastava u inozemstvu omogućuje djeci da razumiju povijesnu i kulturnu baštinu Hrvatske.	0,786	0,065
Potiče se višejezičnost i interkulturalizam.	0,777	-0,044
Kod djece se pobuđuje interes za nastavak školovanja na hrvatskom jeziku.	0,775	-0,032
Djeca se motiviraju da nauče hrvatski jezik i njime se uspješno služe u svakodnevnim situacijama.	0,736	0,005
Djeca se upoznaju s osnovnim procesima povijesnog razvoja hrvatskoga društva, države i kulture.	0,681	0,190
Kod djece se razvija osjećaj za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj.	0,538	0,251
Stvaraju se pretpostavke da djeca sklope prijateljstvo s vršnjacima u hrvatskoj zajednici u mjestu u kojem živimo.	-0,085	0,927
Djeci se omogućuje bolja integraciju u hrvatsku zajednicu u mjestu u kojem živimo.	0,039	0,883
Kod djece se razvija osjećaj nacionalnog ponosa.	0,282	0,550

Uprosječivanjem vrijednosti zadržanih čestica konstruirane su dvije kompozitne varijable: edukativno-nastavna i nacionalno-integrativna komponenta Kurikuluma¹¹. Prosječna vrijednost skale edukativno-nastavne komponente Kurikuluma iznosi 3,9 (SD=0,74), dok prosječna vrijednost nacionalno-integrativne komponente iznosi 4,1 (SD=0,81). Iako je navedena razlika statistički značajna ($t=2.8$, $p=0.006$), pa se posredno može zaključiti da su roditelji nešto

¹¹ Na taj način raspon svake od korištenih skala / varijabli iznosio je od 1 (očekivanja od nastave nisu ispunjena) do 5 (očekivanja od nastave u potpunosti su ispunjena). Unutarnja je konzistencija obaju skala zadovoljavajuća. Vrijednost Cronbach α koeficijenta za edukativno-nastavnu komponentu Kurikuluma iznosi 0,93, a za nacionalno-integrativnu komponentu 0,81.

zadovoljniji ostvarenjem nacionalno-integrativne komponente Kurikuluma, ona se u suštini ne može tumačiti kao supstancijalna. Dakle, generalno gledajući, roditelji su zadovoljni s ostvarenjem obaju komponenti Kurikuluma. Međutim, kako je realizacija edukativno-nastavne komponente Kurikuluma snažnije povezana s generalnim zadovoljstvom roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu¹² ($r=0,72$), posredno možemo zaključiti da je realizacije ove komponente Kurikuluma roditeljima važnija od realizacije nacionalno-integrirajuće komponente¹³. Drugim riječima, posredno se može konstatirati da je navedena komponenta Kurikuluma važnija za zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu.

Kako bi se utvrdilo koji su pojedinačni sadržaji (odgojno-obrazovni ciljevi) navedenih dviju dimenzija Kurikuluma statistički značajni prediktori za ukupno zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu, provedene su dvije višestruke regresijske analize. U prvoj prediktorski sklop činilo je devet varijabli koje su opisivale sadržaj nastavno-edukativne komponente Kurikuluma. U drugoj višestrukoj regresijskoj analizi prediktorski sklop sastojao se od triju varijabli koje su opisivale sadržaj nacionalno-integrativne komponente Kurikuluma. Na taj se način posredno pokušala utvrditi važnost realizacije pojedinih odgojno-obrazovnih ciljeva Kurikuluma za zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu. Rezultati provedenih višestrukih regresijskih analiza prikazani su u tablicama 4 i 5.

Tablica 4.

Statistički značajni prediktori nastavno-edukativne komponente Kurikuluma za zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu.

R=0.642 R²=0,41	B	Beta	t	P
Djeca se motiviraju da nauče hrvatski jezik i njime se uspješno služe u svakodnevnim situacijama.	0,158	0,187	2,687	0,008
Hrvatska nastava u inozemstvu omogućuje djeci da razumiju povijesnu i kulturnu baštinu Hrvatske.	0,170	0,202	2,662	0,008
Potiče se višejezičnost i interkulturalizam.	0,222	0,256	3,668	0,000
Kod djece se razvija osjećaj za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj.	0,135	0,169	2,563	0,011

¹² Generalno zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu procijenjeno je posredstvom pitanja koje je glasilo: „Jesu li se općenito ispunila Vaša očekivanja koja ste imali od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu?“ Opcije odgovora varirale su od 1 – uopće se nisu ispunila, do 5 – u potpunosti su se ispunila.

¹³ Visina Pearsonova koeficijenta korelacije nacionalno-integrativne komponente Kurikuluma i realizacije očekivanja roditelja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu iznosi 0,58.

Kao što je iz tablice 4 vidljivo, motiviranje djece da nauče hrvatski jezik te da se njime uspješno služe u svakodnevnim situacijama, razumijevanje hrvatske kulturne i povijesne baštine, poticanje višejezičnosti i interkulturalizma, razvijanje osjećaja za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj oni su sadržaji edukativno-nastavne komponente Kurikuluma čije ostvarenje generira zadovoljstvo roditeljima hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. Oni objašnjavaju ukupno 41 % varijance zadovoljstva hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu. Ostalih pet sadržaja koji čine nastavno-edukativnu komponentu Kurikuluma nisu statistički značajni, pa ih se posredno ne može tretirati kao one čije ostvarivanje doprinosi zadovoljstvu roditelja. Nasuprot toga, sve tri čestice, tj. sva tri nastavna sadržaja u okviru nacionalno-integrativne komponente Kurikuluma pokazali su se kao statistički značajni prediktori zadovoljstva roditelja. Pritom valja istaknuti da je njihov doprinos ukupnom zadovoljstvu manji. Za razliku od statistički značajnih sadržaja edukativno-nastavne komponente koji objašnjavaju 41 % varijance zadovoljstva roditelja, ova tri nacionalno-integrativna sadržaja Kurikuluma objašnjavaju 27 % varijance kriterijske varijable (tablica 5).

Tablica 5.

Statistički značajni prediktori nacionalno-integrativne komponente Kurikuluma za zadovoljstvo roditelja hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu.

R=0.53 R²=0,27	B	Beta	T	P
Stvaraju se pretpostavke da djeca sklope prijateljstvo s vršnjacima u hrvatskoj zajednici u mjestu u kojem živimo.	0,223	0,266	3,366	0,001
Djeci se omogućuje bolja integracija u hrvatsku zajednicu u mjestu u kojem živimo.	0,137	0,173	2,026	0,044
Kod djece se razvija osjećaj nacionalnog ponosa.	0,149	0,186	2,719	0,007

Provedenim istraživanjem o Hrvatskom nacionalnom identitetu u kontekstu odgojno-obrazovnog djelovanja u inozemstvu (Bušljeta Kardum i sur., 2021) došlo se do zaključka kako se Kurikulumom hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu nastoji, putem ishoda učenja koji su vezani za sadržaje hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti te sadržaja koji se odnose na povijesnu, kulturnu i prirodnu baštinu Hrvatske, potaknuti učenike na izgradnju i očuvanje hrvatskoga nacionalnoga identiteta. Analizom ishoda Kurikuluma zaključili su kako je u Kurikulumu nedovoljan broj ishoda učenja koji vode razvoju hrvatskoga nacionalnoga identiteta. Rezultati i ovog istraživanja ukazuju kako nacionalno-integrativan sadržaj Kurikuluma iseljeni roditelji smatraju značajnim za ukupno zadovoljstvo hrvatskom nastavom u inozemstvu te kako im je nacionalna komponenta

iznimno važan čimbenik hrvatske nastave. Stoga bi pri kreiranju novog Kurikuluma trebalo uzeti u obzir i ove spoznaje te uvrstiti u njega više sadržaja kojim bi se kod djece razvio pozitivan osjećaj prema domovini Hrvatskoj.

Trećim ciljem istraživanja ispitivalo se zadovoljstvo roditelja i njihovi stavovi prema pojedinim obilježjima nastave hrvatskog jezika i književnosti i hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine. Oko polovine anketiranih roditelja izjavljuje da su prilično dobro ili jako dobro upoznati sa sadržajem nastave i nastavnim temama hrvatskog jezika, kao i hrvatske prirodne, povijesne i kulturne baštine (dalje: hrvatska baština). Točno 50 % takvim smatra svoju upoznatost sa sadržajem nastave hrvatskog jezika, a 43 % svoju upoznatost sa sadržajem nastave baštine¹⁴. Također, sudionici istraživanja u velikom broju smatraju da su njihova djeca uglavnom ili pak izuzetno zainteresirana za sadržaj hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu. Međutim, roditelji u većem broju procjenjuju da je interes djece za nastavu hrvatskog jezika veći od interesa za nastavu hrvatske baštine. Naime, 73 % sudionika istraživanja izjavilo je kako su njihova djeca uglavnom ili izuzetno zainteresirana za nastavu hrvatskog jezika i književnosti, dok za nastavu hrvatske baštine to procjenjuje 65 % roditelja ($z=2,4$, $p=0.01$).

S obzirom na rezultate koji ukazuju na to da roditelji procjenjuju nešto manji interes djece za nastavu hrvatske baštine koja pruža neizmjerljivo zanimljivih tema i sadržaja, trebalo bi načine poučavanja prilagoditi suvremenim pedagoškim standardima i strategijama. Korištenje istraživačke, projektne nastave, dramatizacije, simulacije i igrifikacije u nastavi zasigurno bi pridonijelo atraktivnosti i pobuđivanja većeg interesa za nastavu hrvatske baštine. Poticanje povezivanja sa školama i prijateljima u Hrvatskoj, zajednički rad na projektima o hrvatskoj baštini trebalo bi uvrstiti kao specifične ciljeve novog Kurikuluma. Nove digitalne tehnologije koje su se posebno u vrijeme pandemije COVID-19 pokazale kao nužnost, ali i kao nova mogućnost približavanja učenicima obrazovnim videouradcima, trebaju se rabiti kao nadopuna u nastavi.

Roditelji su ispunjenost očekivanja od nastave hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti (tablica 6) ocijenili u najvećem broju kao „uglavnom ispunjena” (57,1 %) ili u „potpunosti ispunjena” (25,8 %). Dakle, velika većina roditelja (83 %) procjenjuje da su ispunjena njihova očekivanja od nastave hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti. Vrlo sličan postotak roditelja izjavio je da su uglavnom ili u potpunosti ispunjena njihova očekivanja od nastave baštine (78 %) (razlika nije statistički značajna, $z = 1,3$, $p = 0,17$). Svega 7 % anketiranih roditelja smatra da se nisu ispunila njihova očekivanja od hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu, a za nastavu baštine to izjavljuje njih 5 %. Navedeni podatci upućuju na to da su roditelji u najvećem broju zadovoljni kvalitetom hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu.

Podatci također ukazuju na to da su roditelji podijeljeni (gotovo pola-pola) oko toga treba li povećati broj nastavnih sati u okviru hrvatske nastave

¹⁴ Razlika nije statistički značajna.

u inozemstvu, i to za obje komponente, za hrvatski jezik i književnost i za hrvatsku baštinu.

Tablica 6.

Zadovoljstvo roditelja i njihovi stavovi prema pojedinim obilježjima nastave hrvatskog jezika i baštine

	Upoznatost sa sadržajem nastave	Zainteresiranost djece za pohađanjem nastave	Ispunjenost očekivanja od nastave	Za povećanje nastavnih sati
Hrvatski jezik i književnost	50 %	73 %	83 %	57 %
Hrvatska povijesna, kulturna i prirodna baština	34 %	65 %	78 %	50 %

Četvrtim ciljem istraživanja željeli smo dobiti uvid u važnost pojedinih operativnih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti i nastavi hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine (zemljopis, povijest, glazbena i likovna kultura) koja se provodi putem Kurikuluma.

Procjene roditelja o važnosti pojedinih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti (tablica 7) ukazuju na to da su roditeljima najvažniji oni ciljevi koji se odnose na vještinu komunikacije na hrvatskom jeziku u svakodnevnim životnim situacijama (M 4,80; SD 0,443). Kako bi se ostvarila ta funkcija, potrebno je djecu poticati i motivirati za *govorenje hrvatskim jezikom kada su god to u prilici* (M 4,74; SD 0,518). Najprikladniji način za ostvarivanje ovog cilja bio bi kada bi se uz pomoć hrvatske škole, na formalnim i neformalnim susretima, proslavama, priredbama, sportskim i drugim natjecanjima ili pak vjerskim obredima djeca i roditelji družili, upoznali i na taj način bolje integrirali u hrvatsku zajednicu. To su prilike kada se može govoriti materinim jezikom i na taj način vježbati, usavršavati komunikaciju na hrvatskom jeziku, ali se i opustiti te bez straha od grešaka govoriti i uspostaviti kontakte.

Ciljevi koji ispitanim roditeljima nisu visoko na listi prioriteta u nastavi hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti obuhvaćaju područje književnosti i književnih razdoblja u hrvatskoj književnosti. To su ciljevi koji nisu neophodni za uspostavljanje osnovne komunikacije na hrvatskom jeziku i opširnije se poučavaju na višim razinama obrazovanja hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu.

Tablica 7.*Važnost pojedinih operativnih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatskog jezika i književnosti*

	Aritmetička sredina	Standardna pogreška	Standardna devijacija
Naučiti hrvatski jezik kako bi se dijete njime služilo u nizu različitih životnih situacija (obitelj, škola, posao, slobodno vrijeme).	4,80	0,028	0,443
Motivirati djecu da kad god su u prilici, govore hrvatskim jezikom.	4,74	0,033	0,518
Razviti gramatičko-pravopisnu pismenost.	4,49	0,045	0,695
Poticati djecu da čitaju književna djela na hrvatskom jeziku.	4,32	0,053	0,830
Steći sposobnost prevođenja različitih tekstova na hrvatski jezik.	4,21	0,059	0,922
Razviti kod djece pozitivan odnos prema hrvatskoj književnosti .	4,05	0,060	0,944
Upoznati djecu s glavnim djelima hrvatske književnosti.	4,02	0,059	0,924
Upoznati najznačajnije hrvatske književnike i njihova najpoznatija djela.	3,78	0,062	0,968
Usvojiti osnovna znanja o značajkama pojedinih razdoblja u hrvatskoj književnosti.	3,58	0,070	1,087
Prosječna važnost svih operativnih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatskog jezika	4,23	0,038	0,58

Posredstvom osam čestica (tablica 8) ispitala se važnost odabranih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine. Jednako kao u nastavi hrvatskog jezika gdje su više vrijednosti svojstvene primarnim ciljevima, tako je i u nastavi hrvatske baštine. Roditeljima je najvažnije da djeca usvoje hrvatske običaje i tradiciju, a potom da usvoje simbole Republike Hrvatske. Manje važnim smatraju da djeca trebaju upoznati gospodarska obilježja ili strukturu vlasti u Republici Hrvatskoj.

Dakle, roditelji smatraju da su najvažniji čimbenici hrvatskog identiteta u odgoju i obrazovanju njihove djece putem hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu jezik, običaji i tradicija. Usto, bitno im je da se putem hrvatske nastave djecu motivira za učenje hrvatskog jezika i potiče da se njime služe u svakodnevnim situacijama.

Tablica 8.*Važnost pojedinih operativnih ciljeva u nastavi povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine*

	Aritmetička sredina	Standardna pogreška	Standardna devijacija
Usvojiti hrvatsku običajnu tradiciju (običaji, blagdani).	4,59	0,042	0,633
Naučiti osnovne simbole Republike Hrvatske.	4,49	0,049	0,735
Objasniti sličnosti i razlike kulturne baštine Hrvatske i zemlje boravka.	3,96	0,060	0,911
Prepoznati gospodarske djelatnosti u mjestu iz kojeg su se iselili roditelji/preci.	3,90	0,067	1,010
Upoznati djecu s osnovnim procesima razvoja hrvatskog društva, države i kulture.	3,84	0,064	0,960
Usporediti osnovna obilježja života u Hrvatskoj u prošlosti i suvremenosti.	3,67	0,065	0,981
Upoznati djecu s gospodarskim obilježjima suvremenog hrvatskog društva.	3,61	0,066	0,990
Opisati strukturu vlasti u RH.	3,16	0,072	1,093
Prosječna važnost svih operativnih ciljeva u nastavi baštine	3,91	0,046	0,69

Kao što je iz tablica 7 i 8 vidljivo, prosječna važnost svih operativnih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti (4,23) veća je od prosječne važnosti svih operativnih ciljeva u nastavi hrvatske baštine (3,91). Budući da je razlika statistički značajna ($t = 8,22$ (221), $p < 0,001$), to upućuje na to da su roditeljima važniji ciljevi nastave hrvatskog jezika i književnosti od ciljeva nastave hrvatske baštine.

OGRANIČENJA ISTRAŽIVANJA

Nalaze koji su predočeni u ovom radu treba sagledati u kontekstu nemogućnosti realizacije probabilističkih uzoraka iseljenika. Naime, zbog brojnih nepoznanica o iseljeničkoj populaciji, kao i nemogućnosti slučajnog izbora, istraživači koji se bave fenomenom iseljavanja u mogućnosti su empirijska istraživanja provesti isključivo na prigodnim ili na kvotnim uzorcima hrvatskih iseljenika. Također, zbog nepoznate demografske strukture iseljeničke

populacije nije moguće napraviti adekvatne pondere kojima bi se u procesu obrade podataka korigirao profil realiziranog uzorka. Zbog toga trenutačno nisu ni moguće pouzdane generalizacije rezultata ovakvih istraživanja, tj. nije moguća u potpunosti pouzdana procjena populacijskih parametara iseljeničke populacije. Posljedično, i rezultate istraživanja realiziranih na iseljeničkim uzorcima treba rabiti isključivo u eksploratorne svrhe. To znači i da rezultate ovog istraživanja treba tretirati kao moguće naznake o odnosu roditelja prema hrvatskoj nastavi u inozemstvu, kao pretpostavke o takvim odnosima koje je potrebno provjeravati u budućim empirijskim istraživanjima na ovu temu.

ZAKLJUČAK

Kako bismo dobili cjeloviti uvid u zadovoljstvo roditelja-iseljenika obrazovanjem u sklopu hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu, ispitano je njihovo zadovoljstvo pojedinim odrednicama aktualnog Kurikuluma. Rezultati istraživanja sugeriraju visoku razinu zadovoljstva roditelja kvalitetom hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu te njihov aktivan angažman u radu hrvatskih škola na 1. i 2. razini obrazovanja. Istraživanje je pokazalo da je roditeljima najvažnije da djeca usvoje hrvatske običaje, tradiciju i simbole Republike Hrvatske, što spada u ciljeve prve razine obrazovanja, koje pohađa najveći broj djece ispitanika. Kada bi učenici nastavili pohađati hrvatsku nastavu na višim stupnjevima obrazovanja, posebno na trećem, imali bi prilike usvojiti i druge značajne ciljeve Kurikuluma, koji su u istraživanju prepoznati kao slabije usvojeni, npr. upoznati se s gospodarskim obilježjima suvremenog hrvatskog društva ili strukturom vlasti. Jedna je od pretpostavki za nastavak pohađanja hrvatske nastave na višim stupnjevima povezivanje sa školom i prijateljima u okruženju. S obzirom na to da se intrinzična motivacija temelji na individualnoj percepciji, psihološkim procesima i potrebama pojedinca, učenike treba navoditi na aktivnosti koje će razviti sklonosti, zanimanja, stavove i vrijednosti koje izazivaju unutarnje zadovoljstvo i sreću. Stoga treba prilagoditi nastavne sadržaje njihovim interesima uvođenjem raznolikosti i poticanjem na sudjelovanje u izvannastavnim aktivnostima kako bi suradničkim učenjem, suvremenim nastavnim strategijama, metodama i medijima u nastavi te zadacima primjerenim individualnim mogućnostima i interesima kod djece razvili osjećaj osobnog zadovoljstva i vrijednosti u školskom okruženju i zajednici.

Kao mjera poboljšanja razvoja osjećaja za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo potvrđuje se potreba iskazana u istraživanju Burai i sur., (2022) te se ponovo predlaže dopuna *Pravilnika o izboru učitelja za rad u hrvatskoj nastavi u inozemstvu* da se svim nastavnicima iz predmeta koji se provode integrativnim kurikulumom omogući rad u hrvatskoj nastavi u inozemstvu uz prethodno usavršavanje na specijalističkim studijima, ili modularnoj nastavi na diplomskoj razini, putem kojih bi stekli sve potrebne kompetencije za rad u hrvatskoj nastavi u inozemstvu.

Rezultati istraživanja upućuju na to da roditelji nastavu hrvatskog jezika i književnosti smatraju važnijom od nastave hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine. Da bi učenici jednako usvojili vrijednosti svih sadržaja hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu, preporučuje se korištenje metode korelacije u nastavi, koja uspješno integrira sadržaje različitih nastavnih predmeta, tj. povezuje, sjedinjuje i usklađuje ih u poučavanju. Uključivanje obrazovanih videouradaka i metode igrifikacije u nastavu još su neke od mogućnosti kojima bi se povećao interes djece za nastavu hrvatske povijesne, kulturne i prirodne baštine.

Roditelji također naglašavaju potrebu jačeg povezivanja djece s lokalnim hrvatskim zajednicama u inozemstvu, gdje bi djeca mogla stvoriti prijateljstva i razvijati osjećaj pripadnosti. Aktivnosti i sadržaji usmjereni ostvarivanju toga cilja mogu se postići putem suvremenih pedagoških metoda i strategija u nastavi, u učionici, i izvan nje. Dakle, interaktivno učenje, istraživanje i projekti, suradničko učenje u formalnim i izvannastavnim aktivnostima može dovesti do navedenih ciljeva. Takav način rada pridonio bi povezivanju i integraciji djece u hrvatsku zajednicu u inozemstvu, stvaranju veza i prijateljstava sa sunarodnjacima.

Rezultati ukazuju i na potrebu za većim usklađivanjem strateških ciljeva Republike Hrvatske prema dijaspori, s posebnim naglaskom na poticanje studiranja i povratka mladih u Hrvatsku. Uzimanje u obzir intrinzične motivacije koja naposljetku vodi do odluke za pohađanje hrvatske nastave na 2. i 3. razini obrazovanja, trebalo bi biti osnova za poticanje zanimanja za nastavak školovanja na hrvatskom jeziku u Republici Hrvatskoj. Od početka pohađanja hrvatske nastave u inozemstvu učenike bi trebalo informirati o mogućnostima studiranja u Hrvatskoj, uključujući poticaje i stipendije. Organizacijom posjeta djelatnika institucija važnih za dijasporu i razmjenom iskustava onih koji su već studirali u Hrvatskoj moglo bi se dodatno motivirati učenike.

Zaključno, nadamo se da će rezultati ovog istraživanja doprinijeti oblikovanju javnih politika Republike Hrvatske prema dijaspori, kako bi hrvatska nastava u inozemstvu ostala relevantna, uključiva i prilagođena učenicima i njihovim obiteljima koje žele očuvati i razvijati svoju kulturnu i jezičnu baštinu u suvremenom svijetu.

PRILOG

1. Popis analiziranih čestica

Čestice odgojno-obrazovnih ciljeva Kurikuluma

Potiče se višejezičnost i interkulturalizam.

Kod djece se razvija osjećaj nacionalnog ponosa.

Djeca se motiviraju da nauče hrvatski jezik i njime se uspješno služe u svakodnevnim situacijama.

Stvaraju se pretpostavke da djeca sklope prijateljstvo s vršnjacima u hrvatskoj zajednici u mjestu u kojem živimo.

Djeca se upoznaju s prirodnim i geografskim obilježjima Hrvatske .

Hrvatska nastava u inozemstvu omogućuje djeci da razumiju povijesnu i kulturnu baštinu Hrvatske.

Djeci se omogućuje bolja integraciju u hrvatsku zajednicu u mjestu u kojem živimo.

Djeca stječu vještine stvaranja na hrvatskom jeziku.

Djeca razvijaju sposobnost pronalaženja informacija na hrvatskom jeziku.

Djeca se upoznaju s osnovnim procesima povijesnog razvoja hrvatskoga društva, države i kulture.

Kod djece se razvija osjećaj za likovno, vizualno i glazbeno stvaralaštvo u Hrvatskoj.

Kod djece se pobuđuje interes za nastavak školovanja na hrvatskom jeziku.

Čestice operativnih ciljeva aktualnog Kurikuluma za hrvatski jezik i književnost

Naučiti hrvatski jezik kako bi se dijete njime služilo u nizu različitih životnih situacija (obitelj, škola, posao, slobodno vrijeme).

Motivirati djecu da kad su god u prilici, govore hrvatskim jezikom.

Razviti gramatičko-pravopisnu pismenost.

Poticati djecu da čitaju književna djela na hrvatskom jeziku.

Steći sposobnost prevođenja različitih tekstova na hrvatski jezik.

Razviti kod djece pozitivan odnos prema hrvatskoj književnosti .

Upoznati djecu s glavnim djelima hrvatske književnosti.

Upoznati najznačajnije hrvatske književnike i njihova najpoznatija djela.

Usvojiti osnovna znanja o značajkama pojedinih razdoblja u hrvatskoj književnosti.

Čestice operativnih ciljeva aktualnog Kurikuluma za hrvatsku povijesnu, kulturnu i prirodnu baštinu

Usvojiti hrvatsku običajnu tradiciju (običaji, blagdani).

Naučiti osnovne simbole Republike Hrvatske.

Objasniti sličnosti i razlike kulturne baštine Hrvatske i zemlje boravka.

Prepoznati gospodarske djelatnosti u mjestu iz kojeg su se iselili roditelji/preci.

Upoznati djecu s osnovnim procesima razvoja hrvatskog društva, države i kulture.

Usporediti osnovna obilježja života u Hrvatskoj u prošlosti i suvremenosti.

Upoznati djecu s gospodarskim obilježjima suvremenog hrvatskog društva.

Opisati strukturu vlasti u RH.

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EXPECTATIONS OF THE DIASPORA FROM CROATIAN TEACHING ABROAD

Abstract: *This paper presents the results of a survey of the satisfaction and attitudes of emigrant parents whose children attend Croatian classes abroad, about Croatian teaching abroad. The research was carried out via an online survey on a convenience sample of emigrant parents in a large number of European countries, and it included 261 parents with 341 children. The results of the research indicate that parents are highly satisfied with Croatian teaching abroad. They consider the teaching of the Croatian language somewhat more important than the teaching of Croatian heritage. Among the two separate dimensions of the Curriculum, the educational-teaching dimension of teaching proved to be somewhat more significant than the national-integrative dimension. As the most important goals of teaching the Croatian language and culture, the parents emphasised communication in the Croatian language and becoming familiar with Croatian customs and traditions. Their expectations from classes were met, while opinions about the need to increase the number of teaching hours for teaching Croatian language and literature and Croatian historical, cultural and natural heritage were divided. The paper emphasises the importance of Croatian teaching abroad and provides guidelines for the development of the new curriculum and the direction of the Republic of Croatia's public policies towards the diaspora.*

Keywords: *diaspora, Croatian identity, Curriculum of Croatian Teaching Abroad, public policies of the Republic of Croatia towards emigration.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the onset of the economic crisis of 2009–2013, estimates suggest that between 300,000 and 400,000 Croatian citizens emigrated to European Union countries (Jurić, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Pokos, 2020; Burić, 2024). According to the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, most emigrants moved to Germany¹, followed by Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and Ireland. Emigration from Slavonia and other less-developed regions, such as Sisak-Moslavina, Virovitica-Podravina, and Bjelovar-Bilogora counties, was particularly intense. Although precise demographic estimates of emigrants are not fully available, some authors (Burić, 2024, p. 75) suggest that the new emigrant population includes an equal number of men and women, primarily of younger and middle-aged groups, with secondary school education being the most common level of attainment. Consequently, this emigrant cohort predominantly comprises individuals of childbearing age, many of whom have already established families (Jurić, 2018a). One distinctive feature of the latest wave of emigration from Croatia is the significant proportion of minor children within emigrant families, indicating that entire families are relocating (Jurić, 2017, p. 348; Župarić-Iljić, 2016, p. 9). Additionally, this latest wave of emigration differs from earlier ones in several ways. Unlike past emigration waves, this one appears less standardized due to the absence of administrative barriers, improved transport connectivity, relatively low travel costs, and easy access to job market information in destination countries. As a result, there is greater uncertainty regarding plans for permanent residence in new environments, the depth of integration into new sociocultural settings, intentions to return, career development, and children's education and future.

The care for Croatian citizens abroad is governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. According to this document, the Act on Relations of the Republic of Croatia with Croats Abroad (Official Gazette 124/11, 16/12, Article 7) stipulates that Croatia aims to preserve and strengthen the position and identity of Croats living abroad through language learning, cultural promotion, education, and science. These individuals are entitled to all rights and obligations prescribed by specific laws related to schooling, employment, scholarships, and more. Furthermore, the Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (Official Gazette 125/2012, Article 47) emphasises the importance of additional education for Croatian children abroad by organizing

¹ For example, in 2009, 46.7% of the total number of Croatian emigrants to EU member states settled in Germany, and by 2016, this had increased to 71.2% (Pokos, 2017, p. 17). Before Croatia's entry into the European Union, minimal numbers of Croatian emigrants were recorded in Ireland, although the 2011 Irish census found 980 residents born in Croatia. The April 2016 Irish census recorded 5,202 residents born in Croatia, representing an increase of 430.8% compared to 2011 (Pokos, 2017, p. 19).

Croatian language and culture lessons based on the Curriculum for Croatian Teaching Abroad (hereinafter: the Curriculum) (Official Gazette 194/2003), under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports. The Curriculum² is designed for children of Croatian citizens who temporarily or permanently live in other countries or for those whose family language is Croatian (Curriculum, 2003, p. 1). The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette 73/2017), under Section IV, lists the protection, strengthening, and promotion of constitutional values and Croatian national identity as one of its strategic goals. The preservation and enhancement of Croatian national identity abroad are achieved through the educational content outlined in the Curriculum. The principles of the Curriculum, which represent its foundational values³ (Curriculum, 2003, p. 4), aim to achieve educational goals across various contexts. Emphasis is placed on educational achievements, and both general and operational goals are specified, focusing on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students are expected to acquire.

The Curriculum is integrative, covering Croatian language and literature, as well as knowledge of Croatia's historical, cultural, and natural heritage through geography, history, music, and visual arts.

The general goals of the Curriculum include the following:

- Learning the Croatian language and literature and effectively using it in formal and informal contexts (family, school, work, leisure, etc.).
- Understanding Croatia's historical and cultural heritage and the main characteristics of modern Croatian society.
- Acquiring knowledge of Croatia's geographical features.
- Developing a positive attitude toward Croatian language, literature, and Croatia's cultural and natural heritage as the students' country of origin and a key element of their national identity.
- Motivating students to learn and preserve the Croatian language, literature, and heritage.
- Equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and values needed to pursue further education in Croatian.
- Encouraging students to shape their identity by comparing Croatian culture with that of the host country and successfully adapting to a multicultural social context.
- Promoting multilingualism and interculturalism as a way of life in modern society (Curriculum for Croatian Teaching Abroad, 2003, p. 14).

² The Curriculum is a written document that encompasses all aspects of the educational process: goals, tasks, content, outcomes, organization, methods, and evaluation.

³ The principles of the Curriculum are as follows: balance, coherence and continuity, openness, flexibility, interculturality, inclusiveness, and a student-centred approach (Curriculum, 2003, p. 5–6).

These eight general educational goals are further elaborated through operational objectives within thematic units (e.g., personal identity, learning-work-leisure, people in space and time, continuity and change, culture and society, contemporary society, global interconnectedness, and interdependence). For the Croatian language and literature, operational goals emphasise communicative competence, linguistic proficiency (in pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary), and literary appreciation to foster a positive attitude toward the Croatian language and literature, encourage a reading culture, and promote aesthetic appreciation (Curriculum, 2003, p. 25).

For Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage, operational goals include fostering interest in visual and musical expressions, understanding Croatia's natural, social, and economic characteristics, and learning about key historical processes related to Croatia as the students' country of origin. The cultural dimension plays a critical role in identity preservation, emphasising national and regional uniqueness while encouraging shared cultural values.

Given the varied prior knowledge of students in Croatian teaching abroad, the goals are structured across three levels:

1. Grades 1–4 of primary school (lower primary level).
2. Grades 5–8/9 (upper primary level).
3. Four grades of secondary school (9/10–12).

The Curriculum also outlines the knowledge, skills, and values to be acquired, along with recommended literature, teaching resources, didactic-methodological guidelines, and evaluation criteria. The Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports currently implements Croatian teaching abroad in 24 countries (Bušljeta Kardum et al., 2022). Classes are conducted in rented facilities after students' regular school hours or on Friday/Saturday afternoons. In some countries, Croatian language classes are integrated into the local education system, while others use a combined approach (Bošnjak, 2024, pp. 200–201). Classes are held for two hours weekly in heterogeneous groups based on age and prior knowledge (70 hours per subject annually).

To implement the Curriculum, the Ministry selects primary school teachers, Croatian language teachers, or history teachers according to the Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools.⁴ Teachers must possess comprehensive knowledge of Croatia's cultural and natural heritage, its literature, and arts, along with professional competencies and a commitment to continuous professional development (Curriculum, 2003, p. 96). Before starting work abroad, the Ministry organizes one- or two-day seminars to prepare teachers for the specific pedagogical, didactic, and methodological requirements of teaching Croatian abroad.

⁴ Regulation on the Conditions and Procedure for the Selection of Teachers for Work in Croatian Teaching Abroad, Official Gazette 87/08.

According to the current Curriculum (Official Gazette 194/2003), Croatian teaching abroad has been in place for two decades. During this period, significant changes in education and technological advancements have occurred. Pedagogical standards have improved, and sustainable development strategies – such as education for environmental awareness, human rights, and social justice – are increasingly integrated into new curricula. Recognizing the need to adapt education policies, Croatia's National Development Plan for Education until 2027 aims to update the Curriculum and develop appropriate educational materials. This research focuses on analysing the satisfaction, expectations, and perspectives of the Croatian diaspora regarding the current Curriculum and education abroad.

Since Croatian teaching abroad links Croatian emigrant children and youth with their language and culture, and Croatian schools serve as hubs for community activities (Bušljeta Kardum et al., 2022, p. 88), the primary goal of this study is to form effective public policies for emigrants, particularly regarding education and identity preservation. This research aims to explore emigrant parents' expectations, opinions, and plans regarding the education of their children, as provided by the Republic of Croatia through Croatian teaching abroad.

METHODOLOGY

Research objectives

This study aims to explore the expectations and attitudes of parents whose children attend Croatian language classes abroad regarding the future of their children's education organized by the Republic of Croatia through Croatian teaching abroad, as well as their satisfaction with certain aspects of Croatian teaching abroad (achieving objectives and familiarity with the Curriculum of Croatian Teaching Abroad) and the national component in education and upbringing. This serves as the general goal of the research.

Based on this, the following four specific research objectives were defined:

1. To determine the extent to which parents assess the achievement of specific general and operational objectives of the Curriculum.
2. To determine the importance of the educational-teaching and national-integrative components of the Curriculum for parents' satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad.
3. To assess parents' satisfaction and attitudes towards specific features of the Croatian language and literature education, as well as Croatian natural, historical, and cultural heritage education.
4. To determine the importance of specific operational objectives in the Croatian language and literature teaching and Croatian historical, cultural,

and natural heritage education (geography, history, music, and visual arts), conducted through the Curriculum.

Research method and measurement instrument

Data for the research were collected via the survey method, specifically through online survey techniques. The survey was created and distributed to participants via the Lime Survey tool via Facebook groups for Croatian emigrants and through the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MZOM) to coordinators and teachers of Croatian teaching abroad, who then forwarded the survey to parents of students across Europe. The link to the survey, along with an invitation to participate, was sent twice through MZOM to coordinators and teachers of Croatian language education abroad (Europe) on 30 April and 27 May 2024. During the same period, the survey was also promoted in 57 Facebook groups for Croats in Europe.

The aim of this study was to assess the satisfaction of Croatian emigrant parents with the current Croatian language education abroad, based on specific general and operational objectives of the Croatian Curriculum of Teaching Abroad. Given the specifics of the Curriculum, particularly its integrative nature, which includes teaching the Croatian language and literature as well as acquiring knowledge about Croatia's historical, cultural, and natural heritage through subjects such as geography, history, music, and visual arts, the creation of the questionnaire began with the general and operational goals of the educational process in the Croatian language and literature and Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage. Consequently, the questionnaire included two main groups of questions.

The first group contained questions evaluating participants' satisfaction with the general objectives of the Curriculum. Three questions assessed parents' familiarity with and satisfaction with the current Curriculum, while twelve statements assessed the realization of specific educational objectives of the Curriculum.⁵

The second group of questions aimed to assess participants' familiarity with the content of the Croatian language and literature Curriculum as well as the Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage Curriculum. It also included questions in which parents evaluated the importance of specific operational objectives related to Croatian language and literature (7 items) and Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage (9 items).⁶

⁵ Each particle is assigned a scale ranging from 1 (the specified curriculum goal is not achieved at all) to 5 (the specified curriculum goal is fully achieved).

⁶ Importance was assessed on a scale ranging from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (extremely important). A list of all the particles used can be found in the Appendix.

Additionally, the questionnaire included nine demographic questions and inquiries about parents' views on children's interest in attending classes, as well as whether there was a need to increase teaching hours in both areas – Croatian language and literature, and Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage.

Sample

The survey-based research was conducted on a non-probabilistic convenience sample of the diaspora residing in Europe. Although these samples do not allow for complete valid generalization of the research results, they provide basic exploratory insights into the issue being studied, thus fulfilling the primary purpose of the research. The sample included 261 parents abroad with 341 children attending, or having attended, Croatian language schools abroad: 1st – 4th grade: 195 students, 5th – 9th grade: 121 students, and high school: 25 students. Most participants were representatives of the first and second levels of Croatian Teaching Abroad. The average age of the participants was 43 years. The study included participants from Germany: 54.3%, Austria and Slovenia: 5.4%, Switzerland: 17.1%, Ireland and England: 10.8%, Benelux countries: 4.4%, Italy and Spain: 4.6%, and other countries: 3.4%.

Statistical procedures

In the data processing phase, in addition to descriptive analysis of the frequencies and percentages of responses, bivariate and multivariate statistical procedures were used. Among the bivariate statistical procedures, the Chi-square test, paired t-test, and Z-test for proportions were applied. The Chi-square test was used to test the statistical significance of differences between different demographic categories of respondents, regarding their knowledge of the Curriculum and whether their expectations of Croatian teaching abroad were met. The paired t-test was applied to test the statistical significance of differences in the assessment of the importance of the educational-teaching and national-integrative components of the Curriculum, as well as the statistical significance of differences in the assessment of the importance of operational objectives in the Croatian language and literature education and operational objectives in Croatian heritage education. The Z-test for proportions was used to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in parents' assessment of children's interest in the Croatian language and literature education compared with their interest in Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage education. Among the multivariate statistical methods, exploratory factor analysis and multiple regression analysis were applied. Exploratory factor analysis was used to gain insight into the structure of the latent space defined by the items used to assess parents' opinions on the realization of specific objectives of the Curriculum. Multiple regression analysis was employed to indirectly assess

the importance of the specific content of the Curriculum for parents' overall satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine the extent to which parents assess the achievement of individual objectives of the Curriculum, three variables were used: parents' familiarity with the Curriculum, the fulfilment of their expectations from Croatian teaching abroad, and parents' assessment of the realization of individual objectives of the Curriculum.

To measure parents' familiarity with the Curriculum, a scale ranging from 1 to 5 was used, where 1 meant not familiar at all, and 5 meant very familiar. The collected data indicate that more than half of the surveyed parents (55.9%) consider themselves fairly familiar with the Curriculum, whereas 44.1% are slightly or moderately familiar. These data suggest that parents are active participants in the educational activities at the Croatian school and are interested in the programme their children attend. Given that parents play a primary role in the upbringing of their children, this indicates that they are monitoring the quality of the Croatian teaching programme. These findings also suggest that they are interested in how teachers convey Croatian national values and identity through various content and topics. When these data are interpreted, it should be noted that the children of the participants mostly attend lower-grade levels of primary school, meaning that they are involved in the first level of Croatian teaching abroad. Specifically, 75% of parents have children attending the first level of education, and 46% have children attending the second level (grades 5–8/9 of primary school). The smallest number of research participants (9.6%) have children attending the third level of education (secondary school).⁷ Therefore, the responses from emigrant parents mainly reflect their views and involvement with Croatian education at the first and second levels abroad. The decline in interest in attending Croatian teaching abroad at higher education levels can be identified as one of the observed problems in Croatian teaching abroad. The reasons for this can be speculated, but at a lower education level, parents have a stronger influence on encouraging children to attend Croatian education. Another reason may be the increased obligations of students at higher levels of education. In this sense, to retain students and encourage them to continue their education in Croatian, a particular focus should be placed on the intrinsic motivation of children.

Regarding parents' expectations from Croatian teaching abroad, most participants (75.4%) mentioned that their expectations were met, while one-quarter of them felt that their expectations were either unmet or partially met.

⁷ The total is greater than 100% because parents may have children at all three levels of education.

Expectations from Croatian teaching abroad may include all the elements defined by the Curriculum, from the achievement of goals, tasks, and content, to material-technical conditions, organization, teaching methods used by teachers, and the teachers themselves. Considering all the factors of this dimension, it can be concluded that a large number of surveyed parents are satisfied with Croatian teaching abroad.

Differences between the demographic categories of parents (gender, generation, and education) in terms of their knowledge of the Curriculum and the fulfilment of their expectations from Croatian teaching abroad were analysed. A difference was found only in the case of generational affiliation, specifically in the variable measuring the fulfilment of expectations from Croatian teaching abroad. Younger participants, members of Generation Y (up to 43 years old), were more likely than members of Generation X (43 years old and older) were to report that their expectations from Croatian education had been fulfilled.

Table 1

Fulfilment of expectations from Croatian teaching abroad by Age

	Expectations were not/mostly not fulfilled	Expectations were mostly fulfilled	Expectations were completely fulfilled
Generation Y	17.9%	47%	35%
Generation X and older	28.1%	56.3%	15.6%

$\chi^2(2) = 10.866, p=0.004$

To assess parents' views on the realization of specific objectives of the Curriculum, twelve items were used, with an associated scale ranging from 1 (this objective is not achieved at all) to 5 (this objective is fully achieved). The following table shows the average values for each item.

Table 2*Parents' assessment of the realization of specific objectives of the Curriculum*

	Mean	Standard Error	SD
Promotes multilingualism and interculturalism	4.20	0.057	0.888
Develops a sense of national pride in children	4.17	0.059	0.931
Motivates children to learn Croatian and use it successfully in everyday situations	4.12	0.054	0.860
Creates opportunities for children to make friends with peers in the Croatian community in the area where we live	4.10	0.059	0.926
Introduces children to the natural and geographical features of Croatia	4.04	0.058	0.912
Croatian teaching abroad helps children understand the historical and cultural heritage of Croatia	4.03	0.058	0.908
Provides better integration for children into the Croatian community in the area where we live	3.94	0.065	1.002
Children acquire skills in creative writing in Croatian	3.93	0.060	0.921
Children develop the ability to find information in Croatian	3.91	0.061	0.948
Children are introduced to the basic processes of the historical development of Croatian society, the state, and culture	3.84	0.058	0.900
Children develop a sense of visual, artistic, and musical creation in Croatia	3.68	0.065	0.990
Children are encouraged to continue their education in Croatian	3.66	0.064	0.987

The means presented in the previous table suggest that parents believe that all the tested objectives of Croatian teaching abroad are achieved, as they are above the theoretical mean of the scale (value 3). However, according to the surveyed parents, the objectives most successfully achieved by Croatian teaching abroad are those focused on multilingualism, interculturalism, fostering national pride in children, and motivating them to speak Croatian in everyday situations. The highest-ranked dimension, focusing on multilingualism and interculturalism, confirms the promotion of multilingualism and interculturalism as an objective emphasised by many authors in the design of modern curricula (Jajić Novogradec, 2017; Petravić, 2014; Sablić, 2014; Sablić, Migles, Rajić, 2021).

Intercultural competence implies establishing and maintaining relationships, respect, patience, flexibility, openness, and curiosity (Hrvatić & Piršl, 2005, p. 258). It is also one of the principles of the Curriculum, respecting the multicultural structure of Croatian society and the society in which the students live, i.e., biculturalism as a way of life for students. Multilingualism and multiculturalism are distinctive features of the experiences of Croatian students teaching abroad.

The next most important value is the development of national pride in children. National pride can be seen as an individual feeling of respect and pride for one's own nation. Motivating students to learn the Croatian language, mastering basic language skills, and enabling students to communicate successfully and use the Croatian standard language in everyday situations is the third most important goal parents believe is achieved by the Curriculum. Language is the key medium through which a nation's cultural and historical heritage is transmitted and preserved. Language is one of the determinants of national identity, and in the Curriculum for teaching Croatian language and literature, it is implemented in the category of communication competence (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) at all levels of education. In contrast, regarding the objectives that parents believe are achieved to a slightly lesser extent by the Curriculum⁸, one that stands out is stimulating interest in continuing education in Croatian and returning to Croatia.

Although this objective is not clearly defined in any part of the Curriculum, it is evident that it could be key in encouraging young people to consider continuing their education in Croatian and returning to Croatia. In other words, encouraging young people to continue their education in Croatia should be more clearly articulated within the Curriculum itself. Additionally, the development of a sense of artistic, visual, and musical creativity in Croatia has been recognized as a goal achieved to a somewhat lesser extent. The reasons for this could be twofold. Croatian language and culture education is often conducted by Croatian language teachers, followed by elementary school teachers and history teachers (unpublished data from the author's research on the pedagogical competencies and needs of teachers in Croatian teaching abroad, 2022). These teachers could not have acquired visual, artistic, and musical creativity to the extent required by the specific nature of Croatian teaching abroad. Slightly more than others, during their studies in the field of arts, elementary school teachers have some formal education in these areas. Competencies in these fields are transferred to teachers through professional development provided by the relevant Ministry, or they attempt to acquire

⁸ The Republic of Croatia encourages studying in Croatia through various projects, such as scholarships, accommodation in student dormitories, and special quotas for university programmes.

them independently through further education. Considering this opinion and the results of the study by Burai et al. (2023), which suggests adding to the Regulation on the Conditions and Procedure for the Selection of Teachers for Work in Croatian Teaching Abroad (Official Gazette 41/2009) the possibility for geography, music, and visual arts teachers to work in Croatian teaching abroad, considering the integrative concept of the Curriculum, the development of an appreciation for visual, artistic, and musical creativity in Croatia could be more fully developed in children attending Croatian teaching abroad. For interested teachers of these subjects, additional education could be organized, either as a specialist study or a modular course at the graduate level, which would prepare them to implement all the subject content of the Curriculum and to work in Croatian teaching abroad. This would offer higher-quality teaching in the diaspora and the achievement of goals aimed at fostering an appreciation for visual, artistic, and musical creativity in Croatia in general.

The second goal of this research was to determine the importance of individual components of the Curriculum for parents' satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad. To gain insight into the structure of the latent space, measured with the twelve items used (Table 2), and to construct the necessary measures for easier execution of other planned analyses, an exploratory factor analysis⁹ was conducted. Using the Guttman-Kaiser criterion for stopping factor extraction and oblique (oblimin) rotation, two latent dimensions were extracted.¹⁰ The first dimension describes the educational-teaching component, and the second describes the national-integrative component of the Curriculum. The educational-teaching function is described by nine items indicating the achievement of various educational goals such as the acquisition of the skills necessary for creation in the Croatian language, interest in continuing education in Croatian, and the development of an appreciation for visual, artistic, and musical creativity, and so on. Three items describe the national-integrative function of the Curriculum, relating to the integration of children into the Croatian community and fostering national pride.

⁹ Bartlett's test was used to assess the significance of the correlation matrix, while the suitability of the correlation matrix for factorization was tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy. The Bartlett's test of the significance of the correlation matrix was found to be satisfactory ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index was above the reference value (0.6), indicating that the correlation matrices of the variables are suitable for factorization. This suggests that the data structure is robust enough for further analysis and can provide meaningful insights.

¹⁰ The conducted factor analysis explained a total of 65% of the variance. The extracted factor structure fully meets the requirements for convergent validity (the items have satisfactory loadings on only one factor) and discriminant validity (the items have low factor loadings on the other factors). This indicates that the factor structure is both reliable and distinct, supporting the validity of the results.

Table 3*Factor pattern matrix*

	Educational-Teaching Component of the Curriculum	National-Integrative Component of the Curriculum
Children develop the ability to find information in Croatian.	0.892	-0.100
Children acquire skills for creating in Croatian.	0.890	-0.010
Children become familiar with the natural and geographical features of Croatia.	0.843	-0.022
Croatian teaching abroad enables children to understand Croatia's historical and cultural heritage.	0.786	0.065
Multilingualism and interculturalism are promoted.	0.777	-0.044
Children's interest in continuing their education in Croatian is stimulated.	0.775	-0.032
Children are motivated to learn Croatian and successfully use it in everyday situations.	0.736	0.005
Children are introduced to the basic processes of historical development of Croatian society, state, and culture.	0.681	0.190
Children develop an appreciation for visual, artistic, and musical creativity in Croatia.	0.538	0.251
Conditions are created for children to form friendships with peers in the Croatian community where they live.	-0.085	0.927
Children are enabled better integration into the Croatian community where they live.	0.039	0.883
Children develop a sense of national pride.	0.282	0.550

By averaging the values of the retained items, two composite variables were constructed: the educational-teaching and national-integrative components of the Curriculum.¹¹ The mean of the educational-teaching component scale is 3.9 (SD = 0.74), while the mean of the national-integrative component is 4.1 (SD

¹¹ In this manner, the range of each of the used scales/variables was from 1 (expectations from the course were not met) to 5 (expectations from the course were fully met). The internal consistency of both scales is satisfactory. The value of Cronbach's α coefficient for the educational-teaching component of the Curriculum is 0.93, and for the national-integrative component, it is 0.81.

= 0.81). Although this difference is statistically significant ($t = 2.8$, $p = 0.006$), it can be indirectly concluded that parents are slightly more satisfied with the achievement of the national-integrative component of the Curriculum, but this difference cannot be interpreted as substantial. In general, parents are satisfied with the achievement of both components of the Curriculum. However, since the implementation of the educational-teaching component is more strongly associated with parents' overall satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad¹² ($r = 0.72$), it can be indirectly concluded that the realization of this component is more important to parents than the realization of the national-integrating component¹³. In other words, the educational-teaching component of the Curriculum is more important for parents' satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad.

To determine which specific contents (educational goals) of these two dimensions of the Curriculum are statistically significant predictors of parents' overall satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad, two multiple regression analyses were conducted. In the first one, the predictor set consisted of nine variables describing the content of the educational-teaching component of the Curriculum. In the second multiple regression analysis, the predictor set consisted of three variables describing the content of the national-integrative component of the Curriculum. In this manner, the goal was to indirectly determine the importance of the realization of specific educational goals of the Curriculum for parents' satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad. The results of the multiple regression analyses are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4

Statistically significant predictors of the educational-teaching component of the Curriculum for parents' satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad

R=0.642 R²=0.41	B	Beta	t	p
Children are motivated to learn Croatian and use it successfully in everyday situations.	0.158	0.187	2.687	0.008
Croatian teaching abroad enables children to understand Croatia's historical and cultural heritage.	0.170	0.202	2.662	0.008
Multilingualism and interculturalism are promoted.	0.222	0.256	3.668	0.000
Children develop an appreciation for visual, artistic, and musical creativity in Croatia.	0.135	0.169	2.563	0.011

¹² Overall satisfaction of parents with Croatian teaching abroad was assessed by means of the question: "Have your general expectations of Croatian teaching abroad been met?" The response options ranged from 1 – not met at all, to 5 – fully met.

¹³ The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient between the national-integrative component of the Curriculum and the fulfilment of parents' expectations of Croatian teaching abroad is 0.58.

As seen in Table 4, motivating children to learn Croatian and use it successfully in everyday situations, understanding Croatian cultural and historical heritage, promoting multilingualism and interculturalism, and developing an appreciation for visual, artistic, and musical creativity in Croatia are the components of the educational-teaching Curriculum whose implementation generates satisfaction among parents of Croatian teaching abroad. These variables explain 41% of the variance in parents' satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad. The other five contents that make up the educational-teaching component of the Curriculum are not statistically significant; therefore, they cannot be indirectly treated as those whose implementation contributes to parents' satisfaction.

In contrast, all three components of the national-integrative Curriculum were statistically significant predictors of parents' satisfaction. However, it is worth noting that their contribution to overall satisfaction is smaller. Unlike the statistically significant contents of the educational-teaching component, which explain 41% of the variance in parents' satisfaction, these three national-integrative components explain 27% of the variance in the criterion variable (Table 5).

Table 5

Statistically significant predictors of the national-integrative component of the Curriculum for parents' satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad

R=0.53 R²=0.27	B	Beta	t	p
Conditions are created for children to form friendships with peers in the Croatian community where they live	0.223	0.266	3.366	0.001
Children are enabled better integration into the Croatian community where they live.	0.137	0.173	2.026	0.044
Children develop a sense of national pride.	0.149	0.186	2.719	0.007

A study on Croatian national identity in the context of educational activities abroad (Bušljeta Kardum et al., 2021) concluded that the Curriculum aims, through learning outcomes related to the content of Croatian language and literature as well as content related to Croatia's historical, cultural, and natural heritage, to encourage students to build and preserve Croatian national identity. Through an analysis of the Curriculum outcomes, it was concluded that there are insufficient learning outcomes in the Curriculum that foster the development of Croatian national identity. The results of this study also indicate that the national-integrative content of the Curriculum is considered significant by emigrant parents for their overall satisfaction with Croatian teaching abroad, and that the national component is an extremely important factor in Croatian

teaching. Therefore, these insights should be considered when creating a new Curriculum, and more content should be included that would help develop positive feelings toward Croatia in children.

The third goal of the research was to examine parents' satisfaction and their attitudes toward specific features of the Croatian language and literature teaching and Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage teaching. Approximately half of the surveyed parents stated that they were quite well or very well informed about the content of Croatian language teaching, as well as about the content of Croatian natural, historical, and cultural heritage teaching (hereinafter: Croatian heritage). Exactly 50% considered themselves well-informed about the content of Croatian language teaching, and 43% felt the same about their awareness of heritage teaching content.¹⁴ Additionally, many participants in the study believe that their children are for the most part or fully interested in the content of Croatian teaching abroad. However, more parents assessed that their children's interest in Croatian language teaching was greater than their interest in Croatian heritage teaching. Specifically, 73% of participants stated that their children were for the most part or fully interested in Croatian language and literature lessons, while 65% of parents assessed their children's interest in Croatian heritage lessons in a similar manner.

Given the results indicating that parents assess children's interest in Croatian heritage teaching as slightly lower, despite the immense interest the subject offers, teaching methods should be adapted to modern pedagogical standards and strategies. The use of research, project-based learning, dramatization, simulation, and gamification in lessons would certainly contribute to the attractiveness and increase interest in Croatian heritage teaching. Encouraging connections with schools and friends in Croatia, as well as joint projects about Croatian heritage, should be included as specific goals in the new Curriculum. New digital technologies, which proved to be essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, should also be used as a supplement in teaching, especially through educational video content.

Parents rated the fulfilment of their expectations from the Croatian language and literature teaching (Table 6) for the most part as "mostly fulfilled" (57.1%) or "fully fulfilled" (25.8%). In total, a vast majority of parents (83%) reported that their expectations for the Croatian language and literature teaching were met. A similar percentage of parents reported that their expectations for heritage teaching were mostly or fully fulfilled (78%) (the difference was not statistically significant, $z=1.3$, $p=0.17$). Only 7% of the surveyed parents reported that their expectations for Croatian teaching abroad were unmet, whereas 5% reported that their expectations for the heritage teaching were the same. These findings

¹⁴ The difference is not statistically significant.

suggest that most parents are satisfied with the quality of Croatian teaching abroad.

The data also suggest that parents are divided, almost evenly, in terms of whether the number of teaching hours in Croatian teaching abroad should be increased, for both components – Croatian language and literature and Croatian heritage.

Table 6

Parents' satisfaction and their attitudes towards specific features of the Croatian language and heritage teaching

	Familiarity with content	Children's interest in attending lessons	Fulfilment of expectations from teaching	Support for increasing teaching hours
Croatian language and literature	50%	73%	83%	57%
Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage	34%	65%	78%	50%

The fourth goal of the research was to gain insight into the importance of specific operational goals in the Croatian language and literature teaching and Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage teaching (geography, history, music, and visual culture) as implemented through the Curriculum. Parents' assessments of the importance of various goals in the Croatian language and literature teaching (Table 7) reveal that the most important goals for parents are those related to the ability to communicate in Croatian in everyday life situations (M 4.80; SD 0.443). To achieve this function, it is necessary to encourage and motivate children to speak Croatian whenever possible (M 4.74; SD 0.518). The most appropriate way to achieve this goal would be through formal and informal meetings, celebrations, performances, sports and other competitions, or religious ceremonies, where children and parents could socialize and integrate into the Croatian community. These are opportunities to speak the native language, practice communication in Croatian, and interact without fear of making mistakes.

The goals that are not highly prioritized by the parents surveyed about the Croatian language and literature teaching include the study of literature and literary periods in Croatian literature. These goals are not essential for establishing basic communication in the Croatian language and are taught in more detail at higher levels of education in Croatian schools abroad.

Table 7

Importance of specific operational goals in the Croatian language and literature teaching

	Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation
Learn Croatian to use it in various life situations (family, school, work, leisure)	4.80	0.028	0.443
Motivate children to speak Croatian whenever possible	4.74	0.033	0.518
Develop grammatical and orthographic literacy	4.49	0.045	0.695
Encourage children to read literary works in Croatian	4.32	0.053	0.830
Gain the ability to translate different texts into Croatian	4.21	0.059	0.922
Develop a positive attitude toward Croatian literature	4.05	0.060	0.944
Introduce children to major works of Croatian literature	4.02	0.059	0.924
Introduce the most significant Croatian authors and their works	3.78	0.062	0.968
Acquire basic knowledge of different periods in Croatian literature	3.58	0.070	1.087
Average importance of all operational goals in Croatian language teaching	4.23	0.038	0.58

Through eight items (Table 8), the importance of the selected goals in Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage teaching was explored. Similar to the case in Croatian language teaching, where primary goals have higher values, the same holds true for Croatian heritage teaching. Parents consider it most important for children to acquire Croatian customs and traditions, followed by learning the symbols of the Republic of Croatia. They deem learning about Croatia's economic features or the structure of government less important.

Thus, parents consider language, customs, and traditions the most significant factors of Croatian identity in educating their children through Croatian teaching abroad. Additionally, it is important that Croatian education motivates children to learn Croatian and use it in everyday situations.

Table 8

Importance of specific operational goals in teaching historical, cultural, and natural heritage

	Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation
Adopt Croatian traditions (customs, holidays)	4.59	0.042	0.633
Learn the basic symbols of the Republic of Croatia	4.49	0.049	0.735
Explain similarities and differences between Croatian cultural heritage and that of the country of residence	3.96	0.060	0.911
Recognize the economic activities prevalent in the area from which the parents/ancestors emigrated	3.90	0.067	1.010
Introduce children to basic processes of Croatian societal, state, and cultural development	3.84	0.064	0.960
Compare basic features of life in Croatia in the past and in the present	3.67	0.065	0.981
Introduce children to the economic features of contemporary Croatian society	3.61	0.066	0.990
Describe the structure of government in the Republic of Croatia	3.16	0.072	1.093
Average importance of all operational goals in heritage teaching	3.91	0.046	0.69

As shown in Tables 7 and 8, the average importance of all operational goals in the Croatian language and literature teaching (4.23) is greater than the average importance of all operational goals in Croatian heritage teaching (3.91). Since the difference is statistically significant ($t = 8.22$ (221), $p < 0.001$), the parents find the goals of the Croatian language and literature teaching more important than those of Croatian heritage teaching.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings presented in this paper should be considered within the context of the inability to realize probabilistic samples of emigrants. Due to numerous unknowns about the emigrant population and the impossibility of random sampling, researchers studying the phenomenon of Croatian emigration can only conduct empirical studies on convenience or quota samples. Additionally, due to the unknown demographic structure of the emigrant population, it is not

possible to create appropriate weights to adjust for the sample profile during data processing. Therefore, reliable generalizations from such studies are currently not possible, and the results should only be used for exploratory purposes. This means that the results of this study should be treated as potential indicators of parents' attitudes toward Croatian teaching abroad, serving as hypotheses that need to be verified in future empirical studies on this topic.

CONCLUSION

In order to gain comprehensive insight into the satisfaction of emigrant parents with education as part of Croatian teaching abroad, their satisfaction with specific aspects of the current Curriculum was examined. The research results suggest a high level of parent satisfaction with the quality of Croatian teaching abroad, as well as their active involvement in the operation of Croatian schools at the primary and secondary education levels. The research results indicate that it is most important for parents that their children adopt Croatian customs, traditions, and symbols of the Republic of Croatia, which fall under the goals of the primary level of education, attended by the largest number of children among the respondents. If students continue attending Croatian teaching at higher levels, particularly at the tertiary level, they will have the opportunity to adopt other significant goals of the Curriculum, which were identified as less well adopted in the study, such as becoming familiar with the economic characteristics of contemporary Croatian society or the structure of government. One of the assumptions for continuing Croatian teaching at higher levels is the connection with schools and friends in the local environment. Since intrinsic motivation is based on individual perceptions, psychological processes, and individual needs, students should be guided to activities that develop preferences, interests, attitudes, and values that bring internal satisfaction and happiness. Therefore, teaching content should be adapted to their interests by introducing diversity and encouraging participation in extracurricular activities in order to develop a sense of personal satisfaction and value in the school environment and community through collaborative learning, modern teaching strategies, methods, and media, as well as appropriate tasks tailored to children's individual abilities and interests.

As a measure to improve the development of an appreciation for artistic, visual, and musical creativity, the need highlighted in the research by Burai et al. (2022) is confirmed. It is again suggested to amend the Regulation on the selection of teachers for work in Croatian teaching abroad, i.e., that all teachers of subjects conducted within the integrative Curriculum should be allowed to work in Croatian teaching abroad after completing advanced studies, or modular courses at the graduate level, utilizing which they would acquire all the necessary competencies to work in Croatian teaching abroad.

The research results indicate that parents consider the Croatian language and literature classes more important than the Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage classes. To ensure that students adopt the same value for all content in Croatian teaching abroad, the use of correlation methods in teaching is recommended, as it successfully integrates content from various subjects, i.e., connects, unites, and harmonizes them in instruction.

The inclusion of educational video clips and gamification methods in teaching is another possibility that could increase children's interest in Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage lessons.

Parents also emphasise the need for stronger connections between children and local Croatian communities abroad, where children can build friendships and develop a sense of belonging. Activities and content aimed at achieving this goal can be achieved through contemporary pedagogical methods and strategies in the classroom and beyond. Therefore, interactive learning, research, and projects, as well as collaborative learning in formal and extracurricular activities, can achieve the stated objectives. This approach contributes to connecting and integrating children into the Croatian community abroad, creating bonds and friendships with fellow compatriots.

The results also point to the need for better alignment of the strategic goals of the Republic of Croatia with those of the diaspora, with a special focus on encouraging young people to study and return to Croatia. Starting from intrinsic motivation for continuing to learn the Croatian language, to the decision to attend Croatian teaching at the secondary and tertiary levels, this should form the basis for stimulating interest in continuing education in the Croatian language in the Republic of Croatia. From the beginning of Croatian teaching abroad, students should be informed about the possibilities of studying in Croatia, including incentives and scholarships. Organizing visits by employees from institutions important to the diaspora and exchanging experiences with those who have already studied in Croatia could further motivate students.

In conclusion, we hope that the results of this research will contribute to shaping public policies in the Republic of Croatia towards the diaspora, so that Croatian teaching abroad remains relevant, inclusive, and adaptable to students and their families who wish to preserve and develop their cultural and linguistic heritage in the modern world.

APPENDIX

1. List of analysed particles

Particles of educational goals of the Curriculum

Multilingualism and interculturalism are encouraged.
A sense of national pride is developed in children.

Children are motivated to learn the Croatian language and to use it successfully in everyday situations.

Conditions are created for children to form friendships with peers in the Croatian community where they live.

Children are introduced to the natural and geographical characteristics of Croatia.

Croatian teaching abroad enables children to understand the historical and cultural heritage of Croatia.

Children are enabled better integration into the Croatian community where they live.

Children acquire skills in creating in the Croatian language.

Children develop the ability to find information in the Croatian language.

Children are introduced to the basic processes of the historical development of Croatian society, the state, and culture.

A sense of artistic, visual, and musical creativity in Croatia is developed in children.

Children's interest in continuing their education in the Croatian language is stimulated.

Particles of operational goals of the current Curriculum for Croatian language and literature

Learn Croatian so that the child can use it in various life situations (family, school, work, free time).

Motivate children to speak Croatian whenever possible.

Develop grammatical and orthographic literacy.

Encourage children to read literary works in Croatian.

Acquire the ability to translate various texts into Croatian.

Develop a positive attitude towards Croatian literature in children.

Introduce children to the main works of Croatian literature.

Introduce the most significant Croatian writers and their most famous works.

Acquire basic knowledge of the characteristics of individual periods in Croatian literature.

Particles of operational goals of the current Curriculum for Croatian historical, cultural, and natural heritage

Adopt Croatian traditional customs (traditions, holidays).

Learn the basic symbols of the Republic of Croatia.

Explain the similarities and differences in the cultural heritage of Croatia and the country of residence.

Recognize the economic activities prevalent in the area from which the parents/ancestors emigrated.

Introduce children to the basic processes of the development of Croatian society, state, and culture.

Compare the main features of life in Croatia in the past and present.

Introduce children to the economic characteristics of contemporary Croatian society.

Describe the structure of government in Croatia.

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VOLONTIRANJE KAO UČENJE SLUŽENJEM U ZAJEDNICI: KVALITATIVNO PILOT-ISTRAŽIVANJE REFLEKSIJÂ BUDUĆIH UČITELJA I PEDAGOGA

***Sažetak:** Ovaj rad istražuje utjecaj volontiranja kao oblika učenja služenjem u zajednici na studente učiteljskih i nastavničkih studija. Polazeći od teorijskih postavki iskustvenog učenja i važnosti povezivanja teorije i prakse u obrazovanju budućih učitelja, kvalitativno je analizirano 58 studentskih refleksija o volontiranju s djecom s posebnim potrebama. Rezultati ukazuju na značajan utjecaj volontiranja na kognitivni, emocionalni, motivacijski i socijalni razvoj studenata, ističući važnost ovakvih iskustava za njihov osobni i profesionalni rast te potrebu za integracijom učenja služenjem u zajednici u formalne kurikulume.*

***Ključne riječi:** učenje služenjem u zajednici, volontiranje, osobe s posebnim potrebama, refleksije studenata, učiteljski i nastavnički studiji*

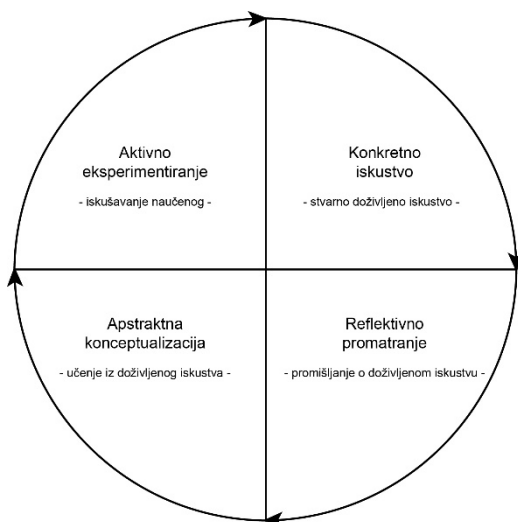
UVOD

Učenje služenjem u zajednici (engl. *service learning*) pedagoški je pristup koji povezuje učenje u učionici s praktičnim radom u zajednici. Studenti primjenjuju teorijsko znanje u stvarnim situacijama, istovremeno pružajući usluge zajednici i razvijajući osobnu građansku odgovornost i kompetencije. Takav pristup učenju ima teorijske i konceptualne korijene u idejama Johna Deweyja, koji je u svom seminalnom djelu, *Experience and Learning* (Dewey, 1938), istaknuo iskustveno učenje kao temeljnu sastavnicu obrazovanja (Kihm i Slawson, 2020; Kolb i Kolb, 2022). Nastavljajući graditi na tim idejama, Kolb (1984) je razvio model iskustvenog ciklusa učenja, koji se sastoji od četiriju faza: konkretnog iskustva, reflektivnog promatranja, apstraktne konceptualizacije i aktivnog eksperimentiranja (slika 1). Učenje služenjem u

zajednici, s naglaskom na povezivanju teorije i prakse te refleksiji o iskustvu, prirodno se uklapa u ovaj ciklus, pružajući studentima priliku da uče kroz aktivan angažman u stvarnom svijetu.

Slika 1.

Kolbov ciklus iskustvenog učenja (Kolb, 1984).



Učenje služenjem u zajednici pri obrazovanju učitelja i nastavnika povezuje učenje iz učionice s praktičnim radom te im nudi mogućnost primjene teorijskog znanja u stvarnim životnim situacijama (Welch i James, 2007). Integracija teorije i prakse ispunjava rascjep između sadržajnog znanja i praktične primjene produbljujući tako razumijevanje nastavnog materijala s jedne i građansku odgovornost s druge strane (Resch i Schritteser, 2021; Peterson i sur., 2020). Pritom je refleksija ključni aspekt takvog pedagoškog procesa jer na taj način studenti povezuju svoja iskustva u zajednici s akademskim sadržajem te istovremeno razvijaju profesionalne kompetencije. Refleksija služi kao katalizator dubinskog učenja pomažući studentima da protumače vlastita iskustva i pridaju im smisao (Castellan, 2012; Peterson i sur., 2020). Prakticiranje refleksije dodatno pridonosi cjeloživotnom razvoju nastavničkih kompetencija potičući u budućih nastavnika promišljanje o osobnom profesionalnom identitetu, razvoj samopouzdanja i motivaciju za odabrani posao (Cañabate i sur. 2019).

Dosadašnja istraživanja pokazala su niz pozitivnih učinaka takvog pedagoškog pristupa. Pokazalo se da unaprjeđuje osjećaj društvene odgovornosti u studenata, kao i njihovo razumijevanje društvenih problema i dvojbi (Yorio

i Ye, 2012; Conway, Amel i Gerwien, 2009; Reed i sur., 2005; Celio i sur., 2011). Također, sudjelovanje u programima učenja koji se temelje na služenju u zajednici pridonosi osobnom rastu kroz povećanje samoeфикаsnosti (Yorio i Ye, 2012; Kurkovsky, 2023), posebice kod studentica (Gutzweiler i sur., 2022). Osim kroz osobni razvoj, učenje služenjem pridonosi razvoju kognitivnih sposobnosti i akademskih ishoda: razvijanje i mijenjanje stavova, razvijanje vještina, osmišljavanje karijernih ciljeva i jačanje samopouzdanja u radu s ranjivim skupinama (Drinkard i Tontodonato, 2019; Celio i sur., 2011). Pritom se kao ključni faktor u poticanju tog razvoja pokazala refleksija, koja je sastavni dio procesa takvog učenja (Yorio i Ye, 2012; Celio i sur., 2011). Konačno, uz ostale dobrobiti povezane s takvom vrstom učenja poput interkulturalnih i multikulturalnih kompetencija (Kilgo, 2015), društvenog angažmana (Pinto i Costa-Ramalho, 2023) i vještina (Drinkard i Tontodonato, 2019), valja istaknuti i istraživanja koja su pokazala značajan doprinos učenja služenjem u povećanju motivacije za učenje te doživljaju smisla i svrhe u procesu vlastita obrazovanja (Reed i sur., 2005).

U Hrvatskoj je učenje služenjem u zajednici još uvijek u fazi početnog prihvaćanja i nije formalno prepoznato ni integrirano u sustav visokog obrazovanja, pa su budući nastavnici tijekom obrazovanja u najvećoj mjeri izloženi tradicionalnim pristupima poučavanju (Škugor i Sablić, 2018). U organizaciji nastave na kojoj je temeljeno ovo kvalitativno istraživanje, volontiranje je korišteno kao način da se studentima omogući praktično iskustvo rada u zajednici. Iako volontiranje samo po sebi ne uključuje sve elemente učenja služenjem u zajednici, ono ipak pruža studentima priliku za stjecanje vrijednih iskustava, razvoj socijalnih vještina, empatije i razumijevanja za potrebe drugih. Stoga, iako nije u potpunosti zamjena za učenje služenjem u zajednici, volontiranje u takvom kontekstu može poslužiti kao oblik angažmana studenata u zajednici s ciljem poticanja osobnog i profesionalnog razvoja. Povezivanjem iskustava volontiranja i rada u učionici mogu se ostvariti temeljna svojstva učenja služenjem u zajednici kao pedagoškog pristupa koji povezuje akademsko učenje s praktičnim iskustvom u zajednici, a s ciljem postizanja obostranih koristi za studente i zajednicu.

Cilj je ovoga rada sustavno prikazati osobne refleksije po jedne generacije studenata Integriranog učiteljskog studija i Diplomskog studija pedagogije na Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Splitu koji su u okviru obaveznog kolegija bili izloženi učenju temeljenom na služenju u zajednici kroz volontiranje u ustanovama koje pružaju usluge osobama s posebnim potrebama.

Specifična su pitanja povezana s tim ciljem sljedeća:

1. Koje se ključne teme pojavljuju u osobnim refleksijama studenata o iskustvima učenja temeljenog na služenju u zajednici?

2. Kako iskustva učenja temeljenog na služenju u zajednici utječu na percepciju studenata o osobama s posebnim potrebama i njihovim obrazovnim potrebama?
3. Na koji način iskustva učenja temeljenog na služenju oblikuju profesionalni identitet studenata kao budućih učitelja?

METODA/METODOLOGIJA

Dizajn istraživanja

S obzirom na vrstu podataka, cilj i istraživačka pitanja, ovo je kvalitativno istraživanje s primarnim ciljem opisa i razumijevanja strukture studentskih iskustava učenja služenjem u zajednici putem volontiranja. Za analizu podataka korištena je tematska analiza (Braun i Clarke 2006), omogućujući nam da identificiramo, analiziramo i interpretiramo obrasce, tj. teme unutar podataka. Ovaj pristup posebno je prikladan za kvalitativna istraživanja jer omogućuje dublje razumijevanje iskustava i perspektiva sudionika.

Istraživački pristup

Istraživanju je pristupljeno s pragmatične epistemološke pozicije. U kontekstu ovoga istraživanja, pragmatizam kao epistemološka pozicija omogućuje nam da istražimo kako refleksije o učenju temeljenom na služenju u zajednici mogu ponuditi praktične implikacije za razumijevanje iskustava studenata, a time, možda i usmjerenja za unaprjeđenje programa pripreme učitelja i nastavnika, posebno u području obrazovanja za rad s osobama s posebnim potrebama.

Uzorak

U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 30 studentica i 2 studenta druge godine Integriranog učiteljskog studija u dobi između 19 i 23 godine (Medijan = 20, IQR = 20–21) te 25 studentica i 1 student prve godine Diplomskog studija Pedagogije u dobi između 21 i 24 godine (Medijan = 22, IQR = 21–23). Oba studija izvode se Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Splitu.

Postupak

U okviru obaveznog kolegija *Psihologija motivacije i socijalizacije u razredu*, koji uključuje nastavne cjeline o osobama s posebnim potrebama, studenti su upućeni da za potrebe izrade seminarskog rada provedu najmanje petnaest sati volontirajući u bilo kojoj ustanovi, državnoj, nevladinoj ili privatnoj gdje se provode programi rada s osobama s posebnim potrebama. Studentima nisu specificirane posebne potrebe ni ciljane dobne skupine, nego su mogli odabrati bilo koju instituciju uz uvjet da odgovara navedenim kriterijima.

Po odrađenim satima volontiranja trebali su sastaviti seminarski zadatak prema sljedećoj uputi:

„Nakon volontiranja od najmanje 15 sati u ustanovi koja se bavi radom ili podrškom osobama s posebnim potrebama (može biti specijalizirana državna ustanova, škola ili nevladina udruga; vrste posebnih potreba i dobne skupine nisu ograničeni), napišite seminarski rad koji će se sadržavati tri dijela. Prvi dio (najmanje 2 stranice) bit će stručni opis specifičnosti posebnih potreba osoba s kojima ste se susreli (pomoću najmanje tri izvora iz literature, od kojih najviše jedan može biti s interneta). Drugi dio (najmanje 1 stranica) bit će opis mjesta gdje ste volontirali i vašeg angažmana (gdje ste bili, što se tamo odvija, što ste vi radili). Treći dio (najmanje 1 stranica) bit će vaš osobni osvrt na doživljeno iskustvo (kako je za vas tekao čitav proces, što ste doživjeli, što ste naučili, što vam je bilo korisno, što biste promijenili, kako ste različiti na kraju procesa u odnosu na početak...). Priloženo je pismo s objašnjenjem vašeg zadatka i molbom da vam se omogući volontiranje. Isprintajte ga, upišite svoje ime i prezime te mi donesite da vam ga potpišem na nastavi. Dijelovi vaših radova mogu biti iskorišteni za potrebe znanstvenog istraživanja. Ako to bude slučaj, sve identificirajuće informacije o vama, institucijama gdje ste volontirali i osobama s kojima ste se susretali bit će izbačene ili maskirane. Slobodno i bez posljedica na vaš uspjeh ili naš odnos možete zatražiti neuključivanje svojega izvještaja iz obrade.”

Za potrebe istraživanja, u zasebni dokument izdvojeni su i obrađeni dijelovi studentskih radova s osobnim refleksijama. Tekstovi su bili dugački između 470 i 1338 riječi (Medijan = 623, IQR = 512–936). Obrada je provedena uz pomoć programa NVivo 12 Pro.

Obrada podataka

Kvalitativni podatci prikupljeni u ovom istraživanju, koji su se sastojali od pisanih refleksija studenata, analizirani su pomoću tematske analize (Braun i Clarke, 2006). Tematska se analiza tipično provodi u šest preklapajućih i međusobno povezanih faza. Radi jasnoće prikaza postupak je obrade u ovom radu prikazan sukcesivno, no u stvarnosti su se ove faze odvijale paralelno te se istraživač konstantno kretao između njih do konačne verzije rezultata istraživanja.

Faza 1: Upoznavanje s podacima

Refleksije studenata pažljivo su više puta pročitane uz vođenje inicijalnih bilješki te se istraživač dubinski upoznao sa sadržajem i razvio početno

razumijevanje o ključnim obrascima unutar studentskih osvrta. Ova je faza bila ključna za postizanje udubljenosti u podatke, što je omogućilo istraživaču da razvije osjećaj za cjelokupnu „priču” koju podatci pričaju.

Faza 2: Generiranje početnih kodova

U ovoj je fazi istraživač identificirao zanimljive značajke koje bi mogle predstavljati obrasce ili teme. Te su značajke označene kodovima koji su služili kao oznake za određene ideje ili koncepte predstavljene u segmentu podataka. Kodiranje je obavljeno ručno, uz uporabu bilješki i označavanja teksta kako bi se olakšalo organiziranje i povezivanje podataka.

Faza 3: Traženje tema

Nakon što su svi podatci kodirani, kodovi su grupirani u teme na osnovi sličnosti i međusobnih odnosa. Ovaj je proces uključivao pregledavanje i razvrstavanje kodova te njihovo povezivanje u šire, smislene cjeline. U ovoj fazi istraživač je također počeo razmatrati hijerarhijski odnos između kodova i tema, identificirajući glavne teme i podteme.

Faza 4: Pregled tema

U ovoj je fazi istraživač kritički pregledao identificirane teme kako bi osigurao njihovu koherentnost, relevantnost i jasnoću. To je uključivalo provjeru jesu li sve kodirane jedinice podataka unutar svake teme smislene i povezane te jesu li teme međusobno jasno razgraničene. Određena su se preklapanja tolerirala kako bi se zadržala cjelovitost tema.

Faza 5: Definiranje i imenovanje tema

Nakon što su teme revidirane i doručene, istraživač ih je jasno definirao i imenovao. Svaka je tema dobila precizan naziv koji je sažeto opisivao njezin sadržaj i značenje.

Faza 6: Izrada izvještaja

U posljednjoj fazi istraživač je izradio konačan izvještaj o rezultatima analize. To je uključivalo odabir ilustrativnih citata iz podataka koji su podržavali identificirane teme te njihovo uključivanje u izvještaj koji je formiran kao koherentna priča o aspektima studentskih iskustava na osnovi analiziranih pisanih refleksija.

REZULTATI I RASPRAVA

Tematskom analizom identificirano je pet osnovnih tema s pripadajućim podtemema (slika 2, detaljan pregled i definicije tema, podtema i kodova s ilustrativnim citatima dostupni su kod autora).

Slika 2.

Prikaz tema i pripadajućih podtema s naznačenim tentativnim odnosima (naznačeno strelicama)



Kognitivni aspekti

Analiza studentskih refleksija otkrila je značajan utjecaj iskustva učenja služenjem u zajednici kroz volontiranje na njihovo razmišljanje i razumijevanje problematike rada s osobama s posebnim potrebama. Studenti su kroz volontiranje stekli nove vještine i znanja, što je u skladu s ranijim istraživanjima koja ističu važnost praktičnog iskustva u procesu učenja (npr. Eyler i Giles, 1999; Billet, 2009; Billet, 2015). Osim razvoja praktičnih vještina, studenti su produbili razumijevanje specifičnih potreba djece s teškoćama u razvoju, što je ključno za njihovu buduću profesiju:

„Kroz rad s djecom stekla sam bolje razumijevanje specifičnih teškoća poput disleksije i disgrafije.”

„Jako mi je drago što sam imala prilike raditi s dječakom s ADHD-om upravo zbog toga što znam da ću se u budućnosti s time nerijetko susretati.”

„Kroz ovo iskustvo naučila sam mnogo o važnosti individualiziranog pristupa u obrazovanju. Shvatila sam koliko je važno razumjeti specifične potrebe svakog djeteta i prilagoditi metode podučavanja tim potrebama.”

Razvoj empatije i razumijevanja također je bio značajan ishod volonterskog iskustva. Studenti su razvili suosjećanje i razumijevanje za izazove s kojima se suočavaju djeca s teškoćama, što je u skladu s istraživanjima koja pokazuju da iskustva učenja kroz volontiranje mogu potaknuti razvoj empatije (npr. Lundy, 2007; Everhart, 2016; Wang i sur., 2018). Osim toga, studenti su promijenili perspektive i uklonili predrasude o djeci s teškoćama, prepoznavajući njihove sposobnosti i potencijale.

„Ovo iskustvo naučilo me empatiji jer, shvaćajući svakodnevne izazove s kojima se susreću djeca s posebnim potre-

bama, razvila sam dublje razumijevanje i suosjećanje prema njihovim borbama.”

„No vrlo brzo sam shvatila da će ključ uspjeha biti u strpljenju, empatiji i dosljednosti.”

„Volontiranje je također promijenilo i moj odnos spram bilo kakvih teškoća. Spoznao sam da previše žalim te osobe te im na takav način ni malo ne pomažem. Shvatio sam koliko oni zapravo mogu ponuditi svijetu i ljudima te ih naučiti kako se živi.”

Promjena percepcije i stavova također je bila evidentna u studentskim promišljanjima. Studenti su razvili pozitivnije stavove o volontiranju i radu s djecom s teškoćama, prepoznajući vrijednost i važnost takvog iskustva. Ova promjena u stavovima uočena je i u prethodnim istraživanjima (npr. Chambers, 2017; Gil-Gomez i sur., 2015; Chiva-Bartoll i sur., 2020), a može se objasniti kroz teoriju kognitivne disonance koja sugerira da ljudi nastoje uskladiti svoja uvjerenja i ponašanja (Festinger, 2017). Nadalje, studenti su razvili samopouzdanje i osjećaj kompetentnosti u radu s djecom s teškoćama, što je važan ishod za njihov budući profesionalni razvoj.

„Kad sam prvi put došla u Udrugu X, nisam znala što me čeka. Očekivala sam prostoriju za rad s djecom i djecu koja tu dolaze jer moraju unaprijediti svoje znanje, čitanje, pisanje i slično. Susrela sam se upravo sa suprotnim. U udругu X djeca dolaze s osmijehom.”

„Mogu reći da sam znatno drukčija osoba od tog dana. Mnogo se toga promijenilo u mojoj percepciji ‘bitnih stvari’.”

„Na početku samog volontiranja bio sam pod osjećajem prisile... Dokazao sam sâm sebi da ja to mogu i da imam u sebi osjećaj za ljude, a posebice za ljude kojima je potrebna još veća pomoć.”

Naposljetku, studenti su uspješno povezali teorijska znanja s praktičnim iskustvom, što je ključni element iskustava učenja kroz služenje u zajednici (Peteresen i sur., 2020). Ova integracija teorije i prakse omogućila im je dublje razumijevanje kompleksnosti rada s djecom s teškoćama i primjenu teorijskih koncepta u stvarnim situacijama.

„Svaki trenutak proveden s djecom bio je prilika za učenje i primjenu teorijskih znanja u stvarnom životu.”

„Pokušaji prenošenja gradiva povijesti na klasičan način nisu bili dovoljni, pa sam prilagodila svoj pristup. Čitanje samog teksta predstavljalo je izazov zbog poteškoća u

dekodiranju i interpretaciji nekih riječi, tako da smo učili gradivo usmenim putem, upotrebljavajući razne tehnike memoriranja i mobilni uređaj kao vizualno pomagalo.”

„To iskustvo me potaklo i na *čitanje* literature i usavršavanje znanja, sposobnosti i vještina za posao buduće nastavnice ili pedagoginje.”

Emocionalni aspekti

Studenti su kroz volontiranje iskusili osjećaj zadovoljstva i ispunjenosti, što je u skladu s ranijim istraživanjima koja pokazuju da volontiranje može doprinijeti pozitivnom emocionalnom stanju i osjećaju sreće (npr. Opazo i sur., 2018; Chiva-Bartoll i sur., 2020). Studenti su izrazili radost zbog pružanja pomoći i pozitivnog utjecaja na djecu, a iskustvo im je potaklo motivaciju i inspiraciju za daljnji rad s djecom.

„Nigdje se nisam osjećala toliko ispunjeno i zadovoljno.”

„Volontiranje u udruzi X definitivno je promijenilo moj pogled na svijet i potaklo me da se još više angažiram u pomoći drugima.”

„Volontiranje u udruzi X nije samo bilo dio mog životnog puta, već je postalo i dio mog identiteta, podsjećajući me svakodnevno na važnost empatije i solidarnosti.”

Emocionalna povezanost i suosjećanje također su bili važni aspekti volonterskog iskustva. Ranija istraživanja sustavno su pokazala da učenje služenjem u zajednici pridonosi razvoju emocionalnih vještina ključnih u razvijanju povezanosti s učenicima (npr. Opazo i sur.; Austral, 2023). Studenti su izgradili odnose s djecom, stvarajući emocionalnu povezanost i prijateljstva te sigurno i povjerljivo okruženje u kojem su se djeca osjećala ugodno i voljeno.

„Djeca su postajala sve opuštenija i često su htjela razgovarati i ispitivala su me o svemu. U posebnom sjećanju ostao mi je dječak s kojim sam radila prvi sat kad sam došla u udrugu. Na kraju rada s njim nacrtao mi je crtež i zahvalio jer sam mu pomogla.”

„Jako mi je bilo drago što su ta djeca bila otvorena prema meni te pričala o sebi tako da nisam imala nikakav strah kako im pristupiti i pomoći.”

„Ovaj seminar pišem punog srca i zahvalnosti što uopće ovako nešto mogu napisati i što imam priliku i dandas biti sa svojim malim prijateljem.”

Suočavanje s izazovima i frustracijama također je bilo prisutno u studentskim promišljanjima. Suočavali su se s teškoćama u komunikaciji i interakciji s djecom, kao i s njihovim emocionalnim stanjima, poput tuge i frustracije. Ovi izazovi ponekad su doveli do preispitivanja – kako vlastitih sposobnosti i kompetencija, tako i samog sustava unutar kojega su djelovali.

„Bilo je trenutaka kada sam se osjećala frustrirano jer nisam znala kako pristupiti određenom djetetu ili kako riješiti neki problem.”

„Također, shvatio sam da ne mogu svima pomoći te da su neke stvari izvan moje moći. To me jako pogodilo jer sam došao s mišlju da ću im svima pomoći.”

„Nedostatak resursa i podrške za djecu s teškoćama u razvoju predstavlja ozbiljan izazov. Potrebno je uložiti više sredstava u obrazovanje, zdravstvenu skrb i socijalne usluge kako bi se osigurala njihova puna integracija u društvo.”

Naposljetku, volontersko iskustvo doprinijelo je osobnom rastu i razvoju studenata. Studenti su razvili strpljenje i toleranciju u radu s djecom s teškoćama, što je ključna vještina za buduće učitelje i odgajatelje (npr., Schulte et al., 2008). Osim toga, volontiranje je potaklo povećano samopouzdanje i osjećaj kompetentnosti u radu s djecom te je doprinijelo promjeni životnih perspektiva i prioriteta, što je u skladu s nalazima koji pokazuju utjecaj učenja služenjem u zajednici na osobni rast i životnu perspektivu (Reed i Hadad, 2016).

„Jedna od stvari koje sam naučila je to da za ovakav posao treba biti strpljiv jer su djeca jako nestrpljiva i razigrana, pa treba imati strpljenja za njih.”

„Također bih istaknula da sam se na početku procesa osjećala nesigurno u svoje sposobnosti i nisam bila sigurna raspoložem li znanjem koje im treba i imam li sposobnosti prenošenja tog znanja na njih. Svakim novim dolaskom u udruhu stjecala sam samopouzdanje u svoje vještine i svoju ulogu u udruzi.”

„Smatram da me ovo iskustvo još više izgradilo kao osobu te da mi je otvorilo jedna dodatna vrata za budući razvoj mene kao profesionalnog pedagoga i nastavnika, ali i kao osobe.”

Socijalni aspekti

Studenti su kroz volontiranje razvili komunikacijske vještine, što je u skladu s ranijim istraživanjima koja ističu važnost učenja služenjem u zajednici za

razvoj socijalnih i komunikacijskih kompetencija (npr. Drinkard i Tontodonato, 2019; Tan i Soo, 2020). Naučili su prilagoditi svoju komunikaciju individualnim potrebama djece s teškoćama, rabeći različite metode i pristupe kako bi osigurali učinkovitu interakciju. Također, studenti su razvili vještine aktivnog slušanja i neverbalne komunikacije, što im je omogućilo bolje razumijevanje djece i njihovih potreba.

„Svojim pitanjima djeca su me naučila da neke stvari objasnim na više mogućih načina, a time sam postala kreativnija.”

„Naučila sam da je neverbalna komunikacija jednako važna kao i verbalna, posebno kada se radi s djecom koja imaju teškoće u izražavanju.”

„Naučila sam da je važno biti prisutan i usmjeren na dijete, slušati ga pažljivo i pokazivati interes za ono što govori.”

Izgradnja odnosa i povezivanje s djecom također su bili važni aspekti studentskih iskustava. Studenti su uspostavili emocionalnu povezanost i prijateljstva s djecom, stvarajući sigurno i podržavajuće okruženje. Razvoj i razumijevanje relacijskih kompetencija predstavljaju važnu sastavnicu nastavničke profesije, posebice u kontekstu rada s osobama koje imaju posebne potrebe (Aspelin i sur., 2021; Koenen i sur., 2021). Osim toga, studenti su naučili prepoznavati i poštovati individualne potrebe i interese djece, prilagođavajući pristup kako bi im pružili optimalnu podršku.

„S djecom sam razvila jako lijep odnos u kojem su se osjećala sigurno i slobodno razgovarati sa mnom o svemu što ih muči i što ih veseli.”

„Važno je naglasiti da je za uspješan rad s djecom s teškoćama u razvoju ključno stvoriti okruženje u kojem će se osjećati sigurno, prihvaćeno i voljeno. To uključuje poštivanje njihovih individualnih potreba, pružanje podrške i ohrabrenja te stvaranje prilika za njihov uspjeh.”

„Također sam naučila da je svako dijete posebno i da ih ne možemo generalizirati. Sa svakim djetetom trebaš razviti poseban odnos i shvatiti njegove želje. Neka djeca vole puno igre i pričanja, a neka vole mir i tišinu te prema tome treba uskladiti naše ponašanje.”

Suradnja i timski rad su bili važni elementi studentskih refleksija. Suradivali su s kolegama, stručnjacima i roditeljima, razmjenjujući znanja i iskustva te zajednički planirajući podršku djeci, što je važan aspekt struke (Santagata i Guarino, 2012), a iz udžbenika ili predavanja može se samo površinski naučiti.

Osim toga, studenti su poticali međusobnu podršku i suradnju među djecom, stvarajući osjećaj zajedništva i pripadnosti.

„Razmjena iskustava s drugim studentima i djelatnicima udruge dodatno je obogatila moje razumijevanje. Kroz razgovore s kolegama čula sam različite perspektive.”

„U tom procesu pomogla je i mentorica koja je usmjeravala i raspoređivala rad te pružala potrebne informacije.”

„Razgovarala sam s njegovom majkom pa mi je spomenula da njegov crtež nije u skladu s dobi, ali da ona uglavnom prepozna što crta jer ga dobro poznaje.”

„Drago mi je što sam ovo iskustvo dijelila s kolegama s fakulteta jer smo međusobno mogli surađivati i prepričavati doživljaje.”

Naposljetku, volontersko iskustvo potaklo je razvoj društvene svijesti i osjećaja odgovornosti kod studenata. Taj je aspekt jedna od temeljnih sastavnica i očekivanih učinaka ovakvog oblika učenja (npr. Prasertsang, 2013; Mergler i sur., 2017). Prepoznali su važnost aktivnog sudjelovanja u razvoju zajednice te razvili svijest o potrebama ranjivih skupina. Studenti su osjećali da aktivno sudjeluju u stvaranju pozitivnih promjena u društvu, promišljajući o svojoj ulozi i važnosti doprinosa zajednici.

„Naučila sam da prave promjene u društvu nastaju kada svaki pojedinac preuzme odgovornost za svoju zajednicu i djeluje s ljubavlju i poštovanjem prema drugima.”

„Ovo iskustvo također me potaklo na promišljanje o načinima na koje društvo može pružiti bolju podršku osobama s Downovim sindromom, kako u obrazovanju, tako i u zapošljavanju i svakodnevnom životu. Važno je kontinuirano raditi na stvaranju inkluzivnog okruženja koje potiče puno sudjelovanje i osnažuje osobe s Downovim sindromom da ostvare svoje potencijale.”

„Rad s djecom s teškoćama promijenio je moj doživljaj teškoća, ljudskih potreba. Postao sam osjetljiviji na zahtjeve društva, češće i hrabrije branim potlačene te više cijenim ljude oko sebe.”

Motivacijski aspekti

Altruizam i želja za pomaganjem bili su snažni motivatori za studente. U skladu s ranijim istraživanjima koja pokazuju razvoj recipročnih obrazaca

altruizma uslijed učenja služenjem u zajednici (npr. Šimšek, 2020, Chiva-Bartoll i sur. 2020), studenti su izrazili nesebičnu želju za pomaganjem i doprinosom zajednici, posebno djeci s teškoćama u razvoju. Osim toga, studenti su osjećali odgovornost i solidarnost prema djeci s teškoćama, prepoznajući njihove potrebe i želeći im pružiti podršku.

„Smatram da je volontiranje jedno od najvrjednijih iskustava koje ikad netko može doživjeti. Iznimno je važno jer pruža priliku da se aktivno doprinosi zajednici i pomogne onima kojima je pomoć najpotrebnija.”

„Ova udruga me naučila kako biti solidaran i osjećajan te na koji način ostvariti komunikaciju s djecom.”

„Kada sam razmišljala o tome gdje ću volontirati, odlučila sam da je vrijeme da vidim što su stvarne teškoće, da iskusim nešto što će mi sigurno biti teško, ali korisno za budući posao.”

Želja za učenjem i razvojem također je bila značajan motivacijski faktor. Studenti su vidjeli volontiranje kao priliku za stjecanje novih znanja i iskustava, što je u skladu s istraživanjima koja pokazuju da volonteri često traže prilike za osobni i profesionalni rast (npr. Soong, 2013).

„Do tog trenutka, tek mi je negdje duboko u podsvijesti bilo da ću se nakon završenog fakultetskog obrazovanja u svom budućem radu susretati s djecom s teškoćama. Osvijestila sam da nemam potrebna znanja, da me čeka dug put i puno učenja. To je potaklo moju znatizelju i želju za promjenom i učenjem.”

„Ovo iskustvo potaklo je moju želju da iskusim što više volonterskih djelovanja kako bih mogla bolje uvidjeti s čime se suočavaju djeca današnjice, kako bih mogla nekome pomoći, kako bih mogla napredovati kao osoba te kako bih bila barem približno spremna na situacije s kojima ću se suočavati u svom budućem poslu.”

Profesionalni interes i razvoj također su imali važnu ulogu u motivaciji studenata. Volontiranje im je omogućilo stjecanje praktičnog iskustva i primjenu teorijskih znanja u stvarnom radu s djecom s teškoćama, što je ključno za njihov budući profesionalni razvoj (Billet, 2015). Volontersko iskustvo također je potvrdilo njihov profesionalni poziv i motivaciju za rad s djecom s teškoćama, pružajući im uvid u stvarne izazove i radosti takvog rada.

„Ovo iskustvo volontiranja bilo je iznimno korisno za moje daljnje obrazovanje, ali i za osobni razvoj.”

„Mnoga su djeca ostavila na mene pozitivan učinak i potvrdila da je ovaj poziv baš za mene, čemu nisam mogla svjedočiti do izravnog rada s djecom.”

„Volontiranje u udruzi iskustvo je koje ću sigurno pamtiti, ali i koje će mi pomoći u daljnjem studiranju.”

Naposljetku, društvena odgovornost i angažman također su bili prisutni u studentskim promišljanjima. Kao i u prethodnim istraživanjima, studenti su prepoznali važnost osobnog doprinosa zajednici, razvijajući svijest o potrebama ranjivih skupina i aktivno sudjelujući u stvaranju pozitivnih promjena (npr. Jobling i Moni, 2010; Broomhead, 2013; Chiva-Bartoll i sur. 2020).

„Volontiranje u Udruzi X definitivno je promijenilo moj pogled na svijet i potaklo me da se još više angažiram u pružanju pomoći drugima.”

„Naučila sam kako pružiti podršku djeci s posebnim potrebama, usvojila vrijedne stručne vještine i poboljšala komunikacijske sposobnosti. Najvažnije od svega, shvatila sam koliko su volonterski rad i zajednička podrška važni za stvaranje osjećajnijeg, poticajnijeg i pravednijeg društva.”

„Naučila sam da prave promjene u društvu nastaju kada svaki pojedinac preuzme odgovornost za svoju zajednicu i djeluje s ljubavlju i poštovanjem prema drugima.”

Očekivanja i ishodi

Studenti su često započinjali volontiranje s inicijalnom nesigurnošću i strahom od nepoznatog, što je u skladu s ranijim istraživanjima koja pokazuju da studenti mogu imati različita očekivanja i zabrinutosti prije početka volonterskog iskustva (npr. Bringle i Hatcher, 1996). Neki su izrazili zabrinutost zbog nedostatka iskustva u radu s djecom s teškoćama, dok su drugi imali nejasna očekivanja. Unatoč početnoj nesigurnosti, studenti su također iskazivali očekivanja o stjecanju iskustva i znanja te motivaciju za pomaganjem i doprinosom zajednici.

„Prvoga dana nisam znala što očekivati i osjetila sam malu dozu straha jer nikad nisam bila u bliskom doticaju s osobama koje imaju određene vrste poteškoća.”

„Kad sam prvi put došla u Udrugu X, nisam znala što me čeka.”

„Kada sam na predavanjima saznala da ćemo, umjesto klasičnih pisanja seminarskih radova i izlaganja prezent-

acija, morati volontirati u udruzi koja se bavi osobama s teškoćama, bila sam jako uzbuđena i zadovoljna jer sam znala da je to jedno novo iskustvo iz kojeg ću mnogo toga naučiti.”

Volontersko iskustvo često je nadmašilo njihova početna očekivanja, pružajući im priliku za osobno zadovoljstvo i ispunjenje, povećano samopouzdanje i osjećaj kompetentnosti te pozitivan utjecaj na djecu i mlade s teškoćama. Izvještavali su o osjećajima radosti i zadovoljstva kroz volontiranje, razvoju samopouzdanja i osjećaju kompetentnosti u radu s djecom te osjećaju pozitivnog utjecaja na djecu.

„Vidjeti osmijehe na njihovim licima i znati da sam pridonijela njihovom razvoju bio je osjećaj koji se ne može opisati.”

„Unatoč tome, nakon rada sa svakim djetetom osjećala sam se ispunjeno i sretno jer sam mogla vidjeti da napreduju.”

„Smatram se kompetentnijom za rad s djecom s posebnim potrebama nakon ovog iskustva. Prije volontiranja u udruzi X mislila sam da neman dovoljno znanja i iskustva za rad s djecom s posebnim potrebama, ali s ovim novim iskustvom osjećam se samopouzdanijom nego ikada.”

Iako su iskusili brojne pozitivne ishode, studenti su se suočavali i s izazovima i teškoćama tijekom volontiranja. To je uključivalo teškoće u komunikaciji i interakciji s djecom/mladima s posebnim potrebama, suočavanje s emocionalnim izazovima, teškoće u prilagodbi i pronalaženju odgovarajućih metoda rada te organizacijske izazove i nedostatke.

„Za mene je najteža stvar nedobivanje povratne informacije od djeteta. Zbog nedostatka komunikacije, moram učiti prepoznavati njegove potrebe bez da mi ih kaže.”

„Najteže mi je bilo kada bi dijete bilo tužno ili frustrirano, a ja nisam znala kako mu pomoći.”

„Nisam se mogla posvetiti samo jednom djetetu i njegovim potrebama, smatram da se ne može obaviti kvalitetan rad u prostoriji gdje postoji više djece i volontera (dijete s posebnim potrebama zahtijeva i posebne okolnosti). Vrlo je teško postići da se dijete koje ima problema s koncentracijom uspije usredotočiti na učenje ako je u prostoriji hiperaktivno dijete. Stoga smatram da je potrebno u udruzi X napraviti više prostorija kako bi se mogao ostvariti individualan rad s djecom.”

Volontersko iskustvo također je potaklo promjene u stavovima i vrijednostima studenata. Došlo je do promjene stavova o osobama s posebnim potrebama i njihovim sposobnostima, promjene stavova o volontiranju i njegovu značaju te promjene osobnih vrijednosti i prioriteta. Studenti su razvili veću empatiju i razumijevanje za potrebe djece s teškoćama, prepoznali su vrijednost volontiranja i njegov utjecaj na osobni rast te su preispitali vlastite prioritete i životne ciljeve.

„Predrasude i strah koji su možda postojali gotovo pa da su nestali. Jako mi je drago što sam imala priliku ovo iskusiti i ‘živjeti‘ s ovim osobama jer, za bolje sutra svih nas, nužno je da smo svjesni potreba i posebnosti svih članova našeg društva.”

„Ovo volontersko iskustvo također me potaklo na refleksiju o vlastitim vrijednostima i prioritetima. Shvatila sam koliko je važno pridonositi zajednici i kako mala djela pažnje i podrške koju pokazujem djeci mogu imati značajan utjecaj na njih i njihove živote.”

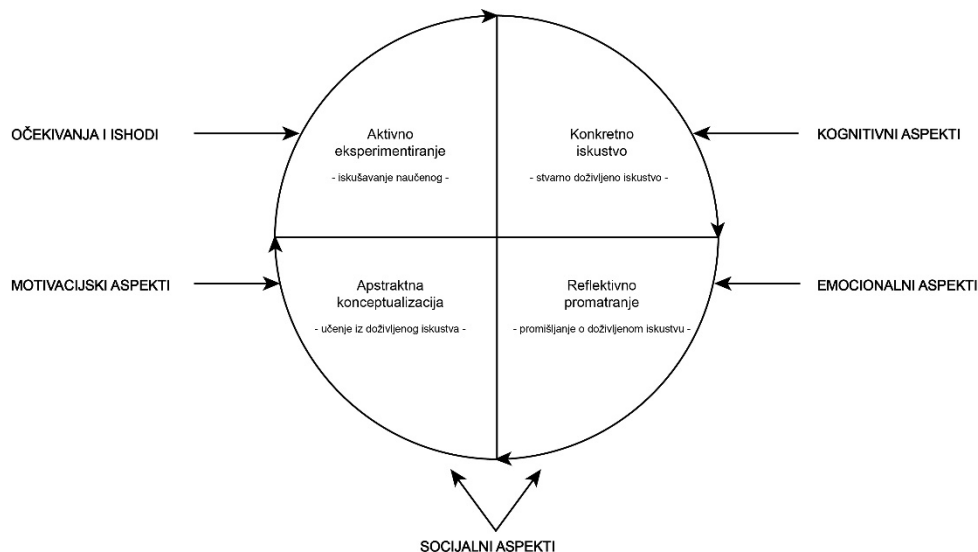
„Pozitivno je to što su ta djeca, mladi i odrasli toliko sretni bez obzira na svoje stanje i zdravlje. Toliko je života u njima. Kada bismo samo mi bili takvi, gdje bi nam bio kraj!? Manje pozitivna mišljenja vezana su mi za poziciju osoblja koji su u jako nezavidnoj situaciji. Puno ljudi na malo mjesta i svatko od njih ima svoje potrebe (različite). Usto nisu istog uzrasta. Jako im se divim, njihovom strpljenju, mucu, trudu, radu, svakoj kapi znoja. Naučila sam da bismo trebali više vremena posvećivati tako posebnim ljudima, previše ih se zanemaruje. Bez obzira na njihovu situaciju, oni svejedno razumiju kada im netko pruža ljubav ili kada pak ne. Jako mi je bilo korisno. Počela sam nekako više cijeniti te ljude i svoje zdravlje, koje često uzimam zdravo za gotovo.”

OPĆA RASPRAVA

Rezultati ovog istraživanja mogu se sagledati u kontekstu Kolbova ciklusa iskustvenog učenja (Kolb, 1984, slika 3). Kolbov model široko je prihvaćen i utjecajan u području obrazovanja i razvoja ljudskih potencijala, a zbog svoje fleksibilnosti i primjenjivosti upotrebljava u različitim kontekstima, od formalnog obrazovanja do treninga u poslovnom svijetu (Morris, 2019).

Slika 3.

Konceptualna povezanost dobivenih rezultata s Kolbovim ciklusom iskustvenog učenja



Ukupno gledano, rezultati ovog istraživanja pokazali su da je volontiranje imalo značajan utjecaj na studente u kognitivnom, emocionalnom, motivacijskom i socijalnom aspektu, što je u skladu s ranijim istraživanjima o učenju kroz služenje u zajednici (npr. Eyler i Giles, 1999; Billet, 2009; Bringle i Hatcher, 1996). U kognitivnom smislu, studenti su stekli nova znanja i vještine, produbili razumijevanje specifičnih potreba djece s posebnim potrebama te povezali teorijska znanja s praktičnim iskustvom. Ovo iskustvo volontiranja, gdje su studenti aktivno sudjelovali u stvarnim situacijama i suočavali se s izazovima, uklapa se u prvu fazu Kolbovog ciklusa – konkretno iskustvo. Ovi nalazi podupiru važnost praktičnog iskustva u procesu učenja i naglašavaju vrijednost volontiranja kao metode učenja (Eyler i Giles, 1999; Billet, 2009). Također, studenti su razvili empatiju i razumijevanje za izazove s kojima se suočavaju djeca s posebnim potrebama, promijenili perspektive i razbili predrasude, što je u skladu s istraživanjima koja pokazuju da iskustva učenja kroz volontiranje mogu potaknuti razvoj empatije (npr. Lundy, 2007; Everhart, 2016; Wang i sur., 2018).

Emocionalno, studenti su iskusili zadovoljstvo i ispunjenost, radost zbog pružene pomoći i pozitivnog utjecaja na djecu te razvili emocionalnu povezanost i suosjećanje. Kroz proces pisanja seminarskog rada, koji je uključivao osobni osvrt na iskustvo, studenti su imali priliku za reflektivno promatranje. Ova faza Kolbova ciklusa omogućila im je da preispitaju svoja iskustva, emocije

i reakcije te da steknu dublje razumijevanje o sebi, osobnim vrijednostima i ulozi u društvu. Ovi nalazi podupiru ideju da volontiranje može doprinijeti pozitivnom emocionalnom stanju i osjećaju sreće (npr. Opazo i sur., 2018; Chiva-Bartoll i sur., 2020). Međutim, studenti su se suočavali i s izazovima i frustracijama, što je ponekad dovodilo do preispitivanja vlastitih sposobnosti. Unatoč tomu, volontersko iskustvo doprinijelo je osobnom rastu i razvoju studenata, potičući razvoj strpljenja, tolerancije i samopouzdanja.

U motivacijskom aspektu, altruizam i želja za pomaganjem bili su snažni motivatori za studente, što je u skladu s ranijim istraživanjima koja pokazuju razvoj recipročnih obrazaca altruizma uslijed učenja služenjem u zajednici (npr. Šimšek, 2020; Chiva-Bartoll i sur. 2020). Također, želja za učenjem i razvojem te profesionalni interes i razvoj bili su značajni motivacijski faktori. Volontiranje je studentima omogućilo stjecanje praktičnog iskustva i primjenu teorijskih znanja, što je ključno za njihov budući profesionalni razvoj (Billet, 2015). Ovaj proces povezivanja praktičnog iskustva s teorijskim znanjima, koji je bio ključan dio seminarskog rada, predstavlja apstraktnu konceptualizaciju u Kolbovu ciklusu. Studenti su analizirali svoja iskustva, izvodili zaključke i stvarali nove koncepte i razumijevanja.

Socijalno, studenti su razvili komunikacijske vještine, naučili prilagoditi komunikaciju individualnim potrebama djece s teškoćama te razvili vještine aktivnog slušanja i neverbalne komunikacije. Ovi nalazi podupiru važnost učenja služenjem u zajednici za razvoj socijalnih i komunikacijskih kompetencija (npr. Drinkard i Tontodonato, 2019; Tan i Soo, 2020). Također, studenti su izgradili odnose s djecom, uspostavili emocionalnu povezanost i prijateljstva te naučili prepoznavati i poštovati individualne potrebe i interese djece. Suradnja i timski rad bili su važni elementi studentskih iskustava, potičući razmjenu znanja i iskustava te zajedničko planiranje podrške djeci. Ovi procesi mogu se smjestiti u faze konkretnog iskustva i reflektivnog promatranja s obzirom na to da su studenti s jedne strane bili neposredno uronjeni u situacije u kojima su razvijali spomenute vještine i stjecali iskustva, a također su na osnovi njih promišljali o njihovu značenju i svojoj ulozi u društvu i društvenim procesima u koje su uključeni.

Volontersko iskustvo često je nadmašilo početna očekivanja studenata, pružajući im priliku za osobno zadovoljstvo, povećano samopouzdanje i pozitivan utjecaj na djecu. Iako su se suočavali s izazovima, volontiranje je potaklo promjene u stavovima i vrijednostima studenata, razvijajući veću empatiju, razumijevanje i svijest o potrebama ranjivih skupina. Ova transformacija i primjena novih spoznaja i vještina u budućim situacijama predstavlja završnu fazu Kolbova ciklusa – aktivno eksperimentiranje. Studenti imaju priliku testirati i učvrstiti svoje učenje, čime se ciklus zatvara i otvara mogućnost za nova iskustva i daljnji razvoj.

Rezultati ističu važnost učenja služenjem u zajednici kroz volontiranje kao pristupa koji potiče kognitivni, emocionalni, motivacijski i socijalni razvoj studenata. Nadalje, ističe se i važnost praktičnog iskustva u povezivanju teorijskih znanja s praktičnim radom te razvoja empatije, komunikacijskih vještina i samopouzdanja kod budućih učitelja.

Buduća istraživanja mogla bi se usmjeriti na dugoročne učinke volontiranja na profesionalni razvoj učitelja te na istraživanje specifičnih strategija podrške studentima tijekom volonterskog iskustva. Također, budući da su europske inicijative usmjerene na razvoj i poticanje društvenog angažmana u okviru razvoja studentskih kompetencija u Hrvatskoj još uvijek u fazi razvoja, u lokalnom kontekstu bilo bi korisno istražiti kako se iskustva učenja kroz volontiranje mogu smisleno integrirati u kurikulume učiteljskih i nastavničkih studija. Naime, slično kao i u ostalim post-komunističkim zemljama, povijesni i kulturalni kontekst predstavlja izazov za širu primjenu ovakvih nastavnih praksi (Aramburuzabala i sur., 2019). Zato je važno učiniti sve što je moguće kako kurikularne promjene uslijed europskih inicijativa ne bi ostale formalne okamine bez stvarne i smislene integracije u iskustvo i dobrobit studenata, nastavnika i članova šire zajednice.

Ovo istraživanje pruža inicijalne uvide u iskustva studenata Učiteljskog studija i Pedagogije koji su volontirali s djecom s posebnim potrebama. Te rezultate svakako valja razmatrati u njihovu ograničenom kontekstu. Riječ je o iskustvu studenata s jedne institucije na kolegiju u organizaciji istog nastavnika. U tom smislu, rezultate treba sagledati kao konceptualni dokaz mogućnosti koje ovakav način učenja i poučavanja pruža, a ne nešto što se može generalizirati na druge populacije i situacije, što ni nije u duhu kvalitativnih istraživanja. Ovaj pristup svakako ovisi o mnogim čimbenicima koji će se razlikovati od slučaja do slučaja, poput potreba i karakteristika zajednice, povezanosti nastavnika s lokalnim dionicima, kompetencija nastavnika i studenata, formalnoj i praktičnoj podršci institucije itd. Ti će se čimbenici razlikovati od slučaja do slučaja i zbog toga je ovu vrstu organizacije učenja teško, ili čak kontraproduktivno, svesti na slijed postupaka koji će voditi do željenih ishoda. Umjesto toga, u duhu pristupa učenju kroz služenje potrebna je otvorena i iskrena komunikacija te stalna refleksija i prilagodba stvarnim potrebama kako se pojavljuju i mijenjaju. Tako je onda ovaj pristup radu i za nastavnika oblik učenja služenjem u zajednici.

ZAKLJUČAK

Kroz volontiranje s djecom s posebnim potrebama studenti ne samo da su stekli praktična znanja i vještine već su i doživjeli značajan osobni i profesionalni razvoj, skok. Iskustvo je potaklo razvoj empatije, samopouzdanja i osjećaja kompetentnosti, oblikujući ih u buduće učitelje i nastavnike koji su ne samo stručno osposobljeni već i duboko predani svojoj profesiji.

Rezultati istraživanja ukazuju na važnost uključivanja iskustava učenja kroz služenje u zajednici u kurikulume učiteljskih i nastavničkih studija. Ovakva iskustva pružaju studentima priliku da povežu teorijska znanja s praktičnim radom, razviju ključne socijalne i emocionalne vještine te izgrade pozitivne stavove prema radu s djecom s teškoćama. Nadalje, volontiranje potiče razvoj altruizma, društvene odgovornosti i angažmana, što su ključne vrijednosti za buduće učitelje i nastavnike. Iako su se studenti suočavali s izazovima tijekom volontiranja, ova su im iskustva omogućila da razviju otpornost, prilagodljivost i sposobnost suočavanja s teškoćama. Također, volontiranje je potaklo promišljanje o vlastitim vrijednostima, prioritetima i ulozi u društvu, što je ključno za osobni i profesionalni rast. U konačnici, ovo istraživanje potvrđuje da iskustva učenja kroz služenje u zajednici imaju transformativni potencijal za studente učiteljskih i nastavničkih studija. Volontiranje ne samo da ih priprema za izazove buduće profesije već ih i oblikuje u empatične, kompetentne i društveno odgovorne pojedince. Stoga je važno nastaviti istraživati i promicati ovakve oblike učenja kako bi se osiguralo da budući učitelji i nastavnici budu spremni stvoriti inkluzivno i podržavajuće obrazovno okruženje za svu djecu.

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VOLUNTEERING AS SERVICE LEARNING: A QUALITATIVE PILOT STUDY OF REFLECTIONS OF FUTURE TEACHERS AND PEDAGOGUES

Abstract: *This paper explores the impact of volunteering, as a form of service learning, on students in teacher education programs. Based on the theoretical foundations of experiential learning and the importance of connecting theory and practice in the education of future teachers, 58 student reflections on volunteering with children with special needs were qualitatively analyzed. Each student wrote a review of their experience at the end of the volunteering. The results indicate a significant impact of volunteering on students' cognitive, emotional, motivational, and social development, highlighting the importance of such experiences for their personal and professional growth and the need to integrate service learning into formal curricula.*

Keywords: *service learning, volunteering, people with special needs, student reflections, teacher education programs*

INTRODUCTION

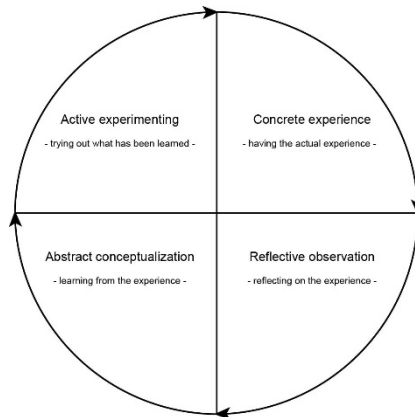
Service learning is a pedagogical approach that connects classroom learning with practical work in the community. Students apply theoretical knowledge in real-life situations, simultaneously providing services to the community and developing personal civic responsibility and competencies. This learning approach has theoretical and conceptual roots in the ideas of John Dewey, who, in his seminal work *Experience and Learning* (Dewey, 1938), emphasized experiential learning as a fundamental component of education (Kihm & Slawson, 2020; Kolb & Kolb, 2022).

Building on these ideas, Kolb (1984) developed a model of the experiential learning cycle, which consists of four phases: concrete experience, reflective

observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Figure 1). Service learning, with its emphasis on connecting theory and practice and reflecting on experience, naturally fits into this cycle, allowing students to learn through active engagement in the real world.

Figure 1.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984).



Service learning in teacher education connects classroom learning with practical work, offering the possibility of applying theoretical knowledge in real-life situations (Welch & James, 2007). Integrating theory and practice bridge the gap between content knowledge and practical application, thus deepening the understanding of teaching material on the one hand and civic responsibility on the other (Resch & Schrittmesser, 2021; Peterson et al., 2020). In this process, reflection is a key aspect of such a pedagogical approach, as it allows students to connect personal experiences in the community with academic content, while simultaneously developing professional competencies. Reflection catalyzes deep learning, helping students interpret personal experiences and give them meaning (Castellan, 2012; Peterson et al., 2020). In addition, it further contributes to the lifelong development of teaching competencies, encouraging future teachers to reflect on their professional identity, develop self-confidence, and increase motivation for the chosen profession (Cañabate et al., 2019).

Previous research has shown a range of positive effects of this pedagogical approach. It has been shown to enhance students' sense of social responsibility, as well as their understanding of social problems and dilemmas (Yorio & Ye, 2012; Conway, Amel & Gerwien, 2009; Reed et al., 2005; Celio et al., 2011). Also, participation in community-based learning programs contributes to personal growth through increased self-efficacy (Yorio & Ye, 2012; Kurkovsky, 2023), especially among female students (Gutzweiler et al., 2022). In addition

to personal development, service learning contributes to the development of cognitive abilities and academic outcomes: developing and changing attitudes, developing skills, designing career goals, and strengthening self-confidence in working with vulnerable groups (Drinkard & Tontodonato, 2019; Celio et al., 2011). Reflection has proven to be a key factor in encouraging this development, as an integral part of the process (Yorio & Ye, 2012; Celio et al., 2011). Finally, in addition to other benefits associated with this type of learning, such as intercultural and multicultural competencies (Kilgo, 2015), social engagement (Pinto & Costa-Ramvalho, 2023) and skills (Drinkard & Tontodonato, 2019), it is worth highlighting research that has shown a significant contribution of service learning to increasing motivation for learning and the experience of meaning and purpose in the process of one's education (Reed et al., 2005).

In Croatia, service learning is still in the initial acceptance phase and is not formally recognized or integrated into the higher education system, so future teachers are primarily exposed to traditional teaching approaches (Škugor & Sablić, 2018). Volunteering was used to provide students practical experience working in the community in the teaching organization on which this qualitative research is based. Although it does not include all the elements of service learning, it still allows students to acquire valuable experiences, develop social skills, empathy, and understand others' needs. Therefore, although not a complete substitute for service learning, volunteering in this context can involve students in the community to encourage personal and professional development. By connecting volunteering experiences and classroom work, the fundamental properties of service learning can be achieved as a pedagogical approach that connects academic learning with practical experience in the community.

This paper aims to systematically present the personal reflections of a generation of students from the Integrated Teacher Education Study and the Graduate Study of Pedagogy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split, who were exposed to service learning through volunteering in institutions providing services to children with special needs, as part of the mandatory course Psychology of Motivation and Socialization in the Classroom. The specific questions related to this goal are as follows:

1. What key themes appear in students' personal reflections on their service-learning experiences?
2. How do service-learning experiences influence students' perceptions of children with special needs and their education?
3. How do service-learning experiences shape students' professional identity as future teachers?

METHOD /METHODOLOGY

Research design

Given the type of data, the aim, and the research questions, this is a qualitative study whose primary goal is to describe and understand the structure of students' service-learning experiences through volunteering.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used for data analysis, which allows us to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns, i.e., themes within the data. This approach is particularly suitable for qualitative research as it enables a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives.

Research approach

The research was approached from a pragmatic epistemological position. In the context of this research, pragmatism as an epistemological position allows us to explore how reflections on service learning can offer practical implications for understanding students' experiences, and thus, perhaps, guidelines for improving teacher preparation programs, especially in the field of education for working with people with special needs.

Sample

The study included 30 female students and two male students in the second year of the Integrated Teacher Education Study, aged between 19 and 23 years (median=20, IQR=20–21), and 25 female students and 1 male student in the first year of the Graduate Study of Pedagogy, aged between 21 and 24 years (median=22, IQR=21–23).

Both studies were conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split.

Procedure

Within the mandatory course, Psychology of Motivation and Socialization in the Classroom, which includes teaching units on working with people with special needs, students are instructed to write a seminar paper after spending at least fifteen hours volunteering in any institution, state, non-governmental, or private, where programs for working with people with special needs are carried out. The students were not assigned specific special needs or age target groups, but could choose any institution, provided that it met the specified criteria. After completing the volunteering hours, they were required to write a seminar paper according to the following instructions:

“After volunteering for at least 15 hours in an institution that works with or supports people with special needs (it can be a specialized state institution, school, or non-governmental

organization), write a seminar paper that will consist of three parts: The first part (at least two pages) will be a professional description of the specifics of the special needs of the people you encountered (using at least three sources from the literature, of which no more than one can be from the Internet). The second part (at least 1 page) will describe where you volunteered and your participation (where you were, what was happening there, what you were doing). The third part (at least 1 page) will be your reflection of your whole experience (how the process went for you, what you experienced, what you learned, what was useful to you, what you would change, whether you changed at the end of the process compared to the beginning and, if so, how you changed...). Attached is a letter explaining your task and a request to allow you to volunteer, which you should print out, write your name and surname, and bring to me to sign in class. Parts of your papers may be used for scientific research purposes. If this happens, all identifying information about you, the institutions where you volunteered, and the people you encountered will be removed or masked. You can freely and without consequences for your success or our relationship request the exclusion of your report from processing.”

For this study, the parts of students' papers with personal reflections were extracted and processed in a separate document. The texts ranged from 470 to 1338 words in length (median=623, IQR=512-936). Processing was carried out via the NVivo 12 Pro program.

Data processing

The qualitative data collected in this research, which consisted of students' written reflections, were analyzed via thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is typically carried out in six overlapping and interconnected phases. For clarity, the processing procedure is presented below. However, consistent with the qualitative approach, these phases took place in parallel, and the researcher constantly moved between them until the final version of the research results.

Phase 1: Familiarization with the data

The students' reflections were carefully read several times, with initial notes taken, and the researcher became deeply acquainted with the content and developed an initial understanding of the key patterns. This phase was crucial

for achieving ‘immersion’ in the data, allowing the researcher to develop a sense of the overall story of the data.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

In this phase, the researcher identified interesting features that could represent patterns or themes. These features were marked with codes that labeled specific ideas or concepts presented in the data segment. Coding was performed manually, using notes and text marking to facilitate the organization and connection of the data.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

After all the data were coded, the codes were grouped into themes based on similarities and interrelationships. This process involved reviewing and sorting the codes and connecting them into broader, meaningful units. In this phase, the researcher also began to consider the hierarchical relationship between codes and themes, identifying central themes and subthemes.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

In this phase, the researcher critically reviewed the identified themes to ensure their coherence, relevance, and clarity. This included checking whether all the coded data units within each theme were meaningful and connected, and whether the themes were delineated from each other. Certain overlaps were tolerated to maintain the integrity of the themes.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

After the themes were revised and refined, the researcher defined and named them. Each was given a precise name that concisely described its content and meaning.

Phase 6: Producing the report

The researcher produced a final report on the results in the final phase. This included selecting illustrative quotes from the data that supported the identified themes and including them in the report, which was formed as a coherent ‘story’ about aspects of students’ experiences based on the analyzed written reflections.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis identified five main themes with corresponding subthemes (Figure 2, a detailed overview and definitions of themes, subthemes, and codes with illustrative quotes are available from the author).

Figure 2.

Presentation of themes and corresponding subthemes with indicated tentative relationships (indicated by arrows)



Cognitive aspects

The analysis of the students' reflections revealed a significant impact of the service-learning experience through volunteering on their thinking and understanding of the issues of working with people with special needs. Students gained new skills and knowledge, aligning with earlier research highlighting the importance of practical experience in the learning process (e.g., Eyler & Giles, 1999; Billet, 2009; Billet, 2015). In addition to developing practical skills, students deepened their understanding of the specific needs of people with developmental disabilities, which is crucial for their future profession.

“Through working with children, I better understood specific difficulties such as dyslexia and dysgraphia.”

“I am very glad that I had the opportunity to work with a boy with ADHD precisely because I know that I will often encounter it in the future.”

“Through this experience, I learned a lot about the importance of an individualized approach in education. I realized how important it is to understand each child's specific needs and adapt teaching methods to those needs.”

Developing empathy and better understanding was also a significant outcome of the volunteering experience. Students developed compassion and understanding for the challenges faced by children with disabilities, which is consistent with research showing that learning experiences through volunteering can foster the development of empathy (e.g., Lundy, 2007; Everhart, 2016; Wang et al., 2018). In addition, students changed perspectives and removed prejudices about children with disabilities, recognizing their abilities and potentials.

“This experience taught me empathy because, understanding the daily challenges faced by children with special needs, I

developed a deeper understanding and compassion for their struggles.”

“But very quickly I realized that the key to success will be patience, empathy, and consistency.”

“Volunteering has also changed my attitude towards any difficulties. I realized I feel too sorry for these people and am not helping them that way. I realized how much they can offer to the world and people and teach them how to live.”

The change in perception and attitudes was also evident in students’ reflections. Students developed more positive attitudes about volunteering and working with children with disabilities, recognizing the value and importance of such experience. This change in attitudes has also been observed in previous research (e.g., Chambers, 2017; Gil-Gomez et al., 2015; Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020), and can be explained through the theory of cognitive dissonance, which suggests that people strive to align their beliefs and behaviors (Festinger, 2017). Furthermore, students developed self-confidence and a sense of competence in working with children with disabilities, which is an important outcome for their future professional development.

“When I first came to Association X, I did not know what to expect. I expected a room for working with children and children who come there because they have to improve their knowledge, reading, writing, and the like. I encountered the opposite. In association X, children come with a smile.”

“I can say that I am significantly different from that day. Many things have changed in my perception of ‘important things’.”

“At the beginning of volunteering, I was under a feeling of compulsion... I proved to myself that I can do it and have a feeling for people, especially those who need even more help.”

Finally, students successfully connected theoretical knowledge with practical experience, a key element of service-learning experiences (Peteresen et al., 2020). This integration of theory and practice enabled them to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of working with children with disabilities and to apply theoretical concepts in real situations.

“Every moment spent with children was an opportunity for learning and applying theoretical knowledge in real life.”

“Attempts to convey history material classically were insufficient, so I adapted my approach. Reading the text was

challenging due to difficulties in decoding and interpreting some words, so we learned the material orally, using various memorization techniques and a mobile device as a visual aid.”

“That experience also encouraged me to read literature and improve my knowledge, abilities, and skills for a future teacher or pedagogue job.”

Emotional aspects

Students experienced a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment through volunteering, which is consistent with earlier research showing that volunteering can contribute to a positive emotional state and a sense of happiness (e.g., Opazo et al., 2018; Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020). Students expressed joy in providing help and positively impacting children, and the experience motivated and inspired them to work further with children.

“I have never felt so fulfilled and satisfied anywhere.”

“Volunteering in Association X has changed my view of the world and encouraged me to become even more involved in helping others.”

“Volunteering in Association X was not only a part of my life path, but also a part of my identity, reminding me daily of the importance of empathy and solidarity.”

Emotional connection and compassion were also important aspects of the volunteering experience. Earlier research has systematically shown that service learning contributes to developing emotional skills crucial for connecting with students (e.g., Opazo et al.; Austral, 2023). Students built relationships with children, creating emotional connections and friendships, and a safe and trusting environment in which children felt comfortable and loved.

“The children were becoming more and more relaxed and often wanted to talk and asked me about everything. I have a special memory of a boy I worked with the first hour I came to the association. At the end of the work with him, he drew me a drawing and thanked me for helping him.”

“I was happy that these children were open towards me and talked about themselves, so I had no fear of how to approach and help them.”

“I am writing this seminar with a full heart and gratitude that I can even write something like this and that I have the opportunity to be with my little friend even today.”

The students' reflections also revealed that they were coping with challenges and frustrations. They faced difficulties in communication and interaction with children, as well as with their emotional states, such as sadness and frustration. These challenges sometimes led to the questioning of their own abilities and competencies and the system within which they operated.

“There were times when I felt frustrated because I did not know how to approach a certain child or how to solve a problem.”

“I realized that I cannot help everyone and that some things are beyond my power. This hit me hard because I came with the idea that I would help them all.”

“The lack of resources and support for children with developmental disabilities is a serious challenge. More funds must be invested in education, health care, and social services to ensure full integration into society.”

Ultimately, the volunteering experience contributed to students' personal growth and development. Students developed patience and tolerance in working with children with special needs, which is a key skill for future teachers and educators (e.g., Schulte et al., 2008). In addition, volunteering encouraged increased self-confidence and a sense of competence in working with children. It contributed to a change in life perspectives and priorities, which aligns with findings that show the impact of service learning on personal growth and life perspective (Reed & Hadad, 2016).

“One of the things I learned is that you need to be patient for this kind of job because children are very impatient and playful, so you need to have patience with them.”

“I would also like to point out that at the beginning of the process, I felt insecure about my abilities, and I was unsure if I had the knowledge they needed and if I could transfer that knowledge to them. With each new arrival at the association, I gained confidence in my skills and role.”

“I believe that this experience has built me up even more as a person and has opened additional doors for the future development of me as a professional pedagogue and teacher, but also as a person.”

Social aspects

Students developed communication skills through volunteering, consistent with earlier research that emphasizes the importance of service learning

for developing social and communication competencies (e.g., Drinkard & Tontodonato, 2019; Tan & Soo, 2020). They learned to adapt communication to the individual needs of children with special needs, using different methods and approaches to ensure effective interaction. Also, they developed active listening and non-verbal communication skills, which enabled them to understand children and their needs better.

“With their questions, the children taught me to explain some things in several possible ways, and thus I became more creative.”

“I learned that non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication, especially when working with children who have difficulty expressing themselves.”

“I learned that it is important to be present and focused on the child, listen to him carefully, and show interest in what he is saying.”

Building relationships and connecting with children were also important aspects of students' experiences. Students established emotional connections and friendships with children, creating a safe and supportive environment. The development and understanding of relational competencies represent an important component of the teaching profession, especially when working with people with special needs (Aspelin et al., 2021; Koenen et al., 2021). In addition, students learned to recognize and respect children's individual needs and interests, adapting their approach to provide them with optimal support.

“I developed a very nice relationship with the children in which they felt safe and free to talk to me about everything that bothered them and what made them happy.”

“It is important to emphasize that for successful work with children with developmental disabilities, it is crucial to create an environment in which they will feel safe, accepted, and loved. This includes respecting their needs, providing support and encouragement, and creating opportunities for success.”

“I also learned that every child is special and that we cannot generalize them. You must develop a special relationship with each child and understand their wishes. Some children like a lot of play and talking, and some like peace and quiet, and we should adjust our behavior accordingly.”

Collaboration and teamwork were important elements of students' reflections. They collaborated with colleagues, experts, and parents, exchanging

knowledge and experiences and jointly planning support for children. This is an important aspect of the profession (Santagata & Guarino, 2012) that can only be superficially learned from textbooks or lectures. In addition, students encouraged mutual support and cooperation among children, creating a sense of community and belonging.

“Exchanging experiences with other students and employees of the association further enriched my understanding. Through conversations with colleagues, I heard different perspectives.”

“The mentor who directed and distributed the work and provided the necessary information also helped in this process.”

“I talked to his mother, and she mentioned that his drawing is not in line with his age, but that she can usually recognize what he is drawing because she knows him well.”

“I am glad that I shared this experience with my colleagues from the faculty because we could cooperate and retell our experiences.”

Finally, the volunteering experience fostered the development of social awareness and a sense of responsibility among students. This aspect is one of the fundamental components and expected effects of this form of learning (e.g., Prasertsang, 2013; Mergler et al., 2017). They recognized the importance of active participation in the development of the community and developed awareness of the needs of vulnerable groups. Students felt that they were actively participating in creating positive changes in society, reflecting on their role and the importance of contributing to the community.

“I learned that real societal changes occur when each individual takes responsibility for the community and acts with love and respect towards others.”

“This experience also prompted me to think about ways in which society can better support people with Down syndrome, both in education, employment, and everyday life. It is important to continuously work on creating an inclusive environment that encourages full participation and empowers people with Down syndrome to realize their potential.”

“Working with children with disabilities has changed my perception of difficulties and human needs. I have become more sensitive to the demands of society, more often and

more bravely defend the oppressed, and appreciate the people around me more.”

Motivational aspects

Altruism and the desire to help were strong motivators for students. In line with earlier research showing the development of reciprocal patterns of altruism as a result of service learning (e.g., Şimşek, 2020; Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020), students expressed a selfless desire to help and contribute to the community, especially for children with special needs. In addition, they felt responsibility and solidarity towards children with disabilities, recognizing their needs and wanting to support them.

“I believe that volunteering is one of the most valuable experiences anyone can ever have. It is extremely important because it provides an opportunity to actively contribute to the community and help those who need help the most.”

“This association taught me how to be compassionate and sensitive and communicate with children.”

“When thinking about where to volunteer, I decided it was time to see what real difficulties are, to experience something that will certainly be difficult for me, but also useful for future work.”

“Until that moment, it was only somewhere deep in my subconscious that after completing my university education I would encounter children with difficulties in my future work. I became aware that I do not have the necessary knowledge, that a long road and much learning awaits me. That sparked my curiosity and desire for change and learning.”

“This experience has encouraged my desire to experience as much volunteer work as possible so that I can better understand what children of today are facing, so that I can help someone, so that I can progress as a person, and so that I can be at least approximately ready for the situations I will face in my future job.”

Professional interest and development also played an important role in students’ motivation. Volunteering enabled them to gain practical experience and apply theoretical knowledge in real work with children with disabilities, which is crucial for their future professional development (Billet, 2015). The volunteering experience also confirmed their professional calling and

motivation for working with children with disabilities, providing them with insight into the real challenges and joys of such work.

“This volunteering experience was beneficial for my further education and personal development.”

“Many children have positively affected me and confirmed that this calling is just for me, which I could not witness until direct work with children.”

“Volunteering in the association is an experience that I will surely remember, but also one that will help me further my studies.”

Finally, social responsibility and engagement were also present in the students’ reflections. As in previous research, students recognized the importance of personal contribution to the community, developing awareness of the needs of vulnerable groups and actively participating in creating positive changes (e.g., Jobling & Moni, 2010; Broomhead, 2013; Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020).

“Volunteering in Association X has definitely changed my view of the world and encouraged me to get even more involved in providing help to others.”

“I learned how to support children with special needs, acquired valuable professional skills, and improved communication skills. Most importantly, I realized how important volunteer work and community support are for creating a more sensitive, stimulating, and just society.”

“I learned that real societal changes occur when each person takes responsibility for their community and acts with love and respect towards others.”

Expectations and outcomes

Students often started volunteering with initial uncertainty and fear of the unknown, which is consistent with earlier research showing that students may have different expectations and concerns before starting a volunteering experience (e.g., Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). Some expressed concern about a lack of experience in working with children with disabilities, while others had unclear expectations. Despite the initial uncertainty, students also expressed expectations about gaining experience, knowledge, and motivation for helping and contributing to the community.

“On the first day, I did not know what to expect and felt a small dose of fear because I had never been in close contact with people who have certain types of difficulties.”

“When I first came to Association X, I did not know what to expect.”

“When I learned in lectures that, instead of classic writing of seminar papers and giving presentations, we would have to volunteer in an association that deals with people with disabilities, I was very excited and satisfied because I knew that it was a new experience from which I would learn a lot.”

The volunteering experience often exceeded their initial expectations, providing them with the opportunity for personal satisfaction and fulfilment, increased self-confidence and a sense of competence, and positively impacted children and young people with disabilities. They reported feelings of joy and satisfaction through volunteering, the development of self-confidence and a sense of competence in working with children, and a positive influence on children.

“Seeing the smiles on their faces and knowing that I contributed to their development was a feeling that cannot be described.”

“Despite this, after working with each child, I felt fulfilled and happy because I could see they were progressing.”

“I consider myself more competent working with children with special needs after this experience. Before volunteering in Association X, I thought I lacked the knowledge and experience to work with children with special needs. However, this new experience makes me more confident than ever.”

Although they experienced numerous positive outcomes, students faced challenges and difficulties while volunteering. These included difficulties in communication and interaction with children and young people with special needs, coping with emotional challenges, difficulties in adaptation and finding appropriate working methods, and organizational challenges and shortcomings.

“For me, the hardest thing is the lack of feedback from the child. Due to the lack of communication, I must learn to recognize his needs without him telling me.”

“The hardest thing for me was when a child was sad or frustrated, and I did not know how to help him.”

“I could not dedicate myself to just one child and his needs. I believe quality work cannot be done in a room with more children and volunteers (a child with special needs requires

special circumstances). It is very difficult to ensure that a child with concentration problems can focus on learning if there is a hyperactive child in the room. Therefore, I believe it is necessary in association X to make more rooms so that individual work with children can be achieved.”

The volunteering experience also prompted changes in students’ attitudes and values. Attitudes about people with special needs and their abilities, attitudes about volunteering and its significance, and personal values and priorities changed. Students developed greater empathy and understanding for the needs of children with disabilities, recognized the value of volunteering and its impact on personal growth, and re-examined their priorities and life goals.

“The prejudices and fears that may have existed have almost disappeared. I am very glad that I had the opportunity to experience and ‘live’ with these people because, for a better tomorrow for all of us, we must be aware of the needs and specificities of all members of our society.”

“This volunteering experience also prompted me to reflect on my own values and priorities. I realized how important it is to contribute to the community and how small acts of attention and support that I show to children can significantly impact them and their lives.”

”It is positive that these children, young people, and adults are so happy regardless of their condition and health. There is so much life in them. If only we were like that, where would we end up? Less positive opinions are related to the position of the staff in a very unenviable situation. Many people are in a small space, and each of them has its own needs (different). In addition, they are not of the same age. I admire them very much, their patience, effort, work, in every drop of sweat. I learned we should devote more time to such special people; too many are neglected. Regardless of their situation, they still understand when someone gives them love or when they do not. It was very useful to me. I somehow started to appreciate these people and my health more, which I often take for granted.”

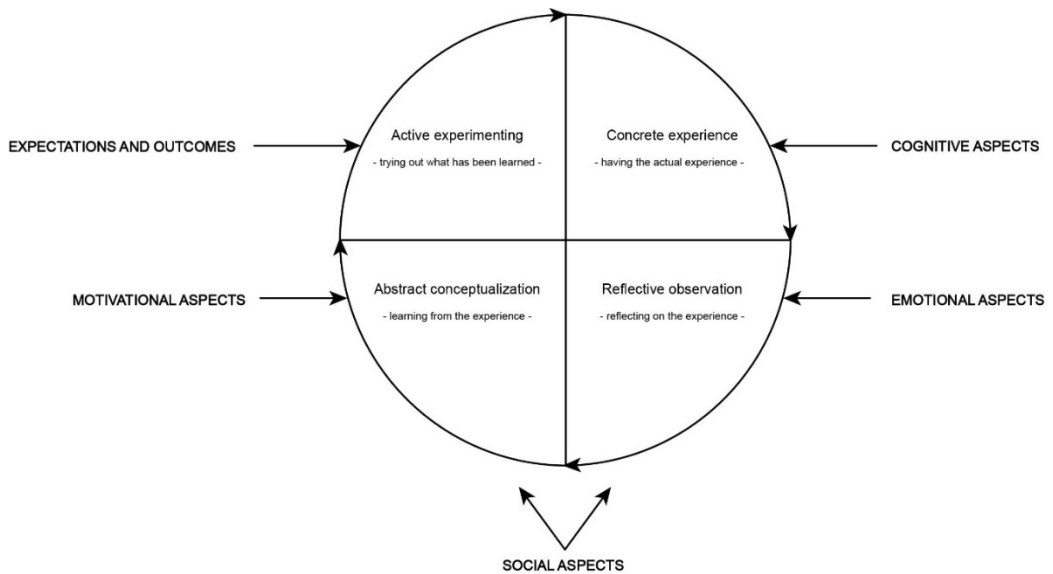
GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results of this research can be viewed in the context of Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984, Figure 3). Kolb’s model is widely

accepted and influential in education and human potential development, and due to its flexibility and applicability, it is used in various contexts, from formal education to business training (Morris, 2019).

Figure 3.

Conceptual connection of the obtained results with Kolb's experiential learning cycle



Overall, the results of this research showed that volunteering had a significant impact on students in the cognitive, emotional, motivational, and social aspects, which is consistent with earlier research on service learning (e.g., Eyler & Giles, 1999; Billet, 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). In a cognitive sense, students gained new knowledge and skills, deepened their understanding of the specific needs of children with special needs, and connected theoretical knowledge with practical experience. This volunteering experience, where students actively participated in real situations and faced challenges, fits into the first phase of Kolb's cycle – concrete experience. The findings support the importance of practical experience in the learning process and emphasize the value of volunteering as a learning method (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Billet, 2009). Also, students developed empathy and understanding for the challenges faced by children with special needs, changed perspectives and broke down prejudices, which is consistent with research showing that learning experiences through volunteering can foster the development of empathy (e.g., Lundy, 2007; Everhart, 2016; Wang et al., 2018).

Emotionally, students experienced satisfaction and fulfillment, joy for the help provided and the positive impact on children, and developed emotional

connection and compassion. Through writing a seminar paper, which included a personal review of the experience, students had the opportunity for reflective observation. This phase of Kolb's cycle allowed them to re-examine their experiences, emotions, and reactions and better understand themselves, their values, and their role in society. These findings support the idea that volunteering can contribute to a positive emotional state and a sense of happiness (e.g., Opazo et al., 2018; Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020). However, students also faced challenges and frustrations, sometimes leading to questioning their abilities. Despite this, the volunteering experience contributed to students' personal growth, encouraging the development of patience, tolerance, and self-confidence.

In terms of motivation, altruism and the desire to help were strong motivators for students, which is consistent with earlier research that shows the development of reciprocal patterns of altruism as a result of service learning (e.g., Şimşek, 2020; Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020). Also, the desire for learning and development, and professional interest and development were significant motivational factors. Volunteering enabled students to gain practical experience and apply theoretical knowledge, which is crucial for their future professional development (Billet, 2015). Connecting practical experience with theoretical knowledge, a key part of seminar papers, represents abstract conceptualization in Kolb's cycle. Students analyzed their experiences, drew conclusions, and created new concepts and understandings.

Socially, students developed communication skills, learned to adapt communication to the individual needs of children with disabilities, and developed active listening and non-verbal communication skills. These findings support the importance of service learning for the development of social and communication competencies (e.g., Drinkard & Tontodonato, 2019; Tan & Soo, 2020). Also, students built relationships with children, established emotional connections and friendship, and learned to recognize and respect children's individual needs and interests. Collaboration and teamwork were important elements of students' experiences, encouraging the exchange of knowledge and experiences and joint planning of support for children. These processes can be placed in the phases of concrete experience and reflective observation, since students were on the one hand directly immersed in situations in which they developed the mentioned skills and gained experiences, and also reflected on their meaning and their role in society and social processes in which they are involved.

The volunteering experience often exceeded students' initial expectations, providing them with the opportunity for personal satisfaction, increased self-confidence, and a positive impact on children. Although they faced challenges, volunteering prompted changes in students' attitudes and values, developing greater empathy, understanding, and awareness of the needs of vulnerable groups. This transformation and application of new knowledge

and skills in future situations represent the final phase of Kolb's cycle – active experimentation. Students have the opportunity to test and consolidate their learning, which closes the cycle and opens the possibility for new experiences and further development.

The results emphasize the importance of service learning through volunteering as an approach that encourages students' cognitive, emotional, motivational, and social development. Furthermore, the importance of practical experience in connecting theoretical knowledge with practical work and the development of empathy, communication skills, and self-confidence among future teachers is highlighted. Future research could focus on the long-term effects of volunteering on the professional development of teachers and the research of specific support strategies for students during the volunteering experience. Also, since European initiatives aimed at developing and encouraging social engagement within the framework of the development of student competencies in Croatia are still in the development phase, in the local context it would be useful to investigate how learning experiences through volunteering can be meaningfully integrated into the curricula of teacher education programs. Namely, similar to other post-communist countries, the historical and cultural context represents a challenge for the wider application of such teaching practices (Aramburuzabala et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to do everything possible so that curricular changes due to European initiatives do not remain formal fossils without real and meaningful integration into the experience and well-being of students, teachers, and members of the wider community.

This research provides initial insights into the experiences of the Teacher Education Study and Pedagogy students who volunteered with children with special needs. These results should certainly be considered in their limited context. It is the experience of students from one institution in a course organized by the same teacher. In this sense, the results should be seen as conceptual evidence of the possibilities that this way of learning and teaching provides, and not something that can be generalized to other populations and situations, which is not in the spirit of qualitative research. This approach certainly depends on many factors that will differ from case to case, such as the needs and characteristics of the community, the connection of teachers with local stakeholders, the competencies of teachers and students, the formal and practical support of the institution, etc. These factors will differ from case to case. Therefore, it is difficult, or even counterproductive, to reduce this type of learning organization to a sequence of procedures that will lead to the desired outcomes. Instead, in the spirit of the service-learning approach, open and honest communication and constant reflection and adaptation to real needs as they appear and change are needed. Thus, this approach is also a form of service learning for the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Through volunteering with children with special needs, students gained practical knowledge and skills and experienced a significant leap in personal and professional development. The experience fostered empathy, self-confidence, and competence, shaping them into future teachers who are professionally trained and deeply committed to their profession.

The research results emphasize the importance of including service-learning experiences in the curricula of teacher education programs. Such experiences allow students to connect theoretical knowledge with practical work, develop key social and emotional skills, and build positive attitudes towards working with children with disabilities. Furthermore, volunteering encourages the development of altruism, social responsibility, and engagement, key values for future teachers. Although students faced challenges while volunteering, these experiences enabled them to develop resilience, adaptability, and the ability to cope with difficulties. Also, volunteering prompted reflection on their own values, priorities, and role in society, which is crucial for personal and professional growth.

Ultimately, this research confirms that service-learning experiences have a transformative potential for students in teacher education programs. Volunteering prepares them for the challenges of their future profession and shapes them into empathetic, competent, and socially responsible individuals. Therefore, it is important to continue to research and promote such forms of learning to ensure that future teachers are ready to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment for all children.

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KOMUNIKACIJA, SURADNJA I UMREŽAVANJE PUTEM ESEP PLATFORME

Sažetak: *ESEP platforma mjesto je susreta, komunikacije, suradnje i umrežavanja odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika koja za cilj ima poboljšanje kvalitete obrazovanja u Europi. Na području Hrvatske provedeno je istraživanje na uzorku od ukupno 174 ispitanika. Za potrebe istraživanja strukturiran je online anketni upitnik. Cilj istraživanja bio je ispitati znanja, iskustva i stavove odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika u predškolskim ustanovama, osnovnim i srednjim školama u Hrvatskoj o ESEP platformi i eTwinning projektima. Obradom rezultata uočeno je da više od polovine ispitanika ima znanja o ESEP platformi, dok ispitanici u izrazito visokom postotku posjeduju znanja o eTwinning projektima neovisno o tome u kojoj vrsti odgojno-obrazovne ustanove rade. Na osnovi uvida u rezultate vezane za skalu procjene iskustava eTwinnera može se zaključiti da se njihova iskustva međusobno uvelike razlikuju. Globalizacijski trendovi i suvremeni način života pred odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike stavljaju brojne izazove, što od njih traži spremnost za cjeloživotno učenje s naglaskom na unapređenje komunikacijskih i digitalnih vještina.*

Ključne riječi: *eTwinning, komunikacija, predškolske ustanove, škole*

UVOD

S obzirom na globalizacijske trendove koji prate razvoj suvremenog društva, obrazovanje mora biti prilagođeno stvarnoj digitalnoj transformaciji. Neophodno je stvarati resurse dostupne svim odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima, pomoću kojih mogu jačati svoje digitalne vještine i kompetencije te ići ukorak s novim obrazovnim trendovima. U kontekstu suvremenog društva, koje uključuje procese europskih integracija, dinamički razvoj i jačanje digitalnih medija, internetski sadržaji koji obuhvaćaju različite obrazovne platforme postaju ključni alati jer povezuju odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike iz različitih kultura i ustanova. Slijedom navedenog, u ovom radu naglasak će biti na komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju putem European School Education Platform (dalje ESEP). Motiv za proučavanje ovog područja jest činjenica da u Hrvatskoj postoji mali broj radova i istraživanja na temu suradničkih mreža na internetu, koje služe za povezivanje odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika u Europi. U prvom dijelu rada iznijet će se kratki pregled znanstvenih spoznaja vezanih za komunikaciju, suradnju i umrežavanje te osvrt na ESEP platformu s naglaskom na eTwinning projekte. Zatim će se prikazati i analizirati dobiveni rezultati provedenog istraživanja o znanjima i iskustvima odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika vezanih za ESEP platformu i eTwinning projekte, u kojima su ispitani njihovi stavovi o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju. Znanstveno-istraživački je doprinos ovoga rada neupitan jer do sada na području Hrvatske nije provedeno slično istraživanje unatoč činjenici da su odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici iz Hrvatske aktivni članovi eTwinning zajednice i dobitnici brojnih oznaka kvalitete za sudjelovanje u eTwinning projektima. Obradi ove teme pristupljeno je s nadom da će osim istraživačke ovaj rad imati i praktičnu vrijednost za odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike u predškolskim ustanovama, osnovnim i srednjim školama.

KOMUNIKACIJA, UMREŽAVANJE I MEĐUNARODNA SURADNJA

Komunikacija je proces u kojem se stvara zajednički sadržaj između izvora i primatelja razmjenom različitih simbola (Antolović i Sviličić, 2020). Preduvjet pokretanja procesa komunikacije potreba je za komunikacijom, dakle treba postojati svrha u obliku poruke koja se treba prenijeti (Jurković, 2012). Smatra se da je oznaka uspješne komunikacije maksimalno podudaranje smisla primljene i poslana poruke (Rouse i Rouse, 2005). Jurković (2012) komunikaciju dijeli na četiri osnovne vrste: usmenu, pismenu, kontaktnu ili neverbalnu te e-komunikaciju. Elektronička komunikacija ili e-komunikacija predstavlja suvremeni oblik komunikacije koji sve češće zamjenjuje tradicionalnu komunikaciju, a temelji se na informacijskoj i komunikacijskoj tehnologiji upotrebom elektroničkih sredstava. Svaka organizacija, uključujući

i one odgojno-obrazovnog karaktera, predstavlja komunikacijsku mrežu u kojoj se odvija slanje i primanje informacija u svrhu postizanja određenih ishoda (Jurković, 2012). Elektronička komunikacija nudi značajnu dostupnost i lakoću, što je čini neophodnom u modernom društvu. Ujedno ima i ključnu ulogu u međunarodnoj suradnji, omogućavajući bržu i učinkovitiju interakciju između pojedinaca i organizacija. Interpersonalna komunikacija na međukulturalnoj razini postaje realan izazov za svakog pojedinca, pa se čak može reći i da mu daje određenu konkurentsku prednost unutar vlastite djelatnosti (Antolović i Sviličić, 2020). Potrebno je spomenuti i međukulturalnu svijest koja predstavlja spoznajnu dimenziju u kompetenciji međukulturalne komunikacije, a uključuje sposobnost pojedinca da shvati sličnosti i razlike između kultura (Gulbay, 2022). Međukulturalna komunikacija zahtijeva posebna znanja i vještine, uključujući razumijevanje i osjetljivost na kontekst koji se razlikuje od vlastitog (Rouse i Rouse, 2005).

Stalno se naglašava važnost interakcije, suradnje i kooperativnosti u odgojno-obrazovnoj praksi. Kvalitetna suradnja svih uključenih u odgojno-obrazovni proces nužna je za zdravo okruženje u kojem se dijete razvija (Srok i Skočić Mihić, 2012). Roditelji i odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici u odgojno-obrazovnom procesu imaju različite, ali komplementarne uloge (Ličanin, 2023). Pravilna komplementarnost obiteljskog i institucionalnog odgoja produkt je kvalitetnih suradničkih odnosa (Strelec, 2023). Također, put prema kvalitetnijoj odgojno-obrazovnoj praksi određen je spremnošću pojedinca za cjeloživotno učenje. Greene (1996, prema Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2009) navodi kooperativno učenje, timski rad i suradnju kao najvažnije djelatnosti u budućnosti i kao preduvjete za uspjeh u 21. stoljeću. Slijedom navedenog, potrebne su nove strategije za promicanje kvalitete odgojno-obrazovnog procesa. Pokazatelji kvalitete vezani uz međuljudske odnose najčešće su povezani s kooperativnim učenjem. Takvo učenje promiče afirmaciju, komunikaciju i suradnju (Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2009). Odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici trebaju biti dionici pozitivnih društvenih promjena prihvaćajući nove tehnologije i mogućnosti povezivanja u svrhu cjeloživotnog učenja i kontinuiranog unaprjeđivanja vlastite prakse (Zorić-Beslema, 2013). Globalizacijski i integracijski procesi na području Europe predstavljaju veliki izazov europskim obrazovnim sustavima na svim razinama (Gehrmann, 2008). Iz navedenog proizlazi nužnost koordinacije radi rješavanja tih pitanja i postavljanja reformskih strategija nacionalnih sustava, a to zahtijeva međunarodnu suradnju (Gehrmann, 2008). Ostvarivanjem zajedničkih ciljeva u obrazovanju poštujući kompetitivnost, toleranciju, inkluzivnost i demokratičnost uspostavlja se koordinacija (Puljiz i Živčić, 2009, prema Baketa 2012). Ciljeve određuje Vijeće EU, sa svrhom ostvarenja prosperiteta i napretka na osnovi cjeloživotnog obrazovanja oslanjajući se na učenje koje proizlazi iz razmjene iskustva između država članica (Baketa, 2012).

Umrežavanje može imati važnu ulogu u obrazovanju pružajući strukturu za profesionalno usavršavanje odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika i integrirajući rascjepkano i raznovrsno područje cjeloživotnog učenja. Na mreže se može gledati kao na organizacijska rješenja za različitost i kompleksnost obrazovnih potreba (Bienzle i sur., 2007, prema Cachia i Punie, 2012). Profesionalno usavršavanje može se definirati kao bilo kakva aktivnost koja osposobljava odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike za poboljšanje njihovog rada u odgojno-obrazovnoj ustanovi (Little, 1987, prema Kostas i Ioannidou, 2023). Za mreže se može reći da predstavljaju najvažnije kanale komunikacije i suradnje jer olakšavaju razmjenu znanja i kvalitetne prakse (Leproni, 2023). Obrazovanje u postmodernim društvima obilježavaju: fleksibilnost, demokratski principi te uključivanje pojedinaca i različitih socijalnih grupa u odgojno-obrazovni proces (Kostas i Ioannidou, 2023). Mreže koje razvijaju budući odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici mogu predstavljati oblik podrške i svojevršno mentoriranje u njihovom profesionalnom razvoju, ali i olakšani pristup novim znanstveno potvrđenim odgojno-obrazovnim praksama i izvorima (Caroll i Resta, 2010, prema Cachia i Punie, 2012). Odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici trebali bi osigurati iskustva učenja koja odražavaju inovativnost i kreativnost, čija se važnost u suvremenim društvima sve više naglašava (Cachia i sur., 2010; Johnson i sur., 2011, prema Cachia i Punie, 2012).

Iako postoji puno iscrpnih radova i istraživanja vezanih za učenje u budućnosti, o ulozi odgojitelja i učitelja te o njihovoj suradnji putem umrežavanja gotovo uopće nema spomena (Cachia i Punie, 2012). Cachia i Punie (2012) iznose da odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici pozitivno gledaju na korištenje i potencijal informacijsko-komunikacijskih mreža u svrhu poboljšanja kvalitete vlastita rada te iskazuju želju za većom suradnjom s kolegama, posebice iz drugih država i kultura. Sam koncept zajednica učenja, između odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika ili djece, stavlja naglasak na njegovanje osjećaja pripadnosti i postavljanje zajedničkih ciljeva (Leproni, 2023). Značajke sumreža : inkluzija, integracija i interakcija, a cilj im je stvoriti okruženja koja prihvaćaju različitost i njeguju svrhovito uključivanje (Leproni, 2023). Putem suradničkih projekata odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici su u prilici potaknuti lokalne zajednice na uključivanje u rješavanje globalnih problema (Leproni, 2023). Ovakva umrežavanja razvijaju osjećaj odgovornosti za održivi razvoj i zajedničku budućnost.

ESEP PLATFORMA

Europska platforma za školsko obrazovanje pokrenuta je 2022. godine. Ova besplatna, višejezična platforma okuplja i povezuje odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike na svim razinama obrazovanja, od ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja, preko osnovnoškolskog i srednjoškolskog, do početnog strukovnog obrazovanja i osposobljavanja. Prijašnje platforme eTwinninga, School

Education Gatewaya i Teacher Academyja objedinjene su na jedinstvenoj ESEP platformi 2022. Platforma je financirana sredstvima iz europskog programa Erasmus+ za obrazovanje i osposobljavanje uz pomoć podupirućih partnera te predstavlja inicijativu Europske komisije. Sadrži različite resurse poput izvješća o nedavnim istraživanjima, primjera dobre prakse, nastavnih materijala koji su rezultat europskih projekata te skup različitih alata za škole kao i alat za samoprocjenu. Još jedna od značajnih odrednica ESEP platforme su besplatni tečajevi, seminari i nastavni materijali na mreži preko EU Academyja u svrhu stručnog usavršavanja, a platforma je dostupna na 30 jezika uključujući hrvatski jezik (ESEP, 2024). Kao što navodi Howell (2010, prema Acar i Peker, 2021), ovakve zajednice učenja na mreži nude vrijedne prilike za stručno usavršavanje odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika. Acar i Peker (2021) navode da se korištenje platforme odražava na percepciju struke odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika po pitanju pedagogije, tehnologije, profesionalnog usavršavanja, inovativnih pristupa praksi i cjeloživotnog učenja.

eTWINNING

eTwinning „utjelovljuje metodologiju, pedagoški pristup, zajednicu praktičara i platformu koja omogućuje inovacije, komunikaciju i suradnju” (ESEP, 2022, prema Horvat 2022, str. 124). Zhu i suradnici (2013, prema Giannis, 2022) vide eTwinning kao sredstvo za unaprjeđivanje inovativnih metoda podučavanja putem razvoja obrazovnih, socijalnih i tehnoloških kompetencija, a koje stavljaju u epicentar transformacije današnjeg obrazovanja na svjetskoj razini. Mreže poput eTwinninga zasigurno doprinose ubrzanju promjena u obrazovanju i širenje pedagoških inovacija na sistemskoj razini (Kostas i Ioannidou, 2023). Cilj je eTwinninga jačanje međunarodne suradnje i stručno usavršavanje odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika registriranih na navedenoj platformi. eTwinning zajednicu financiraju nacionalne službe za podršku – Agencija za mobilnost i programe EU (dalje AMPEU) iz sredstava programa Erasmus+ na osnovi sporazuma o dodjeli bespovratnih sredstava Europske izvršne agencije za obrazovanje i kulturu (ESEP, 2024). AMPEU ima ulogu prenositi informacije i provoditi kampanje, organizirati konferencije, natječaje i radionice za osposobljavanje, kao i pružati podršku odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima na svim razinama uključenosti (Pietrzak, 2009). eTwinning, koji je započeo kao lokalna inicijativa, danas predstavlja zajednicu od 1 053 000 odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika iz 233 000 odgojno-obrazovnih institucija u više od 40 zemalja (ESEP, 2024). Leproni (2023) je naziva najvećom europskom zajednicom praktičara. Primarna svrha ove zajednice upoznavanje je i suradnja djece i odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika sudjelovanjem u zajedničkim virtualnim projektima putem sigurne digitalne platforme.

Komuniciranjem, suradnjom i radom na zajedničkim projektima registriranih članova eTwinning zajednice dolazi do razmjene znanja, ideja i iskustava, što obogaćuje njihov neposredni rad s djecom. Osim toga odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici putem eTwinninga stječu uvid u funkcioniranje odgoja i obrazovanja u drugim državama upoznajući njihove kurikulume, vrijednosti i načela koja primjenjuju u radu s djecom (Horvat, 2022). Crisan (2013) navodi da je krajnji cilj poboljšati kvalitetu obrazovanja u Europi putem suradnje i razmjene ideja, dok Dominguez-Miguela (2007, prema Huertas-Abril i Palacios-Hidalgo, 2023) nabraja čak šest ciljeva eTwinninga: umrežavanje europskih škola, poticanje odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika i djece na sudjelovanje u projektima, njegovanje europske dimenzije u obrazovanju, osvještavanje djece o višejezičnosti i multikulturalnosti europskog društva, poboljšavanje međukulturalnog dijaloga i razumijevanja te pomoć pri usavršavanju profesionalnih i digitalnih vještina odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika.

U novije doba u literaturi može se susresti koncept suradničkog međunarodnog učenja na mreži (*collaborative online international learning*/ dalje *COIL*). Rubin (2017, prema Huertas-Abril i Palacios-Hidalgo, 2023) taj koncept tumači kao inovativni pristup obrazovanju korištenjem prednosti suvremene tehnologije u posredovanju međukulturalnih interakcija i suradničkog učenja između djece i odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika iz različitih država, koji promiče globalno razumijevanje. Za eTwinning se može reći da je jedna od značajnih COIL inicijativa (Huertas-Abril i Palacios-Hidalgo, 2023). Vuorikari (2010, prema Cachia i Punie, 2012) eTwinning opisuje kao inovatore, odnosno one koji su sposobni i voljni ostvarivati međunarodnu suradnju koristeći se informacijsko-komunikacijskom tehnologijom (dalje IKT). U želji da se ispune vlastite potrebe putem odgojno-obrazovnog procesa rađa se potreba za suradnjom s drugima (Bašari i Ada, 2023).

Digitalizacija u svim aspektima života i pojava interneta ima veliki utjecaj na rad odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika. Odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici u Europi mišljenja su da je upotreba IKT alata pozitivno utjecala na njihov rad, čak 85 % ispitanika navode da kombiniraju različite IKT modele kao alate u svom radu (Cachia, Ferrari, Ala-Mutka i Punie, 2010, prema Cachia i Punie, 2012). Po pitanju vještina ispitanici navode da je digitalna kompetencija jedna od glavnih kompetencija koju su unaprijedili sudjelujući u eTwinningu. Odmah nakon nje spominje se kulturološka kompetencija koju su razvijali koristeći se alatima na mreži koji omogućuju korisnicima da se virtualno upoznaju te osmisle i realiziraju suradnički projekt putem platforme. Daljnji razvoj interpersonalnih vještina poput komunikacije, suradnje i upravljanja vremenom još je jedan pozitivan ishod eTwinning suradnje, a ako je ta suradnja međunarodna valja spomenuti i razvoj vještina komunikacije na stranom jeziku (Cachia i Punie, 2012). Cachia i Punie (2012) kod manjeg broja ispitanika primjećuju poboljšanje vještina upravljanja kroz vođenje ljudi, preuzimanje inicijative,

pružanje podrške i smjera u timskom radu. Uzimajući u obzir sve ove spomenute dobrobiti odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici, koji su ujedno i eTwinneri, iskazuju želju za širenjem eTwinning mreže i rastom broja korisnika. Unatoč značajnom rastu broja korisnika posljednjih godina, taj broj još uvijek ostaje simboličan u usporedbi s populacijom odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika u Europi. Schön (1983, prema Leproni, 2023, str. 125) uvodi koncept „refleksivnog praktičara” u odgojno-obrazovni kontekst te time naglašava nužnost razmišljanja o djelovanju dok ono traje. Sudjelovanjem u kontinuiranoj refleksiji odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici imaju priliku mijenjati svoju praksu u realnom vremenu, a ishod ovakve prakse je kontinuirani napredak i poboljšanje pedagoških ishoda (Leproni, 2023). eTwinning projekti pružaju priliku odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima za realizaciju ovakve prakse.

eTWINNING PROJEKTI

Participirajući u eTwinning projektima, odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici dolaze do situacijskog i neformalnog učenja usvajajući nove vještine i kompetencije u kontekstu svog svakodnevnog posla (Nucci, Tosi i Pettenati Carocci, 2021). Zandravelli (2017, prema Kostas i Ioannidou, 2023) nakon provedenog istraživanja zaključuje da odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici ovim neformalnim obrazovanjem jačaju svoje postojeće formalno obrazovanje i prihvaćaju suradničke i samoregulirajuće oblike učenja unutar konteksta zajednice. Također navodi da naučeno kapitaliziraju u svakodnevnom radu s djecom, pa se time nastavlja njihovo profesionalno usavršavanje i samoobrazovanje te bivaju zadovoljniji (Kostas i Ioannidou, 2023).

Preduvjet za osiguravanje kvalitetne okoline za učenje djece i razvoj dječjih potencijala potrebno je kontinuirano usavršavanje znanja, vještina i razvoj kompetencija odgojitelja i učitelja (Horvat, 2022). Nacionalni kurikulum za rani i predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje (2015: 29. str) navodi da „spremnost odgojitelja i drugih stručnih djelatnika vrtića na prihvaćanje novih oblika profesionalnog učenja podrazumijeva kontinuirani proces istraživanja i zajedničkog učenja svih stručnih djelatnika ustanove”. Profesionalni razvoj odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika uključuje kontinuirani razvoj svih kompetencija i spremnost za cjeloživotno učenje (Slunjski i sur., 2006, prema Horvat, 2022). Mnogobrojni su izazovi suvremenog doba te traže razvijanje raznovrsnih kompetencija. Za odgojitelje i učitelje to su: razvijanje novih, modernih strategija planiranja odgojno-obrazovnog procesa, razvoj digitalnih vještina i upotreba informatičke tehnologije, komuniciranje na stranim jezicima i međukulturalno razumijevanje te osjećaj za inicijativu i poduzetništvo kroz sposobnost planiranja i upravljanja projektima (Horvat, 2022).

U eTwinning izvješću iz 2019. godine vidljiva je poveznica između sudjelovanja u eTwinning projektima i razvoja individualnih vještina

odgojitelja i učitelja te razvoja njihove prakse (Horvat, 2022). Ispitano je 10 000 eTwinnera koji su uočili razvoj u područjima: projektnog učenja, usavršavanja tehnoloških znanja potrebnih za odgojno-obrazovni rad, suradnje s drugim odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima te sposobnost odabira optimalne strategije podučavanja (Horvat, 2022). Crisan (2013) navodi rezultate istraživanja koji ukazuju da eTwinning posreduje znanje drugih obrazovnih sistema (87 %), jača osjećaj pripadanja profesionalnoj zajednici (85 %), podržava odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike u preuzimanju značajnije uloge u radu sa studentima (72 %), povezuje formalni kurikulum s zanimljivim i motivirajućim obrazovnim aktivnostima (85 %). Po pitanju kontinuiranog profesionalnog usavršavanja čak se 90 % ispitanika izjasnilo da su im u tome najviše značili suradnički obrazovni projekti, a 89 % ispitanika navelo je blisku suradnju s odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima iz drugih država radi kulturološke razmjene i usavršavanja upotrebe stranog jezika. Uočeno je i poboljšanje odnosa s drugim odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima u vlastitoj ustanovi i drugim ustanovama te provođenje suradničkih aktivnosti ili razmjena iskustava nakon sudjelovanja u eTwinningu kod 81 % ispitanika. Još jedna od dobrobiti sudjelovanja u eTwinning projektima situacije su u kojima odgojitelji i učitelji propituju svoj odgojno-obrazovni rad te sagledavaju implicitnu pedagogiju u odnosu na dijete. Do takvih situacija dolazi upravo zahvaljujući činjenici da su se povezali s drugim praktičarima iz različitih dijelova Europe te upoznali s različitim pristupima odgoju i obrazovanju, ali i osvještavanju kulturoloških razlika i sličnosti (Horvat, 2022).

Zanimljivo je primijetiti da kolaboraciju unutar ove mreže profesionalnog usavršavanja obilježava veća sinergija i suradnja u odnosu na kolaboracije koje nastaju unutar samih ustanova (Bettini, 2021). Bettini (2021) navodi da je spomenuta razlika u većoj spremnosti za pružanje obostrane podrške jer su odnosi u eTwinning zajednici češće simetrični nego unutar ustanova. Osim toga, ispitanici su naveli da je bolja suradnja rezultat kvalitete interpersonalnih odnosa koji nastaju među eTwinnerima, kao i međusobno prepoznavanje kompetencija partnera (Bettini, 2021). Upravo ovo potvrđuje i Hargreaves (1998, prema Bettini, 2021), koji navodi da emocionalna dimenzija odnosa među kolegama može biti ključna u procesu sukonstrukcije i nadogradnje njihova profesionalnog identiteta. Međunarodni projekti u okviru eTwinninga povećavaju broj interakcija i uspostavljanja komunikacije među partnerima, što utječe na oblikovanje međukulturalnih svjetonazora (Izgi Onbašili, 2022). Suradnički zadatci u projektima ne potiču samo profesionalne vještine nego i timski rad, uzimajući u obzir različite poglede i sugestije međunarodnih partnera (Tonner-Saunders i Shimi, 2021, prema Izgi Onbašili, 2022).

Istaknuti projekti mogu dobiti eTwinning europsku nagradu i postati dio galerije projekata. Europska oznaka kvalitete (European Quality label / dalje EQL) međunarodno je priznanje za rad na eTwinning projektu te potvrda

ispunjavanja specifičnih kriterija za procjenu kvalitete (Giannis, 2022). Ona se dodjeljuje odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima za rad na projektima i slijedi nove trendove u procjenjivanju kvalitete odgojno-obrazovnog procesa (Young, 2012; Papadimitriou i Niari, 2017, prema Giannis, 2022). Zanimljivo je istaknuti da Hrvatska ima najveći broj dodijeljenih oznaka kvalitete među 44 države (140 EQL na milijun ljudi). Na drugom mjestu nalazi se Turska s 70 oznaka kvalitete, a na trećem mjestu Sjeverna Makedonija s 58 oznaka kvalitete (Giannis, 2022). Iz svega ranije navedenog kao što su: svestranost, fleksibilnost, međukulturalnost, višejezičnost, razvoj vještina, inovacija, usavršavanje, suradnja, širenje vidika i povezivanja odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika na europskom nivou proizlazi važnost uloge eTwinninga u obrazovanju za generacije odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika i djece (İzgi Onbaşılı, 2022).

CILJ ISTRAŽIVANJA I ISTRAŽIVAČKA PITANJA

Cilj je istraživanja utvrditi posjeduju li odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici u predškolskim ustanovama, osnovnim i srednjim školama u Hrvatskoj znanja o ESEP platformi i eTwinning projektima. Osim navedenog, žele se ispitati iskustva eTwinninga i kako oni procjenjuju komunikaciju, suradnju i umrežavanje s drugim odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima na području Europe. Također, žele se ispitati stavovi odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju.

Na osnovi postavljenog cilja istraživanja strukturirana su sljedeća istraživačka pitanja: Posjeduju li odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici u Hrvatskoj znanja o ESEP platformi? Ako da, kako su ih stekli i koriste li se njima u komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju s ostalim odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima u Europi? Posjeduju li odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici u Hrvatskoj znanja o eTwinning projektima i, ako da, kako su ih stekli? Kakva su iskustva eTwinninga vezana za kreiranje i sudjelovanje u eTwinning projektima? Kakvi su stavovi odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju s drugim odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima?

METODOLOGIJA

Empirijsko istraživanje provedeno je na uzorku od ukupno 174 ispitanika, od čega 168 žena (96,6 %) te 6 muškaraca (3,4 %). S obzirom na mjesto rada, iz dječjih vrtića sudjelovala su 104 djelatnika (59,8 %), iz osnovnih škola 39 (22,4 %), a iz srednjih škola 31 (17,8 %) odgojno-obrazovni djelatnik. Visoku razinu obrazovanja (VSS) ima 93 (53,4 %), a višu (VŠS) 81 (46,6 %) ispitanik. Dob ispitanika i godine radnog iskustva u odgojno-obrazovnim ustanovama prikazani su u priloženim tablicama 1 i 2.

Tablica 1.*Dob ispitanika*

Dob	f	%
> 25 godina	7	4,0
26 – 35 godina	31	17,8
36 – 45 godina	66	37,9
46 – 55 godina	50	28,7
< 55 godina	20	11,5
ukupno	174	100,0

Tablica 2.*Godine radnog iskustva ispitanika*

Godine radnog iskustva u odgojno-obrazovnim ustanovama	f	%
0 – 5 godina	17	9,8
6 – 10 godina	40	23,0
11 – 15 godina	23	13,2
16 – 20 godina	39	22,4
21 – 25 godina	22	12,6
26 – 30 godina	16	9,2
31 – 35 godina	11	6,3
više od 35 godina	6	3,4
ukupno	174	100,0

Istraživanje je provedeno na uzorku odgojitelja djece rane i predškolske dobi, učitelja razredne i predmetne nastave i srednjoškolskih nastavnika u svibnju 2024. godine na području Hrvatske metodom anketiranja koja je provedena *online*. Prikupljeni su podatci analizirani postupcima deskriptivne statistike (postotci, frekvencije, aritmetičke sredine i standardne devijacije). Za potrebe istraživanja izrađen je anketni upitnik. Instrument se sastojao od općih pitanja o ispitanicima (spol, dob, razina obrazovanja, godine radnog iskustva u odgojno-obrazovnim ustanovama, vrsta odgojno-obrazovne ustanove), te od pitanja vezanih za znanja o ESEP platformi i eTwinning projektima. Korištena je i Likertova skala procjene od 1 do 5 (1 – „uopće se ne slažem”; 2 – „djelomično se ne slažem”; 3 – „niti se slažem, niti se ne slažem”; 4 – „djelomično se slažem” i 5 – „u potpunosti se slažem”) za ispitivanje iskustava

vezanih za eTwinning projekte i za ispitivanje stavova o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika.

REZULTATI ISTRAŽIVANJA I RASPRAVA

U prvom dijelu anketnog upitnika ispitivala su se znanja odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika o ESEP platformi. Na osnovi toga postavljena su im sljedeća pitanja: Jesu li čuli za ESEP platformu? Ako da, kako su došli do informacija o ESEP platformi? Jesu li upoznati s platformom i njezinim mogućnostima te upotrebljavaju li mogućnosti komunikacije, suradnje i umrežavanja?

Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da je za ESEP platformu čulo 60,3 % ($f=105$) ispitanika, dok njih 39,7 % ($f=69$) nikad nije čulo za navedenu platformu. Ovakvi rezultati ne iznenađuju s obzirom na to da ESEP platforma postoji tek od 2022. godine te upućuju na potrebu dodatnog informiranja odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika različitim kanalima. U tablici 3 prikazana je usporedba rezultata s obzirom na odgojno-obrazovnu ustanovu u kojoj ispitanici rade.

Tablica 3.

Informiranost o ESEP platformi

Odgojno-obrazovna ustanova u kojoj rade	Čuo/-la sam za ESEP platformu.	Nisam čuo/-la za ESEP platformu.	Ukupno
Dječji vrtić	56,1 % ($f=59$)	65,2 % ($f=45$)	59,8 % ($f=104$)
Osnovna škola	24,8 % ($f=26$)	18,8 % ($f=13$)	22,41 % ($f=39$)
Srednja škola	19 % ($f=20$)	15,9 % ($f=11$)	17,8 % ($f=31$)
Ukupno	60,3 % ($f=105$)	39,7 % ($f=69$)	100 % ($f=174$)

Informaciju o ESEP platformi ispitanici su najčešće dobili od kolega (19 %) i unutar svoje ustanove (17,2 %). Ostatak odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika o ESEP platformi čuli su na stručnom skupu (6,3 %), na internetskim stranicama (12,6 %) i preko društvenih mreža (4,6 %). Manja skupina ispitanika, njih 20,1 %, upoznata je s ESEP platformom i njezinim mogućnostima. Ipak većina ispitanika, njih 48,3 %, navela je kako nije upoznata s ESEP platformom i njezinim mogućnostima, dok je 31,6 % ispitanika upoznato s navedenim samo u određenoj mjeri. U tablici 4 prikazana je usporedba rezultata s obzirom na odgojno-obrazovnu ustanovu u kojoj ispitanici rade.

Tablica 4.

Znanja o ESEP platformi

Odgojno-obrazovna ustanova u kojoj rade	Upoznat/-a sam s ESEP platformom i njezinim mogućnostima.	Nisam upoznat/-a s ESEP platformom i njezinim mogućnostima.	Donekle sam upoznat/-a s ESEP platformom i njezinim mogućnostima.	Ukupno
Dječji vrtić	51,4 % (<i>f</i> = 18)	65,5 % (<i>f</i> = 55)	56,4 % (<i>f</i> = 31)	59,8 % (<i>f</i> = 104)
Osnovna škola	28,5 % (<i>f</i> = 10)	27,8 % (<i>f</i> = 15)	25,5 % (<i>f</i> = 14)	22,41 % (<i>f</i> = 39)
Srednja škola	20 % (<i>f</i> = 7)	20,2 % (<i>f</i> = 14)	18,2 % (<i>f</i> = 10)	17,8 % (<i>f</i> = 31)
Ukupno	20,11 % (<i>f</i> = 35)	48,3 % (<i>f</i> = 84)	31,6 % (<i>f</i> = 55)	100 % (<i>f</i> = 174)

Samo 3,4 % ispitanika navelo je kako se redovito koristi mogućnostima komunikacije, suradnje i umrežavanja putem ESEP platforme navodi, dok se njih 8,6 % koristi povremeno, a 9,8 % rijetko. Većina ispitanika, njih 78,2 %, izjasnila se kako se ipak ne koristi ovim mogućnostima. Komparirajući rezultate, saznali smo da se ispitanici iz osnovnih i srednjih škola češće koriste mogućnostima komunikacije, suradnje i umrežavanja putem ESEP platforme od onih iz dječjih vrtića. To ukazuje na činjenicu da zaposleni u dječjim vrtićima ponešto zaostaju za zaposlenima u osnovnim i srednjim školama. Život u suvremenom dobu omogućuje suradnju i povezivanje s kolegama neovisno o mjestu u bilo kojem trenutku (Cachia i Punie, 2012), ali čini se da odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici ipak nemaju dovoljno znanja o mrežama koje olakšavaju razmjenu znanja i kvalitetne prakse (Leproni, 2023). S obzirom na to da je ESEP platforma sastajalište odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika na svim razinama obrazovanja dostupna i na hrvatskom jeziku te da je besplatna (ESEP, 2024) iznenađuje manjak znanja o njoj te bi valjalo raditi na dodatnom informiranju odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika u Hrvatskoj.

U drugom dijelu anketnog upitnika ispitivala su se znanja odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika o eTwinning projektima. Na osnovi toga postavljena su im sljedeća pitanja: Jesu li čuli za eTwinning projekte? Ako da, kako su došli do informacija o eTwinning projektima i znaju li kako izgleda eTwinning projekt i što sve on uključuje?

Dobiveni rezultati pokazali su da je za eTwinning projekte čulo 94,3 % ispitanika, dok njih 5,7 % nikad nije čulo. Ovaj je rezultat očekivan s obzirom na to da je eTwinning s radom započeo još 2005. godine. U tablici 5 prikazana je usporedba rezultata s obzirom na odgojno-obrazovnu ustanovu u kojoj ispitanici rade.

Tablica 5.*Informiranost o eTwinning projektima*

Odgojno-obrazovna ustanova u kojoj rade	Čuo/-la sam za eTwinning projekte.	Nisam čuo/-la za eTwinning projekte.	Ukupno
Dječji vrtić	59,1 % (<i>f</i> = 97)	70 % (<i>f</i> = 7)	59,8 % (<i>f</i> = 104)
Osnovna škola	23,8 % (<i>f</i> = 39)	0	22,41 % (<i>f</i> = 39)
Srednja škola	17,1 % (<i>f</i> = 28)	30 % (<i>f</i> = 3)	17,8 % (<i>f</i> = 31)
Ukupno	94,6 % (<i>f</i> = 164)	5,7 % (<i>f</i> = 10)	100 % (<i>f</i> = 174)

Informaciju o eTwinning projektima ispitanici su najčešće dobili od kolega (35,1 %) i unutar svoje ustanove (31,6 %). Ostatak odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika o ESEP platformi čuli su na stručnom skupu (11,5 %), zatim na internetskim stranicama (8,6 %) i preko društvenih mreža (4,6 %). Manji broj ispitanika (17,2 %) ne zna kako izgleda eTwinning projekt i što on sve uključuje. Gotovo je podjednak broj ispitanika (42,5 %) koji znaju kako izgleda eTwinning projekt i što on sve uključuje i onih koji su samo donekle upoznati s navedenim (40,2 %). Ustanovljeno je da ispitanici u izrazito visokom postotku posjeduju znanja o eTwinning projektima, a informacije o tome kako izgledaju i što sve uključuju uglavnom su dobili od kolega i unutar vlastitih ustanova. Nisu vidljive značajnije razlike s obzirom na vrstu odgojno-obrazovne ustanove u kojoj ispitanici rade. eTwinning je platforma koja doprinosi učenju odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika i djece korištenjem tehnologije (Özen i Çiray Özkara, 2023) te za cilj ima međunarodnu suradnju i stručno usavršavanje odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika (ESEP, 2024). Svakako ohrabruje činjenica da odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici u Hrvatskoj posjeduju visoku razinu znanja o najvećoj europskoj zajednici praktičara kako je naziva Leproni (2023).

U trećem dijelu anketnog upitnika ispitala su se iskustva eTwinnera o sudjelovanju u eTwinning projektima postavljena su sljedeća pitanja: Jesu li sudjelovali i jesu li osnivači eTwinning projekta? Jesu li dobitnici oznake kvalitete za eTwinning projekt i nosi li ustanova u kojoj rade oznaku eTwinning škole? Također, ispitanicima koji su sudjelovali na eTwinning projektima ponuđena je Likertova skala procjene od 1 do 5 stupnjeva u kojoj je navedeno 19 tvrdnji vezanih za sudjelovanje.

Dobiveni rezultati navode kako je 20,1 % ispitanika sudjelovalo u eTwinning projektu, dok njih 45,4 %, nikada nije sudjelovalo u projektu, iako pripadaju eTwinning zajednici. Još manji broj ispitanika, njih 5,7 %, sebe je navelo kao osnivača bar jednog eTwinning projekta. Preostalih 59,2 % ispitanika nikada nije pokrenulo vlastiti eTwinning projekt. Ukupan je postotak eTwinnera koji su dobili oznaku kvalitete za projekt u kojem su sudjelovali 10,3 %. Njih 54 % nikada nije

dobilo oznaku kvalitete za projekt. Usporedbom dobivenih rezultata s vrstom odgojno-obrazovne ustanove može se zaključiti da su dobitnici oznake kvalitete za eTwinning projekt najrjeđe ispitanici iz dječjih vrtića. Također, 21,8 % ispitanika navodi da ustanova u kojoj rade nosi oznaku eTwinning škole, dok preostalih 43,1 % ne radi u ustanovi s oznakom eTwinning škole. S obzirom na dobivene rezultate zaključujemo da ispitanici iz predškolskih odgojno-obrazovnih ustanova zaostaju u iskustvima eTwinning projekata u odnosu na one iz osnovnih i srednjih škola.

Rangirajući dobivene rezultate prema stupnju slaganja, vidljivo je najveće slaganje s tvrdnjom da umrežavanje ima puno više prednosti nego nedostataka. Nadalje, veliko slaganje ispitanika vidljivo je, također, u tvrdnji da eTwinning promovira idealiziranu predodžbu odgojno-obrazovnog djelatnika kao osobe koja je ujedno i dobar projektni radnik. Ispitanici također pokazuju veće neslaganje po pitanju težine pronalaska partnera za eTwinning suradnju, što ukazuje na to da imaju suprotna iskustva, kao i po pitanju otežane suradnje, s obzirom na pripadnost različitim odgojno-obrazovnim sustavima. Veće slaganje ispitanika uočeno je i kod tvrdnje da su odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici voljni učiti što čini suradnju lakšom.

Tablica 6.

Iskustva eTwinnera

Tvrdnje	N	Min.	Maks.	M	SD
Umrežavanje ima puno više prednosti nego nedostataka.	75	1,00	5,00	3,75	1,25
Komunikacija među partnerima bila je kvalitetna.	77	1,00	5,00	3,70	1,17
Lako je surađivati s odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima jer su voljni učiti.	75	1,00	5,00	3,65	1,12
Komunikacija s partnerima tijekom projekta pozitivno je utjecala na razvoj njihovih komunikacijskih vještina.	78	1,00	5,00	3,64	1,16
Međunarodno umrežavanje bit će neophodno za buduće odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike.	76	1,00	5,00	3,63	1,23
Sudjelovanje u eTwinning projektu pozitivno je utjecalo na moje odnose s drugim odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima.	76	1,00	5,00	3,48	1,37
Suradnja tijekom eTwinning projekta bila je dobra.	75	1,00	5,00	3,44	1,28
eTwinning promovira idealiziranu predodžbu odgojno-obrazovnog djelatnika izjednačavajući dobrog učitelja/odgojitelja s dobrim projektnim radnikom koji je uvijek spreman i voljan pridružiti se ili započeti projekt.	76	1,00	5,00	3,43	1,08

Tablica 6. (nastavak)

Tvrđnje	N	Min.	Maks.	M	SD
Umrežavanje kroz eTwinning projekt dalo mi je nove ideje i obogatilo je moj rad s djecom.	75	1,00	5,00	3,41	1,42
Sudjelovanje u eTwinning projektu utjecalo je na razvoj mojih vještina komunikacije na stranom (engleskom) jeziku.	75	1,00	5,00	3,38	1,32
Sudjelovanje u eTwinning projektu dio je mog kontinuiranog profesionalnog usavršavanja.	76	1,00	5,00	3,38	1,40
eTwinning promovira neprekidno i nedostižno usavršavanje kroz projekte pa sam učitelj/odgojitelj postaje projekt.	76	1,00	5,00	3,30	1,23
Radom na eTwinning projektu umrežio/-la sam se s kolegama iz različitih država.	74	1,00	5,00	3,29	1,35
Komunicirajući s partnerima dobio/-la sam predodžbu o odgojno-obrazovnim sustavima u različitim državama Europe.	75	1,00	5,00	3,29	1,32
Digitalna kompetencija jedna je od glavnih kompetencija koju sam unaprijedio/-la sudjelujući u eTwinningu.	75	1,00	5,00	3,25	1,36
Lakše je umrežiti se na platformi nego u svom okruženju.	76	1,00	5,00	3,21	1,20
Bilo je teško pronaći partnere za suradnju u eTwinning projektu.	75	1,00	5,00	2,68	1,10
Suradnja je bila otežana zbog činjenice da radimo u različitim odgojno-obrazovnim sustavima.	74	1,00	5,00	2,40	1,12
Suradnja je bila otežana zbog kulturoloških razlika.	74	1,00	5,00	2,32	1,18
valjani N	72				

Usporedbom odgovora ispitanika iz različitih odgojno-obrazovnih ustanova pokazalo se da su ispitanici iz dječjih vrtića manje sudjelovali i kreirali eTwinning projekte u odnosu na ispitanike iz osnovnih i srednjih škola. Ta je razlika vidljiva i kod dobivanja oznake kvalitete za eTwinning projekt, kao i kod oznake eTwinning škole koju njihova ustanova nosi. Na osnovi uvida u rezultate vezane za skalu procjene iskustava eTwinnera može se zaključiti da se njihova iskustva međusobno uvelike razlikuju. Zanimljivo je primijetiti da je postignuto najveće slaganje ispitanika s tvrdnjom da umrežavanje ima puno više prednosti nego nedostataka. Također, veliko slaganje ispitanika vidljivo je s tvrdnjom da eTwinning promovira idealiziranu predodžbu odgojno-obrazovnog

djelatnika kao osobe koja je ujedno i dobar projektni radnik. Ovo može ukazivati na razumijevanje odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika da je obrazovni rad samo dio odgojno-obrazovnog procesa, ali i na činjenicu da prema riječima kritičara živimo u „projektnom društvu” koje kroz projekte oblikuje ono što radimo i kako to radimo, uključujući i odgojno-obrazovne procese (Jensen i sur., 2016, prema Lewis i Decuyper, 2023, str. 24).

U četvrtom dijelu anketnog upitnika ispitivali su se općenito stavovi o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju. Analizom dobivenih rezultata putem skale procjene o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju vidljivo je najveće slaganje s tvrdnjom da je za ostvarivanje suradnje nužno ostvariti kvalitetnu komunikaciju. Ne iznenađuje ni visoko slaganje s važnošću povratne informacije u kvalitetnoj komunikaciji kao i neophodnost razvijenih komunikacijskih vještina u odgojno-obrazovnom radu. Najniže slaganje uočeno je kod tvrdnje o izoliranosti u vlastitoj ustanovi, iako se iz visoke vrijednosti standardne devijacije može prepoznati da su po tom pitanju ispitanici imali suprotstavljene stavove. Nisko slaganje prepoznaje se i kod tvrdnji vezanih za isključivu suradnju putem platforme, izazovnost korištenja digitalnih alata i komunikacije na stranim jezicima te zahtjevnost međukulturalne komunikacije. Zanimljivo je primijetiti da ne postoje ispitanici koji su izrazili potpuno neslaganje po pitanju kooperativnog učenja i timskog rada kao preduvjetima za uspjeh u 21. stoljeću, kao i po prihvaćanju novih tehnologija i mogućnosti povezivanja. Također niti jedan ispitanik nije naveo da se uopće ne slaže s tvrdnjom da je u suvremenom društvu nužno znati komunicirati na stranim jezicima, kao i da kvalitetu odgojno-obrazovne prakse određuje spremnost za cjeloživotno učenje. Izostanak potpunog neslaganja s navedenim tvrdnjama ukazuje na opću prihvaćenost istih što bi se moglo i pretpostaviti s obzirom na uzorak ispitanika.

Tablica 7.

Stavovi o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju

Tvrdnje	N	Min.	Maks.	M	SD
Kvalitetna je komunikacija nužna za suradnju.	174	3,00	5,00	4,86	0,40
Nema kvalitetne komunikacije bez povratne informacije.	174	3,00	5,00	4,77	0,50
Odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici moraju imati razvijene komunikacijske vještine.	174	1,00	5,00	4,73	0,61
Kvalitetna suradnja svih uključenih u odgojno-obrazovni proces nužna je za zdravo okruženje u kojem se dijete razvija.	174	1,00	5,00	4,71	0,64
Put prema kvalitetnijoj odgojno-obrazovnoj praksi određen je spremnošću pojedinca za cjeloživotno učenje.	174	2,00	5,00	4,48	0,74

Tablica 7. (nastavak)

Tvrđnje	N	Min.	Maks.	M	SD
Za uspješnu komunikaciju od presudne je važnosti razumijevanje i osjetljivost na kontekst koji se razlikuje od vlastitog.	174	1,00	5,00	4,48	0,70
Kooperativno učenje, timski rad i suradnja bit će nužni u poslovima budućnosti i preduvjeti za uspjeh u 21. stoljeću.	174	2,00	5,00	4,47	0,71
Odgajno-obrazovni djelatnici trebaju biti dionici pozitivnih društvenih promjena prihvaćajući nove tehnologije i mogućnosti povezivanja.	174	2,00	5,00	4,45	0,74
U suvremenom društvu nužno je znati komunicirati na stranim jezicima.	174	2,00	5,00	4,42	0,71
Od umrežavanja koristi imaju i odgajno-obrazovni djelatnici i djeca.	174	1,00	5,00	4,29	0,84
Umrežavanje ima važnu ulogu u obrazovanju jer pruža strukturu za profesionalno usavršavanje.	174	1,00	5,00	4,17	0,86
Mreže su organizacijska rješenja za različitost i kompleksnost obrazovnih potreba.	174	1,00	5,00	3,94	0,91
Najzahtjevniji i najteži oblik interpersonalne komunikacije međukulturalna je komunikacija.	174	1,00	5,00	3,87	0,94
Suradnja na platformi izazovna je jer uključuje upotrebu digitalnih alata i komunikaciju na stranom jeziku.	174	1,00	5,00	3,86	1,05
Teško je surađivati isključivo preko platforme.	174	1,00	5,00	3,69	1,02
Često se osjećam izolirano u svojoj ustanovi.	174	1,00	5,00	2,53	1,27
Valjani N	174				

Stavovi odgajno-obrazovnih djelatnika o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju s drugim odgajno-obrazovnim djelatnicima su prilično ujednačeni, što se može zaključiti na osnovi dobivenih aritmetičkih sredina, a bez većih vrijednosti standardnih devijacija za navedene tvrdnje. Manja odstupanja vezana su samo za isključivu suradnju preko platforme i izazove upotrebe digitalnih alata i komunikacije na stranom jeziku. Ovi rezultati ne iznenađuju te se podudaraju s tvrdnjom Carolla i Restae (2010, prema Cachia i Punie, 2012) da su odgajno-obrazovni djelatnici jednom nogom u budućnosti, dok im je druga ostala u prošlosti. Najveće razilaženje ispitanika dogodilo se vezano uz tvrdnju da se osjećaju izolirano u svojoj ustanovi, što je u suprotnosti s nalazima istraživanja Gatta, Pereira Cunha i Costae (2009, prema Cachia i

Punie, 2012), što se može protumačiti nizom faktora koji nisu nužno vezani za suradnju s kolegama.

U zaključku treba istaknuti važnost kvalitetne komunikacije i neophodnost razvijenih komunikacijskih vještina u odgojno-obrazovnom radu što potvrđuju i nalazi ovog istraživanja. Kvalitetna komunikacija je nužna za suradnju i umrežavanje, a preduvjeti za ostvarivanje učinkovite komunikacije su: poznavanje jezika, posjedovanje interakcijskih vještina i kulturno znanje (Miljković i Rijavec, 2002) te u novije vrijeme i znanja vezana za e-komunikaciju koja predstavlja suvremeni oblik komunikacije (Jurković, 2012). Iako se često misli da je uspješna komunikacija pravilo, pogotovo u odgojno-obrazovnim krugovima, dobra je komunikacija iznimka (Miljković i Rijavec, 2002), stoga je prijeko potrebno raditi na razvijanju komunikacijskih vještina u svim oblicima.

ZAKLJUČAK

Komunikacija, suradnja i umrežavanje odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika dio su pedagoške kulture suradnje koja je određena vrijednostima inkluzije, integracije i interakcije, što su ujedno i vrijednosti ESEP platforme koja za cilj ima poboljšanje kvalitete obrazovanja u Europi. Također, pristup i upotreba digitalnih tehnologija može pomoći u smanjivanju obrazovnog jaza između različitih socioekonomskih okruženja. Ustanove odgojno-obrazovnog karaktera, koje su ujedno i komunikacijske mreže, danas imaju jedinstvene mogućnosti komuniciranja, surađivanja i umrežavanja na platformama kao što je ESEP, a koje su im dostupnije nego ikada prije u prošlosti.

Globalizacijski trendovi i suvremeni način života pred odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike stavljaju brojne izazove poput e-komunikacije, komunikacije na stranim jezicima, međukulturalne komunikacije, kooperativnog učenja, timskog rada i upotrebe digitalnih alata u komunikaciji. Sve navedeno od odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika traži spremnost za cjeloživotno učenje radi ostvarivanja kvalitetne odgojno-obrazovne prakse u kontekstu suvremenog društva. ESEP platforma i njezin dio eTwinning pokušavaju doskočiti izazovima sutrašnjice potičući odgojno-obrazovne djelatnike na dijeljenje iskustava i prikaza dobre prakse te na razmjenu ideja. Prihvaćajući nove tehnologije i mogućnosti povezivanja, odgojno-obrazovni djelatnici postaju dionici pozitivnih društvenih promjena u svojim sredinama jer stvaraju prilike za kontinuirani razvoj svih kompetencija i dječjih i vlastitih.

Nakon provedenog istraživanja, kojem je cilj bio utvrditi znanja i iskustva ispitanika vezano za ESEP platformu i eTwinning projekte te stavove o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju, pokazalo se da više od polovine ispitanika ima znanja o ESEP platformi, dok ispitanici u izrazito visokom postotku posjeduju znanja o eTwinning projektima neovisno o tome u kojoj vrsti odgojno-obrazovne ustanove rade. Informacije o ESEP platformi i eTwinning

projektima uglavnom su dobili od kolega i unutar vlastitih ustanova. Po pitanju poznavanja mogućnosti koje platforma nudi i korištenja tim mogućnostima, taj je postotak značajno manji te je vidljivo da zaposleni u dječjim vrtićima ponešto zaostaju za zaposlenima u osnovnim i srednjim školama. Još veća razlika u rezultatima među ustanovama pokazala se u sudjelovanju i kreiranju eTwinning projekata, kao i kod dobivanja oznake kvalitete za eTwinning projekte te oznake eTwinning škole koja se dodjeljuje ustanovama. Na osnovi uvida u rezultate vezane za skalu procjene iskustava eTwinnera može se zaključiti da se njihova iskustva međusobno uvelike razlikuju, za razliku od stavova odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika o komunikaciji, suradnji i umrežavanju s drugim odgojno-obrazovnim djelatnicima, koji su prilično ujednačeni. U zaključku treba istaknuti važnost kvalitetne komunikacije i neophodnost razvijenih komunikacijskih vještina u odgojno-obrazovnom radu, što potvrđuju i nalazi provedenog istraživanja.

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COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, AND NETWORKING THROUGH THE ESEP

Abstract: *The European School Education Platform (ESEP) serves as a hub for interaction, collaboration, and networking among educational professionals, aiming to increase the quality of education across Europe. A study conducted in Croatia involved a sample of 174 participants. An online structured questionnaire was designed for the research. The primary objective was to examine the knowledge, experiences, and attitudes of educational professionals in preschools, primary, and secondary schools in Croatia regarding the ESEP and eTwinning projects. Data analysis revealed that over half of the respondents were familiar with the ESEP, whereas a significant majority demonstrated substantial knowledge of eTwinning projects, regardless of the type of educational institution in which they worked. Findings related to the evaluation scale of eTwinners' experiences indicate considerable variability in their experiences. Globalization trends and the demands of modern life present numerous challenges for educational professionals, necessitating their commitment to lifelong learning, with a particular focus on enhancing communication and digital skills.*

Keywords: *eTwinning, communication, preschools, schools*

INTRODUCTION

Given the globalization trends accompanying the evolution of modern society, education must align with the realities of digital transformation. It is imperative to develop resources accessible to all educational professionals, enabling them to strengthen their digital skills and competencies while keeping pace with emerging educational trends. In the context of contemporary society, characterized by processes of European integration, dynamic development, and the growing significance of digital media, online content, including various educational platforms, has become an essential tool for connecting educators across different cultures and institutions. Accordingly, this study focuses on communication, collaboration, and networking through the European School Education Platform (ESEP). The motivation for exploring this area lies in the scarcity of studies and research in Croatia addressing collaborative online networks that connect educational professionals across Europe. The first part of the paper provides a brief overview of scientific insights related to communication, collaboration, and networking, with an emphasis on the ESEP and its eTwinning projects. This is followed by a presentation and analysis of the results obtained from a study investigating the knowledge and experiences of educational professionals concerning the ESEP and eTwinning projects, including their attitudes toward communication, collaboration, and networking. The scientific contribution of this paper is significant, as no similar research has been conducted in Croatia, even though Croatian educational professionals are active members of the eTwinning community and recipients of numerous quality labels for their participation in eTwinning projects. This topic is approached with the hope that, in addition to its research value, this paper will provide practical benefits for educational professionals in preschools, primary, and secondary schools.

COMMUNICATION, NETWORKING, AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Communication is a process in which shared content is created between a source and a recipient through the exchange of various symbols (Antolović & Sviličić, 2020). The precondition for initiating communication is the need for it, meaning there must be a purpose in the form of a message to be conveyed (Jurković, 2012). Successful communication is characterized by the highest possible alignment of meaning between the sent and received messages (Rouse & Rouse, 2005). Jurković (2012) identifies four primary types of communication: oral, written, contact (nonverbal), and e-communication. Electronic communication, or e-communication, represents a modern form of interaction that increasingly replaces traditional communication, leveraging information and communication technology through electronic means. Every organization,

including those in the educational sector, functions as a communication network where information is exchanged to achieve specific outcomes (Jurković, 2012). The accessibility and convenience of e-communication make it indispensable in modern society, playing a critical role in international collaboration by enabling faster and more efficient interactions among individuals and organizations. Interpersonal communication on an intercultural level poses a significant challenge for individuals, offering a competitive advantage in their professional field (Antolović & Sviličić, 2020). Intercultural awareness is a cognitive component of intercultural communication competence, encompassing the ability to recognize similarities and differences between cultures (Gulbay, 2022). Effective intercultural communication requires specific knowledge and skills, including sensitivity to and understanding of contexts distinct from one's own (Rouse & Rouse, 2005).

The importance of interaction, collaboration, and cooperation in educational practice is consistently emphasized. Quality collaboration among all participants in the educational process is essential for fostering a healthy environment in which children can develop (Srok & Skočić Mihić, 2012). While parents and educators play distinct yet complementary roles in the educational process (Ličanin, 2023), the harmonious integration of family and institutional education results from strong collaborative relationships (Strelec, 2023). The path to improved educational practices is shaped by individuals' readiness for lifelong learning. Greene (1996, as cited in Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2009) highlights cooperative learning, teamwork, and collaboration as essential activities for success in the 21st century. Accordingly, new strategies are needed to promote quality in educational processes. Indicators of quality related to interpersonal relationships are often linked to cooperative learning, which fosters affirmation, communication, and collaboration (Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2009). Educators should embrace new technologies and opportunities for networking to support lifelong learning and continuously enhance their practices (Zorić-Beslema, 2013). The processes of globalization and European integration present significant challenges to education systems at all levels (Gehrmann, 2008). Addressing these challenges necessitates coordination and the establishment of reform strategies for national systems, which, in turn, requires international collaboration (Gehrmann, 2008). Achieving shared educational goals based on principles of competitiveness, tolerance, inclusivity, and democracy fosters coordination (Puljiz & Živčić, 2009, as cited in Baketa, 2012). These goals, set by the EU Council, aim to achieve prosperity and progress through lifelong learning, relying on knowledge sharing among member states (Baketa, 2012).

Networking plays a vital role in education by providing a framework for the professional development of educators and integrating the fragmented field of lifelong learning. Networks can be seen as organizational solutions to address the diversity and complexity of educational needs (Bienzle et al., 2007, as cited

in Cachia & Punie, 2012). Professional development refers to activities that enable educators to enhance their work in educational institutions (Little, 1987, as cited in Kostas & Ioannidou, 2023). Networks serve as essential channels for communication and collaboration, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and best practices (Leproni, 2023). Education in postmodern societies is characterized by flexibility, democratic principles, and the inclusion of individuals and diverse social groups in the educational process (Kostas & Ioannidou, 2023). Networks developed by future educators can provide support, mentoring, and access to scientifically validated practices and resources (Carroll & Resta, 2010, as cited in Cachia & Punie, 2012). Educators should ensure learning experiences that emphasize innovation and creativity, values increasingly highlighted in modern societies (Cachia et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2011, as cited in Cachia & Punie, 2012).

Although substantial research addresses the future of learning and educators' roles, little attention is given to their collaboration through networking (Cachia & Punie, 2012). Cachia and Punie (2012) note that educators view information and communication networks positively to improve the quality of their work and express a strong desire for greater collaboration with peers, especially across cultures and nations. The concept of learning communities among educators or students emphasizes fostering a sense of belonging and establishing shared goals (Leproni, 2023). Networks are characterized by inclusion, integration, and interaction, aiming to create environments that embrace diversity and promote meaningful participation (Leproni, 2023). Through collaborative projects, educators can encourage local communities to address global challenges (Leproni, 2023). Such networks cultivate a sense of responsibility for sustainable development and a shared future.

THE EUROPEAN SCHOOL EDUCATION PLATFORM

The European School Education Platform (ESEP) was launched in 2022 as a free, multilingual platform that connects and supports education professionals across all levels of education, from early childhood education and care to primary, secondary, and initial vocational education and training. The platform unifies previous platforms such as eTwinning, School Education Gateway, and Teacher Academy into a single entity. Funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme for education and training and supported by partner organizations, ESEP is an initiative of the European Commission. The platform offers a wide range of resources, including reports on recent research, examples of good practices, educational materials developed through European projects, and a variety of tools for schools, as well as a self-assessment instrument. Another key feature of the platform is its free online courses, seminars, and teaching materials available via the EU Academy for professional development.

ESEP is available in 30 languages, including Croatian (ESEP, 2024). As Howell (2010, cited in Acar & Peker, 2021) states, such online learning communities provide valuable opportunities for the professional development of education staff. Acar and Peker (2021) suggest that using a platform positively influences educators' perceptions of pedagogy, technology, professional development, innovative practices, and lifelong learning.

eTWINNING

eTwinning embodies a methodology, pedagogical approach, a community of practitioners, and a platform that enables innovation, communication, and collaboration (ESEP, 2022, as cited in Horvat, 2022, p. 124). Zhu et al. (2013, as cited in Giannis, 2022) view eTwinning as a tool for advancing innovative teaching methods through the development of educational, social, and technological competencies, which place the transformation of education at the global level at its core. Networks such as eTwinning undoubtedly contribute to accelerating educational changes and spreading pedagogical innovations at a systemic level (Kostas & Ioannidou, 2023). The goal of eTwinning is to strengthen international collaboration and professional development among educators registered on the platform. The eTwinning community is funded by national support services – the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMPEU) from Erasmus+ funds, based on a grant agreement from the European Executive Agency for Education and Culture (ESEP, 2024). AMPEU plays a key role in disseminating information, organizing conferences, competitions, training workshops, and supporting educators at all levels of involvement (Pietrzak, 2009). eTwinning, which started as a local initiative, now represents a community of 1,053,000 educators from 233,000 educational institutions across over 40 countries (ESEP, 2024). Leproni (2023) refers to it as the largest European community of practitioners. The primary aim of this community is to foster interaction and collaboration between children and educators through participation in joint virtual projects via a secure digital platform.

Through communication, collaboration, and joint project work, registered members of the eTwinning community exchange knowledge, ideas, and experiences, enriching their work with children. Furthermore, educators gain insights into how education functions in other countries, becoming familiar with curricula, values, and principles applied in their work with children (Horvat, 2022). Crisan (2013) states that the ultimate goal is to improve the quality of education in Europe through collaboration and the exchange of ideas, while Dominguez-Miguela (2007, as cited in Huertas-Abril & Palacios-Hidalgo, 2023) identifies six key objectives of eTwinning: networking European schools, encouraging educators and children to participate in projects, fostering the European dimension in education, raising awareness of multilingualism

and multiculturalism in European society, enhancing intercultural dialogue and understanding, and supporting the professional and digital skills development of educators.

Recently, the concept of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) has appeared in the literature. Rubin (2017, as cited in Huertas-Abril & Palacios-Hidalgo, 2023) defines this concept as an innovative educational approach that uses modern technology to mediate intercultural interactions and collaborative learning between children and educators from different countries, promoting global understanding. eTwinning can be considered one of the prominent COIL initiatives (Huertas-Abril & Palacios-Hidalgo, 2023). Vuorikari (2010, as cited in Cachia & Punie, 2012) describes eTwinners as innovators, individuals capable and willing to engage in international collaboration via Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The desire to meet personal needs within the educational process often sparks the need for collaboration with others (Başari & Ada, 2023).

The digitalization of all aspects of life and the rise of the internet have significantly impacted educators' work. Educators in Europe believe that the use of ICT tools has positively affected their work, with 85% of respondents indicating that they use various ICT models in their teaching practices (Cachia, Ferrari, Ala-Mutka & Punie, 2010, as cited in Cachia & Punie, 2012). Regarding skills, the respondents report that digital competence is one of the main competencies they have developed through eTwinning participation. Following closely behind is cultural competence, which has been enhanced by using online tools that allow users to virtually meet and design collaborative projects via the platform. The further development of interpersonal skills, such as communication, collaboration, and time management, is another positive outcome of eTwinning participation. When the collaboration is international, the development of foreign language communication skills is also noteworthy (Cachia & Punie, 2012). Cachia and Punie (2012) observe that a smaller number of respondents also report improved management skills, such as leadership, initiative-taking, support provision, and team coordination. Given all these benefits, educators who are also eTwinners express a desire to expand the eTwinning network and increase its user base. Despite the significant growth in the number of users in recent years, the number remains symbolic compared with the overall population of educators in Europe. Schön (1983, as cited in Leproni, 2023, p. 125) introduces the concept of the "reflective practitioner" in the educational context, emphasizing the need for professionals to reflect on their actions as they occur. By participating in ongoing reflection, educators have the opportunity to adjust their practices in real time, resulting in continuous progress and improvement of pedagogical outcomes (Leproni, 2023). eTwinning projects provide educators with opportunities to implement this practice.

eTWINNING PROJECTS

By participating in eTwinning projects, educational professionals engage in situational and informal learning, acquiring new skills and competencies within the context of their daily work (Nucci, Tosi & Pettenati Carocci, 2021). Zandravelli (2017; cited in Kostas & Ioannidou, 2023), following the research results, concludes that educators strengthen their existing formal education through this informal learning, adopting collaborative and self-regulated learning methods within a community context. Additionally, they capitalize on what they have learned in their daily work with children, thus continuing their professional development and self-education, leading to greater job satisfaction (Kostas & Ioannidou, 2023).

A precondition for ensuring a high-quality learning environment for children and the development of their potential is the continuous enhancement of the knowledge, skills, and competencies of educators (Horvat, 2022). The National Curriculum for Early Childhood and Preschool Education (2015: 29) states that “the readiness of educators and other professionals in preschools to embrace new forms of professional learning involves an ongoing process of research and collaborative learning among all professionals in the institution”. Professional development for educators includes the continuous development of all competencies and readiness for lifelong learning (Slunjski et al., 2006; cited in Horvat, 2022). The challenges of modern times demand the development of a diverse range of competencies. For educators, these include: developing new, modern strategies for planning educational processes, improving digital skills and using information technology, communicating in foreign languages, fostering intercultural understanding, and cultivating initiative and entrepreneurship through the ability to plan and manage projects (Horvat, 2022).

The 2019 eTwinning report reveals a connection between participation in eTwinning projects and the development of educators’ skills and professional practices (Horvat, 2022). A survey of 10,000 eTwinners revealed development in areas such as project-based learning, improving the technological knowledge essential for educational work, collaboration with other educational professionals, and the ability to select optimal teaching strategies (Horvat, 2022). Crisan (2013) reports findings indicating that eTwinning facilitates the transfer of knowledge from other educational systems (87%), strengthens the sense of belonging to the professional community (85%), supports educators in taking on more significant roles in working with students (72%), and links the formal curriculum with engaging and motivating educational activities (85%). Regarding continuous professional development, as many as 90% of respondents indicated that collaborative educational projects were the most significant factor, and 89% mentioned close collaboration with educators

from other countries for cultural exchange and language skills improvement. Furthermore, 81% of the respondents reported improved relationships with other educators within their institution and across institutions, as well as the implementation of collaborative activities or experience exchanges after participating in eTwinning. Another benefit of participating in eTwinning projects is the opportunity for educators to critically reflect on their pedagogical practices and consider the implicit pedagogy concerning children. These moments arise because they have connected with other practitioners from different parts of Europe, thus encountering various approaches to education and raising awareness of cultural differences and similarities (Horvat, 2022).

It is noteworthy that collaboration within this professional development network is characterized by greater synergy and cooperation than collaboration that occurs within individual institutions (Bettini, 2021). Bettini (2021) observes that this difference stems from a greater readiness to provide mutual support, as relationships within the eTwinning community tend to be more symmetrical than those within institutions. Additionally, respondents noted that better collaboration resulted from the quality of interpersonal relationships formed among eTwinners and the mutual recognition of each other's competencies (Bettini, 2021). This is further confirmed by Hargreaves (1998; cited in Bettini, 2021), who suggests that the emotional dimension of relationships among colleagues can be crucial in the process of co-constructing and enhancing their professional identity. International projects within eTwinning increase the number of interactions and establish communication among partners, which influences the development of intercultural perspectives (İzgi Onbaşılı, 2022). Collaborative tasks in projects foster not only professional skills but also teamwork, considering various perspectives and suggestions from international partners (Tonner-Saunders & Shimi, 2021; cited in İzgi Onbaşılı, 2022).

Outstanding projects may receive the eTwinning European Award and become part of the project gallery. The European Quality Label (EQL) is an internationally recognized distinction for work on an eTwinning project, acknowledging the fulfillment of specific quality criteria (Giannis, 2022). It is awarded to educational professionals for their project work and reflects emerging trends in assessing the quality of educational processes (Young, 2012; Papadimitriou & Niari, 2017; cited in Giannis, 2022). Interestingly, Croatia has the highest number of EQLs awarded among 44 countries (140 EQLs per million people), followed by Turkey with 70, and North Macedonia with 58 (Giannis, 2022). The versatility, flexibility, interculturality, multilingualism, skill development, innovation, professional development, collaboration, broadening horizons, and networking of educational professionals at the European level underscore the importance of eTwinning in the education of generations of educators and children alike (İzgi Onbaşılı, 2022).

AIMS OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of this research is to determine whether educators in preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools in Croatia know about the ESEP and eTwinning projects. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the experiences of eTwinners and how they assess communication, collaboration, and networking with other educational professionals across Europe. Additionally, the study seeks to examine educators' attitudes toward communication, collaboration, and networking.

Based on the research aim, the following research questions were formulated: Do educators in Croatia possess knowledge of the ESEP? If so, how did they acquire this knowledge, and are they using it in communication, collaboration, and networking with other educational professionals in Europe? Do educators in Croatia know about eTwinning projects, and if so, how did they acquire this knowledge? What are the experiences of eTwinners related to creating and participating in eTwinning projects? What are educators' attitudes toward communication, collaboration, and networking with other educational professionals?

METHODOLOGY

The empirical research was conducted on a sample of 174 participants, including 168 women (96.6%) and 6 men (3.4%). Regarding their workplace, 104 (59.8%) educational professionals were from preschools, 39 (22.4%) from primary schools, and 31 (17.8%) from secondary schools. A total of 93 (53.4%) participants held a higher education degree, while 81 (46.6%) had a higher vocational education degree. The age of the participants and their years of work experience in educational institutions are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1.

Age of Participants

Age group	f	%
> 25 years	7	4,0
26 – 35 years	31	17,8
36 – 45 years	66	37,9
46 – 55 years	50	28,7
< 55 years	20	11,5
Total	174	100,0

Table 2.*Years of Work Experience in Educational Institutions*

Years of Experience in Educational Institutions	f	%
0 – 5 years	17	9.8
6 – 10 years	40	23.0
11 – 15 years	23	13.2
16 – 20 years	39	22.4
21 – 25 years	22	12.6
26 – 30 years	16	9.2
31 – 35 years	11	6.3
More than 35 years	6	3.4
Total	174	100.0

The research was conducted in May 2024 on a sample of early childhood educators, primary and secondary school teachers in Croatia via an online survey method. The collected data were analyzed via descriptive statistical procedures (percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations). For the purposes of this research, a questionnaire was developed. The instrument consisted of general demographic questions (gender, age, level of education, years of work experience in educational institutions, type of educational institution), as well as questions related to knowledge of the ESEP and eTwinning projects. A Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 was used to assess experiences related to eTwinning projects and opinions about communication, collaboration, and networking among educational professionals. The scale values were as follows: 1 – “Strongly disagree”; 2 – “Disagree”; 3 – “Neither agree nor disagree”; 4 – “Agree”; 5 – “Strongly agree”.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first section of the questionnaire examined the knowledge of educational staff regarding ESEP. Based on this, the following questions were posed: Have they heard of the ESEP? If yes, how did they come across information about the platform? Are they familiar with the platform and its features, and do they utilize the communication, collaboration, and networking opportunities it offers?

The results indicated that 60.3% (f=105) of the respondents were aware of the ESEP, while 39.7% (f=69) had never heard of it. These results are not surprising considering that the ESEP has only been in existence since 2022, highlighting the need for additional informational outreach to educational professionals through various channels. Table 3 presents a comparison of the results based on the type of educational institution where the respondents work.

Table 3.*Awareness of the ESEP*

Educational Institution	Heard of the ESEP	Never Heard of the ESEP	Total
Preschool	56.1% (f=59)	65.2% (f=45)	59.8% (f=104)
Primary School	24.8% (f=26)	18.8% (f=13)	22.4% (f=39)
Secondary School	19% (f=20)	15.9% (f=11)	17.8% (f=31)
Total	60.3% (f=105)	39.7% (f=69)	100% (f=174)

Information about the ESEP was most frequently obtained by respondents from colleagues (19%) and within their institution (17.2%). A smaller portion learned about it during professional conferences (6.3%), on websites (12.6%), and through social media (4.6%). A group of 20.1% of respondents indicated that they were familiar with the platform and its capabilities. However, the majority, 48.3%, stated that they were not familiar with the platform and its features, while 31.6% were somewhat familiar. Table 4 presents a comparison of the results based on the type of educational institution.

Table 4.*Knowledge of the ESEP*

Educational Institution	Fully Familiar with ESEP and Its Features	Not Familiar with ESEP and Its Features	Somewhat Familiar with ESEP and Its Features	Total
Preschool	51.4% (f=18)	65.5% (f=55)	56.4% (f=31)	59.8% (f=104)
Primary School	28.5% (f=10)	27.8% (f=15)	25.5% (f=14)	22.4% (f=39)
Secondary School	20% (f=7)	20.2% (f=14)	18.2% (f=10)	17.8% (f=31)
Total	20.1% (f=35)	48.3% (f=84)	31.6% (f=55)	100% (f=174)

Only 3.4% of the respondents indicated that they regularly use the communication, collaboration, and networking features of the ESEP, while 8.6% use them occasionally, and 9.8% rarely use them. The majority of the respondents (78.2%) stated that they do not use these features. A comparison of the results revealed that respondents from primary and secondary schools more frequently utilize the communication, collaboration, and networking features of the ESEP than those from preschools do. This suggests that employees in

preschools lag behind those in primary and secondary schools. The modern era enables collaboration and networking with colleagues anytime and anywhere (Cachia & Punie, 2012), but it seems that educational professionals still lack sufficient knowledge about networks that facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices (Leproni, 2023). Given that the ESEP serves as a meeting point for educational professionals at all levels of education, is available in Croatia, and is free of charge (ESEP, 2024), the lack of awareness is surprising. This emphasizes the need for further efforts to inform educational professionals in Croatia.

The second section of the questionnaire focused on the knowledge of educational staff regarding eTwinning projects. Based on this, the following questions were posed: Have they heard of eTwinning projects? If yes, how did they come across information about eTwinning projects, and do they know what an eTwinning project entails?

The results showed that 94.3% of the respondents had heard of eTwinning projects, while 5.7% had never heard of them. This result is expected given that eTwinning was established in 2005. Table 5 presents a comparison of the results based on the type of educational institution.

Table 5.

Awareness of eTwinning Projects

Educational Institution	Heard of eTwinning Projects	Never Heard of eTwinning Projects	Total
Preschool	59.1% (f=97)	70% (f=7)	59.8% (f=104)
Primary School	23.8% (f=39)	0	22.4% (f=39)
Secondary School	17.1% (f=28)	30% (f=3)	17.8% (f=31)
Total	94.6% (f=164)	5.7% (f=10)	100% (f=174)

Information about eTwinning projects was most frequently obtained from colleagues (35.1%) and within their institution (31.6%). A smaller portion learned about it during professional conferences (11.5%), on websites (8.6%), and through social media (4.6%). A smaller group, 17.2%, was unaware of what an eTwinning project entails. Approximately equal proportions of respondents (42.5%) were either fully familiar with what an eTwinning project involves or only somewhat familiar (40.2%). It was found that respondents generally possess a high level of knowledge regarding eTwinning projects, with information about their content and structure acquired mainly from colleagues and within their institutions. There were no significant differences based on the type of educational institution. eTwinning is a platform that contributes to the learning of both educational professionals and children through the use of

technology (Özen & Çiray Özkara, 2023), intending to promote international collaboration and professional development (ESEP, 2024). It is encouraging to note that Croatian educational staff possess a high level of knowledge about eTwinning, described as the largest European community of practitioners by Leproni (2023).

The third section of the questionnaire explored eTwinners' experiences in participating in eTwinning projects. The following questions were posed: Have they participated in or initiated any eTwinning projects? Have they received a quality label for an eTwinning project, and does the institution they work in hold the eTwinning School label? Additionally, respondents who had participated in eTwinning projects were asked to rate 19 statements about their involvement via a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

The results revealed that 20.1% of the respondents had participated in an eTwinning project, while 45.4% had never participated despite being part of the eTwinning community. A smaller percentage, 5.7%, identified themselves as the initiators of at least one eTwinning project. The remaining 59.2% had never initiated their own project. A total of 10.3% of eTwinners had received a quality label for a project they participated in, while 54% had never received such a label. Comparing the results according to the type of educational institution, it can be concluded that recipients of the quality label for eTwinning projects were the least frequent among respondents from preschools. Moreover, 21.8% of the respondents indicated that their institution holds the eTwinning School label, while 43.1% do not work in an institution with this designation. Given the results, it can be concluded that respondents from preschool educational institutions lag behind those from primary and secondary schools in terms of eTwinning project experience.

Ranking the results according to levels of agreement, it was clear that respondents most strongly agreed with the statement that networking has far more advantages than disadvantages. Furthermore, there was also strong agreement with the statement that eTwinning promotes an idealized image of educational professionals as skilled project workers. The respondents showed more disagreement regarding the difficulty of finding a partner for eTwinning collaboration, suggesting that they had contrasting experiences. Moreover, there was greater agreement with the statement that educational professionals are willing to learn, which makes collaboration easier.

Table 6.*Experiences of eTwinners*

Statements	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Networking offers far more advantages than disadvantages.	75	1.00	5.00	3.75	1.25
Communication among partners was of high quality.	77	1.00	5.00	3.70	1.17
It is easy to collaborate with educational professionals because they are willing to learn.	75	1.00	5.00	3.65	1.12
Communication with partners during the project positively influenced the development of my communication skills.	78	1.00	5.00	3.64	1.16
International networking will be essential for future educational professionals.	76	1.00	5.00	3.63	1.23
Participation in an eTwinning project positively influenced my relationships with other educational professionals.	76	1.00	5.00	3.48	1.37
Collaboration during the eTwinning project was good.	75	1.00	5.00	3.44	1.28
eTwinning promotes an idealized image of the educational professional by equating a good teacher/educator with a good project worker who is always ready and willing to join or start a project.	76	1.00	5.00	3.43	1.08
Networking through the eTwinning project gave me new ideas and enriched my work with children.	75	1.00	5.00	3.41	1.42
Participation in an eTwinning project enhanced the development of my foreign language (English) communication skills.	75	1.00	5.00	3.38	1.32
Participation in an eTwinning project is part of my continuous professional development.	76	1.00	5.00	3.38	1.40
eTwinning promotes continuous and unattainable development through projects, making the teacher/educator into a project.	76	1.00	5.00	3.30	1.23
While working on the eTwinning project, I networked with colleagues from different countries.	74	1.00	5.00	3.29	1.35

Table 6. (continued)

Statements	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Communicating with partners gave me an understanding of educational systems in different European countries.	75	1.00	5.00	3.29	1.32
Digital competence is one of the main competencies I improved by participating in eTwinning.	75	1.00	5.00	3.25	1.36
It is easier to network on the platform than in my own environment.	76	1.00	5.00	3.21	1.20
It was difficult to find partners for collaboration in the eTwinning project.	75	1.00	5.00	2.68	1.10
Collaboration was hindered by the fact that we work in different educational systems.	74	1.00	5.00	2.40	1.12
Collaboration was hindered by cultural differences.	74	1.00	5.00	2.32	1.18
Valid N	72				

A comparison of responses from participants working in various educational institutions revealed that participants from preschools were less involved in and did not initiate eTwinning projects as frequently as those from primary and secondary schools were. This difference is also evident in the rates of receiving the eTwinning quality label for projects and the eTwinning school label held by their institutions. Based on the evaluation scale related to eTwinning experience, it can be concluded that participants' experiences vary significantly. Notably, the highest agreement was recorded with the statement that networking offers far more advantages than disadvantages. Additionally, there was strong agreement with the statement that eTwinning promotes an idealized image of the educational professional, equating a good teacher/educator with a skilled project worker. This may indicate an understanding among educational professionals that their role goes beyond teaching alone but also includes collaborative, project-based work. Furthermore, this observation could reflect the notion, as argued by critics, that we live in a "project society", where our work processes, including educational ones, are shaped through projects (Jensen et al., 2016; as cited in Lewis & Decuyper, 2023, p. 24). In the fourth part of the questionnaire, the general attitudes toward communication, collaboration, and networking were examined. Analysis of the results from the evaluation scale on communication, collaboration, and networking indicated the highest agreement with the statement that effective communication is

essential for successful collaboration. The high level of agreement with the importance of feedback in communication and the necessity of developing communication skills in educational practice is not surprising. The lowest agreement was observed with the statement regarding isolation within one's institution, although the high standard deviation suggests that participants held contrasting views on this matter. There was also low agreement with statements regarding exclusive collaboration through platforms, challenges in using digital tools and communicating in foreign languages, as well as the demands of intercultural communication. Interestingly, no participant expressed complete disagreement with the statements about cooperative learning and teamwork being prerequisites for success in the 21st century, as well as the acceptance of new technologies and connectivity opportunities. Additionally, no participant disagreed with the assertion that, in contemporary society, communication in foreign languages is essential, nor with the notion that the quality of educational practice is determined by a commitment to lifelong learning. The absence of complete disagreement with these statements indicates a broad acceptance of these views, which aligns with the profile of the sample of respondents.

Table 7.*Attitudes toward Communication, Collaboration, and Networking*

Statements	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Effective communication is essential for collaboration.	174	3.00	5.00	4.86	0.40
There is no effective communication without feedback.	174	3.00	5.00	4.77	0.50
Educational professionals must possess developed communication skills.	174	1.00	5.00	4.73	0.61
Effective collaboration among all stakeholders in the educational process is essential for a healthy environment in which children can develop.	174	1.00	5.00	4.71	0.64
The path to higher-quality educational practice is determined by an individual's readiness for lifelong learning.	174	2.00	5.00	4.48	0.74
For successful communication, it is crucial to understand and be sensitive to contexts that differ from one's own.	174	1.00	5.00	4.48	0.70
Cooperative learning, teamwork, and collaboration will be essential in future professions and preconditions for success in the 21st century.	174	2.00	5.00	4.47	0.71

Table 7. (continued)

Statements	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Educational professionals should be stakeholders in positive social changes by embracing new technologies and opportunities for connection.	174	2.00	5.00	4.45	0.74
In contemporary society, it is essential to be able to communicate in foreign languages.	174	2.00	5.00	4.42	0.71
Networking benefits both educational professionals and children.	174	1.00	5.00	4.29	0.84
Networking plays an important role in education by providing a framework for professional development.	174	1.00	5.00	4.17	0.86
Networks are organizational solutions for the diversity and complexity of educational needs.	174	1.00	5.00	3.94	0.91
The most demanding and difficult form of interpersonal communication is intercultural communication.	174	1.00	5.00	3.87	0.94
Collaboration through the platform is challenging because it involves using digital tools and communication in a foreign language.	174	1.00	5.00	3.86	1.05
It is difficult to exclusively collaborate via the platform.	174	1.00	5.00	3.69	1.02
I often feel isolated in my institution.	174	1.00	5.00	2.53	1.27
Valid N	174				

The attitudes of educational professionals toward communication, collaboration, and networking with other educational professionals are generally consistent, as indicated by the arithmetic means and the relatively low standard deviations for the given statements. Minor deviations were observed only concerning collaboration exclusively via the platform and challenges related to the use of digital tools and communication in a foreign language. These results are unsurprising and align with the statement by Carroll and Rest (2010; as cited in Cachia & Punie, 2012) that educational professionals are “caught with one foot in the future and another one in past”. The most significant divergence among respondents occurred regarding the statement that they feel isolated in their institution, which contradicts findings from research by Gatta, Pereira Cunha, and Costa (2009; as cited in Cachia & Punie, 2012), which can be interpreted as being influenced by various factors that are not necessarily related to collaboration with colleagues.

In conclusion, the importance of effective communication and the necessity of developing communication skills in educational work are confirmed by the findings of this research. Effective communication is crucial for collaboration and networking, and the prerequisites for achieving effective communication include knowledge of language, interaction skills, and cultural knowledge (Miljković & Rijavec, 2002), and more recently, knowledge related to e-communication, which represents a modern form of communication (Jurković, 2012). While it is often assumed that successful communication is the norm, especially in educational circles, good communication is the exception (Miljković & Rijavec, 2002), which makes it essential to continue developing communication skills in all forms.

CONCLUSION

Communication, collaboration, and networking among educational professionals are part of the pedagogical culture of collaboration, which is defined by the values of inclusion, integration, and interaction. These are also the values of the European School Education Platform, which aims to improve the quality of education across Europe. Furthermore, the approach and use of digital technologies can help reduce the educational gap between different socioeconomic contexts. Educational institutions, which are also communication networks, now have unique opportunities for communication, collaboration, and networking on platforms such as ESEP, which are more accessible than ever before.

Global trends and contemporary lifestyles present numerous challenges for educators, including e-communication, communication in foreign languages, intercultural communication, cooperative learning, teamwork, and the use of digital tools in communication. All of these factors demand that educational professionals be prepared for lifelong learning to achieve high-quality educational practices within the context of modern society. The ESEP and its component, eTwinning, aim to address the challenges of tomorrow by encouraging educators to share experiences, showcase good practices, and exchange ideas. By embracing new technologies and connection opportunities, educators become key stakeholders in positive social change within their communities, as they create opportunities for the continuous development of both children's and their competencies.

Following a previous study, aimed at determining participants' knowledge and experiences regarding the ESEP and eTwinning projects, as well as their attitudes toward communication, collaboration, and networking, the results revealed that more than half of the respondents are familiar with the ESEP. Furthermore, a very high percentage of respondents possess knowledge about eTwinning projects, regardless of the type of educational institution in which

they work. Most of the information about the ESEP and eTwinning projects was obtained from colleagues and within their institutions. However, in terms of awareness of the platform's available features and their utilization, this percentage is significantly lower, with employees in preschools lagging behind their counterparts in primary and secondary schools. A greater disparity in results was evident in terms of participation in and creation of eTwinning projects, as well as in obtaining the quality label for eTwinning projects and the eTwinning School label awarded to institutions. Based on an analysis of the results from the experience evaluation scale for eTwinners, it can be concluded that their experiences vary greatly, unlike the attitudes of educational professionals regarding communication, collaboration, and networking with other educators, which appear to be fairly consistent. In conclusion, it is essential to emphasize the importance of effective communication and the necessity of well-developed communication skills in educational work, a point supported by the findings of the research.

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INTERNALIZIRANI PROBLEMI U PONAŠANJU DJECE RANE I PREDŠKOLSKE DOBI – SAMOPROCJENE KOMPETENCIJA ODGOJITELJA S OBZIROM NA RADNO ISKUSTVO

Sažetak: *Cilj rada bio je istražiti samoprocjene odgojitelja o kompetencijama za rad s djecom s internaliziranim problemima s obzirom na duljinu radnog iskustva jer su suvremeni pristupi istraživanja kompetencija holistički i usmjereni na spregu formalnoga obrazovanja i usavršavanja. U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 111 odgojitelja, a podatci su, između ostalog, obrađeni χ^2 -testom, multivarijantnom analizom varijance i diskriminacijskom analizom. Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da odgojitelji s najduljim radnim iskustvom samoprocjenjuju kompetencije i učestalost usavršavanja boljim od odgojitelja s kraćim radnim iskustvom. Pronađene su i razlike u samoprocjenama o specifičnim znanjima o internaliziranim problemima tako da su odgojitelji koji su imali 31 i više godina radnog iskustva postizali najviše rezultate u području znanja o individualnim obilježjima djece, a odgojitelji s radnim iskustvom do 10 godina pretežito su prepoznavali fenomenološke oblike internaliziranih problema. Vrijednost je istraživanja u tome da rezultati identificiraju teškoće vezane za kompetencije odgojitelja te mogu biti smjernice za daljnje usavršavanje.*

Ključne riječi: *cjeloživotno obrazovanje, pasivni problemi u ponašanju, radni staž, ustanove ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja, znanja*

UVOD

Današnje spoznaje o ranom razvoju djeteta dijete shvaćaju kao cjelovito biće kojem je potrebno holistički pristupiti kako bi se utjecalo na njegov cjelokupni rast i razvoj, odnosno kako bi njegov razvoj bio uredan. Uzimajući u obzir ranjivost dječje populacije te njihovu psihičku i tjelesnu nezrelost u najranijoj dobi, u *Konvenciji o pravima djeteta* (Državni zavod za zaštitu obitelji, materinstva i mladeži, 2001) ističe se potreba za zaštitom posebnih prava svakog djeteta. U istom dokumentu istaknute su i obveze odraslih i društva u smislu da djecu zaštite i zadovoljavaju njihove potrebe. *Nacionalni kurikulum za rani i predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje* (Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta, 2015) temelji se na znanstvenoj studiji *Nove paradigme djetinjstva* (2012), koja je obuhvaćala različite aspekte institucijskog odrastanja djece. Studija je obuhvaćala nekoliko bazičnih komponenti koje se odnose na činjenicu da je dijete socijalni subjekt u odgojnom procesu sa svim svojim osobnim značajkama te mu kao takvom treba ozbiljno pristupati i uvažavati ga (Maleš, 2012). U tom kontekstu suvremeni pogledi na profesionalne pedagoške kompetencije (Cheetham i Chivers, 1996; Kostović-Vranješ i Ljubetić, 2008) imaju u fokusu, pored potrebe za holističkim pristupom u istraživanju kompetentnosti, i spremu formalnoga obrazovanja i usavršavanja nakon formalnoga obrazovanja. Iz tih je razloga potrebno multidisciplinarno pristupati aspektima kompetentnosti, a programe stručnog usavršavanja, koji će na optimalan način zadovoljiti potrebe odgojitelja uzimajući u obzir činjenicu promjenjivosti specifičnih potreba svakog djeteta, potrebno je graditi na znanstveno utemeljenim pokazateljima.

Odgojitelji svakodnevno u neposrednom odgojno-obrazovnom radu i u različitim situacijama trebaju znati procijeniti dječja ponašanja kako bi mogli ispravno postupati prema djetetu i zadovoljiti njegove potrebe. Stoga je važno da znaju prepoznati početak odstupanja od očekivanoga i uobičajenog ponašanja. To omogućava odgojitelju da pravilnim postupcima pomogne djetetu i usmjeri ponašanja roditelja, a samim time spriječi daljnji razvoj problema. Kod djece rane i predškolske dobi vrlo je teško odrediti do koje je mjere neko ponašanje prihvatljivo ili kakvo ono treba biti. Odgojitelji problemima u ponašanju najčešće smatraju ona ponašanja djece koja ometaju svakodnevni rad, dok se stručnjaci oslanjaju na široko prihvaćeno statističko shvaćanje pojma „normalnoga”, što se odnosi na ponašanje koje se pojavljuje kod većine djece određene kronološke dobi (Čturić, 1995).

Problemi u ponašanju ona su ponašanja koja odstupaju od općeprihvaćenih normi ponašanja određenog okruženja u kojem dijete odrasta i koja negativno utječu na cjelokupan psihofizički rast i razvoj djeteta. Ta ponašanja mogu se negativno odraziti na funkcioniranje djeteta u društvu, pa mogu biti potencijalno štetna za djetetovo okruženje, kao i za samo dijete, te zbog toga zahtijevaju stručnu i društvenu pomoć (Krampač-Grljušić i Marinić, 2007; Uzelac, 1995).

Također, takva ponašanja odstupaju od ponašanja primjerenog i uobičajenog za dijete određene dobi, a uvjetovana su osobnošću djeteta, odgojnim, socijalnim, kulturnim ili drugim čimbenicima (Bouillet, 2019). Pri tome pojam problemi u ponašanju prema *Standardima za terminologiju, definiciju, kriterije i način praćenja pojave poremećaja u ponašanju djece i mladih* (Koller-Trbović i sur., 2011) obuhvaća sve oblike tog fenomena koji uključuje rizična ponašanja, teškoće i poremećaje u ponašanju.

Campbell (1995, prema Živčić-Bečirević i sur. 2003, str. 64) zaključuje da je „na ranom uzrastu teško razlikovati problemna ponašanja od različitih oblika ponašanja koja mogu biti izazovna za okolinu, a koja su još uvijek dobno prikladna”. Često je nejasno je li pojedini problem u ponašanju znak pojave poremećaja ili samo obilježje teške, ali prolazne razvojne faze. Čak i problemi u ponašanju koji su prolaznog karaktera mogu na dijete ostaviti teže posljedice jer ometaju djetetov optimalan razvoj i učenje. Ipak, kod djece rane i predškolske dobi susrećemo se s raznovrsnim problemima u ponašanju. Oni mogu biti izazov za odgojitelja radi niza specifičnosti odgojno-obrazovnog rada. Kada se radi o djeci s teškoćama, odnosno problemima u ponašanju, niz je kompetencija koje bi odgojitelj trebao posjedovati kako bi na adekvatan način mogao skrbiti o navedenoj populaciji djece. Navedeno uključuje (Bouillet, 2010, str. 324) razumijevanje socijalnog i emocionalnog razvoja djece; razumijevanje individualnih razlika u procesu učenja djece; poznavanje tehnika kvalitetnog vođenja odgojne skupine; komunikacijske vještine (u odnosu s djecom, roditeljima, drugim stručnjacima i kolegama); poznavanje učinkovitih tehnika podučavanja (uključujući individualne instrukcije i iskustveno učenje); poznavanje specifičnosti pojedinih teškoća u razvoju i drugih teškoća socijalne integracije djece; poznavanje didaktičko-metodičkog pristupa i planiranja prilagođenog kurikulumu; poznavanje dostupnih didaktičko-metodičkih metoda, sredstava i pomagala (uključujući informatičku tehnologiju); poznavanje savjetodavnih tehnika rada; praktično iskustvo u odgoju i obrazovanju djece s pojedinim teškoćama te spremnost na timski rad, suradnju i cjeloživotno obrazovanje. S druge strane, kako navodi Jurčević-Lozančić (2018), kompetencije odgojitelja uvjetovane su teorijskim znanjima koje stječe tijekom školovanja, zatim stručnim znanjem kojeg stječe u praksi, ali i konstantnim učenjem i usavršavanjem koji se temelje na društvenim i socijalnim kompetencijama.

Internalizirana ponašanja mogu lako proći nezapaženo jer su u ranoj dječjoj dobi verbalne vještine još slabo razvijene, što djecu čini manje kompetentnom u izražavanju svojih unutarnjih osjećaja (Tandon i sur., 2009). Također, u većini slučajeva odgojiteljima je izazovnije identificirati dijete s internaliziranim problemima u skupini jer je većina intervencija usmjerena prema djeci s eksternaliziranim problemima (Batsoupoulou, 2017).

Prema istraživanju Panić i Bouillet (2021), internalizirane probleme u ponašanju odgojitelji su procijenili kod 3 % djece rane i predškolske dobi, što je češće nego što su to procjenjivali roditelji – 1 %.

Manifestacija internaliziranih problema može dovesti do kasnijih poremećaja u životu djeteta. Naime, internalizirani problemi koji se ne preveniraju ili se ne prepoznaju na vrijeme povezani su s nizom štetnih ishoda, odnosno posljedica u odrasloj dobi pojedinca kao što su napuštanje škole, depresivni i anksiozni poremećaji, te somatske tegobe.

Također, djeca s internaliziranim emocionalnim poremećajima, s dijagnozom ili bez nje, pokazuju ustaljene obrasce ponašanja koji ometaju njihovo svakodnevno funkcioniranje i uključenost u društvene aktivnosti. Dok su eksternalizirana ponašanja uznemirujuća za društvenu okolinu, internalizirana ponašanja uznemirujuća su za samog pojedinca (Algozzine, 1980, prema Batsoupoulou, 2017).

Autori Živčić-Bečirević i suradnici (2003) za probleme pretjerano kontroliranog ponašanja navode da su to ponašanja koja stvaraju više problema samom djetetu nego osobama koje ga okružuju.

Problemi u ponašanju kod vrlo male djece koja izražavaju ponašanja usmjerena „prema unutra” i emocionalna stanja kao što su povlačenje, inhibicija, tjeskoba i depresija obično se svrstavaju u internalizirane probleme. Za takve probleme smatra se da su relativno česti kod male djece, a početak njihova javljanja uočava se već u ranoj i predškolskoj dobi. Kod djece s internaliziranim problemima u ustanovama ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja najviše teškoća javlja se prilikom stupanja u socijalne kontakte sa svojim vršnjacima radi niskog samopoštovanja, straha od odbijanja i osjećaja poniženja. Takva ponašanja koče ih u aktivnom uključivanju i sudjelovanju u većini aktivnosti u skupini (Batsoupoulou, 2017).

U literaturi možemo pronaći različite klasifikacije internaliziranih (pasivnih) problema u ponašanju, a najprepoznatljivija je Achenbachova klasifikacija (1993), koja pod internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju podrazumijeva sljedeća ponašanja: plašljivost, povučенost, potištenost, plačljivost, sram, depresiju, nisko samopouzdanje, lijenost, dosada, razmaženost i neurotske smetnje. Također, McClellan i Katz (2001) prikazuju popis atributa socijalne kompetencije djece koji se temelji na rezultatima istraživanja socijalne kompetencije djece i istraživanjima koja su uspoređivala socijalno prihvaćenu djecu s djecom koja to nisu. Fokus je na pojedinim individualnim obilježjima djeteta, socijalnim vještinama djeteta, odnosno njihovom izostanku i odnosu djeteta s vršnjacima.

Inkluzija djece s razvojnim teškoćama i problemima općenito proces je koji se intenzivirao u novije vrijeme. Kurikulumi sveučilišnih studija ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja danas su bogatiji sadržajima koji se odnose na specifična znanja u tom smislu (Radetić-Paić, 2018). Također, nove generacije

odgojitelja izloženije su radu s djecom s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju, dok su se starije generacije manje susretale s njima, između ostaloga i zbog terminoloških neujednačenosti i teškoća pri dijagnosticiranju. Može se stoga zaključiti da mlađe generacije stručnjaka u odgojno-obrazovnoj praksi imaju veću odgovornost i izazove (Radetić-Paić, 2018; Westwood i Graham, 2003). I autorica Kiš-Glavaš (2000) dolazi do podataka da mlađi stručnjaci i stručnjaci s manje od dvadeset godina radnoga iskustva u odgoju i obrazovanju pokazuju pozitivnije stavove o inkluziji od starijih kolega.

S druge strane, pojedina istraživanja (Blewitt i sur., 2021; Vukadin, 2021) pokazala su da sudionici istraživanja s duljim radnim iskustvom procjenjuju odgovorno donošenje odluka višim od mlađih kolega te se zaključuje da duže radno iskustvo u određenoj profesiji pruža veću sigurnost i samouvjerenost pri donošenju određenih odluka. Također, manje radno iskustvo u profesiji predstavlja prepreku pri razvoju vlastitih kompetencija. Sudionici istraživanja bili su svjesni važnosti dječjih ali i vlastitih socijalno-emocionalnih kompetencija te su naglašavali važnost „treeninga” vlastitih vještina i pomoći šire zajednice pri njihovom razvoju (Blewitt i sur., 2021). Emam i Mohamed (2011) također su u istraživanju kojim su ispitali povezanost između samoučinkovitosti i stavova prema uključivanju djece s teškoćama, a koje je uključivalo i radno iskustvo, pokazali da odgojitelji s više iskustva imaju pozitivnije stavove u tom smislu.

Slijedom navedenog, pretpostavka je bila da će odgojitelji s različitim radnim iskustvom iskazivati i specifične razlike u samoprocjenama vlastitih kompetencija za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju.

Generalni cilj istraživanja bio je utvrditi samoprocjene odgojitelja o vlastitim kompetencijama kada je riječ o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi s obzirom na duljinu radnog iskustva.

Specifični ciljevi istraživanja bili su:

1. Istražiti samoprocjene kompetencija odgojitelja za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju s obzirom na duljinu radnog iskustva;

2. Istražiti samoprocjene znanja odgojitelja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi s obzirom na duljinu radnog iskustva;

3. Istražiti samoprocjene učestalosti usavršavanja odgojitelja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi s obzirom na duljinu radnog iskustva;

4. Istražiti samoprocjene odgojitelja o specifičnim znanjima o fenomenološkim oblicima, individualnim obilježjima, obilježjima izostanaka socijalnih vještina i odnosa s vršnjacima djece rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju s obzirom na duljinu radnog iskustva.

U istraživanju su bile postavljene sljedeće četiri hipoteze:

H1: odgojitelji s duljim radnim iskustvom samoprocjenjuju vlastite kompetencije za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju boljim od odgojitelja s kraćim radnim iskustvom;

H2: odgojitelji s duljim radnim iskustvom samoprocjenjuju vlastita znanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi boljim od odgojitelja s kraćim radnim iskustvom;

H3: odgojitelji s duljim radnim iskustvom samoprocjenjuju veću učestalost usavršavanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi od odgojitelja s kraćim radnim iskustvom;

H4: postoje razlike u samoprocjenama odgojitelja u specifičnim znanjima o fenomenološkim oblicima, individualnim obilježjima, obilježjima izostanaka socijalnih vještina i odnosa s vršnjacima djece rane i predškolske dobi kod odgojitelja s različitom duljinom radnog iskustva.

METODOLOGIJA

Uzorak sudionika

U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 111 odgojitelja. Istraživanjem su bili obuhvaćeni odgojitelji iz dvaju matičnih i trinaest područnih dječjih vrtića Istarske županije, odnosno iz šezdeset i dvije odgojne skupine. U istraživanju su sudjelovali odgojitelji jedanaest jasličkih skupina i pedeset i jedne vrtičke skupine. Dob djece unutar navedenih skupina kretala se od navršenih 12 mjeseci do 7. godine života.

Velika većina ispitanika, njih 96,4 %, bila je ženskog spola – ukupno 107 žena, dok je 3,6 % sudionika bilo muškog spola – 4 muškarca. Uočava se da su se muškarci kao odgojitelji počeli zapošljavati u ustanovama ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja, ali i dalje u vrlo malom broju u odnosu na zastupljenost odgojiteljica.

Dobnu skupinu odgojitelja od 20 do 29 godina života činilo je 21,6 %, odnosno 24 odgojitelja. Dobnu skupinu od 30 do 39 godina života činilo je 28,8 %, odnosno 32 odgojitelja. Dobnoj skupini od 40 do 49 godina života pripadalo je 24,3 %, odnosno 27 odgojitelja, dok je dobnoj skupini od 50 do 59 godina života pripadalo 16,3 %, odnosno 18 odgojitelja. Najmanje odgojitelja pripadalo je dobnoj skupini od 60 i više godina života te ju je činilo 9 % sudionika istraživanja, odnosno 10 odgojitelja.

Najveći postotak odgojitelja bili su prvostupnici, njih 71,2 %. 25,2 % odgojitelja imalo je završen diplomski sveučilišni studij, dok je 0,9 % imalo završen nekadašnji dvogodišnji Studij predškolskog odgoja. Preostalih 2,7 % sudionika bili su nestručna zamjena (visokoobrazovani profesori i osobe s završenom srednjom školom).

Prema godinama radnog iskustva sudionici ispitivanja su bili podijeljeni u tri skupine: do 10 godina radnog iskustva, od 11 do 30 godina radnog iskustva i više od 31 godinu radnog iskustva (tablica 1).

Tablica 1.

Sudionici istraživanja prema godinama radnog iskustva u ustanovama ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja

godine radnog iskustva	f	%
do 10	46	41,4
11 – 30	45	40,5
31 i više	20	18,1
	111	100

Uzorak čestica

Mjerni instrument izrađen za potrebe ovog istraživanja bio je sastavljen od 17 pitanja zatvorenog i kombiniranog tipa vezanih za kompetencije odgojitelja u radu s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju. Pouzdanost mjernog instrumenta relativno je prihvatljiva (Cronbachova $\alpha = .620$). Unutarnja konzistencija relativno je niska, ali varijable pozitivno koreliraju.

Za potrebe ovog istraživanja analizirane su sljedeće čestice:

1. Smatram se kompetentnim/-om za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju.

2. Kako procjenjujete svoja znanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi?

3. Koliko često proučavate literaturu ili se na bilo koji način usavršavate, a da je vezano za internalizirane probleme u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi?

4. Znam prepoznati sljedeće navedene fenomenološke oblike, individualna obilježja, obilježja izostanaka socijalnih vještina i odnosa s vršnjacima djece rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju.

Procjene za prva tri pitanja rađene su na skali Likertovog tipa. Posljednje postavljeno pitanje sastojalo se od četiri subskale: fenomenološki oblici (11), individualna obilježja (13), obilježja izostanaka socijalnih vještina (13) i odnosi s vršnjacima (3). Mogući odgovori bili su da/ne.

Način provođenja istraživanja i metode obrade podataka

Istraživanje je provedeno anonimnim online upitnikom u razdoblju od veljače do travnja 2024. godine. Ispunjavanje upitnika bilo je dragovoljno i odgojitelji su u svakom trenutku mogli odustati od njegova ispunjavanja. Pri

tome su poštovana etička načela u istraživanju. Odgojitelje se upoznalo s temom i razlogom provedbe istraživanja. Prikupljanje podataka ovom metodom odabrano je kako bi rezultati istraživanja bili što vjerodostojniji i kako bi se sudionicima ubrao i olakšao način ispunjavanja upitnika.

Podatci su obrađeni pomoću osnovnih statističkih parametara, χ^2 -testom, multivarijantnom analizom varijance i diskriminacijskom analizom koji su integrirani dio licenciranog SPSS programa.

REZULTATI I RASPRAVA

Za prvu hipotezu, kojom se pretpostavljalo da odgojitelji s duljim radnim iskustvom samoprocjenjuju vlastite kompetencije za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju boljim od odgojitelja s kraćim radnim iskustvom, rezultati su pokazali (tablica 2) da se za promatranu česticu odstupanja opaženih frekvencija od teoretskih ili očekivanih frekvencija mogu smatrati značajnima na razini $p = .01$, s obzirom na to da su njezine vrijednosti χ^2 -testa bile veće od graničnih vrijednosti na odgovarajućem stupnju slobode ($df = 8$). Odgojitelji s radnim iskustvom većim od 31 godine, prema apsolutnim frekvencijama, najviše su se slagali s tvrdnjom da posjeduju kompetencije za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju (70 %), dok su se odgojitelji s najkraćim radnim iskustvom najmanje slagali s tom tvrdnjom. Time je postavljenu hipotezu bilo moguće prihvatiti. Slične rezultate, na nešto starijoj djeci, pronašla je autorica Idol (2006) koji su pokazali da više radnog iskustva u inkluzivnim skupinama utječe na bolje prihvaćanje djeteta s teškoćom i kompetentniji pristup u odgojno-obrazovnoj praksi. Također, odgojitelji trebaju zadovoljavati svakidašnje potrebe djece i poticati razvoj svakoga djeteta prema njihovim sposobnostima. Iz tog razloga, kompetencije odgojitelja moguće je promatrati kao „kompleksan mozaik različitih područja znanja i vještina koja su nužno uključena u praktično područje svakog profesionalca” (Slunjski i sur., 2006, str. 46). Odgojitelj treba posjedovati profesionalne i osobne kompetencije te imati pozitivan stav prema uključivanju djece s problemima u ponašanju u redovne odgojno-obrazovne sustave kako bi inkluzija bila uspješna, uključujući stvaranje okruženja u kojem svako dijete ima dovoljno prilika za učenje i zadovoljenje svojih potreba (Bukvić, 2014).

Tablica 2.

Relativne i apsolutne frekvencije i vrijednosti χ^2 - testa – Kompetencije za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju

čestica/god. radnog iskustva	do 10	11 – 30	31 i više	χ^2	p	
1. Smatram se kompetentnim/-om za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju	uopće se ne slažem	2 (4,3 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	21.538	.006*
	uglavnom se ne slažem	12 (26,1 %)	3 (6,7 %)	3 (15 %)		
	ni se slažem	20 (43,5 %)	22 (48,9 %)	3 (15 %)		
	ni se ne slažem	9 (19,6 %)	19 (42,2 %)	13 (65 %)		
	uglavnom se slažem	3 (6,5 %)	1 (2,2 %)	1 (5 %)		
	u potpunosti se slažem					

Rezultati odgovora na pitanje *Kako procjenjujete svoja znanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi* pokazali su (tablica 3) da se odstupanja opaženih frekvencija od teoretskih ili očekivanih frekvencija mogu smatrati značajnima ($p = .025$) s obzirom da su vrijednosti χ^2 -testa bile veće od graničnih vrijednosti na odgovarajućem stupnju slobode ($df = 8$). Odgojitelji s najviše godina radnog iskustva procjenjivali su ocjenom odlično i vrlo dobro vlastita znanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi, dok su odgojitelji s najmanje radnog iskustva smatrali svoja znanja u velikoj mjeri nedovoljnim (23 %) i dovoljnim (26,1 %). Time je postavljenu hipotezu da odgojitelji s duljim radnim iskustvom samoprocjenjuju vlastita znanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi boljim od odgojitelja s kraćim radnim iskustvom bilo moguće prihvatiti. Općenito, za uključivanje djece s teškoćama u predškolske ustanove potrebna su znanja i vještine iz najmanje dvaju znanstvenih polja: ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja te edukacijsko-rehabilitacijskih znanstvenih grana (Skočić Mihić, 2011). Odgojitelji se, iz tog razloga, suočavaju s izazovima kreiranja i provedbe programa koji odgovaraju različitim potrebama sve djece. Specifični izazovi podrazumijevaju visoku kvalifikaciju odgojitelja, primjereno okruženje za učenje, inkluzivni kurikulum, didaktičke aktivnosti i kontinuiranu procjenu i unapređivanje razvojnih aktivnosti (Bouillet, 2011). Ranija istraživanja u tom smislu su pokazala da samoprocjene stručnjaka koji su zadovoljni vlastitim znanjem imaju pozitivnije stavove prema uključivanju djece s problemima u redovne uvjete (Kiš-Glavaš, 2000). Naime, prednosti za odgojitelje u čijim

se skupinama nalaze djeca s teškoćama (Mikas i Roudi, 2012) bogaćenje su iskustava i u iznalaženju novih strategija, pristupa i metoda koje vode prema kvalitetnim i učinkovitim rješenjima te jačanje potrebe za dodatnim stručnim usavršavanjem.

Tablica 3.

Relativne i apsolutne frekvencije i vrijednosti χ^2 - testa – Znanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi

čestica/god. radnog iskustva		do 10	11 – 30	31 i više	χ^2	<i>p</i>
2. Kako procjenjujete svoja znanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi?	nedovoljno	11 (23,9 %)	7 (15,6 %)	2 (10 %)	18.959	.015*
	dovoljno	12 (26,1 %)	8 (17,8 %)	0 (0 %)		
	dobro	18 (39,1 %)	19 (42,2 %)	8 (40 %)		
	vrlo dobro	5 (10,9 %)	11 (24,4 %)	9 (45 %)		
	odlično	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (5 %)		

Odgovori na pitanje *Koliko često proučavate literaturu ili se na bilo koji način usavršavate, a da je vezano za internalizirane probleme u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi* (tablica 4) bili su distribuirani tako da su se odgojitelji s najviše radnog iskustva najčešće usavršavali na različite načine. Preko 50 % odgojitelja s radnim iskustvom manjim od 10 godina samoprocjenjivalo je da se usavršavaju rijetko odnosno nikad. Odstupanja opaženih frekvencija od teoretskih ili očekivanih frekvencija mogu se smatrati značajnima na razini $p = .025$, s obzirom da su vrijednosti χ^2 -testa bile veće od odgovarajućih graničnih vrijednosti na odgovarajućem stupnju slobode ($df = 8$). S obzirom na rezultate, hipotezu da odgojitelji s duljim radnim iskustvom samoprocjenjuju veću učestalost usavršavanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi od odgojitelja s kraćim radnim iskustvom, bilo je moguće prihvatiti. Može se pretpostaviti da se odgojitelji s više radnog iskustva učestalije usavršavaju zato što uviđaju potrebu i nužnost cjeloživotnog učenja za podizanje kvalitete odgojno-obrazovne prakse te veću odgovornost u tom smislu (Blewitt i sur., 2021). S druge strane, odgojitelji, a posebno odgojiteljice, koje čine najveći dio populacije ovog zanimanja s manje iskustva u godinama nakon završetka studija, može se pretpostaviti, većinom su zauzete zasnivanjem obitelji te su manje orijentirane na redovito usavršavanje bilo koje vrste. Također, pored drugih razloga, u tom kontekstu autor Kyriacou (2001) zaključuje i da je stres kod odgojitelja povećan na početku profesionalne karijere.

Važnost potrebe usavršavanja na različite načine tijekom profesionalne karijere za svakodnevnu odgojno-obrazovnu praksu vidljiva je iz istraživanja (Zrilić i sur., 2022) u kojem su rezultati pokazali da je 46 % odgojitelja procijenilo da su znanja stekli tijekom formalnog obrazovanja, 51 % odgojitelja navodi da je znanja o radu s djecom s teškoćama steklo tijekom stručnih usavršavanja, a 46,7 % odgojitelja informalnim obrazovanjem. Pored toga, kompetentnijima se osjećaju oni odgojitelji koji su se dodatno stručno usavršavali za rad s djecom s teškoćama (Skočić Mihić, 2011).

Tablica 4.

Relativne i apsolutne frekvencije i vrijednosti χ^2 - testa – Učestalost usavršavanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi

čestica/god. radnog iskustva	do 10	11 – 30	31 i više	χ^2	p	
3. Koliko često proučavate literaturu ili se na bilo koji način usavršavate, a da je vezano za internalizirane probleme u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi?	jednom godišnje	7 (15,2 %)	7 (15,6 %)	2 (10 %)	18.310	.019*
	jednom u 6 mjeseci	12 (26,1 %)	15 (33,3 %)	8 (40 %)		
	jednom mjesečno	2 (4,3 %)	5 (11,1 %)	6 (30 %)		
	rijetko	20 (43,5 %)	18 (40 %)	4 (20 %)		
	nikada	5 (10,9 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)		

Za četvrtu hipotezu vezanu uz samoprocjene odgojitelja s različitim duljinom radnog iskustva u specifičnim znanjima na četiri subskale, aritmetičke sredine (tablica 5), s obzirom na smjer odgovora, pokazuju da odgojitelji smatraju da najviše znaju prepoznati sljedeće fenomenološke oblike te obilježja djece rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju:

- razmaženost,
- ljutnju i frustraciju ne izražava na primjeren način,
- povučenost,
- plačljivost,
- nisko samopouzdanje.

Pojedini autori (Shaw i Wood, 2009) dovode u vezu razmaženost i ljutnju i frustracije djece, tj. govore o razmaženosti kao svojevrsnoj epidemiji suvremenog doba u kojoj roditelji smatraju da život njihove treba biti bez frustracija. Smatraju da je razlog tome činjenica da roditelji često provode malo vremena sa svojom djecom pa radi svojevrsne grižnje savjesti ne postavljaju djetetu granice u kratkom vremenu koje provode zajedno. Izbjegavanjem doživljaja frustracije kod djeteta se ne razvija empatija niti se razvijaju socijalne kompetencije. Ispunjavanjem svih djetetovih želja i nagrađivanjem izravno se

potkrjepljuje neprimjereno ponašanje te se time smanjuje mogućnost da dijete shvati što je pozitivno, a što negativno u nekom ponašanju (Raundalen, 1998).

S druge strane, objašnjenja uzročnosti socijalne povučenosti djece svode se na nedostatak socijalnih vještina. No, postavlja se i pitanje (Lebedina Manzoni, 2010) ometa li anksioznost socijalne interakcije i time uvjetuje njihovo izbjegavanje ili socijalno povučena djeca ne posjeduju socijalne vještine koje bi im omogućile interakciju s vršnjacima. Plačljivost se pak može povezati sa simptomima depresivnosti koji imaju drukčije pojavne oblike kod djece nego kod odraslih. Sagledavanjem svih čimbenika, depresija se kod djece u klinički značajnom problemu uzima u obzir kada se jedno ponašanje koje traje dulje vrijeme, npr. upravo plačljivost, javlja uzajamno s drugim simptomima, te predstavlja neuobičajeno, odstupajuće ponašanje kod određenog djeteta i ometa njegovo svakodnevno funkcioniranje (Vulić-Prtorić, 2004). Ljubetić (2009) također smatra da treba biti pažljiv kada se govori o plačljivosti i povučenosti kod djece rane i predškolske dobi kako bi izbjegli etiketiranje i zbog toga što se ti problemi mogu relativno jednostavno riješiti odgovarajućim, odnosno prilagođenim i individualiziranim odgojnim postupcima odgojitelja.

Tablica 5.

Osnovni statistički parametri

čestice	N	Min	Max	M	St. Dev
plašljivost	111	1,00	2,00	1,2793	,45068
povučenost	111	1,00	2,00	1,5495*	,49980
potištenost	111	1,00	2,00	1,1351	,34342
plačljivost	111	1,00	2,00	1,5405*	,50061
sram	111	1,00	2,00	1,2342	,42544
depresija	111	1,00	2,00	1,0541	,22715
nisko samopouzdanje	111	1,00	2,00	1,5405*	,50061
lijenost	111	1,00	2,00	1,1892	,39344
dosada	111	1,00	2,00	1,1802	,38608
razmaženost	111	1,00	2,00	1,5766*	,49634
neurotske smetnje	111	1,00	2,00	1,1081	,31193
obično je neraspoloženo	111	1,00	2,00	1,2793	,45068
pretjerano je ovisno o odraslima	111	1,00	2,00	1,4505	,49980
u vrtić u pravilu ne dolazi rado	111	1,00	2,00	1,1892	,39344
ne nosi se dobro sa socijalnim odbijanjem vršnjaka	111	1,00	2,00	1,3423	,47665
ne uspijeva ostvariti prijateljstvo s jednim ili dvoje djece	111	1,00	2,00	1,3063	,46305
ne pokazuje sposobnost za empatiju	111	1,00	2,00	1,2613	,44131

Tablica 5. (nastavak)

čestice	N	Min	Max	M	St. Dev
ne pokazuje smisao za humor	111	1,00	2,00	1,0631	,24418
kontrolira izražavanje osjećaja	111	1,00	2,00	1,1712	,37837
tužno je bez očitog razloga	111	1,00	2,00	1,2793	,45068
vrlo je kritično prema sebi	111	1,00	2,00	1,2162	,41353
djeluje zabrinuto	111	1,00	2,00	1,2072	,40714
djeluje zbunjeno	111	1,00	2,00	1,1982	,40045
brine hoće li pogriješiti	111	1,00	2,00	1,3784	,48718
ne prilazi samostalno drugoj djeci	111	1,00	2,00	1,3514	,47956
ne izražava jasno svoje želje i preferencije	111	1,00	2,00	1,2432	,43099
zadovoljenje svojih potreba ne traži na adekvatan način	111	1,00	2,00	1,2613	,44131
lako ga mogu zastrašiti ili uznemiriti ponašanja druge djece	111	1,00	2,00	1,2252	,41963
ljutnju i frustraciju ne izražava na primjeren način	111	1,00	2,00	1,5586*	,49881
ne može se uključiti u grupu djece koja se igraju ili rade	111	1,00	2,00	1,3604	,48228
ne uključuje se u zajedničke rasprave	111	1,00	2,00	1,1161	,32175
teško dijeli igračke ili poticaje s drugom djecom	111	1,00	2,00	1,2252	,41963
slabo pokazuje interes za druge	111	1,00	2,00	1,1712	,37837
pažnju privlači na neadekvatne načine	111	1,00	2,00	1,2793	,45068
uspavano je u većini društvenih kontakata	111	1,00	2,00	1,0631	,24418
osjeća se neugodno kada mora nešto reći na glas pred grupom djece ili odraslih osoba	111	1,00	2,00	1,3333	,47354
pokazuje nelagodu u blizini druge djece ili odraslih	111	1,00	2,00	1,0811	,27420
druga djeca ga u pravilu ne prihvaćaju, odbacuju ga i zanemaruju	111	1,00	2,00	1,1532	,36177
druga djeca ga ne pozivaju da im se pridruži u igri ili radu	111	1,00	2,00	1,4865	,50208
druga djeca ga ne biraju za prijatelja niti pokazuju da se vole igrati s njim	111	1,00	2,00	1,2523	,43627

Za testiranje razlika među skupinama odgojitelja s obzirom na duljinu radnog iskustva u odnosu na kombinaciju varijabli o specifičnim znanjima unutar četiri subskale (o fenomenološkim oblicima, individualnim obilježjima, obilježjima izostanaka socijalnih vještina i odnosa s vršnjacima) upotrijebljena je multivarijatna analiza varijance. Analiza je pokazala da postoje statistički značajne razlike u samoprocjeni navedenih specifičnih znanja između triju skupina odgojitelja s različitom duljinom radnog iskustva, $\Lambda = ,636$, $F = 1,56$, $p = ,006$.

Diskriminacijska analiza provedena je sa svrhom utvrđivanja latentne strukture razlika između skupina odgojitelja s različitom duljinom radnog iskustva mjerenu u skupu od 40 česticama kojima se samoprocjenjuju specifična znanja koja uključuju četiri subskale. Na taj način nastojalo se utvrditi koliko se skupine sudionika međusobno razlikuju i koliko pojedine čestice doprinose toj razlici.

S obzirom da je provedena diskriminacijska analiza na tri skupine sudionika prema godinama radnog iskustva; do 10 godina radnog iskustva, od 11 do 30 godina radnog iskustva i više od 31 godinu radnog iskustva, dobivene su dvije diskriminacijske funkcije. Izračunane vrijednosti za diskriminacijske funkcije pokazale su da skup promatranih čestica značajno razlikuje skupine sudionika s obzirom na duljinu njihovog radnog iskustva na razini značajnosti, $p = ,01$ (tablica 6) samo za prvu diskriminacijsku funkciju. Kanonička korelacija za tu diskriminacijsku funkciju pokazuje dobru diskriminacijsku moć te funkcije u praktičnom smislu.

Time je bilo moguće prihvatiti posljednju postavljenu hipotezu kojom se pretpostavljalo da postoje razlike u samoprocjenama odgojitelja u specifičnim znanjima o fenomenološkim oblicima, individualnim obilježjima, obilježjima izostanaka socijalnih vještina i odnosa s vršnjacima djece rane i predškolske dobi kod odgojitelja s različitom duljinom radnog iskustva.

Tablica 6.

Statistička značajnost diskriminacijskih funkcija

function	% Var.	R	Λ	χ^2	df	p
1	66,3	,714	,321	100,674	80	,006
2	33,7	,588	,654	37,545	39	,536

Tablica 7.*Struktura značajne diskriminacijske funkcije*

čestice	C	S
plašljivost	-,330	-,339*
sram	-,907	-,323*
u vrtić u pravilu ne dolazi rado	,393	266*
djeluje zabrinuto	-1,347	-,250*
vrlo je kritično prema sebi	,735	,244*
djeca ga u pravilu ne prihvaćaju, odbacuju ga i zanemaruju	,753	,236*
djeluje zbunjeno	,389	-,233*
kontrolira izražavanje osjećaja	,999	,227*
potištenost	-,177	-,219*
plačljivost	-,462	-,218*
pretjerano je ovisno o odraslima	,364	
brine se o tome hoće li pogriješiti	,193	,217*
lijenost	-,176	-,216*
tužno je bez očitog razloga	,193	-,215*

Uvidom u strukturu značajne diskriminacijske funkcije (tablica 7) saznajemo da su čestice koje sudjeluju u kreiranju prve diskriminacijske funkcije na kojoj se statistički značajno razlikuju skupine odgojitelja s obzirom na duljinu radnog iskustva:

- plašljivost,
- sram,
- u vrtić u pravilu ne dolazi rado,
- djeluje zabrinuto,
- vrlo je kritično prema sebi,
- djeca ga u pravilu ne prihvaćaju, odbacuju ga i zanemaruju,
- djeluje zbunjeno,
- kontrolira izražavanje osjećaja,
- potištenost,
- plačljivost,
- pretjerano je ovisno o odraslima,
- brine se o tome hoće li pogriješiti,
- lijenost,
- tužno je bez očitog razloga.

Tablica 8.*Centroidi skupina*

funkcija	1	2
do 10	-,901	-,561
11 – 30	,061	,867
31 i više	1,935	-,662

Uzimajući u obzir predznake centroida skupina te njihove vrijednosti za svaku skupinu (tablica 8), zaključuje se da skupina sudionika koja ima više od 31 godinu radnog iskustva postiže najviše rezultate u području znanja na skali o individualnim obilježjima djece rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim poremećajima u ponašanju. Za razliku od njih, odgojitelji s manjim radnim iskustvom, do 10 godina, pretežito prepoznaju fenomenološke oblike internaliziranih poremećaja u ponašanju.

Od odgojitelja se očekuje dobro poznavanje razvojnih faza djeteta i utjecaj na ponašanje djeteta, a prepoznavanje odstupanja od uobičajenog psihosocijalnog funkcioniranja i ponašanja djeteta određene dobi omogućuje sustavno praćenje djeteta i njegova cjelovitog razvoja, za što je sustav ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja osobito pogodan (Panić i Bouillet, 2021).

ZAKLJUČAK

Rezultati istraživanja su pokazali da odgojitelji s najduljim radnim iskustvom, 31 i više godina radnog iskustva, samoprocjenjuju vlastite kompetencije za rad s djecom rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju boljim od odgojitelja s kraćim radnim iskustvom. Odgojitelji s najduljim radnim iskustvom boljima procjenjuju i vlastita znanja o internaliziranim problemima u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi i iskazuju veću učestalost usavršavanja u tom području. Također, zaključuje se da postoje razlike u samoprocjenama odgojitelja s različitim duljinom radnog iskustva o specifičnim znanjima o fenomenološkim oblicima internaliziranih problema u ponašanju, individualnim obilježjima takve djece, obilježjima izostanaka socijalnih vještina i odnosa s vršnjacima, u tom smislu da skupina sudionika koja ima više od 31 godinu radnog iskustva postiže najviše rezultate u području znanja o individualnim obilježjima djece rane i predškolske dobi s internaliziranim poremećajima u ponašanju. Odgojitelji s radnim iskustvom do 10 godina pretežito značajnije prepoznaju fenomenološke oblike internaliziranih poremećaja u ponašanju.

Ograničenja istraživanja, pa time i interpretacije rezultata, odnose se na prigodni uzorak sudionika koji je između ostalog uključivao i 2,7 % sudionika koji su nestručna zamjena, kao i na upitnik koji je izrađen za potrebe ovog istraživanja s relativno prihvatljivom pouzdanošću. Također, upitnikom nisu

ispitivane vještine i stavovi, odnosno vrijednosti sudionika koji su sastavni dio kompetencija.

Vrijednost je ovoga istraživanja u tome što su dobiveni rezultati znanstveni pokazatelji samoprocjena kompetencija samih odgojitelja, što mogu biti objektivne i važne smjernice za identifikaciju specifičnih teškoća vezanih za kompetencije u kontekstu internaliziranih problema u ponašanju djece rane i predškolske dobi u neposrednoj odgojno-obrazovnoj praksi te za daljnje usavršavanje odgojitelja, posebice kod odgojitelja s manjim radnim iskustvom. Naime, odgojitelji u svakodnevnom neposrednom radu s djecom rane i predškolske dobi imaju povoljne uvjete da mogu najlakše prevenirati, ali i detektirati internalizirane probleme u ponašanju, ali za to trebaju kontinuirano cjeloživotno usavršavanje i podršku.

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INTERNALIZING PROBLEMS IN THE BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN OF EARLY AND PRESCHOOL AGE – SELF-ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATORS’ COMPETENCIES WITH REGARD TO WORK EXPERIENCE

***Abstract:** The goal of this research was to explore educators’ self-assessments of their competencies to work with children with internalizing problems, considering the length of their work experience, because modern approaches to competence research are holistic and focused on the combination of formal education and training. As many as 111 educators participated in the research, and the data were, among other things, processed with the χ^2 -test, multivariate analysis of variance and discriminant analysis. The results of the research show that educators with the greatest amount of work experience self-assess their competencies and frequency of training better than do educators with less work experience. Differences were also found in the self-assessments of specific knowledge about internalizing problems in such a way that educators who had 31 or more years of work experience achieved the highest results in the area of knowledge about individual characteristics of children, while educators with up to 10 years of work experience predominantly recognized phenomenological forms of internalizing problems. The value of this research is that the results identify difficulties related to the competence of educators and can be guidelines for further training.*

***Keywords:** early and preschool education institutions, knowledge, lifelong education, passive behavioural problems, work experience*

INTRODUCTION

Today's knowledge about the early development of a child understands the child as a complete being that needs to be approached holistically in order to influence their overall growth and development, that is, so that their development is orderly. In the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (State Institute for Family, Maternity and Youth Protection, 2001), with regard to the vulnerability of the child population, their psychological and physical immaturity at an early age, the need to protect the special rights of each child, as well as the obligation of adults and the society in which they grow up to protect them and meet their needs are especially emphasized. *The National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education* (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, 2015) is based on the scientific study of the *New Paradigm of Childhood* (2012), which included various aspects of the institutional upbringing of children. The study included several basic components related to the fact that children are social subjects in the educational process with all their characteristics, and as such, they should be seriously approached and respected (Maleš, 2012). In this context, contemporary views on professional pedagogical competencies (Cheetham and Chivers, 1996; Kostović-Vranješ and Ljubetić, 2008) focus, in addition to the need for a holistic approach in competence research, on the combination of formal education and training after formal education. For these reasons, it is necessary to approach aspects of competence in a multidisciplinary manner, while professional development programmes, which will optimally meet the needs of educators, taking into account the fact that the specific needs of each child change, must be built on scientifically based indicators.

Educators should know how to evaluate children's behaviour in their direct educational work and in different situations every day, so that they can treat children correctly and meet their needs. Therefore, it is important that they know how to recognize the beginning of a deviation from the expected and usual behaviour. This enables the educator to help the child with proper procedures and direct the behaviour of the parents, thus preventing the further development of the problem. With children of early and preschool age, it is very difficult to determine to what extent certain behaviour is acceptable or what it should be. Educators most often consider behavioural problems to be children's behaviours that interfere with daily work, while experts rely on the widely accepted statistical understanding of the term "normal", which refers to the behaviour that appears in the majority of children of a certain chronological age (Čturić, 1995).

Behavioural problems are those behaviours that deviate from the generally accepted norms of behaviour in the specific environment in which the child grows up and as such, negatively affect the overall psychophysical growth and development of the child. These behaviours can have a negative impact on the

child's functioning in society, so they can be potentially harmful to the child's environment as well as to the child himself, and therefore require professional and social help (Krampač-Grljušić and Marinić, 2007; Uzelac, 1995). Also, such behaviours deviate from the appropriate and usual behaviour for a child of a certain age, and are conditioned by the child's personality, educational, social, cultural, or other factors (Bouillet, 2019). At the same time, the term behavioural problems, according to the *Standards for terminology, definition, criteria and methods of monitoring the occurrence of behavioural disorders in children and young people* (Koller-Trbović et al., 2011), includes all forms of this phenomenon, such as risky behaviours, and behavioural difficulties and disorders.

Campbell (1995, as cited in Živčić-Bečirević et al., 2003, p. 64) concludes that "at an early age it is difficult to distinguish problematic behaviours from different forms of behaviour that can be challenging for the environment, and which are still age appropriate". It is often unclear whether a particular behavioural problem is a sign of a disorder or just a symptom of a difficult but transitory developmental phase. Even behavioural problems that are temporary can have serious consequences for the child because they interfere with the child's optimal development and learning. However, children of early and preschool age face a variety of behavioural problems. They can be a challenge for educators due to a number of specifics of educational work. When it comes to children with difficulties or behavioural problems, there are a number of competencies that the educator should possess in order to be able to adequately care for this population of children. The above includes (Bouillet, 2010, p. 324) understanding the social and emotional development of children; understanding individual differences in the children's learning process; knowledge of the techniques of quality management of the educational group; communication skills (in relation with children, parents, other experts and colleagues); knowledge of effective teaching techniques (including individualized instruction and experiential learning); knowledge of the specifics of certain difficulties in the development and other difficulties of social integration of children; knowledge of the didactic-methodical approach and planning of adapted curriculum; knowledge of available didactic methodical methods, tools and aids (including information technology); knowledge of advisory work techniques; practical experience in the education of children with particular difficulties, and readiness for teamwork, cooperation and lifelong education. On the other hand, as Jurčević-Lozančić (2018) states, the competencies of educators are conditioned by the theoretical knowledge they acquire during schooling, by the professional knowledge they acquire in practice, but also by constant learning and improvement based on social competencies.

Internalized behaviours can easily go unnoticed because verbal skills are still poorly developed in early childhood, which makes children less competent

in expressing their inner feelings (Tandon et al., 2009). Moreover, in most cases it is more challenging for educators to identify a child with internalizing problems in the group because most interventions are directed towards children with externalizing problems (Batsoupoulou, 2017). According to research conducted by Panić and Bouillet (2021), educators assessed internalized behavioural problems in 3% of early and preschool children, more often than parents did (1%).

The manifestation of internalizing problems can lead to later disorders in a child's life. Specifically, internalizing problems that are not prevented or recognized on time are associated with a series of harmful outcomes, i.e., consequences in the individual's adulthood, such as dropping out of school, depressive and anxiety disorders, and somatic complaints. Also, children with internalized emotional disorders, diagnosed or not, show established patterns of behaviour that interfere with their daily functioning and involvement in social activities. While externalized behaviours are distressing to the social environment, internalized behaviours are distressing to individuals themselves (Algozzine, 1980, as cited in Batsoupoulou, 2017). Regarding the problem of excessively controlled behaviour, Živčić-Bečirević et al. (2003) state that these are behaviours that create more problems for the child than for the people around them.

Behavioural problems in very young children who exhibit "inward" behaviours and emotional states such as withdrawal, inhibition, anxiety, and depression are usually classified as internalizing problems. Such problems are relatively common in young children, and the onset of their occurrence is already noticed in early and preschool age. For children with internalizing problems in early and preschool education institutions, the most difficulties arise when entering into social contacts with their peers due to low self-esteem, fear of rejection and feelings of humiliation. Such behaviours prevent them from active involvement and participation in most activities in the group (Batsoupoulou, 2017).

In the literature, we can find different classifications of internalizing (passive) behaviour problems, and the most recognizable is Achenbach's classification (1993), which includes the following behaviours under internalizing behaviour problems: timidity, withdrawal, depression, tearfulness, shame, depression, low self-confidence, laziness, boredom, spoiledness and neurotic disorders. McClellan and Katz (2001) presented a list of attributes of children's social competence based on the results of research on children's social competence and research that compared children who are socially accepted with children who are not. The focus is on certain individual characteristics of the child, the child's social skills or their absence, and the child's relationship with peers.

The inclusion of children with developmental difficulties and problems, in general, is a process that has intensified in recent years. The curricula of

university studies of early and preschool education today are richer in content related to specific knowledge in this sense (Radetić-Paić, 2018). Moreover, new generations of educators are more exposed to working with children with internalizing behaviour problems, while older generations have encountered them less, among other things, due to terminological inconsistencies and difficulties in diagnosis. It can therefore be concluded that younger generations of experts in educational practice have greater responsibility and challenges (Radetić-Paić, 2018; Westwood and Graham, 2003). Kiš-Glavaš (2000) also came across data that younger experts and experts with less than twenty years of work experience in education show more positive attitudes toward inclusion than their older colleagues.

On the other hand, individual studies (Blewitt et al., 2021; Vukadin, 2021) have shown that research participants with longer work experience rate responsible decision-making higher than younger colleagues, and it is concluded that longer work experience in a certain profession provides greater security and self-confidence when making certain decisions. Also, less work experience in the profession is an obstacle to the development of one's own competencies. Research participants were aware of the importance, on the one hand, of children's social-emotional competencies, but also of their own, and emphasized the importance of "training" their own skills and the help of the wider community in developing them (Blewitt et al., 2021). In their research, Emam and Mohamed (2011) examined the connection between self-efficacy and attitudes toward the inclusion of children with disabilities, which included work experience, and reported that educators with more work experience have more positive attitudes in this regard.

As a result of the above, the assumption was that educators with different work experience would show specific differences in the self-assessments of their own competencies to work with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems.

The general goal of the research was to explore the educators' self-assessments of their own competencies when it comes to internalizing problems in the behaviour of early and preschool children, considering the length of work experience.

The specific objectives of the research were as follows:

1. To explore the self-assessments of educators' competencies for working with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems, considering the length of work experience.
2. To explore the self-assessments of educators' knowledge about internalizing problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age, considering the length of work experience.

3. To explore the self-assessments of the frequency of teacher training on internalizing problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age concerning the length of work experience.

4. To explore educators' self-assessments of specific knowledge about phenomenological forms, individual characteristics, characteristics of social skills absences, and relationships with peers of early and preschool children with internalizing behavioural problems, considering the length of work experience.

The following four hypotheses were put forward in the research:

H1: Educators with a greater amount of work experience self-assess their competencies to work with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behaviour problems better than educators with less work experience;

H2: Educators with a greater amount of work experience self-assess their knowledge about internalizing problems in the behaviour of early and preschool children better than educators with less work experience;

H3: Educators with a greater amount of work experience self-assess a higher frequency of training on internalizing problems in the behaviour of early and preschool children than educators with less work experience;

H4: There are differences in educators' self-assessments of specific knowledge about phenomenological forms, individual characteristics, characteristics of lack of social skills, and relationships with peers of early and preschool children among educators with different amounts of work experience.

METHODOLOGY

Sample of participants

111 educators participated in the research. The research included educators from two local and thirteen regional kindergartens of the Istrian County from sixty-two educational groups. Teachers from eleven nursery groups and fifty-one kindergarten groups participated in the research. The age of the children within the mentioned groups ranged from 12 months to 7 years.

Most research participants were female – 107 of them, which is 96.4%. There were 4 male participants, which is 3.6%. Men have started to be employed as educators in early and preschool education institutions, but there are not a lot of them compared with female educators.

The age group of educators from 20 to 29 years included 21.6% or 24 educators. The age group from 30 to 39 years included 28.8% or 32 educators. A total of 24.3% or 27 educators were between 40 to 49 years, while 16.3% or 18 educators were from 50 to 59 years of age. The fewest educators belonged to the age group of 60 and over, namely 9% of the research participants, i.e., 10 educators.

The largest percentage of educators, 71.2% of them, were bachelor's degree holders, 25.2% of educators had completed graduate university studies, and

0.9% had completed the former two-year Study of preschool education. The remaining 2.7% of participants were non-professional substitutes (highly educated professors and people with a high school diploma).

According to years of work experience, the study participants were divided into three groups: those with up to 10 years of work experience, those with 11 to 30 years of work experience, and those with more than 31 years of work experience (Table 1).

Table 1

Research participants according to years of work experience in early and preschool education institutions

years of work experience	f	%
up to 10	46	41.4
11–30	45	40.5
31 and more	20	18.1
	111	100

Items

The instrument created for the purposes of this research consisted of 17 closed-ended and combined-type questions related to the competencies of educators in working with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems. The reliability of the measuring instrument is relatively acceptable (Cronbach's $\alpha=.620$). Internal consistency is relatively low, but the variables are positively correlated. For the purposes of this research, the following items were analysed:

1. I consider myself competent to work with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems.

2. How do you assess your knowledge about internalizing behavioural problems of early and preschool children?

3. How often do you study literature or improve yourself in any way, and is it related to internalizing problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age?

4. I can recognize the following phenomenological forms, individual characteristics, characteristics of lack of social skills, and relationships with peers characterizing children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems.

Assessments for the first three questions were made on a Likert-type scale. The last question asked consisted of four subscales: phenomenological forms (11), individual characteristics (13), characteristics of lack of social skills (13), and relationships with peers (3). Possible answers were yes/no.

Research and data processing methods

The research was conducted via an anonymous online questionnaire in the period from February to April 2024. Completing the questionnaire was voluntary, and educators could withdraw from it at any time. At the same time, ethical principles were respected in this research. Educators were introduced to the topic and the reasons for conducting the research. Data collection using this method was chosen in order to make the research results as credible as possible and to speed up and make it easier for the participants to complete the questionnaire.

Data were processed based on basic statistical parameters, χ^2 -test, multivariate analysis of variance, and discriminant analysis, which are an integral part of the licensed SPSS program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the first hypothesis, which assumes that educators with more work experience self-assess their competencies to work with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems better than do educators with less work experience do, the results showed (Table 2) that the observed fraction of deviations of the observed frequencies from the theoretical or expected frequencies can be considered significant at the $p = .01$ level, given that its χ^2 -test values were higher than the threshold values at the corresponding degree of freedom ($df = 8$). Educators with more than 31 years of work experience, according to the absolute frequency, were the most likely to agree that they had the competence to work with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems (70%), while educators with the least work experience were the least likely to agree with this assertion. This allowed the hypothesis to be accepted. Similar results, for slightly older children, were reported by the author Idol (2006), who showed that more work experience in inclusive groups led to better acceptance of a child with disabilities and a more competent approach in educational practice. Also, educators should meet the daily needs of children and encourage the development of each child according to their abilities. For this reason, it is possible to view the competences of breeders as “a complex mosaic of different areas of knowledge and skills that are necessarily included in the practical area of every professional” (Slunjski et al., 2006, p. 46). The educator should possess professional and personal competencies and have a positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with behavioural problems in regular educational systems for inclusion to be successful, which also includes creating an environment in which every child has enough opportunities to learn and meet their needs (Bukvić, 2014).

Table 2

Relative and absolute frequencies and χ^2 -test values – Competences for working with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems

item/year of work experience		up to 10	11–30	31 and more	χ^2	p
1) I consider myself competent to work with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems	I don't agree at all	2 (4.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	21.538	.006*
	I mostly disagree	12 (26.1%)	3 (6.7%)	3 (15%)		
	I neither agree nor disagree	20 (43.5%)	22 (48.9%)	3 (15%)		
	I mostly agree	9 (19.6%)	19 (42.2%)	13 (65%)		
	I completely agree	3 (6.5%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (5%)		

The results of the answer to the question *How do you evaluate your knowledge about internalizing problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age* (Table 3) showed that the deviations of the observed frequencies from the theoretical or expected frequencies can be considered significant ($p = .025$), given that the values of the χ^2 -test were higher than the threshold values on the corresponding degree of freedom ($df = 8$). Educators with the most years of work experience assessed their knowledge about internalizing problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age as excellent and very good, whereas educators with the least work experience considered their knowledge largely insufficient (23%) and sufficient (26.1%). Thus, it was possible to accept the hypothesis that educators with more work experience self-assess their knowledge about internalized problems in the behaviour of early and preschool children better than do educators with less work experience.

In general, the inclusion of children with disabilities in preschool institutions requires knowledge and skills from at least two scientific fields: early and preschool education and educational-rehabilitation scientific branches (Skočić Mihic, 2011). Specific challenges include the high qualifications of educators, an appropriate learning environment, an inclusive curriculum, didactic activities, and continuous assessment and improvement of developmental activities (Bouillet, 2011). Earlier research in this sense showed that the self-assessments of experts who are satisfied with their knowledge have more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with problems in regular settings (Kiš-Glavaš, 2000). The advantages for educators whose groups include children with

disabilities (Mikas and Roudi, 2012) are the enrichment of experiences and the ability to find new strategies, approaches and methods that lead to high-quality and effective solutions, as well as the need for additional professional learning.

Table 3

Relative and absolute frequencies and χ^2 -test values – knowledge about internalizing problems in the behaviour of early and preschool children

item/year of work experience		up to 10	11–30	31 and more	χ^2	p
2) How do you assess your knowledge about internalizing behavioural problems of early and preschool children?	insufficiently	11 (23.9%)	7 (15.6%)	2 (10%)	18.959	.015*
	enough	12 (26.1%)	8 (17.8%)	0 (0%)		
	good	18 (39.1%)	19 (42.2%)	8 (40%)		
	very good	5 (10.9%)	11 (24.4%)	9 (45%)		
	excellent	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)		

The answers to the question *How often do you study literature or improve yourself in any way, and that it is related to internalized problems in the behaviour of early and preschool children* (Table 4) were distributed in such a way that educators with the most work experience most frequently improved themselves in different ways. Over 50% of the educators with less than 10 years of work experience self-assessed that they rarely or never improved. Deviations of the observed frequencies from the theoretical or expected frequencies can be considered significant at the $p=.025$ level, given that the χ^2 -test values were higher than the corresponding threshold values at the corresponding degree of freedom ($df=8$). Considering the results, it was possible to accept the hypothesis that educators with more work experience self-assess a higher frequency of training on internalized problems in the behaviour of early and preschool children than do educators with less work experience. It can be assumed that educators with more work experience improve more often due to the fact that they recognize the need and necessity of lifelong learning to increase the quality of educational practice and have greater responsibility in this sense (Blewitt et al., 2021). On the other hand, educators, especially female educators who make up the largest part of the population of this profession, with less experience in the years after completing their studies, can be assumed to be mostly busy starting a family and are less oriented towards regular training of any kind.

Kyriacou (2001) also concludes that stress among educators is increased at the beginning of their professional career.

The importance of the need to improve for everyday educational practice in different ways during a professional career is evident from the results of research (Zrilić et al., 2022), in which the results showed that 46% of educators estimated that they acquired knowledge during formal education, 51% of educators acquired knowledge about working with children with disabilities during professional training, and 46.7% of educators acquired the same through informal education. In addition, educators who have received additional professional training for working with children with disabilities feel more competent (Skočić Mihić, 2011).

Table 4

Relative and absolute frequencies and values of the χ^2 -test – Frequency of learning about internalizing problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age

item/year of work experience		up to10	11–30	31 and more	χ^2	p
3) How often do you study literature or improve yourself in any way, and is it related to internalizing problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age?	once a year	7 (15.2%)	7 (15.6%)	2 (10%)	18.310	.019*
	once in 6 months	12 (26.1%)	15 (33.3%)	8 (40%)		
	once a month	2 (4.3%)	5 (11.1%)	6 (30%)		
	rarely	20 (43.5%)	18 (40%)	4 (20%)		
	never	5 (10.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)		

For the fourth hypothesis related to the self-assessments of educators with different lengths of work experience in specific knowledge on four subscales, arithmetic means (Table 5), with respect to the direction of the answers, show that educators believe that they are best able to recognize the following phenomenological forms and characteristics of children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems:

- spoiledness
- does not appropriately express anger and frustration
- seclusion
- tearfulness
- low self-confidence.

Some authors (Shaw and Wood, 2009) link spoiledness with children's anger and frustration, i.e., they refer to spoiledness as a kind of epidemic of modern

times in which parents believe that their life should be without frustration. They believe that the reason for this is that parents often spend little time with their children, so out of a guilty conscience, they do not set boundaries for the child in the short time they spend together. Avoiding the experience of frustration in a child does not develop empathy, nor does it develop social competence. Fulfilling all the child's wishes and rewarding directly supports inappropriate behaviour and thus reduces the possibility of the child understanding what is positive and what is negative in some behaviour (Raundalen, 1998).

On the other hand, explanations of the causes of children's social withdrawal are reduced to a lack of social skills. However, the following question has also been raised (Lebedina Manzoni, 2010): Does anxiety interfere with social interactions and thereby condition their avoidance, or do socially withdrawn children possess social skills that would enable them to interact with peers? Crying can be associated with symptoms of depression, which have different manifestations in children than in adults. By looking at all factors, depression in children is considered a clinically significant problem when a behaviour that lasts for a long time, for example crying, occurs together with other symptoms, and represents unusual, deviant behaviour in a certain child interfering with his/her daily functioning (Vulić -Prtorić, 2004). Ljubetić (2009) also believes that one should be careful when talking about crying and withdrawal in children of early and preschool age in order to avoid labelling, because these problems can be solved in a relatively easy way by applying appropriate, adapted, and individualized educational procedures.

Table 5

Basic statistical parameters

Items	N	Min	Max	M	St. Dev
timidity	111	1.00	2.00	1.2793	.45068
reticence	111	1.00	2.00	1.5495*	.49980
dispirited	111	1.00	2.00	1.1351	.34342
tearfulness	111	1.00	2.00	1.5405*	.50061
shame	111	1.00	2.00	1.2342	.42544
depression	111	1.00	2.00	1.0541	.22715
low self-confidence	111	1.00	2.00	1.5405*	.50061
laziness	111	1.00	2.00	1.1892	.39344
boredom	111	1.00	2.00	1.1802	.38608
pampering	111	1.00	2.00	1.5766*	.49634
neurotic disorders	111	1.00	2.00	1.1081	.31193
he/she is usually in a bad mood	111	1.00	2.00	1.2793	.45068

Table 5 (continued)

Items	N	Min	Max	M	St. Dev
he/she is overly dependent on adults	111	1.00	2.00	1.4505	.49980
as a rule, he/she does not like coming to kindergarten	111	1.00	2.00	1.1892	.39344
he/she does not cope well with social rejection by peers	111	1.00	2.00	1.3423	.47665
he/she fails to achieve friendship with one or two children	111	1.00	2.00	1.3063	.46305
he/she shows no capacity for empathy	111	1.00	2.00	1.2613	.44131
he/she shows no sense of humor	111	1.00	2.00	1.0631	.24418
he/she controls the expression of feelings	111	1.00	2.00	1.1712	.37837
he/she is sad for no apparent reason	111	1.00	2.00	1.2793	.45068
he/she is very critical of him/herself	111	1.00	2.00	1.2162	.41353
he/she seems worried	111	1.00	2.00	1.2072	.40714
he/she seems confused	111	1.00	2.00	1.1982	.40045
he/she worries about making a mistake	111	1.00	2.00	1.3784	.48718
he/she does not approach other children independently	111	1.00	2.00	1.3514	.47956
he/she does not clearly express his wishes and preferences	111	1.00	2.00	1.2432	.43099
he/she does not adequately seek the satisfaction of needs	111	1.00	2.00	1.2613	.44131
he/she can easily be intimidated or disturbed by the behavior of other children	111	1.00	2.00	1.2252	.41963
he/she does not express anger and frustration in an appropriate way	111	1.00	2.00	1.5586*	.49881
he/she cannot join a group of children playing or working	111	1.00	2.00	1.3604	.48228
he/she does not participate in joint discussions	112	1.00	2.00	1.1161	.32175
he/she has difficulty sharing toys or incentives with other children	111	1.00	2.00	1.2252	.41963
he/she shows little interest in others	111	1.00	2.00	1.1712	.37837
he/she attracts attention in inadequate ways	111	1.00	2.00	1.2793	.45068

Table 5 (continued)

Items	N	Min	Max	M	St. Dev
he/she is dormant in most social contacts	111	1.00	2.00	1.0631	.24418
he/she feels uncomfortable when he has to say something out loud in front of a group of children or adults	111	1.00	2.00	1.3333	.47354
he/she shows discomfort around other children or adults	111	1.00	2.00	1.0811	.27420
other children, as a rule, do not accept him/her, reject and ignore him/her	111	1.00	2.00	1.1532	.36177
other children do not invite him/her to join them in play or work	111	1.00	2.00	1.4865	.50208
other children do not choose him/her as a friend or show that they like to play with him/her	111	1.00	2.00	1.2523	.43627

A multivariate analysis of variance was used to test the differences between the groups of educators regarding the length of work experience in relation to the combination of variables on specific knowledge within the four subscales (of phenomenological forms, individual characteristics, characteristics of the absence of social skills, and relationships with peers). The analysis showed that there are statistically significant differences in the self-assessment of the specified specific knowledge among the three groups of educators with different amounts of work experience, $\Lambda=.636$, $F = 1.56$, $p=.006$.

The discriminant analysis was conducted with the purpose of determining the latent structure of differences between groups of educators with different lengths of work experience, measured in a set of 40 items that self-assess specific knowledge, which include four subscales. In this way, an effort was made to determine how much the groups of participants differ from each other and how much individual items contribute to that difference.

Given that a discriminant analysis was conducted on three groups of participants according to years of work experience (up to 10 years of work experience, from 11 to 30 years of work experience, and more than 31 years of work experience), two discriminant functions were obtained. The calculated values for the discriminant functions showed that the set of observed items significantly differentiates the groups of participants regarding the length of their work experience at the level of significance, $p=.01$ (Table 6) only for the first discriminant function. The canonical correlation for that discriminant function shows a good discriminant power of that function in a practical sense.

This made it possible to accept the last hypothesis, which assumed that there are differences in the educators' self-assessments of specific knowledge about phenomenological forms, individual characteristics, characteristics of the absence of social skills, and relationships with peers of early and preschool children in educators with different amounts of work experience.

Table 6*Statistical significance of discriminant functions*

function	% Var.	R	Λ	χ^2	df	p
1	66.3	.714	.321	100.674	80	.006
2	33.7	.588	.654	37.545	39	.536

Table 7*Structure of significant discriminant function*

Items	C	S
timidity	-.330	-.339*
shame	-.907	-.323*
as a rule, he/she doesn't like coming to kindergarten	.393	.266*
he/she seems worried	-1.347	-.250*
he/she is very critical of himself/herself	.735	.244*
other children, as a rule, do not accept him/her, reject and ignore him/her	.753	.236*
he/she seems confused	.389	-.233*
he/she controls the expression of feelings	.999	.227*
dispirited	-.177	-.219*
tearfulness	-.462	-.218*
he/she is overly dependent on adults	.364	
he/she worries about making a mistake	.193	.217*
laziness	-.176	-.216*
he/she is sad for no apparent reason	.193	-.215*

By looking at the structure of the significant discriminant function (Table 7), we can learn that the items that participate in the creation of the first discriminant function on which the groups of educators differ statistically significantly about the amount of work experience are as follows:

- timidity
- shame

- as a rule, he/she does not like coming to kindergarten
- he/she seems worried
- he/she is very critical of himself/herself
- other children, as a rule, do not accept him/her, reject him/her and ignore him/her
- he/she seems confused
- he/she controls the expression of feelings
- dispirited
- tearfulness
- he/she is overly dependent on adults
- he/she worries about making a mistake
- laziness and
- he/she is sad for no apparent reason.

Table 8

Centroids of groups

f	1	2
Up to 10	-.901	-.561
11-30	.061	.867
31 and over	1.935	-.662

Considering the signs of the groups' centroids and their values for each group (Table 8), it was concluded that the group of participants with more than 31 years of work experience achieves the highest results in the area of knowledge on the scale about the individual characteristics of early and preschool children with internalizing behavioural disorders. Unlike them, educators with less work experience, up to 10 years, predominantly recognize the phenomenological forms of internalizing behavioural disorders.

Educators are expected to have good knowledge of the child's developmental stages and influence on the child's behaviour, and recognition of deviations from the usual psychosocial functioning and behaviour of a child of a certain age enables systematic monitoring of the child and its overall development, for which the system of early and preschool education is particularly suitable (Panić and Bouillet, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The results of the research showed that educators with the longest amount of work experience, 31 and more years of work experience, self-assess their competencies to work with children of early and preschool age with internalizing behavioural problems better than do educators with less work experience,

and the same is true for their knowledge about internalizing problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age and a higher frequency of training in this area. It was also concluded that there are differences in the self-assessments of educators with different lengths of work experience regarding specific knowledge about phenomenological forms of internalizing behavioural problems, individual characteristics of such children, characteristics of the absence of social skills and relationships with peers in such a way that the group of participants who have more than 31 years of work experience achieves the highest results in the field of knowledge about the individual characteristics of early and preschool children with internalizing behavioural disorders. Educators with up to 10 years of work experience predominantly recognize more significantly the phenomenological forms of internalized behavioural disorders.

The limitations of the research, and consequently of the interpretation of the results, refer to the convenience sample of participants, which included, among other things, 2.7% of participants who were non-professional substitutes, as well as to the questionnaire that was created for the purposes of this research, with relatively acceptable reliability. Additionally, the questionnaire did not examine the skills and attitudes, or values of the participants, which are integral competencies.

The value of this research is that the obtained results are scientific indicators of self-assessment of competencies by educators themselves, which can be objective and important guidelines for the identification of specific difficulties related to competencies in the context of internalized problems in the behaviour of children of early and preschool age in immediate educational practice, as well as for further teacher training, especially for educators with less work experience. Moreover, educators in their daily direct work with children of early and preschool age have favourable conditions in which they can easily prevent and detect internalizing behavioural problems; however, for this purpose, they need continuous lifelong training and support.

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KULTURA IZGLEDA I POREMEĆENA PREHRAMBENA PONAŠANJA KAO NAČIN OBLIKOVANJA IDEALNOGA TIJELA KOD ADOLESCENATA

Sažetak: Zapadna kultura izgleda promiče važnost tijela i izgleda. Privlačno, vitko tijelo osigurava uspjeh i prihvaćenost u društvu. Prikazi savršeno oblikovanih tijela kod promatrača stvaraju osjećaj nezadovoljstva vlastitim tijelom te potiču želju za postizanjem idealnoga izgleda. Tjelesni izgled postao je važan konstrukt među adolescentima i mladima. Velik dio njih smatra izgled važnim dijelom osobnosti. Kako bi postigli društveno prihvatljiv mršavi izgled, mladi pribjegavaju nezdravim prehrambenim ponašanjima. Stroge dijete i nezdravo prehrambeno ponašanje mogu potaknuti razvoj poremećaja hranjenja. Cilj je rada prikazati utjecaj kulture izgleda na percepciju tijela kod adolescenata, s naglaskom na poremećene obrasce hranjenja kao način oblikovanja tijela. U radu je upotrijebljen sociokulturni pristup. Kao uzroci nezadovoljstva tijelom i rizici razvoja poremećaja hranjenja promatraju se okolišni činitelji kao što su mediji, obiteljsko okruženje i vršnjačke grupe. U zaključku se među sociokulturnim rizicima izdvaja značajan pritisak vršnjaka te ističe potreba istraživanja.

Ključne riječi: adolescenti, mediji, nezadovoljstvo tijelom, obiteljsko okruženje, vršnjaci

UVOD

Ideal ljepote povijesni je i kulturni fenomen. Standardi koji definiraju ljepotu mijenjali su se kroz povijest u ovisnosti od kulturnih, društvenih i okolišnih utjecaja. Za razliku od ranijih vremena kada je žensko tijelo s oblinama označavalo zdravlje i ujedno ljepotu, nagla se promjena dogodila šezdesetih godina prošloga stoljeća, otkada su ljepota i privlačnost tijela definirane vitkim izgledom i skladno oblikovanim tijelom.

Istraživanjima je pokazano kako ljepota lica i tijela imaju važnu ulogu u društvenom životu (Dimitrov i Kroumpouzos, 2023). Privlačan izgled donosi brojne prednosti i privilegije. Tijelo oblikovano u skladu sa suvremenim idealima ljepote jamči bogatije društvene interakcije i mreže. Ljepota osigurava prihvaćenost i uspjeh u profesionalnom i privatnom životu. Lijepi ljudi brže nalaze posao, dobivaju bolje ocjene i napreduju u karijeri. Odrasli i djeca preferiraju privlačne u odnosu na neprivlačne ljude (Griffin i Langlois, 2006). Pozitivna vjerovanja i stavove o privlačnim ljudima Dion i sur. (1972) nazvali su stereotipom „ljepota je dobra”.

Danas više negoli ikada ranije u povijesti dobrobiti koje donosi lijepi izgled motiviraju pojedince na kontinuirani rad na tijelu, usavršavanje tjelovježbom, prehranom i drugim načinima. U tu su svrhu na raspolaganju gotovo neograničeni kapaciteti različitih industrija ljepote i vitkosti koje bilježe kontinuirano povećanje profita s pozitivnim prognozama. Uz već poznate kanale promocije, one sve više profitiraju od društvenih mreža i *influencera*, koji su osobito utjecajni kod mlađih dobnih skupina.

Važnost izgleda i tijela, fenomen koji je prvobitno vezan uz zapadnu kulturu, sve više postaje globalan. Univerzaliziranjem kulturnih normi tijelo postaje moćan instrument u privatnom i društvenom životu ljudi diljem svijeta te nadilazi kulturne razlike. Kulturne norme izgleda i tjelesne težine komuniciraju se putem medija i društvenih kanala te su većinski usmjerene prema ženskoj populaciji, međutim, u posljednje vrijeme sve više uključuju i muškarce. Dok žene nastoje izgubiti na težini i postići vitki izgled, muškarci teže ostvarenju idealnoga, mišićavoga tijela. Pomjeraju se ne samo rodne, već i dobne granice te se svijest o važnosti izgleda i tijela pojavljuje u sve ranijoj dobi. Mladi uočavaju povezanost izgleda i ostvarivanja osobnih i društvenih dobrobiti te odabiru različite, ponekad rigorozne i po zdravlje opasne načine oblikovanja tijela.

Premda nisu isključivi, društveni i kulturni čimbenici važni su utjecajni faktori koji, promičući ideal ljepote mršavosti i savršenoga tijela, promiču osvještavanje vlastitih tjelesnih odstupanja od promoviranoga ideala. Internaliziranjem slika tijela oblikovanoga u skladu sa suvremenim idealom ljepote, pojedinci procjenjuju i evaluiraju vlastito tijelo, uslijed čega često

nastaje nezadovoljstvo izgledom, što dovodi do nezdravih načina kontrole težine, među kojima su i poremećena ponašanja hranjenja

U ovome radu cilj je prikazati utjecaj suvremene kulture izgleda na percepciju i način oblikovanja tijela kod adolescenata, s naglaskom na poremećene obrasce hranjenja kao ponašanja oblikovanja tijela. U prvome dijelu rada raspravlja se o suvremenoj kulturi izgleda i značenju tijela u suvremenom društvu iz perspektive društvene znanosti te se razmatraju društveni činitelji percepcije tijela. U drugome dijelu rada fokus je na razvoju nezadovoljstva tijelom kod mlade populacije i ponašanjima poremećenog hranjenja kojima se ostvaruje društveno promovirani i vrjednovani izgled posredstvom sociokulturnih rizičnih činitelja, medija, vršnjaka i obiteljskog okruženja.

KULTURA IZGLEDA I TIJELO U DRUŠTVENOJ TEORIJI

Zapadnu kulturu koja promiče važnost tijela i izgleda, dok tijelo percipira kao prezentaciju osobe, Serna (2018, str. 129) naziva kulturom izgleda (engl. *appearance culture*). Prema ovoj autorici, zapadna kultura moćan je konstrukt koji stalno potiče pojedince na razmišljanje o zdravlju i izgledu kao prvenstveno osobnom izboru te ih različitim sredstvima potiče na stalni rad na poboljšanju tijela. U kulturi izgleda mediji nas uvjeravaju kako je tijelo mjera sveukupne sreće i osobne vrijednosti u društvu te da na tijelo treba gledati kao objekt koji zahtijeva stalnu pozornost i održavanje. Kultura izgleda poziva žene da budu vitke i privlačne, dok istodobno inzistira na tome da je takav izgled nešto čemu svaka žena treba stremiti i željeti kao moralnu obvezu, istovremena smatrajući to osobnim izborom i slobodom.

U kulturi izgleda tijelo se razotkriva i izlaže pogledima, za što se upotrebljavaju različiti mediji. Oni posreduju društvene standarde ljepote te uvjeravaju pojedince kako su ti standardi njihovi, odnosno osobni. Duncan (1994, str. 49) razlikuje dva glavna mehanizma kojima časopisi utječu na odnos žena prema njihovim tijelima. Prvi je „učinkovita inicijativa” (engl. *efficacy initiative*), koja poziva žene da se obvežu kako će poduzeti promjenu, dok je drugi mehanizam „osjećati se dobro znači izgledati dobro” (engl. *feeling good means looking good*), koji naglašava važnost zdravlja, ali stavlja naglasak na izgled. U kulturi izgleda, s obzirom na prednosti koje donosi lijep izgled, tijelo se poima kao alat, dok se istovremeno objektivizira jer postaje projekt na kojemu je potreban stalan rad s ciljem njegova usavršavanja.

U skladu s afirmacijom kulture izgleda od osamdesetih godina prošloga stoljeća, tijelo postaje predmet proučavanja mnogih znanosti koje na različite načine analiziraju i razumijevaju tijelo. U istome razdoblju tijelo postaje predmet sociološkog interesa. Nettleton (2021, str. 44–45) izdvaja tri sociološka pristupa objašnjenju tijela. Prvi se odnosi na društvenu regulaciju tijela, odnosno na

načine na koje institucije reguliraju, kontroliraju, prate i upotrebljavaju tijela. Premda su pojedinci uvjereni kako kontroliraju svoja tijela, ona su politizirana. Dobar su primjer rasprave o pobačaju ili eutanaziji. Drugi pristup odnosi se na ontologiju tijela, koja postavlja pitanja što tijelo zapravo jest. Autori koji pripadaju ovoj perspektivi smatraju kako je u kasno-modernom društvu sve više nesigurnosti po pitanju toga što tijelo predstavlja. Za većinu je ono više ili manje socijalno konstruirano, međutim, postoje varijacije. Dok neki smatraju kako je ono jednostavno tvorevina diskurzivnog konteksta, drugi su mišljenja kako tijela pokazuju određene karakteristike na koje utječu društveni i kulturni čimbenici. Treći pristup polaže pozornost na način na koji se tijelo doživljava i živi. Ovaj fenomenološki pristup prihvaća da je tijelo u određenoj mjeri društveno oblikovano, međutim, nalaže uzeti u obzir što tijelo, odnosno što utjelovljeni akter radi. S obzirom na to da je ovdje riječ više o utjelovljenju nego o tijelu, društvena reguliranost i društvena konstruiranost tijela ostaju središnji pojmovi za razumijevanje tijela.

Izniman značaj tijela Giddens (1991, str. 102) objašnjava krizom identiteta koja nastaje u post-tradicionalnom društvu. Naime, siguran i stabilan identitet više ne proizlazi automatski iz položaja pojedinca u društvenoj strukturi. Identitet i osjećaj sebe u postmodernom društvu nisu datost; pojedinci ne mogu računati na svoje tradicionalno mjesto u društvu koje je određivala klasna pripadnost, spol ili obitelj. Umjesto toga, postoji refleksivno „ja”, koje je rezultat onoga što dolazi iz mnoštva izvora iz okruženja. Ontološka nesigurnost i refleksivna zabrinutost za tijelo dogodila se zbog slabljenja tradicije. Identitet se utemeljuje u tijelu, ono je što pojedinac ima i što jest. Tijelo postaje sredstvo izražavanja individualnosti, težnji i grupne pripadnosti.

Featherstone (1982) promatra tijelo u potrošačkoj kulturi u kojoj je uspostavljen novi odnos tijela i jastva. Unutar potrošačke kulture spajaju se unutarnje tijelo – koje podrazumijeva brigu o zdravlju i funkcioniranju tijela i koje zahtijeva oporavak u slučaju bolesti, zlostavljanja ili starenja, i vanjsko tijelo – koje se odnosi na izgled, kretanje i kontrolu tijela unutar društvenoga prostora. Glavna svrha održavanja unutarnjeg tijela postaje poboljšanje izgleda vanjskog tijela. Svijest o izgledu stvara se usporedbom s idealiziranim slikama ljudskoga tijela koje se umnožavaju u reklamama i vizualnim medijima. Slike pozivaju na usporedbe, one su stalni podsjetnici na ono što jesmo i što bismo uz trud mogli postati. U suvremenome je društvu tijelo postalo putovnica za sve što je dobro u životu. Zdravlje, mladost, ljepota, seks i kondicija pozitivne su osobine koje se negom tijela mogu postići i sačuvati. Budući da se izgled uzima kao refleks vlastitoga jastva, kazne za zanemarivanje tijela jesu smanjenje prihvatljivosti osobe, pokazatelj lijenosti, niskog samopoštovanja, pa čak i moralnoga neuspjeha.

Društvena važnost izgleda i tijela objašnjiva je Cooleyjevim konceptom (2017) „zrcalnog ja” (engl. *looking-glass self*). Prema ovom autoru, društvo

i pojedinci nisu odvojeni fenomeni, nego su aspekti istoga. „Zrcalno ja” podrazumijeva da se identitet osobe izgrađuje na osnovi toga kako drugi percipiraju tu osobu. Drugim riječima, pojedinci razvijaju saznanja o sebi na osnovi toga kako ih drugi vide te se oblikuju kroz mišljenja drugih. Ako je riječ o tijelu, percepcija vlastitoga tijela rezultat je naše slike u očima drugih. Prema ovoj teoriji, razlog nezadovoljstva tijelom mogao bi biti u negativnoj evaluaciji drugih osoba ili grupe.

Interpretacija koncepta imidž tijela (engl. *body image*)¹ također odražava transfer od percepcije tijela pojedinca prema percepciji tijela od strane drugih. Dok Schilder (1935) tumači imidž tijela kao način na koji se tijelo prikazuje nama samima, odnosno kao sliku vlastitoga tijela koju formiramo u svome umu, Featherstone (2010) smatra kako se imidž tijela može zamisliti kao vizualni osjećaj slike koju drugi imaju o osobi na osnovi njezina izgleda. U nedostatku zrcala, snimanje lica i tijela kamerom postaje dominantni način prikazivanja slike tijela, ali i zamišljanja slike vlastitoga tijela u modernoj kulturi. U modernoj potrošačkoj kulturi pojavljuje se novi pojedinac koji znatnu pozornost polaže na svoj vanjski izgled i upravljanje dojmovima, što možemo nazvati upravljanje imidžem tijela (engl. *body image management*).

Kada je riječ o nezadovoljstvu tijelom i s time povezanim poremećenim obrascima hranjenja, u sociološkom istraživanju osobito je zastupljen sociokulturni pristup. Temeljna je premisa ovog pristupa da društveni činitelji imaju snažan utjecaj na razvoj percepcije tijela i to putem kulture izgleda koja vrednuje i potiče kulturne ideale ljepote i oblika tijela. Medijske slike identificirane su kao središnji elementi kulture izgleda koji snažno utječu na oblikovanje standarda izgleda (Field i sur., 1999). Sociokulturni utjecaji posreduju ideal ljepote mršavosti te snažno utječu na stigmatizaciju prekomjerne težine. Ovi su činitelji važna varijabla nastanka i razvoja poremećenih prehrambenih ponašanja i poremećaja hranjenja.²

Ponašanja poremećenog hranjenja mogu se objasniti teorijom poticanja i društvene usporedbe (Festinger, 1954). Društveno poticanje proces je kojim osobe usvajaju i internaliziraju stavove i ponašanja koja su odobrili ili prakticiraju cijenjenu drugi. Kada je riječ o oblikovanju tijela, to uključuje

¹ Prema Quittkat i sur., (2019) imidž tijela multidimenzionalni je konstrukt koji uključuje ponašanja povezana s tijelom (ponašanja provjere), percepciju tjelesnih značajki (izgled, težina) te kognitivno-afektivnu komponentu koja uključuje znanja, stavove i osjećaje spram tijela. Negativne misli i osjećaji o vlastitome tijelu rezultiraju nezadovoljstvom tijelom.

² Poremećaji hranjenja potaknuti su psihološkim, biološkim, obiteljskim, okolišnim, socijalnim, kulturnim faktorima (Garner, 1993; Tothova 2019). Barakat i sur., (2023), na osnovi analize 284 studije, izdvojili su devet skupina rizičnih čimbenika: genetika, gastrointestinalna mikrobiotika i autoimune reakcije, djetinjstvo i rana izloženost u adolescenciji, osobine ličnosti i mentalno zdravlje, spol, socioekonomski status, pripadnost etničkoj manjini, izgled tijela, društveni utjecaj i elitni sport.

komentare i aktivnosti drugih osoba kojima se potiče ili podržava ideal mršavosti uslijed čega nastaje nezadovoljstvo tijelom. Poticanje može dolaziti od medija koji prikazuju i promiču mršavost, ali i od osoba u okruženju koje su zaokupljene vlastitom težinom, provode dijete i druga ponašanja kontrole težine te kritiziraju osobe s viškom kilograma. Pojedinci uspoređivanjem oponašaju druge u svojoj okolini. Ovo je ponašanje osobito znakovito za vršnjačke grupe. Primjerice, ako neka djevojčica upotrebljava načine kontroliranja težine i time postiže rezultate, takvo ponašanje može postati uzor njezinim vršnjakinjama. Iz društvene ili grupne okoline proizlaze poticaji prema zaokupljenosti izgledom tijela, držanju dijeta ili drugi načini oblikovanja tijela i kontrole težine.³

Na osnovi okolišnih rizika, Thompson i sur. (1999) razvili su tripartitni sociokulturni model utjecaja na tjelesni izgled i razvitak poremećaja hranjenja. Ovim se modelom prikazuju mehanizmi utjecaja društvenih i kulturnih rizičnih čimbenika poput medija, grupa vršnjaka i obiteljskog okruženja, koji utječu na internalizaciju ideala mršavog izgleda i usporedbu izgleda s drugima, uslijed čega osoba postaje nezadovoljna tijelom, što može biti okidač za razvoj poremećaja hranjenja (Ata i sur., 2015; Stice, 2002; Rymarczyk, 2021).

NEZADOVOLJSTVO TIJELOM U ADOLESCENTSKOJ DOBI

U kulturi izgleda tijelo se nalazi na plakatima, stranicama časopisa, u filmovima. Savršeno oblikovano, digitalno manipulirano tijelo promiče nerealistične standarde ljepote koji negativno utječu na promatrače stvarajući nelagodu i nezadovoljstvo vlastitim izgledom.⁴

Istraživanjima je potvrđeno kako se prikazi savršenih tijela u oglašavanju, modi i industrijama ljepote povezuju s nezadovoljstvom tijelom, lošim raspoloženjima, smanjenim samopoštovanjem i povećanim rizikom od ponašanja poremećenog hranjenja (McBride i sur., 2019).

Prikazi savršenog izgleda osobito utječu na poimanje i percepciju tijela kod adolescenata. Kod ove dobne skupine tjelesni je izgled važan konstrukt te veliki dio adolescenata smatra izgled važnim dijelom osobnosti (Grosick i sur., 2013). Oni su svjesni toga da dobar izgled osigurava atraktivnost, popularnost u grupi i uspješnost u životu te podiže samopouzdanje. Kako bi ostvarili savršeno tijelo koje će biti prihvatljivo njima i osobama koje su im važne, često odabiru različite načine manipuliranja tjelesnom težinom (Ata i sur., 2015).

³ Posljednjih desetljeća pojavljuje se utjecaj interneta i društvenih mreža koji omogućuju komunikaciju ideala ljepote, ali i komunikaciju osoba s poremećajima hranjenja. Poznati su primjer toga stranice „pro-ana” i „pro-mia” koje okupljaju djevojke koje razmjenjuju iskustva i ideje kako smršavjeti i prevariti obitelj koja im to brani (Ambrosi-Randić i sur., 2008).

⁴ Nezadovoljstvo tijelom negativna je subjektivna procjena tijela kao cjeline ili njegovih određenih obilježja poput veličine, oblika, mišićavosti i težine (Grogan, 2016).

Razdoblje adolescencije veoma je ranjivo. Kao tranzicijski period ka odrastanju obilježavaju ga brojne tjelesne promjene, dok je samoevaluacija tjelesnog izgleda osobito izražena i stroga. U ovoj dobi mladi postaju svjesni važnosti tijela i tjelesnog izgleda koji postaju dio osobnoga identiteta i sredstvo ostvarenja društvene prihvaćenosti i ugleda. Važnost koju mladi pridaju tijelu potvrdilo je istraživanje autorice Tiggerman (2012). Mladi u dobi od 11 do 24 godine ocijenili su izgled tijela kao primarnu brigu, stavivši ga ispred konflikta u obitelji, stresa ili ovisnosti o alkoholu. Njihova razmišljanja ne samo da potvrđuju važnost izgleda nego i ukazuju i na njegovu problematičnu percepciju. Istraživanje provedeno u Velikoj Britaniji pokazalo je kako čak 79 % mladih u dobi od 11 do 16 godina smatra kako je izgled vrlo važan, dok je 52 % njih zabrinuto zbog svog izgleda (Be Real, 2017). Uslijed nesuglasja između promicanih obrazaca ljepote i vlastitoga tijela, kod adolescenata se javlja negativna percepcija tijela (Voelker i sur., 2015). Djevojke koje nisu zadovoljne svojim tijelom postaju još nezadovoljnije ako su izložene prikazima idealnoga, mršavoga tijela (Rodgers i Chabrol, 2009).

Ranija istraživanja nezadovoljstva tijelom bila su rodno orijentirana te su se fokusirala na populaciju adolescentica, potvrđujući kako veliki dio njih nije zadovoljan tijelom (Thompson i sur., 1999). Novija istraživanja sve češće uključuju i dječake. Primjerice, istraživanje Dion i sur. (2016), pokazalo je kako 50,5 % djevojčica i 35,9 % dječaka u dobi od 11 do 14 godina želi imati mršavije tijelo, dok je istraživanje Quittkat i sur., (2019), koje je proučavalo djevojčice i dječake u pred-adolescentnoj dobi, pokazalo slične omjere; 50 % djevojčica i 30 % dječaka nije bilo zadovoljno svojim tijelima. Istraživanje Jones i sur., (2004) pokazalo je kako izloženost vizualnim prikazima tijela iz časopisa izaziva nezadovoljstvo tijelom kod djevojčica, dok razgovori s prijateljima o izgledu, kao i kritika vršnjaka po pitanju izgleda utječu na nezadovoljstvo tijelom kod djevojčica i dječaka.

Svjesni nepodudarnosti promicanoga ideala i realnoga tijela, sve je više adolescenata koji izražavaju želju za modifikacijama tijela. Što mladi više smatraju kako je izgled važan, to u većoj mjeri žele promijeniti svoj izgled tijela i smanjiti težinu (Pokrajac-Bulian i sur., 2007). Istraživanje Aanesen i sur., (2017), pokazalo je kako čak 50 % dječaka i 74 % djevojčica u dobi od 14 godina žele promijeniti nešto na svom tijelu. U istraživanju Grosick i sur. (2013) utvrđeno je nezadovoljstvo tijelom kod dječaka i djevojčica, međutim, za razliku od dječaka, kod djevojčica se pokazala veća razina sklonosti prakticiranja dijetnoga ponašanja, depresije zbog izgleda i sklonosti rizičnim prehrambenim ponašanjima. Istraživanje srednjoškolaca u Hrvatskoj pokazalo je kako 65,5 % mladih pokazuje nezadovoljstvo tijelom i želju za mršavijim izgledom, od čega je većina djevojaka, čak 48,6 % (Livazović i Mudrinić, 2015).

Kako bi modificirali svoje tijelo i postigli društveno prihvatljiv izgled, mladi često pribjegavaju rizičnim načinima kontrole težine. Istraživanje Pokrajac-Bulian i sur., (2007), pokazalo je kako, s ciljem poboljšanja izgleda, dijete provodi 39,4 % djevojaka i 14,1 % mladića. Među njima, 59 % djevojaka i 59,4 % mladića navodi da netko u njihovoj obitelji provodi dijete, a 89 % djevojaka i 71,1 % mladića navodi da je netko od njihovih vršnjaka koje poznaju na dijete.

Dobne granice dijetalnoga ponašanja spuštene su do dječje dobi. Istraživanje Schur i sur. (2000) pokazalo je kako su djeca u dobi od 11 do 12 godina dobro informirana o dijetama. Dijeta za njih znači promjenu izbora hrane i tjelesno vježbanje, pri čemu je 50 % željelo smanjiti svoju težinu, dok je 16 % to pokušalo.

Stroge dijete i nezdravo prehrambeno ponašanje, u ovisnosti od intenziteta i učestalosti, mogu dovesti do razvoja poremećaja hranjenja. Prema istraživanju Patton i sur. (1999) koje je obuhvatilo 1 699 djece u dobi od 14 godina, 8 % djevojčica držalo je rigorozne dijete, dok je 60 % njih prakticiralo umjerenu dijetu. Kod djevojčica koje su držale rigorozne dijete utvrđena je 18 puta veća vjerojatnost da će razviti poremećaj hranjenja unutar 6 mjeseci od onih koje nisu ograničavale prehranu. Tijekom jednogodišnjega istraživanja na 960 djevojčica Johnson i Wardle (2005) otkrili su emotivno hranjenje, negativne stavove prema hranjenju i težini, smanjeno samopoštovanje, stres i depresiju kod djevojčica koje su nezadovoljne svojim tijelom. Recentna studija Dzielske i sur. (2020), koja je obuhvatila 26 europskih zemalja, te 639 194 adolescenata u dobi od 11, 13 i 15 godina, pokazala je učestalost ponašanja smanjenja tjelesne težine među djevojčicama od 18,0 % a kod dječaka od 10,2 %.

Ne primjenjuje se samo prakticiranje dijete, već i druga ponašanja kontrole tjelesne težine kako bi se postigla mršavost. Četverogodišnja studija koju su proveli McNight Investigators (2003) na 1 103 djevojčice, gdje su pratili njihovo stanje od 6. do 9. razreda osnovne škole, pokazala je kako je tijekom praćenja 2,9 % djevojčica razvilo djelomični ili potpuni poremećaj prehrane, a najviše njih pokazivalo je simptome bulimije. Ponašanja čišćenja otkrivena su i u istraživanju Field i sur. (1999). Tijekom godine dana, 74 od 6 982 djevojčice u dobi između 9 i 14 godina počele su prakticirati povraćanje ili uzimati laksative najmanje jednom mjesečno kako bi kontrolirale tjelesnu težinu.

Studija Croll i sur. (2002) u kojoj je sudjelovalo 81 247 učenika pokazala je kako 56 % djevojčica i 28 % dječaka u dobi od 14 do 15 godina pokazuje poremećena ponašanja hranjenja, dok su postotci kod starijih adolescenata od 17 do 18 godina nešto viši i iznose 57 % kod djevojčica i 31 % kod dječaka. Također, metaanaliza López-Gil i sur. (2023), koja je obuhvatila podatke 32 studije i uključivala 63 181 sudionika iz 16 zemalja, pokazala je kako 22 % djece i adolescenata pokazuje znakove poremećenih ponašanja hranjenja. Učestalost je veća kod djevojčica, starijih adolescenata i onih s višim indeksom tjelesne mase.

Premda se stječe dojam da je riječ o suprotnim stanjima i poremećajima, poremećaji hranjenja povezani su s prekomjernom težinom te se mogu razviti zbog tjelesne težine i pretilosti, osobito u adolescentskoj dobi. Porast indeksa tjelesne mase i precjenjivanje važnosti tjelesne težine značajni su faktori porasta rizika ponašanja reduciranja tjelesne težine kod oba spola (Dzielska i sur., 2020). Prekomjernu tjelesnu težinu kao čimbenik razvoja poremećaja u hranjenju potvrdili su Ferguson i sur. (2014). Indeks tjelesne mase kod 237 adolescentice u dobi između 10 i 17 godina usporedili su s razinom nezadovoljstva tijelom. Rezultati su pokazali kako nezadovoljstvo tijelom raste s porastom indeksa tjelesne mase; adolescentice s najnižim indeksom iskazale su najviše zadovoljstvo svojim tijelom, i obratno.

UČESTALI POREMEĆAJI HRANJENJA KOD ADOLESCENATA

Poremećaji hranjenja bihevioralna su stanja koja obilježavaju ozbiljan i stalan poremećaj ponašanja hranjenja i s time povezane uznemirujuće misli i emocije. Poremećaji hranjenja mogu biti veoma ozbiljna stanja koja utječu na fizičko, psihološko i socijalno funkcioniranje. Tipovi poremećaja hranjenja uključuju anoreksiju nervozu, bulimiju nervozu, kompulzivno prejedanje, izbjegavajući/restriktivni poremećaj uzimanja hrane, druge specifične poremećaje hranjenja, pica poremećaj i poremećaj ruminacije (American Psychiatric Association, APA, 2013).

Poremećaji hranjenja čest su medicinski i psihološki problem u adolescenciji, a mogu se javiti u dojenačkoj dobi i ranom djetinjstvu (Vidović, 2009). Poremećaji hranjenja smatraju se trećom najučestalijom kroničnom bolešću u adolescenata s visokom stopom smrtnosti (Knez i sur., 2008; Perše i sur., 2022).

Postoji spektar poremećaja hranjenja kod djece i adolescenata. Nicholls i Barrett (2015) kao najučestalije u dječjoj i ranoj adolescentskoj dobi navode ranu anoreksiju nervozu, bulimiju nervozu, poremećaj emotivnog izbjegavanja hrane, selektivno jedenje i pervazivno odbijanje hrane. Najučestaliji i najistraženiji poremećaji kod mladih jesu anoreksija nervoza, bulimija nervoza i poremećaj prejedanja.

Poremećaji hranjenja utječu na društveni i emotivni život mladih osoba. Adolescenti koji pate od poremećaja hranjenja imaju socijalne poteškoće u većoj mjeri od vršnjaka koji ne pate od poremećaja hranjenja (Patel i sur., 2016). Kod mladih su konstatirane i socijalno-emotivne poteškoće, osobito s emotivnom rekognicijom i regulacijom (Boscoe, i sur., 2021).

Anoreksiju nervozu karakterizira iskrivljena slika tijela pri čemu osoba sebe vidi težom nego što je njezina stvarna tjelesna težina. Obilježava je trajno narušen odnos prema jelu, promijenjena percepcija vlastitog izgleda, što dovodi

do restriktivnog obrasca u jedenju koji, ponekad uz kompenzacijske oblike ponašanja (vježbanje, povraćanje, korištenje diuretika i laksativa), dovodi do značajnog oštećenja fizičkoga i psihoemotivnoga zdravlja te do izrazito narušenoga socijalnog funkcioniranja (Perše i sur., 2022, str. 115). Nerijetko se osobe koje pate od anoreksije upuštaju u iscrpljujuće tjelesne aktivnosti u smislu tjelovježbe. Mogu biti zaokupljene hranom, iako izbjegavaju njezinu konzumaciju. Upuštaju se u pripremu novih recepata, proučavaju kuharice i kuhaju obroke za druge (Krleža, 2020).

Nunn i sur. opisali su osobe koje pate od anoreksije. One mogu odlučno izbjegavati hranu, imati strah od debljanja, biti zaokupljene težinom i oblikom tijela, imati poremećenu percepciju tijela, značajan gubitak težine, poremećaj raspoloženja, intenzivnu anksioznost, opsesivno-kompulzivno ponašanje i izmijenjenu obradu informacija koje dolaze iz vanjskih ili unutarnjih podražaja poput povišenog praga boli, gubitka okusa, nemogućnosti da se integriraju misli i osjećaji te nizak osjećaj samopoštovanja (2011, str. 353). Djevojke koje pate od anoreksije povlače se iz društva, razdražljive su i ne nalaze zadovoljstvo u omiljenim aktivnostima. Redovito su uspješne u školi, sklone perfekcionizmu i često pretjeruju u očekivanju svojih uspjeha (Vidović, 2009, str. 187–188).

Anoreksične djevojčice mogu izgledati prerano ostarjele, krhke i tanke, ali i kao savršeno uređene manekenke, kao da žele izazvati pažnju i divljenje. Neke su prihvatile sportski izgled, dok druge skrivaju svoju atraktivnost. Neke fanatično kontroliraju sve oko sebe, a ima onih koje su sklone samoranjavanju (obično s bulimičnim oblikom anoreksije) i razvijanju osjećaja gađenja prema sebi. Naposljetku, neke od njih mogu biti toliko zaokupljene svojim tijelom da to poprima psihotične razmjere (Nunn, 2001., prema Vidović, 2009, str. 187).

Što se tiče prognoza za oporavak, procjenjuje se potpuni oporavak kod 50 % oboljelih, poboljšanje kod 30 % oboljelih te kronično oboljenje kod 20 % oboljelih (Steinhausen, 2002, prema Neale 2020). Anoreksija ima visoku stopu smrtnosti, najvišu među drugim psihijatrijskim poremećajima i pet puta veću nego što je u populaciji određene dobi i spola. U prosjeku, smrtna posljedica najčešće su u dobi između 25 i 34 godine (Jassogne i Zdanowicz, 2018). Osobe s anoreksijom umiru od medicinskih komplikacija uslijed izgladnjivanja, dok je suicid drugi vodeći razlog smrtnosti (APA, 2013).

Nekad znakovita za mlade žene i adolescentice više i srednje klase, urbanih sredina zapadnoga svijeta, danas se anoreksija globalizira i širi na manje razvijene zemlje i sredine, sve društvene klase i etničke grupe (Bordo, 2002). Posljednjih godina bilježi se porast incidencije u mlađim dobnim skupinama. Djeca s anoreksijom nervozom opisana su već u dobi od sedam godina (Vidović, 2009:186). Prepoznaju se i „novi” podtipovi bolesti s atipičnim obilježjima koji nisu ništa manje ozbiljni. Radi se o atipičnoj anoreksiji koja ima sva obilježja klasične anoreksije (snažnu restrikciju unosa hrane, dismorfofobiju, strah od debljanja, gubitak na tjelesnoj masi), ali ključna je razlika da se u trenutku

postavljanja dijagnoze ne nalazi pothranjenost. S obzirom da se pacijenti ne uklapaju u tipičnu sliku anoreksije kao bolesti „mršavih”, atipičnu anoreksiju nerijetko je teško prepoznati (Perše i sur., 2022, str. 116).

Bulimija nervoza ozbiljan je i potencijalno po život opasan poremećaj hranjenja koji se obično razvija u doba adolescencije i ranoga djetinjstva. Bulimiju karakteriziraju ponavljajuće epizode jedenja objektivno velikih količina hrane (tj. prejedanje) s povezanim gubitkom kontrole, kao i neprikladno kompenzacijsko ponašanje (npr. samoizazvano povraćanje, zlorporaba laksativa ili diuretika, gladovanje ili pretjerano vježbanje) kao i precjenjivanje oblika tijela i tjelesne težine (APA, 2013). Studije pokazuju alarmantno visoki broj adolescenata s bulimijom nervozom. Prema podacima, 1 % mladih žena razvit će simptome bulimije tijekom života (Hoek i Hoeken, 2003). Bulimično ponašanje tipično je za djevojčice u razdoblju adolescencije, odnosno između 13 i 14 godina (Nicholls i Barrett, 2015).

Osobe koje pate od bulimije obično teže savršenstvu i osjećaju da ne mogu zadovoljiti očekivanja roditelja i osjećaju se izoliranima. Bulimija je u velikoj mjeri skriveni poremećaj prehrane. Teško je prepoznati ima li netko bulimiju samo na osnovi izgleda, a također je teško uočiti prejeda li se osoba ili na neki način kontrolira prehranu povraćanjem ili pretjeranom tjelovježbom. Bulimična ponašanja, prejedanje i kompenzacijska ponašanja odvijaju se u tajnosti, uz osjećaj srama.

Prehrambeno je ponašanje osoba s bulimijom specifično. One mogu izbjegavati hranjenje u prisustvu drugih ili se u tim situacijama ponašati suzdržano i kontrolirano. Često jedu same i skrivaju hranu. Također učestalo odlaze u toalet za vrijeme ili nakon jela, upotrebljavaju laksative ili druge pripravke kojima se može kontrolirati težina. Izbjegavaju masnoće, slatkiše i nezdravu hranu, dok konzumiraju povrće, voće i male količine nemasnoga mesa, stoga njihova prehrana može čak ostavljati dojam zdravoga hranjenja.

Javna manifestacija samokontrole prikriva privatne, kaotične i nekontrolirane obrasce prehrane osobe s bulimijom, kao i strahove od hrane. Socijalna izolacija uobičajena je karakteristika ponašanja kod bulimije. Osobe s bulimijom često se više povlače iz obitelji i društva jer im prejedanje i čišćenje oduzimaju prilično mnogo vremena i energije (Cavanaugh i Lemberg, 1999).

Poremećaj prejedanja definira se kao konzumacija objektivno velikih količina hrane u kratkome vremenu, većih nego što bi većina ljudi konzumirala u sličnim okolnostima, uz gubitak osjećaja kontrole nad jedenjem (APA, 2013). Poremećaj prejedanja karakteriziraju ponavljajuće epizode prejedanja, uz uznemirenost zbog jedenja, tajnost jedenja ili jedenje u odsutnosti gladi, te se može povezati s bulimijom. Međutim, dok osobe s bulimijom nastoje poremećenim načinima kontrolirati težinu, osobe s poremećajem prejedanja takvim se strategijama služe samo ponekad. Stoga, ako ne primjenjuju kompenzacijska ponašanja, kod osoba s prejedanjem može se javiti pretilost.

Poremećaj prejedanja često se pojavljuje u adolescentskoj dobi. Međutim, kod adolescenata ponekad je teže prepoznati ovaj poremećaj zbog moguće veće potrebe za hranom u skladu s razvojnom fazom. Procjene o učestalosti kod adolescenata neznatno se razlikuju i kreću se od 1,6 % (Swanson i sur., 2011) do 5 % (Marzilli i sur., 2018), nešto češće kod djevojčica nego kod dječaka (Bohon, 2019, str. 549). Istraživanje provedeno u Hrvatskoj pokazalo je kako se prejeda 5,1 % djevojaka uz osjećaj gubitka kontrole, dok ih 1,3 % ima potrebu za povraćanjem nakon jela (Pokrajac-Bulian i sur., 2007).

Prejedanje se često javlja tijekom provođenja dijete, koja je, kao način kontrole tjelesne težine, danas vrlo raširen i široko prihvaćen oblik ponašanja. Prema nekim je autorima to ponašanje toliko učestalo među adolescentima, posebno djevojkama, da se može smatrati normativnim.

RIZIČNI ČINITELJI NASTANKA POREMEĆAJA HRANJENJA

Slijedeći sociokulturni pristup, odnosno tripartitni model utjecaja, nadalje će se prikazati kontekst medija, vršnjaka i obitelji kao rizičnih činitelja razvoja poremećaja hranjenja.

Posljednjih desetljeća mediji imaju sve značajniju ulogu u kulturi adolescenata. Osobito raste upotreba društvenih mreža.⁵ Konzumacija medijskih sadržaja kod mladih može imati pozitivne i edukativne učinke. Kada je riječ o hranjenju, mediji mogu biti alat komuniciranja produktivne, pravovremene i neglamurozne poruke o prehrani i poremećajima povezanima s tijelom (Thompson i Heinberg, 1999). Međutim, mediji ostvaruju snažan utjecaj u promicanju vitkog izgleda. Analiza prehrambenih i *fitness* sadržaja u časopisima za adolescentice, koji su objavljeni između 1970. i 1990. godine, autora Guillena i Barra (1994) pokazala je vidljivu promjenu ženskog tijela koje postaje više androgino. Poruke u časopisima za djevojčice naglašavaju izgled i oblik tijela, slično onima u časopisima za odrasle žene, te tako doprinose kulturnom miljeu u kojem se od žena očekuje mršavi izgled.

Promidžbene poruke koje prikazuju idealno mršava tijela negativno utječu na zadovoljstvo tijelom kod djevojaka koje postaju zabrinute i nezadovoljne svojim izgledom te poduzimaju ponašanja kontrole težine (Rodgers i Chabrol, 2009). Potvrđeno je kako se negativni stav o tijelu povećava nakon izloženosti

⁵ Istraživanje američkih tinejdžera u dobi od 13 do 17 godina pokazalo je kako je TikTok najpopularnija platforma. Njih 67 % upotrebljava ovu društvenu mrežu, dok je 16 % rabi skoro konstantno (Pew Research Center, 2022). Kod djece u dobi do 17 godina, uporaba platformi na kojima se dijele video sadržaji postalo je gotovo univerzalna aktivnost koju prakticira njih 96 %. Najučestalije se rabi platforma YouTube (88 %), slijedi WhatsApp (55 %), TikTok (53 %), Snapchat (46 %), Instagram (41 %) i Facebook (34 %) (OfCom, 2023).

fotografijama i videozapisima mršavih ženskih tijela. Taj je efekt snažniji kod djevojaka mlađih od 19 godina, što ukazuje na izraženiju osjetljivost djevojaka navedene dobi (Groesz i sur., 2002).

Medijski prikazi mogu osobito štetno utjecati na djecu i adolescente koji već imaju problema s tjelesnom težinom ili s već nastalim poremećenim obrascima hranjenja. Zaokupljenost tijelom i težinom često dovodi do pretraživanja medijskih sadržaja i oglasa kako postići privlačan izgled s obećavajućim efektima samozadovoljstva i društvene prihvaćenosti. Pritisak medija toliko je snažan da djevojčice vjeruju kako su pretile i žele smršavjeti iako su većinom normalne težine.

Studija Tiggemann i sur. (2000) pokazala je kako adolescentice imaju vrlo sofisticirano razumijevanje sociokulturnih i drugih pritisaka koji rezultiraju željom za mršavošću. One najčešće žele smršavjeti kako bi postigle dimenzije tijela prezentiranih u medijima, dok na drugom mjestu navode želju da budu privlačne i privuku pozornost. Svjesne su da lijepo tijelo donosi samopoštovanje i samouvjerenost, da mršavim osobama bolje pristaje odjeća, da imaju kontrolu, da postaju popularne i privlačne dječacima. Također, svjesne su da je vitko tijelo društveno poželjno, da lakše pripadaju vršnjačkim grupama te da žene trebaju biti manje i nježnije od muškaraca.

Vršnjaci i vršnjačke grupe, kao socijalna okruženja u okviru kojih se često ostvaruju snažne veze, važni su u životima djece i mladih. Poput medija, i vršnjačke grupe mogu imati dvostruka djelovanja. S jedne strane, utjecaji vršnjaka mogu biti pozitivni, primjerice, među vršnjacima mogu se dijeliti informacije i savjeti o zdravoj prehrani. U tom slučaju, vršnjački kontekst može biti dobar alat i prilika za prevenciju razvoja poremećaja hranjenja (Keel i Forney, 2013).

Međutim, grupe vršnjaka mogu djelovati isključujuće te viktimizirati ili stigmatizirati pojedince koji se u nekom aspektu razlikuju od većine pripadnika grupe. Poistovjećivanje s grupom vršnjaka česta je pojava. Adolescenti pokušavaju pripadati vršnjačkim entitetima kao dio izgradnje vlastitog identiteta. Privlačan izgled i mršavost mogu biti uvjet grupne prihvatljivosti te su mladi spremni prilagoditi svoj izgled i ponašanje kako bi se što bolje povezali s grupom. Također, zadirkivanje ili izrugivanje vršnjaka zbog tjelesne težine može rezultirati nezadovoljstvom tijelom te potaknuti promjene u hranjenju.

Istraživanja većinom ukazuju na vršnjačke grupe kao značajne prediktore poremećaja hranjenja te ukazuju na značajne pozitivne korelacije između utjecaja vršnjaka i poremećaja hranjenja kod djevojčica i dječaka (Meyer i Gast, 2008). Komparativno istraživanje Field i sur. (1999) bavilo se ispitivanjem utjecaja vršnjaka i medija na ponašanja čišćenja, korištenja laksativa i povraćanja kod adolescentica od 9 do 14 godina. Pokazalo se kako na ponašanja kontrole težine utječu oba rizična čimbenika. Izgled modela u časopisima na televiziji i filmovima pokazao se kao model ponašanja za djevojčice koje su počele

povraćati barem jednom mjesečno kako bi ostvarile izgled modela. Međutim, ova je studija pokazala kako je utjecaj vršnjaka snažniji od utjecaja medija, i to razvidno u kategorijama važnosti vitkog izgleda među vršnjacima i promjene prehrambenih navika pod utjecajem vršnjaka. Što više vršnjačka grupa u kojoj je djevojčica članica pozornosti polaže na mršavost, veća je vjerojatnost razvoja bulimičnih ponašanja.

Istraživanje Al-Sheyab i sur. (2018) potvrdilo je povezanost vršnjačkog pritiska i poremećenog prehrambenog ponašanja kod adolescenata u dobi od 13 i 16 godina. Pritisak vršnjaka mjerio se kao zadirkivanje, interakcije vršnjaka (razgovor o izgledu, zajedničko vježbanje i uspoređivanje proporcija tijela) te mršavost kao kriterij popularnosti među vršnjacima. Rezultati su pokazali kako na poremećena prehrambena ponašanja najviše utjecaja ima kategorija interakcije s vršnjacima koja je uključivala razgovor s vršnjacima o izgledu, zajedničko vježbanje i međusobno uspoređivanje tjelesnog izgleda i proporcija.

Snažan utjecaj vršnjaka potvrdilo je istraživanje McNight Investigators (2003), kojim je provjeravan utjecaj više varijabli, između ostaloga i utjecaj vršnjaka i roditelja. Vršnjačko natjecanje i međusobno uspoređivanje vanjskog izgleda među vršnjacima pokazalo se značajnijim prediktorom u odnosu na roditeljski utjecaj, zadirkivanje roditelja i roditeljsku zabrinutost zbog težine djeteta. Također, komparativno istraživanje Fergusona i sur. (2014) u kojem su se analizirali mediji, roditeljsko okruženje i vršnjaci potvrdilo je značajniji utjecaj vršnjaka, dok se s druge strane izloženost idealima mršavosti na televiziji i društvenim mrežama, kao i roditeljska briga, nisu pokazale utjecajnim varijablama razvoja poremećaja hranjenja.⁶

Što se tiče obiteljskog okruženja kao činitelja poremećaja hranjenja, važno je istaknuti kako se obitelj ne smatra ni jedinim ni primarnim mehanizmom iniciranja i razvoja poremećaja hranjenja kod djece (Le Grange i sur., 2010). Rizični čimbenici i mehanizmi transmisije poremećaja hranjenja s roditelja na dijete mogu biti genetski utjecaji, utjecaj roditeljske psihopatologije hranjenja, zaokupljenost roditelja hranom i tjelesnim izgledom, slaba uloga roditelja kao modela oponašanja kod prenošenja zdravih prehrambenih navika te poremećeni odnosi u obitelji (Pattel i sur., 2002, str. 16).

Neka istraživanja nisu pronašla poveznicu između roditeljskog pristupa i obiteljskog okruženja i razvoja poremećenih obrazaca hranjenja kod djece (Attie i Brooks-Gunn, 1989; Grigg i sur., 1996), dok su neka pokazala kako su od obiteljskog okruženja snažniji utjecaji drugih činitelja, osobito vršnjaka (McNight Investigators, 2003; Ferguson i sur., 2014). Moguće je objašnjenje nalaza studija o utjecaju vršnjaka i obiteljskog okruženja, koje se razlikuju prema

⁶ S obzirom na to da je ovo istraživanje provedeno 2014. godine, jasan je zaključak o manjem utjecaju društvenih mreža. Novije studije potvrdit će snažan utjecaj društvenih mreža na oblikovanje tijela (Aparicio-Martinez i sur., 2019.; Chae, 2017.)

važnosti svakoga od ovih rizičnih faktora, studija Striegel-Moore i Cachelin (1999), koje su razvile model dvostrukoga puta nastanka nezadovoljstva tijelom. Prvi put uključuje internalizaciju društvenih ideala ljepote i mršavosti, što dovodi do ograničavanja u hranjenju kako bi se prevladala diskrepancija između vlastitog tijela i društvenih ideala. Drugi je put međusobna ranjivost, koji počinje neadekvatnim roditeljskim odgojem uslijed čega mogu nastati poremećaji viđenja tijela i društvenog funkcioniranja. Nezadovoljstvo tijelom i poremećaji hranjena mogu nastati uslijed jednoga od ovih načina, međutim, najčešće se pojavljuju kao rezultat njihove interakcije i sinergijskog djelovanja.

S druge strane, studije koje su ispitivale isključivo utjecaj obitelji na ponašanja hranjenja pokazuju pozitivne korelacije. Primjerice, istraživanje Allen i sur. (2014) fokusiralo se isključivo na utjecaj obitelji, preciznije ulogu majke u razvoju poremećaja hranjenja kod kćeri. Majke koje imaju ili su imale poremećaje hranjenja zabrinutije su za težinu djece. Njihova su djeca prijavljivala veću učestalost emotivnog jedenja od ostalih. U ovom istraživanju pokazao se utjecajnim obrazovni status majke, pri čemu su djeca majki koje nisu završile srednju školu imala više razine psihopatologije poremećaja prehrane tijekom dvogodišnjeg razdoblja istraživanja od djece majki koje su završile srednju školu.⁷

Studija Sticea i sur. (1999) izdvaja se po tome što je praćeno razdoblje prvih pet godina života djece. Autori su zaključili kako se tijekom prvih pet godina života djeteta pojavljuju poremećaji hranjenja te da mogu biti odraz roditeljskog utjecaja, osobito majke. Djeca majki koje su iskazivale nezadovoljstvo vlastitim tijelom i internalizaciju ideala mršavosti, kao i majki koje su prakticirale dijete i imale simptome bulimije, u većoj su mjeri razvijala ponašanja poremećenog hranjenja poput jedenja u tajnosti, prejedanja, povraćanja ili suzdržavanja od jedenja.

Ne isključujući utjecaj drugih faktora rizika, članovi obitelji i obiteljsko okruženje mogu povećati rizik od poremećaja hranjenja u djetinjstvu i adolescenciji. Neslaganja i stresne situacije u obitelji mogu djelovati kao negativni faktor, dok su pozitivno ozračje i zadovoljstvo obiteljskim životom zaštitni faktor (Allen i sur., 2014). Poremećaji hranjenja mogu se javiti u ranom djetinjstvu te biti povezani s prehranbenim ponašanjima roditelja. Majčinska ponašanja poremećenog hranjenja poput prejedanja, gladovanja, nezadovoljstva tijelom, bulimična ponašanja, kao i pretilost u obitelji, pojavljuju se kao prediktori tajnog jedenja kod djece (Stice i sur., 1999).

⁷ Autori daju dva moguća obrazloženja. Prvi proizlazi iz socijalno-demografskog statusa obitelji pri čemu su djeca iz obitelji nižeg dohotka osjetljiva na povećanu brigu o hranjenju, težini i obliku tijela. Pretpostavlja se da restrikcije u prehrani proizlaze iz siromaštva. Drugo je obrazloženje da se majke koje nemaju završenu srednju školu razlikuju od drugih majki po sposobnosti oblikovanja poruke o zdravoj prehrani i izgledu tijela te po naglasku koji stavljaju na tjelesnu težinu i prihvatljivi oblik tijela.

ZAKLJUČAK

Mršavi izgled već se desetljećima poistovjećuje s idealom ljepote, prvotno u zapadnim društvima, a danas je gotovo globalno prihvaćen. Kriteriji ljepote ujednačili su se, a granice među kulturama i tradicijama izmiješale, smanjile ili gotovo nestale (Dimitrov i Kroupouzous, 2023). Mršavost je postala uvjet pristupa i popularnosti u društvenim grupama, kao i uspješnosti u poslu i životu. Briga o tijelu označuje suvremeno moderno i postmoderno društvo u kojem je vanjski izgled važna dimenzija definiranja identiteta i uloga, kao i u konstrukciji društvenih razlika (Volonte, 2019).

Djeca danas odrastaju u društvenom i kulturnom okruženju koje se sve više fokusira na izgled i važnu ulogu atraktivnosti u ostvarenju životnih ciljeva. Svijest o važnosti tjelesnog izgleda javlja se već u ranoj dobi. Slijedeći kulturne standarde ljepote, adolescenti postaju zaokupljeni izgledom i nezadovoljni tjelesnom težinom i izgledom te često posežu za, ponekad i opasnim, praksama smanjenja težine kako bi postigli savršeno tijelo (Morris i Katzman, 2003).

Što se tiče ostalih rizika, socijalni i kulturni čimbenici imaju važnu ulogu u nastanku i intenziviranju fenomena nezadovoljstva tijelom i slijedom toga mogu biti djelomice odgovorni za porast učestalosti poremećenih obrazaca hranjenja. Poremećaji hranjenja ozbiljni su zdravstveni i mentalni problemi koji mogu ugroziti zdravlje i život mlade osobe. Tijekom posljednjih desetljeća ovi su poremećaji u stalnom porastu, osobito među adolescentima, pri čemu se dobna granica spušta prema dječjoj dobi. Ne samo dob, nego i spol prestaju biti određujuća varijabla, pa se ponašanja smanjenja tjelesne težine sve više šire i među dječacima.

Mediji različitim mehanizmima komuniciraju idealnu mršavost, bilo putem sve vitkijih dimenzija ženskih tijela, stavljanjem naglaska na dijete, oblikovanje tijela, vježbanje i druge načine kontrole težine i postizanja vitkosti. Takva medijska prezentacija ima snažan učinak na mlade. U posljednje vrijeme osobito zabrinjavaju rizici društvenih mreža koje često promiču nerealistične standarde, idealiziraju mršavost i nude savjete kao ih ostvariti.

Istraživanja medija i društvenih mreža, kao i drugih sociokulturnih rizičnih čimbenika poremećaja hranjenja vrlo su prisutna u stranoj literaturi te postoje važni podatci i saznanja o tome. S druge strane, u Hrvatskoj je evidentan nedostatak istraživanja društvenih znanosti o ovoj problematici, osobito kod djece i mladih. Nedovoljna istraženost, kao i sve veća učestalost ovog poremećaja kod mlade populacije nalažu potrebu znanstvenog interesa i obrade. Potrebu budućih istraživanja u Hrvatskoj i preventivnog djelovanja, kao i jačanja medijske pismenosti, potvrđuju istraživanja medijske izloženosti djece koja pokazuju kako djeca počinju upotrebljavati ekrane prije druge godine života te ih svakodnevno upotrebljavaju više od dva sata (Roje Đapić

i sur., 2020), dok adolescenti konzumiraju medije pretežito u zabavne svrhe (Labaš i Marinčić, 2018).

Roditeljski pristup i obiteljsko okruženje također mogu biti čimbenik razvoja poremećaja hranjenja u djetinjstvu i adolescenciji. Suvremene promjene u obitelji (Giddens, 2007, str. 180–189), konfliktni odnosi i poremećaji u funkcioniranju obitelji, roditeljski pritisak ili kritiziranje u vezi s težinom, biografija majke i njezino poticanje na vitkost pozitivno su povezani s razvojem poremećaja hranjenja kod adolescenata. Naime, u suvremenom društvu sve je prisutnija važnost uspješnosti u životu kao načina ostvarenja pojedinca. Utoliko je jasan roditeljski pritisak na djecu i njihova očekivanja da budu što uspješniji, kao i roditeljsko stremljenje po pitanju boljitka djeteta. Međutim, definiranje djeteta kao „roditeljskoga projekta” može djelovati kao veliki pritisak i stres, osobito kada su precijenjene djetetove sposobnosti. S druge strane, obiteljska stabilnost, kao okruženje bliskih osoba koje omogućuju razumijevanje, podršku i sigurnost, djeluje kao zaštitni faktor od nastanka ili razvoja poremećaja hranjenja. S obzirom na krizu obitelji i slabljenje obiteljskih veza, očekivano je i slabljenje zaštitne funkcije obitelji.

Na osnovi prikazanih istraživanja u ovome radu, može se kazati kako je kod percepcije tijela i nezadovoljstva tijelom osobito snažan utjecaj vršnjaka, što ukazuje na važnost i potrebu programa prevencije na razini vršnjačkih grupa (Lieberman i sur., 2001). U adolescentskoj dobi postoji snažna želja za pripadanjem grupi vršnjaka. U toj dobi mladi se često odvajaju u homogene grupe, na osnovi čega izgrađuju specifične identitete i životne stilove (Corsaro, 2005, str. 171–188). Kao mjesta kulturne reprodukcije (James i sur., 2010, str. 94–96) vršnjačke grupe često djeluju ekskluzivno-inkluzivno. Zadirivanje, pritisci vršnjaka, pa čak i komentiranje izgleda i težine te uvjeti pristupa grupi mogu biti poticaji poremećenom hranjenju. Medijski i obiteljski utjecaji na prehrambena ponašanja, kao i vršnjačke grupe, mogu predstavljati izazov budućim istraživanjima u Hrvatskoj.

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APPEARANCE CULTURE AND DISORDERED EATING BEHAVIOUR AS A MEANS OF SHAPING THE IDEAL BODY IN ADOLESCENTS

Abstract: *Western appearance culture promotes the importance of the body and appearance. An attractive, slim body ensures success and acceptance in society. Images of perfectly shaped bodies create dissatisfaction with one's own body and encourage the desire to achieve an ideal appearance. Physical appearance has become an important construct among young people and adolescents. The majority of them regard their appearance as an important part of their personality. To achieve a socially accepted slim appearance, young people adopt unhealthy eating habits. Strict diets and unhealthy eating habits can lead to the development of eating disorders. This paper aims to demonstrate the influence of the culture of appearance on the body image perception of adolescents, emphasizing the unhealthy eating habits used to shape the body. A socio-cultural approach was used. The following environmental factors are seen as causes of body dissatisfaction and risks for the development of eating disorders: media, the family environment and peer groups. To summarize, among the socio-cultural risks, significant peer pressure stands out, underlining the need for further research.*

Keywords: *adolescents, body dissatisfaction, family environment, media, peers*

INTRODUCTION

The ideal of beauty is a historical and cultural phenomenon. The norms that define beauty have changed throughout history according to cultural, social and environmental influences. Unlike in the past, when a curvaceous female body signified health and beauty, there was a sudden shift in the 1960s when beauty and attractiveness were defined by a slim appearance and a harmoniously shaped body.

Research has shown that the beauty of the face and body plays an important role in social life (Dimitrov and Kroumpouzou, 2023). An attractive appearance has its numerous advantages and privileges. A body shaped according to modern beauty ideals guarantees richer social interactions and networking. Beauty ensures acceptance and success in professional and private life. Beautiful people find jobs faster, get better grades and advance in their careers. Adults and children prefer attractive people to unattractive people (Gryphon and Langlois, 2006). Dion et al. (1972) referred to positive beliefs and attitudes towards attractive people as the stereotype “beauty is good”.

Today, more than ever before in history, the benefits of good looks motivate people to continually work on their bodies and improve them through exercise, diet and other means. To this end, the beauty and slimming industries offer almost unlimited opportunities, with a continuous increase in profits if the forecasts are positive. In addition to already well-known advertising channels, they are increasingly benefiting from social networks and influencers, especially those who are influential among younger age groups.

The importance of appearance and the body, a phenomenon originally associated with Western culture, is becoming increasingly global. With the universalization of cultural norms, the body is becoming a powerful tool in the private and social lives of people worldwide, transcending cultural differences. Cultural norms related to appearance and body weight are communicated through the media and social channels and are aimed primarily at the female population; however, more recently, they have also increasingly affected men. While women strive to lose weight and achieve a slim appearance, men try to achieve an ideal, muscular body. Not only gender, but also age boundaries are shifting, and awareness of the importance of appearance and body is emerging at an earlier and earlier age. Young people realise the connection between appearance and personal and social well-being. To this end, they choose different, sometimes rigorous and unhealthy ways to mould their bodies.

Although they are not mutually exclusive, social and cultural factors are important influencing factors that promote the beauty ideal of slimness and the perfect body and raise awareness of one's own physical differences from the propagated ideal. By internalising images of a body shaped according to the contemporary ideal of beauty, individuals evaluate their bodies, often

resulting in dissatisfaction with their appearance, which can lead to unhealthy forms of weight control, including disordered eating behaviours. This paper aims to present the influence of contemporary beauty culture on adolescents' perceptions and ways of body shaping, highlighting disordered eating patterns as a body shaping behaviour. The first part of the paper discusses the contemporary appearance culture and the importance of the body in today's society from a social science perspective, observing social factors of body perception. The second part of the paper focuses on the development of body dissatisfaction in the young population and disordered eating behaviours that serve to achieve a socially promoted and valued appearance mediated by socio-cultural risk factors, media, peers and the family environment.

APPEARANCE CULTURE AND THE BODY IN SOCIAL THEORY

Western culture, which promotes the importance of the body and appearance and perceives the body as a presentation of a person, is called the culture of appearance (Serna, 2018, p. 129). According to Serna, Western culture is a powerful structure that constantly encourages individuals to view health and appearance as primarily personal choices and encourages them through various means to work constantly to improve their bodies. In the culture of appearance, the media asserts that the body is the measure of overall happiness and personal worth in society. The body should be seen as an object that requires constant attention and care. The culture of appearance appeals to women to be slim and attractive. At the same time, the appearance culture insists that such an appearance is something that every woman should strive for as a moral obligation, while considering it a personal choice and freedom.

In the culture of appearance, the body is unclothed and shown to others as often as possible. The media is used to convince people that these standards are their own. Duncan (1994, p. 49) distinguishes two main mechanisms by which magazines influence women's attitudes to their bodies. The first is the "efficacy initiative", which encourages women to commit to change. The second is the "feeling good means looking good" mechanism, which emphasizes the importance of health but places appearance at the forefront. In the appearance culture, considering the advantages associated with an attractive appearance, the body is seen as a tool, while at the same time, it is objectified and becomes a project that requires constant work to achieve perfect measurements.

In line with the affirmation of the culture of appearance since the 1980s, the body has become the object of study of many sciences that analyze and understand the body in different ways. In the same period, the body has also become a subject of sociological interest. Nettleton (2021, pp. 44-45) distinguishes three sociological perspectives to explain the body. The first relates

to the social regulation of the body, i.e. the ways in which institutions regulate, control, monitor and utilize the body. Although individuals are convinced that they control their bodies, they are politicized. A good example of this is the debate on abortion or euthanasia. The second approach relates to the ontology of the body, which reflects on what the body actually is. The authors of this perspective believe that in late modern society there is increasing uncertainty about what the body represents. For most, it is socially constructed. However, there are also differences. While some believe that it is simply a creation of the discursive context, others believe that bodies have certain characteristics that are influenced by social and cultural factors. The third approach focuses on the subjective experience and lived embodiment of the body. This phenomenological approach acknowledges that the body is, to some extent, socially constructed; however, it emphasizes the importance of examining the actions and experiences of the embodied individual. As this is more about embodiment than the body, the social regulation and social construction of the body remain central to understanding the body.

Giddens (1991, p. 102) explains the extraordinary importance of the body in the identity crisis that occurs in post-traditional society. A secure and stable identity no longer results automatically from the position of the individual in the social structure. In postmodern society, identity and self-image cannot be taken for granted. Individuals cannot rely on their traditional place in society, which was determined by class, gender or family. Instead, there is a reflexive "self" that is the result of what comes from a variety of sources in the environment. Ontological uncertainty and reflexive concern for the body have arisen through the weakening of tradition. Identity is rooted in the body, encompassing both what an individual possesses and who they are. The body becomes a means of expressing individuality, aspirations and group affiliation.

Featherstone (1982) observes the body in a consumer culture in which a new relationship between the body and the "self" has been established. In consumer culture, the inner body, which is concerned with maintaining the health and functioning of the body to be restored in the event of illness, abuse or ageing, and the outer body, which refers to the appearance, movement and control of the body in the social environment, become conflated. The main purpose of caring for the inner body is to improve the appearance of the outer body. Awareness of appearance arises through comparison with idealised images of the human body reproduced in advertising and the visual media. Images invite comparison; they are a constant reminder of who we are and what we could become with some effort. In modern society, the body has become a passport to everything good in life. Health, youth, beauty, sex and fitness are positive attributes that can be achieved and maintained by taking care of the body. Since appearance is a reflection of the self, neglecting the body may lead to reduced social acceptability and be perceived as a sign of laziness, low self-esteem, or

even moral failure. Cooley's (2017) concept of the *looking-glass self* explains the social significance of appearance and the body. According to this author, society and the individual are not separate phenomena, but aspects of one and the same thing. The "looking-glass self" implies that a person's identity is based on how others perceive that person. In other words, individuals develop their knowledge of themselves based on how others see them and are moulded by the opinions of others. In the case of the body, the perception of one's own body is the result of our image in the eyes of others. According to this theory, the reason for dissatisfaction with one's own body could be the negative judgement of other people or groups.

The interpretation of the concept of body image¹ also reflects the transference from the perception of one's own body to the perception of the body by others. While Schilder (1935) interprets body image as the way the body is presented to ourselves, i.e., the image we have of our own body, Featherstone (2010) believes that body image can be perceived as a visual sense of the image that others have of a person based on their appearance. In the absence of mirrors, recording the face and body with a camera becomes the predominant way of presenting body image and imagining one's own body in modern culture. In modern consumer culture, a new individual who pays considerable attention to appearance and manages impressions, something that could be called *body image* management, emerges.

In terms of body dissatisfaction and associated eating disorders, sociological research focuses particularly on the socio-cultural approach. The basic premise of this approach is that social factors strongly influence the development of body image through an appearance culture that values and promotes cultural ideals of beauty and body shape. Media images have been identified as key elements of the appearance culture that strongly influence the formation of appearance standards (Field et al., 1999). Socio-cultural influences convey the beauty ideal of slimness and have a strong influence on the stigmatisation of overweight appearance. These factors are important variables for the occurrence and development of disordered eating behaviour and eating disorders.²

¹ According to Quittkat et al. (2019), body image is a multidimensional construct that encompasses body-related behaviours (control behaviours), perceptions of body characteristics (appearance, weight) and a cognitive-affective component that includes knowledge, attitudes and feelings about the body. Negative thoughts and feelings about one's own body lead to body dissatisfaction.

² Eating disorders are caused by psychological, biological, familial, environmental, social and cultural factors (Garner, 1993; Tothova, 2019). Barakat et al. (2023) identified nine groups of risk factors based on an analysis of 284 studies: genetics, gastrointestinal microbiota and autoimmune responses, childhood and early adolescent exposure, personality traits and mental health, gender, socio-economic status, ethnic minority affiliation, body image, social influence and elite sports.

Disordered eating behaviour can be explained by the theory of encouragement and social comparison (Festinger, 1954). Social encouragement is the process by which individuals adopt and internalise attitudes and behaviours that are endorsed or practised by other respected members of society. In the case of body shaping, this refers to the comments and activities by others that promote or support the ideal of slimness. Encouragement can come from the media that portray and promote slimness, but also from individuals around them who are concerned with their weight, practice dieting and other weight control behaviours and criticize overweight individuals. By comparison, they imitate others around them. This behaviour is particularly significant for peers. For example, if a girl uses weight control methods and they result in success, this behaviour can become a role model for her peers. Encouragement to become preoccupied with body image, dieting, or other body shaping methods and weight control behaviours can come from the social environment or group.³

On the basis of environmental risks, Thompson et al. (1999) developed a tripartite socio-cultural model of influence on body image and the development of eating disorders. This model shows the mechanisms of influence of social and cultural risk factors: media, peer groups and the family environment, which influence the internalisation of the ideal of a slim appearance and the comparison of appearance with others, causing a person to develop body dissatisfaction, which can trigger the development of eating disorders (Ata et al., 2015; Stice, 2002; Rymarczyk, 2021).

BODY DISSATISFACTION IN ADOLESCENCE

In the appearance culture, the body is depicted on posters, in magazines and in films. Perfectly sculpted and digitally manipulated, it promotes unrealistic beauty standards that have a negative impact on the viewer, causing discomfort and dissatisfaction with one's own appearance.⁴ Research has confirmed that depictions of perfect bodies in advertising, fashion, and the beauty industry are associated with body dissatisfaction, desolation, low self-esteem, and an increased risk of disordered eating behaviours (McBride et al., 2019).

The depiction of a perfect appearance particularly influences the understanding and perception of the body in adolescents. In this age group, physical appearance is an important construct and many consider it an

³ In recent decades, the influence of the internet and social networks has emerged, enabling the communication of beauty ideals, but also communication between people with eating disorders. One well-known example is the websites "pro-ana" and "pro-mia", which bring girls together to share experiences and ideas on how to lose weight and deceive their families, who forbid them to do so (Ambrosi-Randić et al., 2008).

⁴ Body dissatisfaction is a negative subjective evaluation of the entire body or its specific features, such as size, shape, musculature and weight (Grogan, 2016).

important part of personality (Grosick et al., 2013). Adolescents know that a good appearance ensures attractiveness, popularity in the group, success in life and boosts self-confidence. In order to achieve a perfect body that is acceptable to them and their peers, they often choose different ways to manipulate their body weight (Ata et al., 2015).

The period of adolescence is vulnerable. Numerous physical changes characterise the transition to adulthood, with self-evaluation of physical appearance being particularly pronounced and rigorous. Adolescents become aware of the importance of the body and physical appearance, which become part of personal identity and a means of gaining social acceptance and reputation. Research confirms the importance that young people attach to the body. Young people between the ages of 11 and 24 state that the appearance of their body is one of their main concerns, before family conflicts, stress or alcohol addiction. Their thoughts confirm the importance of appearance and indicate its problematic perception (Tiggerman, 2012). A study conducted in the UK showed that as many as 79% of young people aged 11 to 16 consider their appearance important, while 52% are concerned about it (Be Real, 2017). Due to the discrepancy between publicized beauty standards and their bodies, adolescents develop a negative body image (Voelker et al., 2015). Girls who are dissatisfied with their bodies become even more dissatisfied when they are exposed to images of an ideal, slim body (Rodgers and Chabrol, 2009).

Earlier studies on body dissatisfaction were gender-specific and focused on adolescent girls, confirming that a large proportion of them were dissatisfied with their bodies (Thompson et al., 1999). More recent studies have increasingly included boys. For example, Dion et al. (2016) found that 50.5% of girls and 35.9% of boys aged 11 to 14 wanted a slimmer body, while Quittkat et al. (2019), who studied pre-adolescent girls and boys, showed similar percentages; 50% of girls and 30% of boys were dissatisfied with their bodies. Jones et al. (2004) showed that exposure to visual images of bodies in magazines leads to body dissatisfaction in girls, while conversations with friends about appearance and peer criticism of appearance influence body dissatisfaction in girls and boys.

Awareness of the discrepancy between the publicized ideal and the real body is causing an increasing number of adolescents to desire body modifications. The more young people believe that their appearance is important, the more they want to change their appearance and lose weight (Pokrajac-Bulian et al., 2007). A study by Aanesen et al. (2017) showed that as many as 50% of boys and 74% of girls aged 14 want to change something about their bodies. A study by Grosick et al. (2013) found that both boys and girls are dissatisfied with their bodies; in contrast to boys, however, girls showed a higher tendency towards dieting behaviour, depression due to appearance and a tendency towards risky eating behaviour. A study among high school students in Croatia found that

65.5% of adolescents are dissatisfied with their bodies and have a desire to look slimmer, with the majority of them, 48.6%, being girls (Livazović and Mudrinić, 2015).

In order to change their bodies and achieve a socially acceptable appearance, young people often choose risky methods of weight control. A study by Pokrajac-Bulian et al. (2007) showed that 39.4% of girls and 14.1% of boys dieted to improve their appearance. Among them, 59% of girls and 59.4% of boys say that someone in their family is dieting, and 89% of girls and 71.1% of boys say that someone they know is dieting.

The age limit for dieting behaviour has decreased to childhood years. Schur et al. (2000) have shown that children aged 11 to 12 years are well informed about diet. For them, dieting means changing their food choices and exercising, while 50% of them want to lose weight and 16% have already tried.

Depending on their intensity and frequency, strict diets and unhealthy eating behaviour can lead to the development of eating disorders. According to a study by Patton et al. (1999), which involved 1,699 children aged 14, 8% of the girls were on strict diets, while 60% were on moderate diets. Girls who followed a strict diet were 18 times more likely to develop an eating disorder within 6 months than those who did not restrict their diet. In a one-year study of 960 girls, Johnson and Wardle (2005) found that girls who were unhappy with their bodies were more prone to emotional eating, negative attitudes towards food and weight, lower self-esteem, stress and depression. A recent study by Dzielska et al. (2020), involving 26 European countries and 639,194 adolescents aged 11, 13 and 15, showed that the prevalence of weight loss behaviour was 18.0% in girls and 10.2% in boys.

Dieting and other weight-control behaviours are used to become slim. A four-year study by the McNight Investigators (2003) of 1103 girls followed up from the 6th to 9th grade in primary schools found that 2.9% of the girls developed a partial or full eating disorder during follow-up, with most of them showing symptoms of bulimia nervosa. Purging behaviour was also found in the study by Field et al (1999). Over the course of the year, 74 of the 6,982 girls aged between 9 and 14 years began vomiting or taking laxatives at least once a month to control their weight.

The study by Croll et al. (2002), which involved 81,247 students, showed that 56% of girls and 28% of boys aged 14 to 15 showed disordered eating behaviour, while the percentages were slightly higher in older adolescents aged 17 to 18, with 57% of girls and 31% of boys. A meta-analysis by López-Gil et al. (2023), which included data from 32 studies with 63,181 participants from 16 countries, also showed that 22% of children and adolescents showed signs of disordered eating behaviour. The incidence was higher among girls, older adolescents, and those with a higher body mass index.

Although they appear to be opposing conditions and disorders, eating disorders are associated with being overweight and can develop due to body weight and obesity, especially during adolescence. An elevated body mass index and an overestimation of the importance of body weight are major factors that increase the risk of weight-loss behaviour in both sexes (Dzielska et al., 2020). Excessive body weight as a factor in the development of eating disorders was confirmed by Ferguson et al. (2014). The body mass index of 237 adolescent girls aged between 10 and 17 years was compared with the degree of body dissatisfaction. The results showed that body dissatisfaction increases with increasing body mass index; adolescents with the lowest index expressed the highest satisfaction with their bodies and vice versa.

FREQUENT EATING DISORDERS IN ADOLESCENTS

Eating disorders are behavioural disorders characterized by severe and persistent disordered eating behaviour and associated disturbing thoughts and feelings. Eating disorders can be serious illnesses that impair physical, psychological and social functioning. The types of eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, avoidant/restrictive eating disorders, other specific eating disorders, pica disorders, and rumination disorder (American Psychiatric Association, APA, 2013).

Eating disorders are a common medical and psychological problem in adolescence and can occur as early as infancy and toddlerhood (Vidović, 2009). Eating disorders are considered the third most common chronic illness in adolescents with a high mortality rate (Knez et al., 2008; Perše et al., 2022).

There is a whole spectrum of eating disorders in children and adolescents. Nicholls and Barrett (2015) list the most common disorders in childhood and early adolescence: early anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, emotional avoidance disorder, selective eating and pervasive food refusal. The most common and best-researched disorders in young people are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder.

Eating disorders affect the social and emotional lives of young people. Adolescents who suffer from eating disorders have greater levels of social difficulties than their peers who do not suffer from eating disorders (Patel et al., 2016). Socio-emotional difficulties have also been identified in young people, particularly in recognizing and regulating emotions (Boscoe et al., 2021).

Anorexia nervosa is characterized by a distorted body image in which a person perceives themselves to be heavier than their actual body weight. It is characterized by a permanently disturbed relationship with food and an altered perception of one's own appearance, resulting in restrictive eating behaviours that, sometimes with compensatory behaviours (exercise, vomiting, use of diuretics and laxatives), lead to significant health damage, both physical and

psycho-emotional, and severely impaired social functioning (Perše et al., 2022, p. 115). People suffering from anorexia nervosa often engage in strenuous physical activities in the form of exercise. They may be obsessed with food even if they avoid eating it. They prepare new recipes, study cookery books, and cook meals for others (Krleža, 2020).

Nunn et al. describe people who suffer from anorexia. They may have a determined avoidance of food, fear of gaining weight, preoccupation with body weight and shape, distorted body perception, significant weight loss, mood disturbances, severe anxiety, obsessive-compulsive behaviour, and altered processing of information derived from external or internal stimuli, such as increased pain threshold, loss of taste, inability to integrate thoughts and feelings, and low self-esteem (2011, p. 353). Girls who suffer from anorexia withdraw from society, are irritable and do not enjoy their favourite activities. They are regularly successful at school, with a tendency towards perfectionism, and often exaggerate their expectations of success (Vidović, 2009, pp. 187–188).

Anorexic girls may appear prematurely aged, frail and thin, but they also look like perfectly groomed models, as if to attract attention and admiration. Some have adopted an athletic appearance, while others hide their attractiveness. Some fanatically control everyone around them, others are prone to self-harm (usually in the bulimic form of anorexia) and develop a sense of disgust with themselves. Finally, some of them can become so preoccupied with their bodies that they take on psychotic traits (Nunn, 2001, according to Vidović, 2009, p. 187).

In terms of the prognosis for recovery, it is estimated that 50% of patients achieve a full recovery, 30% improve and 20% remain chronically ill (Steinhausen, 2002, according to Neale, 2020). Anorexia has a high mortality rate, it is the highest among other psychiatric disorders and five times higher than in the population of a given age and gender. On average, fatal outcomes occur most frequently between the ages of 25 and 34 (Jassogne and Zdanowicz, 2018). People with anorexia die from medical complications due to starvation, while suicide is the second most common cause of death (APA, 2013).

Once significant for young women and adolescent girls in the upper and middle classes in urban areas of the Western world, anorexia is now “globalized”. It is spreading in less developed countries and environments and across all social classes and ethnic groups (Bordo, 2002). In recent years, the prevalence of the disorder has increased in younger age groups. Children with anorexia nervosa have been described as young as seven years of age (Vidović, 2009, p. 186). “New” subtypes of the disorder with atypical features that are no less severe are also being recognized. This is atypical anorexia, which has all the features of classic anorexia (severe restriction of food intake, dysmorphophobia, fear of weight gain, loss of body weight), but the key difference is that malnutrition is not detected at the time of diagnosis. Since patients do not fit the typical image

of anorexia as a disease of “slim people”, a typical anorexia is often difficult to recognize (Perše et al., 2022, p. 116).

Bulimia nervosa is a serious, potentially life-threatening eating disorder that usually develops in adolescence and early childhood. Bulimia is characterized by recurrent episodes of eating objectively large amounts of food (i.e. binge eating), with an associated loss of control as well as inappropriate compensatory behaviours (e.g. self-induced vomiting, abuse of laxatives or diuretics, fasting or excessive exercise) and an overestimation of body shape and weight (APA, 2013). Studies show an alarmingly high number of adolescents with bulimia nervosa. According to data, 1% of young women will develop symptoms of bulimia nervosa in their lifetime (Hoek & Hoeken, 2003). Bulimic behaviour is typical of girls in adolescence, between the ages of 13 and 14 (Nicholls & Barrett, 2015).

People who suffer from bulimia usually strive for perfection and feel that they cannot fulfill their parents' expectations and feel isolated. Bulimia is largely a hidden eating disorder. It is difficult to tell if someone has bulimia by their appearance, and it is also difficult to tell if the person has binge eating or controls their eating in any way through vomiting or excessive exercising. Bulimic behaviours, binge eating and compensatory behaviours occur in secret and are accompanied by feelings of shame.

The eating behaviour of people with bulimia is specific. They may avoid eating with others or behave in a restrained and controlled manner. They often eat alone and hide their food. They also frequently go to the toilet during or after eating and use laxatives or other preparations that can control weight. They avoid fats, sweets and unhealthy foods, while eating vegetables, fruit and small amounts of lean meat, so that their diet can even give the impression of a healthy diet.

The public display of self-control masks the private, chaotic and uncontrolled eating behaviour of bulimics and their anxiety about food. Social isolation is a common behavioural feature of bulimia. People with bulimia often withdraw from family and society because binge eating and purging take up a significant amount of their time and energy (Cavanaugh & Lemberg, 1999).

Binge eating disorder is defined as the consumption of objectively large amounts of food in a short period of time, much more than most people would consume under similar circumstances, accompanied by a loss of control overeating (APA, 2013). Binge eating disorder is characterised by recurrent episodes of binge eating associated with stress over food, secrecy of eating or eating without hunger, and may be associated with bulimia nervosa. However, while people with bulimia attempt to control their weight in disorganised ways, people with binge eating disorder sometimes use such strategies. Therefore, if they do not use compensatory behaviours, people with binge eating can become obese.

Binge eating disorder often occurs in adolescence. However, it is sometimes more difficult to recognise this disorder in adolescents, as the need for food may be greater depending on their developmental stage. Estimates of prevalence in adolescents vary, ranging from 1.6% (Swanson et al., 2011) to 5% (Marzilli et al., 2018), with girls being slightly more likely to be affected than boys (Bohon, 2019, p. 549). A study conducted in Croatia found that 5.1% of girls overeat and feel like they are losing control, while 1.3% feel the need to vomit after eating (Pokrajac-Bulian et al., 2007).

Binge eating often occurs during dieting, a common and widely accepted form of weight control behaviour today. According to some authors, this behaviour is so common among adolescents, especially girls, that it can be considered normative.

EATING DISORDERS RISK FACTORS

Based on the socio-cultural approach, or more precisely, the tripartite model of influence, the media, peers and the family are presented as risk factors for the development of eating disorders.

The media has played an important role in the adolescent culture in recent decades. The use of social media in particular has increased significantly.⁵ The consumption of media content can have positive and educational effects. Regarding nutrition, the media can be a tool to convey productive, timely, and unglamorous messages about dieting and body-related disorders (Thompson and Heinberg, 1999). However, the media has a strong influence on the promotion of a slim appearance. An analysis by Guillen and Barra (1994) of nutrition and fitness content in magazines for adolescent girls published between 1970 and 1990 showed a visible change in the female body becoming more androgynous. The messages in magazines for girls emphasize body shape and appearance, like those for adult women, contributing to a cultural milieu in which women are expected to look slim.

Advertising that portrays ideal slim bodies harms body satisfaction in girls who have become concerned and dissatisfied with their appearance and who engage in weight-control behaviours (Rodgers & Chabrol, 2009). It has been confirmed that negative body attitudes increase after their exposure to the photos and videos of slim female bodies. This effect is more pronounced in girls under the age of 19, indicating a more pronounced vulnerability in girls of

⁵ A survey of American teenagers between 13 and 17 showed that TikTok is the most popular platform. As many as 67% use this social network, while 16% use it almost constantly (Pew Research Center, 2022). Among children under 17, video-sharing platforms have become an almost universal activity practiced by 96% of them. The most used platform is YouTube (88%), followed by WhatsApp (55%), TikTok (53%), Snapchat (46%), Instagram (4 1%) and Facebook (34%) (OfCom, 2023).

this age (Groesz et al., 2002). Depictions in the media can have a particularly negative effect on children and adolescents who already have weight problems or disordered eating behaviour. The preoccupation with body and weight often leads them to seek out media content and advertising that promises them an attractive appearance with the promised effects of self-satisfaction and social acceptance. The media pressure is so strong that girls believe they are overweight and want to lose weight, even though most of them are of normal weight.

Tiggemann et al (2000) have shown that adolescent girls have a strong understanding of the socio-cultural and other pressures that lead to the desire to be slim. Mostly they want to lose weight to achieve the body measurements propagated by the media, while at the same time expressing a desire to be attractive and draw attention. They are aware that a beautiful body contributes to self-esteem and self-confidence, that thin girls wear nicer clothes, have control and are popular and attractive to boys. They also know that a slim body is socially desirable, that it is easier to belong to peer groups if you are thin, and that women should be smaller and more delicate than men.

Peers and peer groups are important in the lives of children and young people as they form a social environment that leads to the establishment of strong bonds. Like the media, peer groups can have a dual effect. On the one hand, the influence of peers can be positive. For example, information and advice on healthy eating can be shared among peers. In this case, the peer context can be a beneficial tool and a good way to prevent the development of eating disorders (Keel and Forney, 2013).

However, peer groups can also be exclusive and victimize or stigmatize individuals who differ in some way from most group members. Identification with a peer group is widespread. Adolescents try to belong to peer groups in order to build their identity. Attractive appearance and slimness can be a prerequisite for acceptance in the group. Young people are willing to adjust their appearance and behaviour to better connect with group members. Teasing or ridicule from peers about body weight can also lead to dissatisfaction with one's own body and encourage changes in eating behaviour.

Research primarily points to peer groups as significant predictors of eating disorders and indicates significant positive correlations between the influence of peers and eating disorders in girls and boys (Meyer and Gast, 2008). A comparative study by Field et al (1999) examined the influence of peers and the media on purging behaviour, laxative use and vomiting in adolescent girls aged 9 to 14 years. Both risk factors were found to influence weight control behaviour. The appearance of models in magazines, television and films has been shown to be a role model for girls, who began vomiting at least once a month to achieve the model's appearance. However, this study has shown that the influence of peers is stronger than that of the media, as evidenced by the importance of a thin appearance among peers and the changes in eating habits

under the influence of peers. The more the peer group to which a girl belongs places importance on slimness, the greater the risk of developing bulimic behaviours.

Al-Sheyab et al (2018) confirmed the link between peer pressure and disordered eating behaviour in adolescents aged 13 and 16. Peer pressure was measured in the form of teasing, peer interactions (conversations about appearance, exercising together and comparing body proportions) and slimness as a criterion for popularity among peers. The results showed that disordered eating behaviour was most strongly influenced by peer interactions, which included conversations about appearance with peers, exercising together and comparing appearance and body proportions.

The strong influence of peers was confirmed by the McNight Investigators (2003) study, which examined the influence of several variables, including the influence of peers and parents. Peer competition and peer comparison of appearance were found to be more significant predictors than parental influence, parental teasing and parental concern about the child's weight. A comparative study by Ferguson et al. (2014), which examined media, parental environment and peers, also confirmed a more significant influence of peers, while on the other hand, exposure to thin ideals on TV and social media and parental care did not appear to be influential variables in the development of eating disorders.⁶

About the family environment as a risk factor for eating disorders, it should be noted that the family is neither the only nor the primary mechanism for the initiation and development of eating disorders in children (Le Grange et al., 2010). Risk factors and mechanisms for the transmission of eating disorders from parent to child may include genetic influences, the influence of parental eating psychopathology, parental preoccupation with food and body image, the weak role of parents as role models in teaching healthy eating habits, and dysfunctional relationships in the family (Pattel et al., 2002, p. 16).

Some studies have found no association between parental attitudes and the family environment and the development of disordered eating habits in children (Attie and Brooks-Gunn, 1989; Grigg et al., 1996), while other studies have shown that other factors, particularly peers, have a greater influence than the family environment (McNight Investigators, 2003; Ferguson et al., 2014). One possible explanation for the findings on the influence of peers and the family environment can be found in the study by Striegel-Moore and Cachelin (1999), who developed a model of a dual pathway of body dissatisfaction. The first path consists of the internalisation of social ideals of beauty and slimness, which leads to eating restrictions in order to overcome the discrepancy between

⁶ Since the research was conducted in 2014, social media has had a lesser influence. More recent studies confirm a strong influence of social media on body shaping (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019; Chae, 2017).

one's own body and social ideals. The second pathway is mutual vulnerability, which begins with inadequate parental education that can lead to body image and social functioning disorders. Body dissatisfaction and eating disorders can arise from either of these pathways, but most often they occur because of their interaction and synergistic effect.

On the other hand, the studies that exclusively investigated the influence of the family on eating behaviour showed positive correlations. The study by Allen et al. (2014), for example, focused exclusively on the influence of the family, more specifically on the role of the mother in the development of eating disorders in daughters. Mothers who suffer or have suffered from eating disorders are more concerned about their children's weight. Their children reported a higher frequency of emotional eating than others. In this study, the educational status of the mother was found to have more influence. The children of mothers without a high school diploma exhibited higher levels of eating disorder psychopathology during the two-year study period than children of mothers with a high school diploma.⁷

The study by Stice et al. (1999) is remarkable because it follows the first five years of a child's life. The authors concluded that eating disorders occur in the first five years of a child's life and that they may be due to the influence of the parents, particularly the mother. The children of mothers who were dissatisfied with their bodies and internalized the ideal of slimness, as well as mothers who exploited the child and showed symptoms of bulimia, were more likely to develop disordered eating behaviour such as secret eating, binge eating, vomiting or abstaining from food.

Without excluding the influence of other risk factors, family members and the family environment can increase the risk of eating disorders in childhood and adolescence. Disagreements and stressful situations in the family can act as negative factors, while a positive atmosphere and satisfaction with family life are protective factors (Allen et al., 2014). Eating disorders can occur in early childhood and can be linked to the eating behaviour of parents. Maternal eating disorders such as binge eating, starvation, body dissatisfaction, bulimic behaviour and obesity in the family appear to be predictors of secret eating in children (Stice et al., 1999).

⁷ The authors offer two possible explanations. The first arises from the socio-demographic status of the family, according to which children from lower-income families are more prone to increased concerns about diet, weight, and body shape. It is assumed that the dietary restrictions are due to poverty. The second explanation is that mothers who have not completed secondary school education differ from other mothers in their ability to communicate messages about healthy eating and body appearance, and that they place more emphasis on body weight and acceptable body shape.

CONCLUSION

Slimness has been the ideal of beauty for decades. Originally, it was only accepted in Western societies, but today it is almost universally accepted. Beauty criteria have become standardized and the boundaries between cultures and traditions have blurred, diminished or almost disappeared (Dimitrov and Kroumpouzous, 2023). Slimness has become a condition for access and popularity in social groups and success in work and life. Body grooming characterizes today's modern and postmodern society, where physical appearance is important in defining identity and roles and constructing social differences (Volonte, 2019).

Today's children are growing up in a social and cultural environment that is increasingly focused on physical appearance and the important role of attractiveness in achieving life goals. Awareness of the importance of physical appearance develops at a young age. By following cultural standards of beauty, adolescents become preoccupied with their physical appearance and are often dissatisfied with their body weight. This can sometimes lead to dangerous weight loss practices to achieve a perfect body (Morris and Katzman, 2003).

In addition to other risks, social and cultural factors also play an important role in the development and reinforcement of the phenomenon of body dissatisfaction. They may therefore be partly responsible for the increase in the incidence of eating disorders. Eating disorders are serious health and psychological problems that can threaten a young person's health and life. In recent decades, these disorders have increased in prevalence among adolescents in particular, with the age limit decreasing towards childhood years. Age and gender are no longer the determining variables, so that slimming behaviour is increasingly common among boys.

The media conveys the ideal image of slimness through various mechanisms, such as women's increasingly slim bodies, emphasizing dieting, body shaping, exercise, and other ways of controlling weight and achieving slimness. Such media portrayals have a strong influence on young people. Recently, the risks of social networks, which often promote unrealistic standards by idealizing slimness and giving advice on how to achieve these standards, have attracted particular attention.

Research on media and social networks and other socio-cultural risk factors for eating disorders is widely present in foreign literature, and there are important data and findings. On the other hand, there is an obvious lack of social science research on this topic in Croatia, especially among children and adolescents. The lack of research and the increasing prevalence of this disorder in the young population of Croatia require scientific interest and attention. The need for future research in Croatia and preventive measures as well as strengthening media literacy is confirmed by research on children's media exposure which

shows that children start using screens before the age of two and use them for more than two hours a day (Roje Đapić et al., 2020), while adolescents consume media mainly for entertainment purposes (Labaš and Marinčić, 2018).

Parental attitudes and the family environment can also be factors in the development of eating disorders in childhood and adolescence. Contemporary changes in the family (Giddens, 2007, pp. 180–189), conflictual relationships and disruptions in family life, parental pressure or criticism regarding weight, the mother's biography and her encouragement to be thin are positively correlated with the development of eating disorders in adolescents. In modern society, the importance of success in life as a path to individual fulfilment is increasingly present. This is why parental pressure on children and the expectation of being a successful as possible is so evident, as is the parental pursuit of the child's well-being. However, defining a child as a "parental project" can cause great pressure and stress, especially if the child's potential is overestimated. On the other hand, family stability as an environment of close people who offer understanding, support and security acts as a protective factor against the onset or development of eating disorders. In view of the family crisis and the weakening of family ties, a weakening of the family's protective function is likely expected.

Based on the research findings presented in this paper, it can be argued that the influence of peers on body image and body dissatisfaction is strong, which points to the importance and necessity of prevention programmes at the peer group level (Lieberman et al., 2001). During adolescence, there is a strong desire to belong to a peer group. At this age, young people often divide themselves into homogeneous groups on the basis of which they build specific identities and lifestyles (Corsaro, 2005, pp. 171–188). Peer groups often function exclusively as places of cultural reproduction (James et al., 2010, pp. 94–96). Teasing, peer pressure and even the communication of appearance and weight, as well as the conditions of access to the group, can be incentives for disordered eating behaviour. Just as media and family influence eating behaviour, peer groups may also pose a challenge for future research in Croatia.

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ANALIZA PONUDE I POTRAŽNJE PROGRAMA OBRAZOVANJA ODRASLIH U EUROPSKOJ UNIJI

Sažetak: *Obrazovanje odraslih u Europskoj uniji ključan je element u razvoju ljudskih resursa i poboljšanju konkurentnosti na tržištu rada. Ovo istraživanje analizira ponudu i potražnju za programima obrazovanja odraslih u EU, identificira ključne trendove, izazove i prilike te pruža preporuke za poboljšanje tih programa. Pregledom literature, analizom podataka i studijama slučaja iz nekoliko država članica rad pokazuje kako obrazovanje odraslih doprinosi socijalnoj uključenosti, ekonomskom razvoju i poboljšanju kompetencija populacije. Zaključci sugeriraju da su daljnja ulaganja i prilagodba obrazovnih politika nužni kako bi se osigurala dostupnost i kvaliteta obrazovanja za sve odrasle osobe u EU.*

Ključne riječi: *obrazovanje odraslih, cjeloživotno učenje, tržište rada, razvoj vještina, obrazovne politike*

UVOD

Ponuda i potražnja za programima obrazovanja odraslih u Europi igraju ključnu ulogu u poboljšanju vještina i kompetencija stanovništva, što je posebno važno u kontekstu stalnih promjena na tržištu rada i društvenih izazova. Obrazovanje odraslih doprinosi socijalnoj uključenosti, ekonomskoj stabilnosti i osobnom razvoju pružajući pojedincima priliku za stjecanje novih vještina, prekvalifikaciju i kontinuirani profesionalni razvoj. Ovaj rad analizira ponudu i potražnju programa obrazovanja odraslih u Europi, s posebnim naglaskom

na ključne inicijative, trendove i izazove. Obrazovanje odraslih u Europskoj uniji suočava se s brojnim izazovima, ali istovremeno nudi značajne prilike za razvoj ključnih kompetencija neophodnih za napredak i uspjeh na tržištu rada. Ključne inicijative i strategije već su uspostavljene, no dodatna ulaganja i prilagodbe nužni su kako bi se osigurala dostupnost i kvaliteta obrazovanja za sve odrasle osobe. Povećanje aktivnog sudjelovanja u obrazovanju odraslih ključno je za socijalnu uključenost i gospodarski razvoj u Europi. Obrazovanje odraslih sastavni je dio politike cjeloživotnog učenja Europske komisije i obuhvaća formalno, neformalno i informalno učenje s ciljem poboljšanja osnovnih vještina, stjecanja novih kvalifikacija te unaprjeđenja i razvoja sposobnosti za uspješnije zapošljavanje. Potražnja za obrazovanjem odraslih raste, a Europska komisija, sa svojim ciljevima povećanja konkurentnosti i zapošljivosti, socijalne uključenosti, aktivnog građanstva i osobnog razvoja, prednjači u stvaranju uspješnijeg sustava obrazovanja odraslih u državama članicama Europske unije.

Glavne značajke uspješnog sustava obrazovanja odraslih prema Europskoj su komisiji: fleksibilnost, visoka kvaliteta, izvrsna nastava te poboljšana uloga lokalnih vlasti, zaposlenika, socijalnih partnera, građana i kulturnih organizacija. Preporuka Vijeća Europske unije od 19. prosinca 2016. o novim prilikama za obrazovanje odraslih definira tri razine osposobljavanja: procjenu vještina, ponudu obrazovanja i vrednovanje te priznavanje. Procjena vještina omogućava sudionicima da identificiraju postojeće kompetencije koje već posjeduju i potencijalnu potrebu za njihovim unaprjeđenjem. Ponuda obrazovanja prilagođena je potrebama sudionika kako bi im se omogućilo fleksibilno i kvalitetno obrazovanje i osposobljavanje, dok vrednovanje i priznavanje novostečenih vještina omogućava sudionicima njihovu primjenu na tržištu rada ili za nastavak školovanja.

Europska komisija nastavlja pratiti razvoj programa obrazovanja odraslih uspostavljanjem ključnih kompetencija u cjeloživotnom učenju, među kojima su najvažnije: pismenost, višejezična kompetencija, matematička kompetencija te kompetencije u znanosti, tehnologiji i inženjerstvu, digitalna kompetencija, osobna i socijalna kompetencija, kompetencija učenja učenja, građanska kompetencija, poduzetnička kompetencija te svijest i izražavanje kroz kulturu (Europska unija, 2016.).

Izvjешća poput onog za 2021., koje je objavila mreža Eurydice (2022.), pružaju uvid u područje obrazovanja i osposobljavanja odraslih u Europi analizirajući pristupe promicanju cjeloživotnog učenja te politike i mjere koje omogućuju veći pristup obrazovanju za odrasle s nižim razinama kvalifikacija. Ova izvješća, koja uključuju podatke iz organizacija poput Eurostata i Cedefopa, omogućuju donositeljima odluka kvalitetnije kreiranje politika koje doprinose razvoju obrazovanja odraslih. Obrazovanje odraslih obuhvaća sve oblike učenja kojima se odrasli bave nakon završetka formalnog obrazovanja. Prema

teoriji obrazovanja odraslih Malcolma Knowlesa, ono se razlikuje od dječjeg obrazovanja (Peterson i Ray, 2013.). To može uključivati formalno, neformalno i informalno učenje. Formalno obrazovanje odraslih odnosi se na strukturirane programe koji vode do priznatih kvalifikacija poput diploma ili certifikata. Neformalno učenje obuhvaća obrazovne aktivnosti koje nisu formalizirane, poput seminara, radionica i tečajeva, dok se informalno učenje odnosi na učenje koje se događa kroz svakodnevne aktivnosti i iskustva bez formalne strukture ili ocjenjivanja. Cilj je obrazovanja odraslih poboljšanje osnovnih vještina, stjecanje novih kvalifikacija te razvoj osobnih i profesionalnih kompetencija (Eurydice, 2022.).

Obrazovanje odraslih ima ključnu ulogu u društvenom i gospodarskom razvoju. Ono povećava zapošljivost, unaprjeđuje vještine potrebne za prilagodbu promjenama na tržištu rada i potiče osobni razvoj. Ovaj rad ima za cilj analizirati trenutačnu ponudu i potražnju za programima obrazovanja odraslih u Europskoj uniji, identificirati ključne trendove, izazove i prilike za poboljšanje tih programa. Istraživanje će pružiti preporuke donositeljima politika i obrazovnim institucijama kako bi se poboljšao pristup i kvaliteta obrazovanja odraslih.

Ključni su ciljevi istraživanja :

- razumijevanje trenutačnog stanja obrazovanja odraslih u različitim državama članicama EU
- identifikacija demografskih karakteristika sudionika i njihovih obrazovnih potreba
- analiza uspješnih modela i praksi u obrazovanju odraslih
- pružanje preporuka za poboljšanje politika i programa obrazovanja odraslih.

TEORIJSKI OKVIR

Pregled literature o obrazovanju odraslih u Europi otkriva bogatstvo istraživanja koja se bave različitim aspektima ove teme. Za potrebe ovog istraživanja odabrani su noviji izvori. Obrazovanje odraslih postalo je ključno pitanje u mnogim europskim zemljama zbog njegove uloge u promicanju cjeloživotnog učenja (Phyu Thwe i Kálmán, 2024), povećanju ekonomske konkurentnosti (Kesner-Škreb, 2007) i poticanju socijalne uključenosti (Kersh i sur., 2021). Europska udruga za obrazovanje odraslih (EAEA) svake godine objavljuje izvješća o stanju obrazovanja odraslih u Europi. Najnovije dostupno izvješće iz 2021. godine obuhvaća 44 zemlje (EAEA, 2024^a). Ista organizacija objavila je 2019. godine predviđanja o budućnosti obrazovanja odraslih u Europi u dokumentu *Budućnost učenja odraslih u Europi – Temeljni dokument* (EAEA, 2024^b). Osim toga, mreža informacija o obrazovanju Eurydice, koju financira Europska komisija i koja je osnovana 1980. godine,

ima ključnu ulogu kao važan izvor podataka o obrazovanju odraslih. Njezin je primarni cilj pružiti ažurirane i pouzdane informacije donositeljima politika u Europskoj uniji i drugim sudionicima o obrazovnim sustavima i politikama. Mreža se sastoji od europske koordinacijske jedinice i nekoliko nacionalnih jedinica smještenih u ministarstvima obrazovanja država članica. Eurydice objavljuje detaljne opise nacionalnih obrazovnih sustava, usporedne studije o specifičnim obrazovnim temama i statističke podatke, podržavajući donošenje odluka temeljenih na dokazima. Pokriva sve razine obrazovanja, od predškolskog do visokog obrazovanja i obrazovanja odraslih. Mreža također igra ključnu ulogu u promicanju europske suradnje u obrazovanju dijeljenjem informacija i najboljih praksi među državama članicama. Nedavno je mreža proširena uključivanjem nacionalnih jedinica iz Gruzije, Moldavije i Ukrajine, što odražava njezinu predanost izgradnji uključivijeg i povezanijeg obrazovnog prostora u Europi (Eurydice, 2024^{a, b, c, d}). Publikacija *Pravo na cjeloživotno učenje: Zašto je obrazovanje odraslih važno*, koju je objavio UNESCO (2023), naglašava kritičnu važnost obrazovanja odraslih za društveni i ekonomski razvoj. Obrazovanje odraslih ne samo da poboljšava individualne vještine i znanje, već također potiče inkluziju, smanjuje nejednakosti i podržava održivi razvoj. Kroz cjeloživotno učenje odrasli se mogu prilagoditi brzim promjenama na tržištu rada, poboljšati svoje društvene i ekonomske mogućnosti te aktivno sudjelovati u društvu. Ovaj izvor naglašava da je pravo na cjeloživotno učenje temeljno ljudsko pravo koje doprinosi jačanju demokratskih vrijednosti i društvene kohezije.

Iz perspektive ciljeva održivog razvoja Ujedinjenih naroda (SDGs) (United Nations, 2024), UNESCO-ov Institut za cjeloživotno učenje naglašava značaj obrazovanja odraslih kao ključnog elementa cjeloživotnog učenja. Obrazovanje odraslih pomaže pojedincima da se aktivno uključe u društvo i radno okruženje, čime doprinose ostvarivanju ciljeva održivog razvoja. Ovaj izvor naglašava potrebu za kontinuiranim učenjem kako bi se odgovorilo na globalne izazove, uključujući klimatske promjene i digitalizaciju, te poziva na veću predanost politikama obrazovanja odraslih na globalnoj razini. Među znanstvenicima koji se profesionalno bave ovom temom važno je spomenuti Stephena Brookfielda (2018), koji analizira dvije glavne tradicije kritičke analize koje su oblikovale teoriju obrazovanja odraslih: marksizam i kritičku društvenu teoriju Frankfurtske škole, kao i kritičku pedagogiju povezanu s Paulom Freireom. Također istražuje utjecaj teorija transformativnog učenja, feminističke teorije, *queer* teorije, afrocentrične teorije i teorije kritičke rase na obrazovanje odraslih. Njegov rad pomaže u razumijevanju kako teorija može pridonijeti razgradnji moćnih struktura kritiziranjem ideologija koje ih podržavaju. Sljedeći su Rocco i sur. (2018), koji u svom radu *Kritički zaokret u razvoju ljudskih resursa* istražuju kako su različite kritičke teorije stvorile prostor za kritički razvoj ljudskih resursa (HRD) i kako teorija kritičke rase vodi HRD u radikalnijem smjeru.

Njihov rad pruža uvid u to kako se kritička teorija može primijeniti na razvoj ljudskih resursa, naglašavajući važnost suzbijanja nejednakosti i promicanja socijalne pravde u radnom okruženju. Brown i Bimrose (2018) naglašavaju važnost učenja na radnom mjestu u odnosu na razvoj identiteta. Oni mapiraju promjene u shvaćanju razvoja identiteta na poslu i predstavljaju dva modela učenja koja podržavaju razvoj identiteta u radnom okruženju. Njihov rad pomaže u razumijevanju kako profesionalni razvoj i učenje mogu pridonijeti oblikovanju radnog identiteta. Autori Boyadjieva i Ilieva-Trichkova (2018) istražuju heuristički potencijal pristupa sposobnostima u konceptualizaciji cjeloživotnog učenja i testiraju njegovu empirijsku vrijednost. Oslanjajući se na radove Amartye Sena i Marthe Nussbaum, razvijaju indeks pravednosti u sudjelovanju u obrazovanju odraslih te istražuju prepreke sudjelovanju. Njihov rad doprinosi razumijevanju kako cjeloživotno učenje može biti proces emancipacije i društvene pravde. Lange (2018) istražuje kako obrazovanje za održivost može prijeći s isprazne retorike (*sustainabble*) na značajne društvene promjene. Njezino istraživanje fokusira se na obrazovanje koje transformira društvene strukture kako bi se postigla održivost, naglašavajući ulogu obrazovanja u ostvarivanju ciljeva održivog razvoja (SDGs).

METODOLOGIJA

Ovo istraživanje upotrebljavalo je kombinaciju kvantitativnih i kvalitativnih metoda za prikupljanje i analizu podataka. Kvantitativni podatci prikupljeni su iz postojećih baza podataka, poput Eurostata i Cedefopa, kako bi se identificirali ključni trendovi i statistički podatci o obrazovanju odraslih u Europskoj uniji. Kvalitativna analiza temeljila se na studijama slučaja iz nekoliko država članica te pregledu relevantne literature. Analiza podataka uključivala je deskriptivnu statistiku, komparativnu analizu i analizu trendova s ciljem prepoznavanja ključnih obrazaca u ponudi i potražnji obrazovanja odraslih. Kvalitativna analiza fokusirala se na identifikaciju uspješnih modela i praksi te razumijevanje izazova i prepreka u obrazovanju odraslih. Sinteza rezultata provedena je integracijom nalaza, čime se dobio sveobuhvatan uvid u stanje obrazovanja odraslih u EU. Na osnovi dobivenih rezultata pružene su preporuke za poboljšanje politika i praksi obrazovanja odraslih.

REZULTATI I RASPRAVA

Trenutačno stanje programa obrazovanja odraslih u EU

Ponuda programa obrazovanja odraslih u Europi obuhvaća različite oblike učenja koji odraslima omogućuju stjecanje novih vještina, unaprjeđenje postojećih kompetencija i povećanje zapošljivosti. Ti programi mogu biti formalni, neformalni i informalni, a svaki od njih ima specifične karakteristike

i ciljeve. Formalno obrazovanje odraslih uključuje strukturirane programe koji vode do priznatih kvalifikacija, poput diploma, certifikata ili drugih oblika akreditacije. Takve programe često organiziraju sveučilišta, strukovne škole i druge obrazovne institucije. Kroz formalno obrazovanje odrasli polaznici imaju priliku steći nove stručne kvalifikacije ili unaprijediti postojeće. Informalno obrazovanje odraslih odnosi se na nenamjerno i nesustavno učenje koje se događa kroz svakodnevne aktivnosti i iskustva. To može uključivati samostalno učenje, učenje kroz radne zadatke, socijalne interakcije i druge oblike neformalnog stjecanja znanja. Istraživanja pokazuju da informalno učenje igra ključnu ulogu u razvoju praktičnih vještina i znanja kojima se odrasli koriste u svakodnevnom životu. Naprimjer, digitalna pismenost često se stječe kroz svakodnevnu uporabu računala i interneta bez formalne obuke (Illeris, 2014). U mnogim europskim zemljama informalno učenje prepoznato je kao važan element cjeloživotnog učenja. Neformalno obrazovanje odraslih također ima značajnu ulogu u cjeloživotnom učenju. Ono obično uključuje organizirane aktivnosti izvan formalnog obrazovnog okvira, poput radionica, programa osposobljavanja u zajednici i online tečajeva. Ovi su programi prilagođeni potrebama odraslih polaznika i često se fokusiraju na specifične vještine ili područja znanja, poput digitalne pismenosti, strukovnih vještina ili osobnog razvoja. Neformalno obrazovanje pruža fleksibilan i pristupačan način stjecanja novih kompetencija bez obveze završavanja formalnih kvalifikacija. Nacionalne i europske obrazovne politike i inicijative često promiču vrijednost informalnog učenja i njegovu integraciju u formalne i neformalne obrazovne sustave (Merriam i Brockett, 1996, str. 173–179). Europska unija ima nekoliko ključnih politika i inicijativa koje podržavaju obrazovanje odraslih. Jedna je od najznačajnijih strategija Europa 2020, koja naglašava važnost cjeloživotnog učenja za postizanje gospodarskog rasta i socijalne kohezije. Ova strategija promiče fleksibilne i inkluzivne obrazovne sustave koji omogućuju pristup obrazovanju za sve građane, uključujući odrasle osobe (EAEA, 2024^b). Druga je značajna inicijativa program Erasmus+, koji pruža financijsku potporu za obrazovne projekte i mobilnost odraslih polaznika. Ovaj program omogućuje odraslima sudjelovanje u različitim obrazovnim i strukovnim osposobljavanjima diljem Europe, stječući nova znanja i vještine (Erasmus+, 2024^a).

Uspješni modeli i prakse u obrazovanju odraslih

Jedan od ključnih primjera formalnog obrazovanja odraslih sustav je *Volkshochschulen* (VHS) u Njemačkoj. *Volkshochschulen* su javne institucije koje nude širok raspon obrazovnih programa, uključujući osnovno obrazovanje, srednjoškolske diplome, strukovne tečajeve i pripreme programe za sveučilišta. Ove institucije imaju ključnu ulogu u njemačkom sustavu cjeloživotnog učenja, omogućujući odraslima kontinuirano usavršavanje i prilagodbu promjenama

na tržištu rada (Hinzen & Meilhammer, 2022). U Švedskoj općinski sustavi obrazovanja odraslih (Komvux) pružaju slične mogućnosti. Općine organiziraju programe različitih razina obrazovanja, od osnovnog do višeg srednjeg obrazovanja, omogućujući odraslima stjecanje potrebnih kvalifikacija za tržište rada ili daljnje obrazovanje (Eurydice, 2024^a). U Finskoj je obrazovanje odraslih integrirano u širi obrazovni sustav, s posebnim naglaskom na fleksibilnost i individualne potrebe polaznika (Eurydice, 2024^o). Nastavni plan i program često su prilagođeni uvjetima rada i životnim situacijama sudionika. U Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu obrazovanje odraslih uključuje različite oblike i razine učenja, od strukovnih tečajeva do visokog obrazovanja. Odrasli mogu pohađati djelomične tečajeve, stručne kvalifikacije i preddiplomske programe kako bi napredovali u svojim karijerama. Institut za obrazovanje odraslih (IAL) i Udruga radničkog obrazovanja (WEA) nude pristupačne tečajeve u lokalnim centrima i *online*, podržavajući odrasle osobe iz različitih zajednica, uključujući one bez prethodnih kvalifikacija (Higginbotham, 2024). U većini europskih obrazovnih sustava postoje *kompensacijski* ili *korektivni* programi obrazovanja i osposobljavanja povezani s najnižim razinama obrazovanja. Ovi su programi prvenstveno namijenjeni osobama starijima od obvezne školske dobi, uključujući mlade i odrasle koji, iz različitih razloga, nisu završili osnovno obrazovanje. Često se fokusiraju na funkcionalnu pismenost u različitim područjima, uključujući čitanje, pisanje, računanje i informacijsko-komunikacijske tehnologije (IKT). Po završetku polaznici obično dobivaju certifikate ili kvalifikacije potrebne za daljnje obrazovanje unutar formalnog sustava obrazovanja i osposobljavanja. Mnoge kompensacijske programe karakterizira povezanost sa strukovnim obrazovanjem i osposobljavanjem (VET – *Vocational Education and Training*). Dok početni obrazovni sustavi često nude samo osnovno opće obrazovanje, programi druge šanse često uključuju elemente strukovnog osposobljavanja i omogućuju stjecanje priznatih strukovnih kvalifikacija. Neki od najuspješnijih primjera kompensacijskih programa provode se u Turskoj, Portugalu, Grčkoj, Estoniji, Rumunjskoj, Hrvatskoj, Slovačkoj, Srbiji, Danskoj, Finskoj, Švedskoj i Norveškoj. U Grčkoj, škole poznate kao *Scholia Defteris Efkerias* nude dvogodišnje programe za odrasle koji nisu stekli osnovnoškolsko obrazovanje. Sličan certifikat može se steći i putem troipolgodisnjih večernjih programa u nižim srednjim školama (*Esperino Gymnasio*), koji su namijenjeni i odraslima i maloljetnicima koji su u radnom odnosu. U Portugalu programi obrazovanja i osposobljavanja odraslih (*Cursos de Educação e Formação de Adultos*) omogućuju stjecanje kvalifikacija na četiri, šest, devet ili dvanaest godina školovanja, ovisno o razini obrazovanja (Eurydice, 2024^b). U Turskoj se osnovno obrazovanje može završiti u sustavu otvorenog osnovnog obrazovanja (Açık Öğretim Ortaokulu) (VHS^{ab}, 2024). U Estoniji druga razina strukovnog obrazovanja (*2. taseme kutseõpe*) namijenjena je polaznicima starijima od 17 godina koji nisu završili osnovnu školu. Ovaj

program omogućuje stjecanje strukovne kvalifikacije i može se kombinirati s programom osnovnog obrazovanja za odrasle (*põhiharidus Täiskasvanutele mittestatsionaarses õppevormis*) (Eurydice, 2024ⁱ). U Hrvatskoj je obrazovni program za odrasle podijeljen u šest obrazovnih ciklusa, svaki u trajanju od 18 tjedana. Nakon završetka programa, polaznici mogu upisati osnovne strukovne programe osposobljavanja u trajanju od 150 sati (Eurydice, 2024^r). U Rumunjskoj polaznici programa „Druga šansa” (*Doua șansă*) mogu steći certifikat koji im omogućuje nastavak školovanja na višim razinama. Također, moguće je pohađati 720 sati praktične obuke, a uspješni polaznici dobivaju certifikat strukovne kvalifikacije trećeg stupnja (Eurydice, 2024^j). U Slovačkoj, odrasli koji nisu završili niže srednjoškolsko obrazovanje mogu upisati dvogodišnje programe strukovnog obrazovanja s naglaskom na praktičnu nastavu. Iako ovi programi ne omogućuju izravan upis u više srednjoškolske obrazovne programe, uspješni polaznici dobivaju potvrdu o završnom ispitu i strukovnu kvalifikaciju. Nakon završetka programa formalnog osnovnog obrazovanja, polaznici mogu nastaviti obrazovanje u programima viših strukovnih škola (Eurydice, 2024^k). U Srbiji je funkcionalno osnovno obrazovanje za odrasle organizirano u tri ciklusa i traje tri do pet godina. Program uključuje osam sati redovite nastave osnovnog i nižeg srednjoškolskog obrazovanja. Prva dva ciklusa fokusiraju se na opće obrazovanje, dok treći ciklus kombinira opće i strukovno obrazovanje (Eurydice, 2024^l). U Danskoj je sustav općeg obrazovanja za odrasle (*almen voksenuddannelsen*) namijenjen osobama starijima od 25 godina. Program pokriva isti nastavni sadržaj kao i redovno osnovno i niže srednjoškolsko obrazovanje (*folkeskole*). Polaznici mogu birati između pojedinačnih predmeta ili cijelih programa, koji završavaju pripremnim ispitima za odrasle. Ovi ispiti omogućuju upis u programe viših srednjoškolskih kvalifikacija (Eurydice, 2024^m). U Finskoj osnovno obrazovanje za odrasle (*aikuisten perusopetus*) omogućuje polaznicima naknadno stjecanje osnovnoškolskog obrazovanja. Polaznici mogu učiti pojedinačne predmete (npr. jezike) ili se pripremati za završne ispite iz više predmeta, koji omogućuju daljnje obrazovanje (Eurydice, 2024^o). U Švedskoj općinski sustav osnovnog obrazovanja za odrasle (*komvux grundläggande nivå*) obuhvaća iste nastavne sadržaje kao i obavezno osnovno obrazovanje (od 1. do 9. razreda), ali je prilagođen odraslim polaznicima. Polaznici koji postignu zadovoljavajuće ocjene u četirima osnovnim predmetima – švedski (ili švedski kao drugi jezik), engleski, matematiku i društvene znanosti – stječu certifikat o završenom obrazovanju (Eurydice, 2024^s). U Norveškoj osobe starije od 23 godine s najmanje pet godina radnog iskustva mogu sudjelovati u programima općeg srednjoškolskog obrazovanja za odrasle (*videregående opplæring studieforberedende utdanningsprogramme*), koji traje jednu godinu umjesto standardne tri godine u redovnom sustavu. Program obuhvaća šest predmeta iz općeg obrazovanja (norveški jezik, engleski, matematiku, prirodne znanosti, društvene znanosti i povijest) (Eurydice, 2024ⁿ).

U nekim zemljama, kao što su Bugarska, Češka, Rumunjska, Slovačka i Island, ne postoje posebno dizajnirani programi srednjoškolskog obrazovanja za odrasle. U tim zemljama srednjoškolsko obrazovanje (opće ili strukovno) odvija se u različitim fleksibilnim aranžmanima, uključujući programe s nepunim radnim vremenom ili večernje programe. Ovi su programi dostupni svim polaznicima koji više nisu obvezni pohađati redovno obrazovanje. S druge strane, nekoliko zemalja razvilo je sustave kvalifikacija koji nadopunjuju redovni obrazovni sustav. Kvalifikacije obuhvaćene ovim sustavima obično uključuju smanjeni obim nastave, što ih čini pristupačnijom opcijom za odrasle, uključujući one s ograničenim prethodnim formalnim obrazovanjem.

Osim obrazovnih i osposobljavajućih prilika koje vode do priznatih kvalifikacija, državna tijela financiraju i druge vrste obrazovnih programa, uključujući one koji mogu pomoći odraslima u poboljšanju osnovnih vještina. Ti se programi sastoje od tečajeva koje provode različiti obrazovni pružatelji i manje su strukturirani od programa koji vode do priznatih kvalifikacija. Također postoje razlike između programa koji vode do priznatih kvalifikacija i neformalnih programa osnovnih vještina. Prvi tip programa uglavnom se provodi u javnim obrazovnim i osposobljavajućim ustanovama koje su usmjerene na obrazovanje odraslih ili u državnim školama koje pružaju inicijalno obrazovanje i osposobljavanje za mlade. Drugi tip programa provode javne ili privatne institucije za obrazovanje i osposobljavanje odraslih.

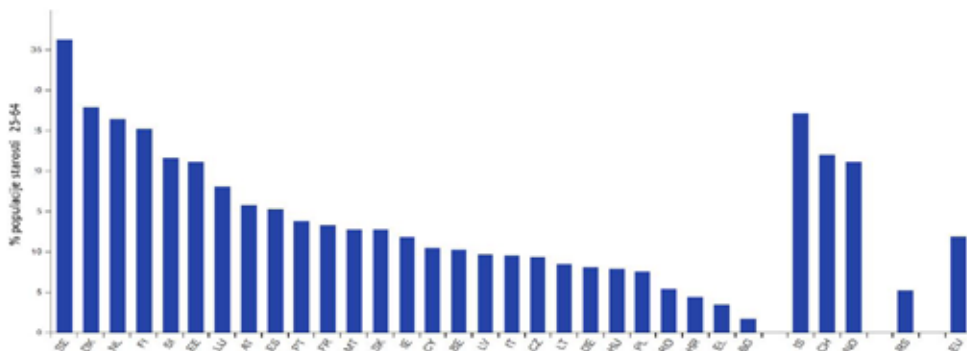
Izazovi i prepreke obrazovanju odraslih

Potražnja za obrazovanjem odraslih u Europi raste zbog različitih ekonomskih, društvenih i tehnoloških čimbenika. Taj rast odražava potrebu za kontinuiranim stjecanjem novih vještina i znanja kako bi odrasli mogli prilagoditi se promjenama na tržištu rada i unaprijediti svoje osobne kompetencije. Demografske karakteristike sudionika obrazovanja odraslih u Europi pokazuju značajnu raznolikost. Prema podacima Eurostata (2024), obrazovanje odraslih privlači širok raspon pojedinaca različitih dobnih skupina, obrazovnih razina i profesionalnih profila. U većini zemalja Europske unije sudionici su prvenstveno osobe starije od 25 godina, no značajan broj mlađih odraslih također sudjeluje u obrazovnim programima kako bi unaprijedili svoje kvalifikacije ili se prekvalificirali za nova zanimanja. Prema istom izvoru, u 2022. godini, kako je vidljivo na slici 1., prosječno 11,9 % osoba u dobi od 25 do 64 godine u Europskoj uniji sudjelovalo je u obrazovanju ili osposobljavanju tijekom prethodna četiri tjedna, što je povećanje od 2,8 postotnih bodova u odnosu na 2020. godinu. Najviša stopa sudjelovanja zabilježena je u Švedskoj (36,2 %), Danskoj (27,9 %), Nizozemskoj (26,4 %) i Finskoj (25,2 %), dok su najniže stope bile u Grčkoj i Bugarskoj. U svim državama članicama Europske

unije, osim u Rumunjskoj i Slovačkoj, žene su imale veću stopu sudjelovanja u obrazovanju odraslih nego muškarci.

Slika 1.

Sudjelovanje odraslih u obrazovanju u EU 2022.



Izvor: Eurostat, 2024.

Motivi za sudjelovanje u obrazovnim programima među odraslima brojni su i raznoliki. Prema Kesner-Škrebju (2007), ekonomski motivi igraju ključnu ulogu jer odrasli žele poboljšati mogućnosti zapošljavanja i napredovati u karijeri. U tom kontekstu, potreba za stjecanjem novih vještina, prekvalifikacijom i usavršavanjem sve je važnija. Od država članica EU očekuje se da ulažu u obrazovanje i razvoj vještina te primjenjuju aktivne mjere zapošljavanja, sve s ciljem izgradnje društva temeljenog na znanju. Društveni motivi također imaju značajnu ulogu. Obrazovanje odraslih doprinosi socijalnoj uključenosti omogućujući pojedincima iz marginaliziranih skupina stjecanje vještina i znanja potrebnih za aktivno sudjelovanje u društvenom i gospodarskom životu. Primjerice, programi učenja jezika za imigrante ili tečajevi digitalne pismenosti za starije osobe doprinose njihovoj društvenoj integraciji i poboljšanju kvalitete života (Kersh i Laczik, 2021). Osobni razvoj i zadovoljstvo još su jedan motiv. Mnogi odrasli sudjeluju u obrazovnim programima kako bi zadovoljili znatiželju, razvili nove hobije ili jednostavno uživali u procesu učenja. Ovakva vrsta motivacije posebno je prisutna u neformalnom obrazovanju, gdje tečajevi često uključuju teme poput umjetnosti, kuhanja, vrtlarstva i drugih osobnih interesa (Jarvis, 2004, str. 16–33, 77). Tržište rada ima značajan utjecaj na potražnju za obrazovanjem odraslih. Promjene u gospodarstvu, tehnološki

napredak i globalizacija sve više zahtijevaju od radne snage da se prilagodi novim uvjetima. To zahtijeva kontinuirano stjecanje novih vještina i znanja.

Prema A. G. Wattsu (2010), koji je ponudio pregled izvještaja *Learning through Life: Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning* autora Schullera i Watsona (2009), cjeloživotno učenje i stjecanje novih vještina ključni su faktori za održavanje konkurentnosti i produktivnosti radne snage. Watts naglašava kako istraživanje uvodi strateški okvir za cjeloživotno učenje u Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu za sljedećih 10 do 15 godina, identificirajući četiri ključne faze životnog ciklusa: do 25 godina, 25 – 50 godina, 50 – 75 godina, iznad 75 godina. Ovaj model naglašava produžene tranzicije za mlade, dulji radni vijek i prilagodbu povećanom životnom vijeku, s fokusom na osiguravanje da se stečene vještine ne samo usvoje, već i učinkovito primijene za održive gospodarske i društvene koristi.

Jedan je od ključnih zaključaka taj da je potrebno povećati ulaganja u obrazovanje odraslih kako bi se osigurala prilagodljivost radne snage brzim promjenama tržišnih uvjeta. Radnici koji ne stječu nove vještine i ne prilagođavaju se novim tehnologijama i metodama rada suočavaju se s rizicima smanjenih mogućnosti zapošljavanja i stagnacije u karijeri. S druge strane, stjecanje novih vještina i kontinuirano obrazovanje omogućuju radnicima ne samo zadržavanje posla, već i napredovanje u karijeri, doprinos većoj inovativnosti unutar organizacija te zadržavanje relevantnosti na tržištu rada.

Ključni elementi predložene strategije uključuju: uvođenje osobnih obrazovnih računa, koji bi odraslima omogućili upravljanje vlastitim obrazovanjem od 25. godine nadalje te stvaranje snažne infrastrukture za savjetovanje i podršku učenju, koja bi pomogla pojedincima u identificiranju njihovih obrazovnih potreba i mogućnosti. Nedostatak prepoznavanja potrebe za kontinuiranim učenjem i neprilagodba novim uvjetima predstavljaju značajan rizik za pojedince i gospodarstvo u cjelini. Digitalna revolucija, primjerice, dovela je do velikih promjena na tržištu rada, stvarajući potrebu za novim vještinama, poput digitalne pismenosti, upravljanja podacima i programiranja. Mnogi odrasli odlučuju se za tečajeve i obuke koje im omogućuju stjecanje ovih vještina i ostanak konkurentnima na tržištu rada. Uz tehničke vještine, tržište rada sve više zahtijeva i meke vještine, poput timske suradnje, komunikacije i rješavanja problema. Ove su vještine ključne za uspjeh u modernom radnom okruženju i često su sastavni dio programa obrazovanja odraslih. Programi obrazovanja odraslih sve više uključuju grupne projekte i zadatke koji pomažu polaznicima u razvijanju vještina timskog rada. Ove su vještine ključne za učinkovitu suradnju u profesionalnim okruženjima te povećavaju šanse za zapošljavanje i napredovanje u karijeri. Komunikacijske vještine također su često uključene u kurikulum obrazovanja odraslih, s obzirom na to da su ključne za vođenje sastanaka, prezentacija i svakodnevnih interakcija na radnom mjestu. Scenariji i studije slučaja, koji simuliraju stvarne probleme iz

radnog okruženja, također dobivaju sve veću važnost. Ovi zadatci omogućuju polaznicima primjenu naučenih vještina u kontroliranom okruženju te razvijanje strategija za učinkovito rješavanje problema (Field, 2005, str. 15–29). Ovi su elementi ključni za poboljšanje kompetencija radne snage i povećanje njihove konkurentnosti na tržištu rada. Učinkoviti programi obrazovanja odraslih ne samo da poboljšavaju individualne vještine, već doprinose i većoj produktivnosti i inovativnosti unutar organizacija. Potražnja za obrazovanjem odraslih varira među različitim regijama Europe. Ove razlike često su posljedica različitih ekonomskih, društvenih i kulturnih faktora, kao i različitih razina institucionalne podrške i obrazovnih politika za odrasle. U Njemačkoj postoji duga tradicija cjeloživotnog učenja, podržana snažnim institucionalnim okvirom. *Volkshochschulen* (VHS) ili javna učilišta za obrazovanje odraslih igraju ključnu ulogu u pružanju obrazovnih programa za odrasle. Ove institucije nude širok raspon tečajeva, uključujući jezične tečajeve, informatičke vještine, poslovne vještine, umjetnost i zdravlje. Ova raznolikost omogućuje odraslima pronalazak programa koji odgovaraju njihovim potrebama i interesima. Državna potpora kroz financiranje i politike osigurava visoku razinu dostupnosti i sudjelovanja u obrazovanju odraslih (Eurydice, 2022). U skandinavskim zemljama, poput Švedske, Norveške i Danske, prisutan je sličan pristup. Ove zemlje imaju snažne socijalne sustave i visok stupanj financijske potpore za obrazovanje odraslih. Primjerice, u Švedskoj se obrazovni programi nude kroz općinske sustave obrazovanja odraslih (Komvux), omogućujući građanima stjecanje novih vještina ili prekvalifikaciju za nove karijere. Ovi su programi često besplatni ili subvencionirani, što povećava njihovu dostupnost (Eurydice, 2022). S druge strane, u Italiji i Španjolskoj potražnja je za obrazovanjem odraslih niža. To je djelomično posljedica socioekonomskih faktora, poput veće nezaposlenosti i nižih javnih izdvajanja za obrazovanje odraslih. Također, nedostatak institucionalne podrške može otežati pristup obrazovanju odraslih. Međutim, u tim zemljama raste interes za obrazovanjem odraslih, posebno u sektorima pogođenim gospodarskim promjenama. Primjerice, u Španjolskoj programi učenja jezika i tečajevi digitalnih vještina i IT kompetencija postaju sve popularniji. Ove programe često organiziraju privatne institucije i nevladine organizacije, koje popunjavaju praznine nastale zbog nedostatka državne potpore. U Španjolskoj istraživanje pod nazivom *Društvena i teritorijalna kohezija u Španjolskoj: važnost socioekonomskog konteksta* (Faura-Martínez i sur., 2020) ističe važnost obrazovanja odraslih u kontekstu društvene kohezije i teritorijalne ravnopravnosti. Obrazovanje odraslih prepoznaje se kao ključni element u borbi protiv socijalne isključenosti i nejednakosti. Studija analizira faktore poput prihoda, zapošljavanja, obrazovanja, zdravlja, stanovanja, socijalnih i obiteljskih odnosa te sudjelovanja u društvu, pokazujući da obrazovanje igra ključnu ulogu u poboljšanju društvene mobilnosti i kvalitete života. Autori naglašavaju da su visoke razine socijalne isključenosti povezane

s niskim obrazovnim razinama, što dodatno otežava mogućnosti zapošljavanja i ekonomsku stabilnost. Obrazovanje odraslih pruža prilike za stjecanje novih vještina i prekvalifikaciju, što je posebno važno u kontekstu gospodarskih kriza i brzih promjena na tržištu rada. Programi obrazovanja odraslih pomažu pojedincima prilagoditi se novim zahtjevima tržišta rada, smanjujući tako rizik od socijalne isključenosti. Važnost obrazovanja odraslih također je povezana s potrebom za društvenom inkluzijom, omogućujući marginaliziranim skupinama pristup obrazovnim prilikama koje mogu poboljšati njihov socioekonomski status. Primjerice, programi digitalne pismenosti i učenja jezika za imigrante pridonose njihovoj integraciji u društvo i povećavaju mogućnosti zapošljavanja. U zemljama središnje i istočne Europe, poput Poljske, Mađarske i Češke, sustavi su obrazovanja odraslih u porastu, ali se suočavaju s različitim izazovima. Ekonomske tranzicije i reforme tržišta rada zahtijevaju od radne snage prilagodbu novim uvjetima, što povećava potražnju za obrazovanjem odraslih. Međutim, nedostatak financijskih sredstava i institucionalne podrške može ograničiti pristupačnost i kvalitetu ovih programa. Niža potražnja za obrazovanjem odraslih u tim zemljama, uzrokovana ekonomskim izazovima i ograničenim resursima, povećava interes za obrazovanje kao sredstvo društvene mobilnosti.

IMPLIKACIJE ZA POLITIKE I PRAKSU

Prema OECD-u (2024), nekoliko ključnih preporuka može poboljšati obrazovanje odraslih, osobito u manje razvijenim regijama i među skupinama s nižom stopom sudjelovanja:

1. Potrebno je povećati financijsku podršku kroz stipendije, subvencije i besplatne programe za odrasle, osobito one iz socioekonomski ugroženih skupina. Ova mjera može značajno povećati dostupnost obrazovanja odraslih, što je ključno za osnaživanje pojedinaca i poboljšanje njihovih profesionalnih i osobnih prilika.
2. Važno je razviti lokalne inicijative koje će omogućiti pristup obrazovanju na razini zajednice. Poticanje lokalnih zajednica na razvijanje i provedbu obrazovnih programa prilagođenih specifičnim potrebama lokalnog stanovništva može rezultirati boljim obrazovnim ishodima. Ovi programi mogu uključivati tečajeve prilagođene određenim skupinama, poput starijih osoba, nezaposlenih ili migranata (Erasmus+, 2024^b).
3. Poboljšati ulaganje u infrastrukturu za obrazovanje odraslih može poboljšati pristup i kvalitetu obrazovanja. To uključuje digitalne resurse, tehnologije i *online* platforme koje omogućuju fleksibilnije učenje. Digitalizacija obrazovanja osobito je korisna za odrasle koji

usklađuju obrazovanje s radnim i obiteljskim obvezama (European Commission, 2024).

4. Suradnja s privatnim sektorom može osigurati da obrazovni programi budu usmjereni na konkretne potrebe tržišta rada. Poslodavci mogu imati važnu ulogu u definiranju vještina koje su potrebne na tržištu te osigurati mogućnosti za praktično učenje i stažiranje. Uspješni primjeri ove suradnje uključuju programe učenja temeljenog na radu i strukovnog obrazovanja koji omogućuju polaznicima primjenu stečenih znanja u stvarnim radnim okruženjima (Erasmus+, 2024^b).
5. Važno je povećati svijest o važnosti obrazovanja odraslih kroz informativne kampanje i promociju cjeloživotnog učenja. Informiranost građana o dostupnim mogućnostima obrazovanja može značajno povećati sudjelovanje u obrazovnim programima. Primjerice, mnogi pojedinci nisu svjesni besplatnih ili subvencioniranih programa koji su im dostupni, što smanjuje njihovu stopu sudjelovanja (EPALE, 2024).

Ovaj dio također sadrži analizu specifičnih programa obrazovanja odraslih u nekoliko država članica Europske unije, uz analizu rezultata i učinaka tih programa. Cilj ovih studija slučaja bio je pokazati na koji način različiti pristupi mogu pridonijeti uspješnosti obrazovanja odraslih.

U Njemačkoj djeluje *Volkshochschulen* (VHS). Riječ je o javnim centrima za obrazovanje odraslih, koji su ključni element sustava obrazovanja odraslih u Njemačkoj. Ove institucije nude širok raspon obrazovnih programa, uključujući jezične tečajeve, IT vještine, umjetnost, obrt i građansko obrazovanje. Osnovani su s ciljem pružanja pristupačnog i visokokvalitetnog obrazovanja svim građanima, neovisno o njihovu prethodnom obrazovnom ili socijalnom porijeklu, te su postali središnji dio njemačkog sustava obrazovanja odraslih. Što se tiče strukture i financiranja, VHS centri financiraju lokalne vlasti, savezne države i savezne vlade, čime se osigurava stabilno financiranje i široka dostupnost programa. Svaki VHS djeluje kao autonomna institucija koja prilagođava svoje programe lokalnim potrebama, no svi centri slijede nacionalne smjernice koje osiguravaju visoku kvalitetu obrazovanja. Osim osnovnog financiranja, VHS centri djelomično ovise i o naknadama koje plaćaju polaznici, iako su te naknade često subvencionirane kako bi se osiguralo da obrazovanje ostane dostupno svima. Prema izvješću Saveznog instituta za strukovno obrazovanje i osposobljavanje (BIBB), više od šest milijuna ljudi svake godine sudjeluje u programima koje nude VHS centri, što ih čini najvećim pružateljima obrazovanja odraslih u zemlji (BIBB, 2021). Uloga VHS centara nije samo poučavanje praktičnih vještina, već i promicanje socijalne uključenosti i aktivnog građanstva. Ovi programi omogućuju ljudima svih dobi i socijalnih skupina da unaprijede svoje vještine i znanje, čime pridonose osobnom razvoju i profesionalnom napretku. VHS centri nude

širok spektar obrazovnih programa. Među najpopularnijima su jezični tečajevi koji polaznicima omogućuju poboljšanje jezičnih vještina, što je ključno za zapošljavanje i integraciju, osobito za imigrante. Također, važnu ulogu imaju IT tečajevi, koji polaznicima pomažu prilagoditi se digitalnom svijetu i povećati zapošljivost. Osim toga, VHS centri nude i kreativne tečajeve, poput likovne umjetnosti i obrtništva, koji doprinose osobnom zadovoljstvu i kulturnom obogaćivanju polaznika. Jedan je od ključnih faktora uspjeha VHS centara njihova dostupnost. Centri su smješteni u gotovo svakom gradu i većem naselju u Njemačkoj, omogućujući većini stanovništva jednostavan pristup obrazovnim programima. Mnogi tečajevi prilagođeni su radno aktivnim osobama, s nastavom koja se održava u večernjim satima ili vikendom. Kvaliteta obrazovanja u VHS centrima strogo je regulirana. Nacionalne smjernice i standardi osiguravaju da svi tečajevi zadovoljavaju određene kriterije kvalitete, a instruktori su obično visokokvalificirani stručnjaci u svojim područjima (BIBB, 2024; EAEA, 2024^b).

U Švedskoj djeluje *Komvux*, što je skraćenica za *Kommunal vuxenutbildning* ili općinsko obrazovanje odraslih. U pitanju je ključni program obrazovanja odraslih u Švedskoj. Ovaj program nudi širok raspon tečajeva prilagođenih potrebama odraslih učenika, omogućujući im da poboljšaju svoje obrazovanje, steknu nove vještine ili se prekvalificiraju za druga zanimanja. Programi *Komvuxa* posebno su osmišljeni kako bi pružili fleksibilnost u učenju, što je iznimno korisno za one koji već rade ili imaju druge obveze. Program *Komvux* financiraju općine uz potporu državnih sredstava. Ova kombinacija financiranja osigurava široku dostupnost i pristupačnost tečajeva za sve odrasle građane. Svaka općina organizira i upravlja vlastitim programom *Komvux*, prilagođavajući ponudu tečajeva specifičnim potrebama lokalnog stanovništva. Programi uključuju osnovno i srednjoškolsko obrazovanje, strukovne i tehničke vještine te programe za učenike s posebnim potrebama (*Skolverket*, 2024). Prema istraživanju koje je provela Švedska nacionalna agencija za obrazovanje (*Skolverket*, 2024), oko 60 % sudionika uspješno završava svoje tečajeve, što potvrđuje visoku učinkovitost programa *Komvux*. Mnogi od tih sudionika koriste se novostečenim kvalifikacijama kako bi napredovali u karijeri ili ostvarili pristup visokom obrazovanju. Jedan od ključnih faktora uspjeha programa *Komvux* njegova je fleksibilnost. Tečajevi se često nude u večernjim satima ili *online*, omogućujući polaznicima da usklade obrazovanje, rad i obiteljske obveze. Ova fleksibilnost posebno je važna za odrasle koji rade i žele poboljšati svoje obrazovanje ili steći nove vještine a da pritom ne moraju odustati od svojih profesionalnih i osobnih obveza. Uspjeh programa *Komvux* ogleda se u činjenici da 60 % sudionika uspješno završava svoje tečajeve, čime poboljšavaju svoje profesionalne kvalifikacije i povećavaju mogućnosti za zapošljavanje (*Skolverket*, 2024).

U Španjolskoj *Centros de Educación de Adultos* (CEA) ključne su institucije za obrazovanje odraslih u Španjolskoj. Ovi centri pružaju obrazovne programe prilagođene potrebama odraslih polaznika, s posebnim naglaskom na marginalizirane skupine i osobe s nižim stupnjem obrazovanja. CEA centri nude širok raspon tečajeva, uključujući osnovno i srednjoškolsko obrazovanje, strukovno osposobljavanje i jezične tečajeve, a sve s ciljem poboljšanja zapošljivosti i poticanja socijalne uključenosti. CEA centre financira regionalne ili lokalna vlast, uz dodatnu potporu nacionalne vlade putem Ministarstva obrazovanja, strukovnog osposobljavanja i sporta (Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes – MEFPD). Ova kombinacija financiranja osigurava dostupnost i kvalitetu obrazovanja odraslih za sve građane. Svaka regija prilagođava svoje programe specifičnim potrebama lokalnog stanovništva, osiguravajući da ponuđeni tečajevi budu usklađeni s potrebama tržišta rada i zahtjevima polaznika (MEFPD, 2024). Prema istom istraživanju koje je proveo MEFPD (2024), programi koje nude CEA centri značajno su doprinijeli smanjenju stope nezaposlenosti među odraslim polaznicima. Istraživanje pokazuje da su ovi programi smanjili stopu nezaposlenosti polaznika za 15 %, što potvrđuje visoku učinkovitost i relevantnost ovih obrazovnih inicijativa u poboljšanju zapošljivosti. CEA centri su široko rasprostranjeni diljem Španjolske, omogućujući jednostavan pristup obrazovnim programima većini stanovništva. Tečajevi su često fleksibilni, s mogućnostima večernjeg i *online* obrazovanja, što polaznicima omogućuje usklađivanje obrazovanja s radnim i obiteljskim obvezama. Kvaliteta obrazovanja u CEA centrima osigurana je putem kvalificiranih instruktora i modernih nastavnih metoda, koje jamče relevantnost i učinkovitost ponuđenih tečajeva (Eurydice, 2024^p)

Programi i inicijative obrazovanja odraslih u Poljskoj obuhvaćaju širok spektar aktivnosti usmjerenih na poboljšanje vještina i kvalifikacija odraslih polaznika. Ovi programi osmišljeni su kako bi zadovoljili potrebe tržišta rada i podržali koncept cjeloživotnog učenja, omogućujući odraslima da unaprijede svoje profesionalne i osobne vještine. Obrazovanje odraslih u Poljskoj organiziraju različite institucije, uključujući javne škole, visoka učilišta i privatne obrazovne centre. Programi su financirani iz državnog proračuna, fondova Europske unije i lokalnih izvora. Takav sustav financiranja omogućuje široku dostupnost i pristupačnost obrazovnih programa za sve odrasle građane, neovisno o njihovom prethodnom obrazovnom ili socijalnom statusu. Prema zakonima i politikama usvojenima u Poljskoj i Europskoj uniji, rabe se sljedeći pojmovi u vezi s obrazovanjem i osposobljavanjem odraslih. Kontinuirano obrazovanje (CE) (*kształcenie ustawiczne*), definirano u Zakonu o školskom obrazovanju (*ustawa Prawo oświatowe*) (članak 4., stavak 30.), odnosi se na obrazovanje i osposobljavanje u školama za odrasle, sektorima drugog stupnja strukovnog obrazovanja i postsekundarnim školama, kao i na stjecanje novih i dopunskih znanja, vještina i profesionalnih kvalifikacija izvan školskog sustava

za osobe koje su završile obvezno obrazovanje. Obrazovanje odraslih (AE) (*edukacja dorosłych*) rabi se kao ekvivalent za obrazovanje i osposobljavanje odraslih (*AET–kształcenie i szkolenia dorosłych*). AET se provodi i kao praktično osposobljavanje na radnom mjestu te kao organizirane aktivnosti građanskih grupa ili zajednica. Prema izvješću mreže *Eurydice*, programi obrazovanja odraslih u Poljskoj imaju ključnu ulogu u smanjenju socijalne isključenosti i povećanju zapošljivosti. Ovi programi omogućuju polaznicima stjecanje novih vještina i kvalifikacija koje su tražene na tržištu rada, čime doprinose njihovom profesionalnom razvoju i ekonomskom napretku. Programi obrazovanja odraslih u Poljskoj osmišljeni su tako da budu dostupni i fleksibilni, prilagođeni potrebama odraslih polaznika. Tečajevi se često nude u večernjim satima i *online*, što, kao i u drugim zemljama, omogućuje sudionicima da usklade obrazovanje s radnim i obiteljskim obvezama. Osim toga, mnogi programi nude mogućnost priznavanja prethodnog učenja i iskustva, što ubrzava proces stjecanja novih kvalifikacija (Statistics Poland, 2024, Eurydice, 2024^b).

SINTEZA NALAZA I PREPORUKE ZA POBOLJŠANJE POLITIKA I PRAKSI U OBRAZOVANJU ODRASLIH

Rezultati istraživanja o ponudi i potražnji za obrazovanjem odraslih u Europskoj uniji ukazuju na značajne razlike među državama članicama, kao i na zajedničke izazove i mogućnosti za unaprjeđenje sustava obrazovanja odraslih. Ova rasprava analizira ključne nalaze, identificira područja koja zahtijevaju dodatnu pažnju te pruža preporuke za poboljšanje obrazovnih politika i praksi.

Ključni nalazi

Uočene su razlike u dostupnosti i kvaliteti obrazovnih programa. Studije slučaja pokazale su da zemlje s dobro razvijenim sustavima obrazovanja odraslih, poput Njemačke i Švedske, imaju visoke stope sudjelovanja i širok raspon kvalitetnih programa. U Njemačkoj sustav *Volkshochschulen* (VHS) nudi raznolike tečajeve, od učenja jezika do stjecanja IT vještina, omogućujući odraslima poboljšanje kompetencija i povećanje zapošljivosti. U Švedskoj programi *Komvux* pružaju fleksibilne mogućnosti učenja, što je ključno za visoku stopu uspješnosti polaznika. S druge strane, zemlje poput Italije i Španjolske bilježe niže stope sudjelovanja zbog socioekonomskih faktora i nedostatka institucionalne podrške.

Ekonomski motivi, poput povećane zapošljivosti i mogućnosti napredovanja u karijeri, glavni su faktori koji potiču odrasle na uključivanje u obrazovne programe. Istraživanja pokazuju da odrasli koji sudjeluju u obrazovnim programima imaju veće šanse za pronalazak zaposlenja i napredovanje u karijeri. Društveni motivi, poput inkluzije i osobnog razvoja, također imaju

značajnu ulogu, osobito za marginalizirane skupine, koje kroz obrazovanje stječu potrebne vještine za aktivno sudjelovanje u društvu.

Tržište rada brzo se mijenja zbog tehnološkog napretka i globalizacije, stvarajući potrebu za kontinuiranim učenjem i prilagodbom novim vještinama. Digitalne vještine, poput upravljanja podacima i programiranja, postaju sve važnije, a programi obrazovanja odraslih sve češće uključuju tečajeve koji odgovaraju tim potrebama. Tzv. „meke vještine”, poput timskog rada i komunikacije, također su ključne za uspjeh u modernom radnom okruženju i često su integrirane u programe obrazovanja odraslih.

Potražnja za obrazovanjem odraslih varira među europskim regijama. Zemlje s jakom tradicijom cjeloživotnog učenja, poput Njemačke i skandinavskih zemalja, bilježe visoke stope sudjelovanja zbog snažne institucionalne podrške i javnih ulaganja. Nasuprot tome, zemlje poput Italije i Španjolske pokazuju niže stope sudjelovanja zbog ekonomskih izazova i nedostatka podrške za programe obrazovanja odraslih.

Identifikacija nedostataka i izazova

U mnogim manje razvijenim regijama nedostatak financijskih sredstava ograničava pristup programima obrazovanja odraslih. To se posebno odnosi na socioekonomski ugrožene skupine, koje nemaju potrebna sredstva za sudjelovanje u obrazovanju. Nadalje, nedostatak specijaliziranih institucija za obrazovanje odraslih i neadekvatna infrastruktura otežavaju provedbu učinkovitih obrazovnih programa. Mnoge zemlje nemaju dovoljno razvijene institucionalne okvire koji bi omogućili širok pristup obrazovanju odraslih. Osim toga, nedostatak digitalne infrastrukture i tehnologije predstavlja značajan izazov, osobito u ruralnim područjima. Digitalna podjela između urbanih i ruralnih regija ograničava pristup obrazovnim resursima i sprečava ravnomjernu raspodjelu obrazovnih mogućnosti.

Preporuke za poboljšanje

Osiguravanje većeg broja stipendija, subvencija i besplatnih programa za odrasle, osobito za socioekonomski ugrožene skupine, može značajno povećati pristup obrazovanju. Osim toga, poticanje lokalnih zajednica na razvoj obrazovnih programa prilagođenih specifičnim potrebama stanovništva može povećati učinkovitost obrazovnih inicijativa. Ulaganje u digitalne resurse i tehnologije može omogućiti širi pristup obrazovnim sadržajima i povećati fleksibilnost učenja, što je posebno važno za zaposlene odrasle osobe. Jačanje suradnje između vlada, nevladinih organizacija i privatnog sektora može doprinijeti razvoju relevantnih obrazovnih programa koji odgovaraju potrebama tržišta rada. Organizacija kampanja za podizanje svijesti o značaju cjeloživotnog učenja može motivirati veći broj odraslih na uključivanje

u obrazovne aktivnosti, povećavajući ukupno sudjelovanje i pridonoseći društvenoj inkluziji.

ZAKLJUČAK

Ovo istraživanje naglašava ključnu ulogu obrazovanja odraslih u prilagodbi na brze ekonomske, tehnološke i društvene promjene s kojima se suvremeno društvo suočava. Analizom programa obrazovanja odraslih diljem Europske unije postalo je jasno da, iako su neke države članice razvile pristupačne i visokokvalitetne sustave, druge se suočavaju sa značajnim izazovima koji otežavaju sudjelovanje i postizanje rezultata. Zemlje poput Njemačke i Švedske pokazuju kako snažna institucionalna podrška i adekvatno financiranje mogu dovesti do uspješnih programa koji omogućuju odraslima stjecanje novih vještina i kvalifikacija. S druge strane, zemlje poput Italije i Španjolske, koje se suočavaju sa socioekonomskim nejednakostima i ograničenim resursima, imaju poteškoća u pružanju jednake razine pristupa obrazovanju. Međutim, rastući interes za obrazovanje odraslih u tim regijama, osobito u područjima poput IT-a i digitalnih vještina, ukazuje na potencijal za napredak ako se osigura odgovarajuća podrška. Nalazi istraživanja također naglašavaju sve veću važnost cjeloživotnog učenja u današnjem svijetu, koji se brzo mijenja. Digitalna revolucija stvorila je potrebu za vještinama poput digitalne pismenosti, programiranja i upravljanja podacima, uz meke vještine kao što su komunikacija, timski rad i rješavanje problema. Obrazovanje odraslih ne samo da pomaže pojedincima da ostanu konkurentni na tržištu rada, već i podržava šire ciljeve društvene uključenosti i osobnog razvoja, od integracije marginaliziranih skupina do promicanja aktivnog sudjelovanja u društvu. Kako bi se ostvario napredak, potrebno je riješiti postojeće nejednakosti i učiniti sustave obrazovanja odraslih u Europskoj uniji inkluzivnijima, fleksibilnijima i otpornijima. Iako su u ovoj studiji već izložene detaljne strategije, širi fokus treba biti na osiguravanju da ti naponi dovedu do stvarnih promjena. Povećanjem dostupnosti, poticanjem suradnje među sektorima i uporabom digitalnih inovacija, države članice mogu izgraditi snažniji temelj za cjeloživotno učenje koji će biti od koristi pojedincima i društvu u cjelini. Obrazovanje odraslih nije samo ekonomski alat – ono je put prema osnaživanju, jednakosti i napretku. Prihvatanjem ovih mogućnosti i rješavanjem izazova, Europska unija može stvoriti obrazovni sustav koji priprema svoje stanovništvo za budućnost te podržava održiv rast i razvoj u godinama koje dolaze.

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ANALYSIS OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Abstract: *Adult education in the European Union is a crucial element in the development of human resources and in enhancing competitiveness in the labor market. This paper analyzes the supply and demand for adult education programs in the EU, identifies key trends, challenges, and opportunities, and provides recommendations for the improvement of these programs. Through a review of the literature, data analysis, and case studies from several member states, this paper demonstrates how adult education contributes to social inclusion, economic development, and the improvement of population competencies. The conclusions suggest that further investment and adaptation of educational policies are necessary to ensure the accessibility and quality of education for all adults in the EU.*

Keywords: *adult education, lifelong learning, labor market, skill development, educational policies.*

INTRODUCTION

The supply and demand for adult education programs in Europe play crucial roles in improving the skills and competencies of the population, which is particularly important in the context of ongoing changes in the labor market and social challenges. Adult education contributes to social inclusion, economic stability, and personal development by providing individuals with the opportunity to acquire new skills, retrain, and engage in continuous professional

development. This paper analyzes the supply and demand for adult education programs in Europe, with a special emphasis on key initiatives, trends, and challenges.

Adult education in the European Union faces numerous challenges but also offers significant opportunities for the development of key competencies essential for progress and success in the labor market. Key initiatives and strategies have already been established, but additional investments and adjustments are necessary to ensure accessibility and quality education for all adults. Increasing active participation in adult education is crucial for social inclusion and economic development in Europe.

Adult education is a key component of the European Commission's lifelong learning policy and includes formal, non-formal, and informal learning aimed at improving basic skills, acquiring new qualifications, enhancing skills, and acquiring new skills for more successful employment. The demand for adult education is growing, and the European Commission, with its goals of creating competitiveness and employability, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, is leading the way in enabling the creation of a more successful adult education system by the member states of the European Union.

The main characteristics of a successful adult education system, according to the European Commission, are: flexibility, high quality, excellent teaching, and an improved role for local authorities, employees, social partners, citizens, and cultural organizations. The Council of the European Union made a Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on new opportunities for adult education, specifies three levels of training: skills assessment, learning offer, and evaluation and recognition. Skills assessment enables participants to identify existing competencies they already have and the potential need to improve them. The learning offer is tailored to the needs of the participants to provide them with flexible and quality education and training, while the evaluation and recognition of newly acquired skills allow participants to use them in the labor market or for further studies.

The European Commission has continued to monitor the development of adult education programs by establishing key competencies in lifelong learning, the most important of which are: literacy competence, multilingual competence, mathematical competence, and competence in science, technology, and engineering, digital competence, personal and social competence, learning-to-learn competence, citizenship competence, entrepreneurial competence, and cultural awareness and expression competence (European Union, 2016).

Reports like the one for 2021 published by the Eurydice network (2022) provide insight into the field of adult education and training in Europe, analyzing approaches to promoting lifelong learning and policies and measures that enable greater access to education for adults with lower qualification levels. These reports, which include data from organizations such as Eurostat

and Cedefop, enable policymakers to make quality decisions that contribute to the development of adult education. Adult education encompasses all forms of learning that adults undertake after completing formal education. According to the theory of adult education developed by Malcolm Knowles, it differs from that of children's education (Peterson & Ray, 2013). This can include formal, non-formal, and informal learning. Formal adult education refers to structured programs leading to recognized qualifications such as diplomas or certificates. Non-formal learning encompasses educational activities that are not formalized, such as seminars, workshops, and courses, while informal learning involves learning that occurs in everyday activities and experiences without formal structure or assessment. The goal of adult education is to improve basic skills, acquire new qualifications, and develop personal and professional competencies (Eurydice, 2022).

Adult education plays a key role in social and economic development. It increases employability, enhances skills needed to adapt to changes in the labor market, and fosters personal development. This paper aims to analyze the current supply and demand for adult education programs in the European Union, identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities for improving these programs. The research will provide recommendations for policymakers and educational institutions to improve access and quality of adult education. The key objectives of the research are:

- Understanding the current state of adult education in various EU member states
- Identifying the demographic characteristics of participants and their educational needs
- Analyzing successful models and practices in adult education
- Providing recommendations for improving policies and programs in adult education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A review of the literature on adult education in Europe reveals a wealth of research addressing various aspects of this topic. For this research, newer sources were selected. Adult education has become a critical issue in many European countries due to its role in promoting lifelong learning (Phyu Thwe & Kálmán, 2024), increasing economic competitiveness (Kesner-Škreb, 2007), and fostering social inclusion (Kersh et al., 2021). The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) annually publishes country reports on the state of adult education in Europe. The latest available report is for 2021 for 44 countries (EAEA, 2024^a). The same organization provided predictions in 2019 in the document *The Future of Adult Learning in Europe – Background paper* (EAEA, 2024^b). Furthermore, in the context of adult education and as

an important source of information, the Eurydice information network on education, funded by the European Commission and established in 1980, plays a crucial role. Its primary goal is to provide up-to-date and reliable information to policymakers in the European Union and other participating countries about educational systems and policies. The network consists of a European coordination unit and several national units located in the ministries of education of member countries. Eurydice publishes detailed descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies on specific educational topics, and statistical data, supporting evidence-based decision-making in the field of education. It covers all levels of education, from preschool to higher education and adult education. The network also plays a key role in promoting European cooperation in education by sharing information and best practices among member states. Recently, the network expanded to include national units from Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, reflecting its commitment to building a more inclusive and connected educational space across Europe (Eurydice, 2024^{a, b, c, d}). The publication *The Right to Lifelong Learning: Why Adult Education Matters*, released by UNESCO (2023), highlights the critical importance of adult education for social and economic development. Adult education not only enhances individual skills and knowledge but also promotes inclusion, reduces inequalities, and supports sustainable development. Through lifelong learning, adults can adapt to rapid changes in the labor market, improve their social and economic opportunities, and actively participate in society. This source emphasizes that the right to lifelong learning is a fundamental human right that contributes to strengthening democratic values and social cohesion. From the perspective of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2024), UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning underscores the importance of adult education as a key component of lifelong learning. Adult education helps individuals to actively engage in society and the work environment, thereby contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals. This source highlights the need for continuous learning to address global challenges, including climate change and digitalization, and calls for greater commitment to adult education policies at a global level. Among the scholars who have a professional interest in the subject matter, it is essential to mention Stephen Brookfield (2018), who analyses two main traditions of critical analysis that have shaped the theory of adult education: Marxism and the critical social theory of the Frankfurt School, as well as critical pedagogy associated with Paulo Freire. He also examines the impact of transformative learning theories, feminist theory, queer theory, Afrocentric theory, and critical race theory on adult education. His work helps in understanding how theory can contribute to dismantling power structures by criticizing the ideologies that sustain them. In their work *The Critical Turn in Human Resources Development*, Rocco et al. (2018) explore how various critical theories have created space

for the critical development of human resources (HRD) and how critical race theory is leading HRD in a more radical direction. Their work provides insights into how critical theory can be applied to human resource development, emphasizing the importance of combating inequalities and promoting social justice in the work environment. Brown and Bimrose (2018) emphasize the importance of workplace learning in relation to identity development. They map changes in ideas about identity development at work and present two models of learning that support identity development in the workplace. Their work helps in understanding how professional development and learning can contribute to shaping work identity. Authors Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova (2018) explore the heuristic potential of the capabilities approach in conceptualizing lifelong learning and test its empirical value. Drawing on the work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, they develop an index of equity in adult education participation and explore barriers to participation. Their work contributes to understanding how lifelong learning can be a process of emancipation and social justice. Lange (2018) explores how education for sustainability can move from empty rhetoric (“sustainababble”) to meaningful societal change. Her research focuses on education, which transforms social structures to achieve sustainability, emphasizing the role of education in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

METHODOLOGY

This research used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. Quantitative data were collected from existing databases such as Eurostat and Cedefop to identify key trends and statistical data on adult education in the EU. The qualitative analysis was based on case studies from several member states and a review of the relevant literature. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, and trend analysis to identify key patterns in the supply and demand for adult education. The qualitative analysis focused on identifying successful models and practices as well as understanding challenges and barriers in adult education. The synthesis was based on the integration of findings for a comprehensive insight into the state of adult education in the EU and providing recommendations for improving policies and practices in adult education based on the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current state of adult education programs in the eu

The supply of adult education programs in Europe encompasses various forms of learning that allow adults to acquire new skills, enhance existing competencies, and increase their employability. These programs can be formal,

non-formal, and informal, each with its specific characteristics and goals. This section will analyze different aspects of the supply of adult education programs in the European Union, with a particular focus on examples from several member states.

Formal adult education includes structured programs leading to recognized qualifications such as diplomas, certificates, or other forms of accreditation. These programs are often organized by universities, vocational schools, and other educational institutions. Through formal education, adult learners can acquire new professional qualifications or improve existing qualifications. Informal adult education refers to unintentional and unsystematic learning that occurs through daily activities and experiences. This can include self-directed learning, learning through work tasks, social interactions, and other forms of informal knowledge acquisition. Research shows that informal learning plays a key role in developing practical skills and knowledge that adults use in everyday life. For example, digital literacy is often acquired through the daily use of computers and the internet without formal training (Illeris, 2014). In many European countries, informal learning is recognized as an essential element of lifelong learning. Non-formal adult education also plays a significant role in lifelong learning. Non-formal adult education normally includes organized activities outside the formal educational framework, such as workshops, community training programs, and online courses. These programs are tailored to the needs of adult learners and often focus on specific skills or knowledge areas, such as digital literacy, vocational skills, or personal development. Non-formal education provides a flexible and accessible pathway for adults to acquire new competencies without committing to formal qualifications. National and EU-level policies and initiatives often promote the value of informal learning and its integration into formal and non-formal education systems (Merriam & Brockett, 1996, p. 173–179). The European Union has several key policies and initiatives that support adult education. One of the most significant strategies is the Europe 2020 strategy, which emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning for achieving economic growth and social cohesion. This strategy promotes flexible and inclusive education systems that enable access to education for all citizens, including adults (EAEA, 2024^b). Another significant initiative is the Erasmus+ program, which provides financial support for educational projects and mobility for adult learners. This program allows adults to participate in various types of educational and professional training across Europe, gaining new knowledge and skills (Erasmus+, 2024^a).

Successful models and practices in adult education

One of the key examples of formal adult education is the *Volkshochschulen* (VHS) system in Germany. *Volkshochschulen* are public institutions offering

a wide range of educational programs, including basic education, secondary school diplomas, vocational courses, and university preparatory programs. These institutions play an essential role in Germany's lifelong learning system, enabling adults to continuously improve and adapt to changes in the labor market (Hinzen & Meilhammer, 2022). In Sweden, municipal adult education systems (*Komvux*) provide similar opportunities. Municipalities organize programs at various education levels, from basic to higher secondary education, allowing adults to acquire the necessary qualifications for the labor market or further education (Eurydice, 2024⁸). In Finland, adult education is integrated into the broader education system, with a particular emphasis on flexibility and the individual needs of learners (Eurydice, 2024⁹). The curriculum is often adapted to match the working conditions and life situations of participants. Adult education in Finland includes various levels and forms of learning, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning. The goals of adult education policy are to ensure the availability and competence of the workforce, provide educational opportunities for all adults, and strengthen social cohesion and equality. Liberal adult education offers many opportunities for personal development without obtaining qualifications or professions. Finland has a long tradition in adult education, focusing on adapting to the changing needs of working life and society.

In the United Kingdom, adult education encompasses various forms and levels of learning, from vocational courses to higher education. Adults can attend part-time courses, professional qualifications, and undergraduate programs to advance their careers. The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) offer affordable courses in local centers and online, supporting adults from different communities, including those without previous qualifications (Higginbotham, 2024). In most European education systems, there are "compensatory" or "corrective" education and training programs associated with the lowest levels of education, primarily aimed at individuals older than the age of compulsory education, such as youth and adults who, for various reasons, did not complete primary education. These programs focus on functional literacy in various areas, including reading, writing, arithmetic, and ICT. These programs usually result in certificates or qualifications necessary for further education within the formal education and training system. What characterizes many compensatory programs is their connection with vocational education and training. While initial education systems at these levels often include only basic general education, re-entry programs often incorporate elements of vocational education and are used to obtain recognized vocational qualifications. Some successful examples of the application of compensatory programs are found in Turkey, Portugal, Greece, Estonia, Romania, Croatia, Slovakia, Serbia, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

In Greece, schools known as *Scholia Defteris Efkerias* offer two-year programs for adults who did not obtain a compulsory education certificate. The same certificate can be obtained by attending three-year evening programs at lower secondary schools (*Esperino Gymnasio*). These programs are designed for adults and minors who are employed. In Portugal, adult education and training programs (*Cursos de Educação e Formação de Adultos*) cater to four, six, nine, and twelve years of schooling, with the level of qualification achieved depending on the program. (Eurydice, 2024^h). In Turkey, it is possible to complete lower secondary education within the system of open lower secondary education (*Açık Öğretim Ortaokulu*) (VHS^{ab}, 2024). In Estonia, second-level vocational education (*2. taseme kutseõpe*) is intended for students aged 17 and older who have not completed primary education. This program allows the acquisition of vocational qualifications and can be combined with general-oriented “basic education for adults” (*põhiharidus Täiskasvanutele mittestatsionaarses õppevormis*) (Eurydice, 2024ⁱ).

In Croatia, the adult education curriculum is divided into six educational periods of 18 weeks each. Upon completion of the program, participants can enroll in basic vocational training programs lasting 150 hours (Eurydice, 2024^j). In Romania, participants in the “doua sansă” program who obtain a certificate have the right to continue their education at a higher level. It is also possible to attend 720 hours of practical training, and successful participants receive a third-degree vocational qualification certificate (Eurydice, 2024^j). In Slovakia, adults who have not completed lower secondary education can attend two-year vocational education programs with a strong practical component. Although these programs do not directly allow access to higher secondary education, successful participants receive a certificate of completion of the final exam and a vocational certificate. After an additional formal lower secondary education completion program, participants can attend higher vocational school programs (Eurydice, 2024^k).

In Serbia, functional primary education for adults is an official educational program organized into three cycles lasting from three to five years. The content includes eight hours of regular integrated primary and lower secondary education. The first two cycles focus on general education, while the third cycle combines general and vocational education (Eurydice, 2024^l). In Denmark, the general adult education system (*almen voksenuddannelsen*) is intended for individuals aged 25 and older. The content is the same as the curriculum in primary and lower secondary school (*folkeskole*). Single-subject programs can be attended separately or together and conclude with general preparatory exams for adults. These exams enable access to programs with higher preparatory exams (Eurydice, 2024^m).

In Finland, basic education for adults (*aikuisten perusopetus*) is intended for students completing primary education after the age of compulsory schooling.

Participants can study individual subjects (e.g., languages) as “students of that subject” or prepare for exams in multiple subjects that meet the requirements for attending general upper secondary education (Eurydice, 2024^o). In Sweden, municipal basic education for adults (*komvux grundläggande nivå*) programs correspond to those in compulsory school education (from 1 to 9 years), but the content and educational program are adapted for adults. Participants who achieve at least a passing grade in four basic subjects – Swedish or Swedish as a second language, English, mathematics, and social studies – are awarded a certificate of completed education (Eurydice, 2024^o).

In Norway, individuals aged 23 and older with at least five years of work experience can participate in a general upper secondary education program for adults (*videregående opplæring studieforberedende utdanningsprogramme*), which lasts one year (instead of three years as in the initial education system). The program consists of six courses corresponding to general education (Norwegian, English, mathematics, science, social studies, and history) (Eurydice, 2024^o).

Some countries do not have specially designed upper secondary education programs for adult participants, such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, and Iceland. In these countries, upper secondary education (general or vocational) takes place in various flexible arrangements, including part-time or evening programs. Programs are available to all participants who are no longer in compulsory regular education. On the other hand, several countries have developed qualification systems that complement the regular education system. The qualifications covered by these systems usually involve a lighter workload, making them a more accessible option for adults, including those with limited prior formal education.

In addition to educational and training opportunities leading to recognized qualifications, state authorities subsidize other types of educational programs, including those that can help adults improve their basic skills. These programs consist of courses led by various education providers and are less structured than programs leading to recognized qualifications. There are also certain differences between programs leading to recognized qualifications and non-formal basic skills programs. The first type of program is conducted mainly in public educational and training institutions focused on adult education or in state schools that provide initial education and training for young people. The second type of program is conducted in public or private institutions for adult education and training.

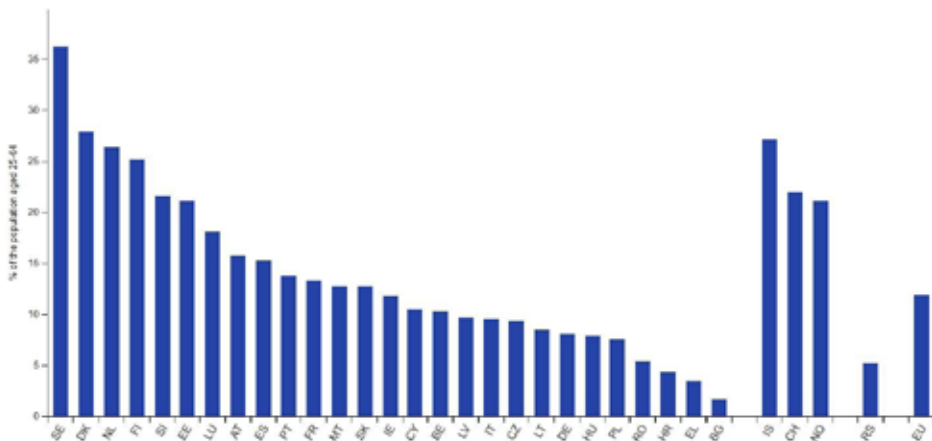
Challenges and barriers to adult education

The demand for adult education in Europe is growing due to various economic, social, and technological factors. This increase in demand reflects

the need for the continuous acquisition of new skills and knowledge so that adults can adapt to changes in the labor market and improve their personal competencies. This section analyzes the demographic characteristics of participants, motives, and needs for adult education, as well as the impact of the labor market on the demand for this education. The demographic characteristics of the adult education participants in Europe show significant diversity. According to Eurostat (2024), adult education attracts a wide range of individuals of different age groups, educational levels, and professional backgrounds. In most EU countries, participants are primarily aged 25 and older, but a significant number of younger adults engage in educational programs to improve their qualifications or retrain for new careers. According to the same source, in 2022, as shown in Figure 1, an average of 11.9% of people aged 25 to 64 years in the European Union participated in education or training in the previous four weeks, which is an increase of 2.8 percentage points compared with 2020. The highest participation rates were recorded in Sweden (36.2%), Denmark (27.9%), the Netherlands (26.4%), and Finland (25.2%), while the lowest rates were reported in Greece and Bulgaria. Women had a higher rate of participation in adult education than men did in all EU member states except Romania and Slovakia.

Figure 1.

Adult Participation in Education in the EU in 2022



Source: Eurostat, 2024.

The motives for engaging in educational programs among adults are numerous and varied. According to Kesner-Škreb (2007), economic motives play a crucial role, as adults seek education to improve their employment

opportunities and advance in their careers. In this context, the need to acquire new skills, retrain, and enhance existing competencies becomes increasingly important. EU member states are expected to invest in education and skills development and implement active employment measures, all in the pursuit of a knowledge-based society.

Social motives also play a significant role. Adult education contributes to social inclusion by enabling individuals from marginalized groups to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for active participation in social and economic life. For example, language learning programs for immigrants or digital literacy courses for older adults contribute to their social integration and improve their quality of life (Kersh & Laczik, 2021). Personal development and fulfillment are additional motives. Many adults engage in educational programs to satisfy their curiosity, develop new hobbies, or simply enjoy the learning process. This type of motivation is particularly present in non-formal education, where courses often cover topics such as art, cooking, gardening, and other personal interests (Jarvis, 2004, pp. 16–33, 77).

The labor market has a significant influence on the demand for adult education. Changes in the economy, technological advancements, and globalization increasingly demand that the workforce adapts to new conditions. This requires continuous acquisition of new skills and knowledge. According to A.G. Watts (2010) in his review of *Learning through Life: Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning* by Schuller and Watson (2009), lifelong learning and the acquisition of new skills are framed as essential factors for maintaining competitiveness and productivity in the workforce. Watts highlights that the study introduces a strategic framework for lifelong learning in the United Kingdom over the next 10–15 years, identifying four key stages in the life cycle: up to 25 years, 25–50 years, 50–75 years, and over 75 years. This model emphasizes extended transitions for youth, prolonged participation in the workforce, and adapting to an increased lifespan, with a focus on ensuring that skills are not only acquired but also effectively utilized for sustainable economic and societal benefits.

One of the key findings is that it is necessary to increase investment in adult learning to ensure the adaptability of the workforce to rapidly changing market conditions. Workers who fail to acquire new skills and adapt to new technologies and work methods face risks such as reduced employment opportunities and career stagnation. On the other hand, acquiring new skills and continuous education enables workers not only to retain their jobs but also to advance in their careers, contribute to greater innovation within their organizations, and maintain their relevance in the labor market.

The key elements of the proposed strategy include the introduction of personal learning accounts, allowing adults to manage their education from the age of 25 onwards, and the creation of a strong infrastructure for guidance

and support in learning, helping individuals identify their educational needs and opportunities. Failing to recognize the need for continuous learning and not adapting to new conditions represents a significant risk for individuals and the economy as a whole. The digital revolution, for example, has led to significant changes in the labor market, creating a demand for new skills, such as digital literacy, data management, and programming. Many adults are opting for courses and training that enable them to acquire these skills and remain competitive in the labor market.

In addition to technical skills, the labor market also requires soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. These skills are crucial for success in modern work environments and are often part of adult education programs. Adult education programs frequently include group projects and tasks that help participants develop teamwork skills. These skills are essential for effective collaboration in professional environments and increase the chances of employment and career advancement. Communication skills are also often included in the adult education curriculum, as they are key to successfully leading meetings, presentations, and day-to-day interactions in the workplace. Role-playing scenarios and case studies that simulate real-world problems from the work environment are also gaining importance. These tasks allow participants to apply learned skills in a controlled environment and develop strategies for effectively solving problems (Field, 2005, pp. 15–29). These components are critical for improving workforce competencies and increasing their competitiveness in the labor market. Effective adult education programs not only enhance individual skills but also contribute to greater productivity and innovation within organizations.

The demand for adult education varies between different regions in Europe. These differences are often the result of various economic, social, and cultural factors, as well as differing levels of institutional support and adult education policies. Below, some key examples from different European countries are discussed.

In Germany, there is a long-standing tradition of lifelong learning, supported by a strong institutional framework. The *Volkshochschulen* (VHS) or Public Adult Education Centers play a key role in providing educational programs for adults. These institutions offer a wide range of courses, including language classes, information technology, business skills, arts, and health. This diversity allows adults to find programs that meet their needs and interests. Government support through funding and policy ensures a high level of accessibility and participation in adult education (Eurydice, 2022). In Scandinavian countries like Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, a similar approach is observed. These countries have strong social welfare systems and a high level of economic support for adult education. For example, Sweden offers educational programs through municipal adult education systems that allow citizens to acquire new

skills or retrain for new careers. These programs are often free or subsidized, increasing their accessibility (Eurydice, 2022).

In contrast, Italy and Spain show lower demand for adult education. This is partly due to socio-economic factors such as higher unemployment rates and lower levels of public spending on adult education. Additionally, the lack of institutional support can make access to adult education programs more difficult. However, there is a growing interest in adult education in these countries, especially in sectors affected by economic changes. For example, in Spain, programs for learning languages and courses focused on digital skills and IT competencies are becoming increasingly popular. These programs are often organized by private institutions and non-governmental organizations that fill the gaps left by a lack of state support. In Spain, research titled *Social and Territorial Cohesion in Spain: Relevance of the Socioeconomic Context* (Faura-Martínez et al., 2020) highlights the importance of adult education in the context of social cohesion and territorial equity. Adult education is recognized as a key component in combating social exclusion and inequality. This study analyzes factors such as income, employment, education, health, housing, social and family relationships, and participation, showing that education plays a vital role in improving social mobility and quality of life. The authors emphasize that high levels of social exclusion are associated with low levels of education, which further complicates employment opportunities and economic stability. Adult education provides opportunities to acquire new skills and retrain, which is especially important in the context of economic crises and rapid labor market changes. Adult education programs help individuals adapt to new labor market demands, thus reducing the risk of social exclusion. The importance of adult education is also linked to the need for social inclusion, allowing marginalized groups access to educational opportunities that can improve their socio-economic status. For example, digital literacy programs and language learning for immigrants contribute to their integration into society and increase their employment opportunities.

In Central and Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, adult education systems are growing but face different challenges. Economic transitions and labor market reforms require the workforce to adapt to new conditions, which increases the demand for adult education. However, a lack of financial resources and institutional support may limit the accessibility and quality of these programs. Lower demand, driven by economic challenges and limited resources, raises interest in education as a means of achieving social mobility.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

According to the OECD (2024), the following recommendations are provided for improving adult education in less developed regions:

1. Increase financial support: Provide more scholarships, subsidies, and free programs for adults, especially those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. This measure can significantly increase access to adult education, which is key to empowering individuals and improving their professional and personal opportunities.
2. Develop local initiatives: Encourage local communities to develop and implement educational programs that meet the specific needs of the local population. Local approaches can be more effective in addressing specific challenges and needs, resulting in better educational outcomes (Erasmus+, 2024^b).
3. Improve infrastructure: Invest in educational infrastructure, including digital resources and technologies, to enable broader access to educational content. The digitalization of education can allow more flexible learning, especially for adults who balance education with work and family obligations (European Commission, 2024).
4. Collaborate with the private sector: Increase cooperation between governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to develop programs that meet the needs of the labor market. The private sector can provide valuable resources and expertise to develop adult education programs that are relevant to labor market demands (Erasmus+, 2024^b).
5. Raise awareness: Organize awareness campaigns about the importance of lifelong learning and adult education to motivate more adults to engage in educational activities. Promoting positive examples and the benefits of adult education can encourage more people to participate in educational programs (EPALE, 2024).

This section contains an analysis of specific adult education programs in several European Union member states, along with an analysis of the results and effects of these programs. The aim of these case studies was to demonstrate how different approaches can contribute to the success of adult education.

In Germany, *Volkshochschulen* (VHS) or public adult education centers are key elements of adult education in Germany. These institutions offer a wide range of educational programs, including language courses, IT skills, arts, crafts, and civic education. Established to provide accessible and high-quality education to all citizens, regardless of their prior educational or social background, these centers have become central to Germany's adult education system. VHS centers are supported by local governments, federal states, and the federal government, providing stable funding and broad accessibility to

programs. Each VHS is an autonomous institution that adapts its programs to local needs, but all centers follow national guidelines that ensure high quality in education. In addition to basic funding, VHS centers also rely on fees paid by participants, although these fees are often subsidized to ensure accessibility. According to the report from the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), more than 6 million people participate in VHS programs each year, making these centers the largest providers of adult education in the country (BIBB, 2021). The role of VHS is not only to teach practical skills but also to promote social inclusion and active citizenship. They enable people of all ages and social classes to improve their skills and knowledge, contributing to their personal development and professional advancement. The range of courses offered by VHS centers is broad. Language courses are among the most popular, as they allow participants to improve their linguistic skills, which are essential for employment and integration, particularly for immigrants. IT courses are also important as they help participants adapt to the digital world and increase their employability. Additionally, VHS offers creative courses such as arts and crafts, which contribute to personal satisfaction and cultural enrichment. One of the key factors in the success of VHS centers is their accessibility. Centers are located in almost every city and major town in Germany, allowing the majority of the population easy access to educational programs. Additionally, many courses are designed for working adults, with classes held in evenings or on weekends. The quality of education in VHS centers is highly regulated. National guidelines and standards ensure that all courses meet certain quality criteria, and that instructors are usually highly qualified experts in their fields (BIBB, 2024; EAEA, 2024^b).

In Sweden, *Komvux* Program – Komvux, which stands for *Kommunal vuxenutbildning* or Municipal Adult Education, is a key program for adult education in Sweden. This program offers a wide range of courses tailored to the needs of adult learners, enabling them to improve their education, acquire new skills, or retrain for different careers. Komvux programs are specifically designed to provide flexibility in learning, which is extremely beneficial for those who are already working or have other obligations. The Komvux program is funded by municipalities with government support. This combination of funding ensures the wide availability and affordability of courses for all adult citizens. Each municipality organizes and manages its Komvux program, adapting the range of courses to the specific needs of the local population. Courses include basic and secondary education, vocational and technical skills, and programs for students with special needs. According to a study conducted by the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2024), about 60% of participants complete their courses, confirming the high efficiency of the Komvux program. Many of these participants use their newly acquired qualifications to advance their careers or access higher education. One of the

key factors in the success of the Komvux program is its flexibility. Courses are often offered in the evenings or online, allowing learners to balance education, work, and family responsibilities. This flexibility is particularly important for working adults who want to improve their education or acquire new skills without giving up their professional and personal commitments. The success of the Komvux program is reflected in the fact that 60% of participants successfully complete their courses, improving their professional qualifications and increasing their chances of employment (Skolverket, 2024).

In Spain, *Centros de Educación de Adultos* (CEA) are key institutions for adult education. These centers provide educational programs tailored to the needs of adult participants, particularly focusing on marginalized groups and those with lower educational levels. CEA centers offer a wide range of courses, including basic and secondary education, vocational training, and language courses, all aimed at improving employability and fostering social inclusion. CEA centers are supported by regional and local authorities, with additional support from the national government through the *Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes* (MEFPD). This combination of funding ensures accessibility and quality in adult education for all citizens. Each region tailors its programs to the specific needs of the local population, ensuring that the courses offered align with labor market demands and the needs of participants (MEFPD, 2024). According to a study by the MEFPD (2024), the programs offered by CEA centers have significantly contributed to reducing unemployment rates among adult participants. The study highlights that these programs have reduced the unemployment rate among participants by 15%, demonstrating the high effectiveness and relevance of these educational initiatives in improving employability. CEA centers are widely distributed throughout Spain, providing easy access to educational programs for most of the population. Courses are often flexible, with evening and online options, allowing participants to balance education, work, and family commitments. The quality of education in CEA centers is ensured by skilled instructors and modern teaching methods, which guarantee the relevance and effectiveness of the courses (Eurydice, 2024^p).

In Poland, Adult Education Initiatives include a wide range of programs and initiatives designed to improve the skills and qualifications of adult learners. These programs are designed to meet labor market needs and support the concept of lifelong learning, enabling adults to improve their professional and personal skills. Adult education in Poland is organized by various institutions, including public schools, higher education institutions, and private educational centers. The programs are funded from the state budget, European Union funds, as well as local sources. This funding system enables the wide availability and accessibility of educational programs for all adult citizens, regardless of their prior educational or social backgrounds. According to the laws and policies

adopted in Poland and the EU, the following terms are used about adult education and training: Continuing Education (CE) (*kształcenie ustawiczne*), defined in the School Education Law (*ustawa Prawo oświatowe*) (Article 4, Section 30). CE refers to education/training in adult schools, second-degree sectoral vocational schools, and post-secondary schools, as well as acquiring new and supplemental knowledge, skills, and professional qualifications in non-school environments for individuals who have completed compulsory education. Adult Education (AE) (*edukacja dorosłych*) is used as an equivalent for Adult Education and Training (AET) (*kształcenie i szkolenia dorosłych*). AET is provided both as practical training at the workplace and as organized activities by civic groups or communities. According to Eurydice, adult education programs in Poland play a key role in reducing social exclusion and improving employability. These programs allow participants to acquire new skills and qualifications that are in demand in the labor market, thereby contributing to their professional development and economic advancement. Adult education programs in Poland are designed to be accessible and flexible, tailored to the needs of adult learners. Courses are often offered in the evening and online, which, as in other countries, allows participants to balance education, work, and family obligations. Additionally, many programs offer the possibility of recognizing prior learning and experience, which accelerates the process of acquiring new qualifications (Statistics Poland, 2024; Eurydice, 2024^b).

THE SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN ADULT EDUCATION

The research findings on the supply and demand for adult education in the European Union highlight significant differences between member states, as well as common challenges and opportunities for improving the adult education system. This discussion analyzes key findings, identifies areas that require further attention, and provides recommendations for improving educational policies and practices.

Key findings

Differences in the accessibility and quality of educational programs were detected. Case studies have shown that countries with well-developed adult education systems, such as Germany and Sweden, have high participation rates and a wide range of quality programs. In Germany, the *Volkshochschulen* (VHS) system provides a wide array of courses, from language learning to IT skills, allowing adults to improve their competencies and increase employability. In Sweden, Komvux programs offer flexible learning opportunities, which are key to the high success rate of participants.

On the other hand, countries like Italy and Spain face lower participation rates due to socioeconomic factors and a lack of institutional support. Economic motives, such as increased employability and career advancement, are primary factors motivating adults to engage in educational programs. Studies show that adults who participate in educational programs have a better chance of finding employment and advancing in their careers. Social motives, such as inclusion and personal development, also play a significant role, especially for marginalized groups, who, through education, acquire the necessary skills for active participation in society.

The labor market is rapidly changing due to technological advancements and globalization, creating a need for continuous learning and adaptation to new skills. Digital skills, such as data management and programming, are increasingly important, and adult education programs often include courses that meet these needs. Soft skills, such as teamwork and communication, are also crucial for success in the modern workplace and are often integrated into adult education programs.

The demand for adult education varies across Europe's regions. Countries with a strong tradition of lifelong learning, such as Germany and Scandinavian countries, exhibit high participation rates due to strong institutional support and public investment. Conversely, countries like Italy and Spain show lower participation rates due to economic challenges and a lack of support for adult education programs.

Identification of shortcomings and challenges

In many less developed regions, the lack of financial resources limits access to adult education programs. This is especially true for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, who do not have the means to participate in education. The lack of specialized institutions for adult education and inadequate infrastructure hinders the implementation of effective educational programs. Many countries do not have sufficiently developed institutional frameworks that would allow broad access to adult education. The lack of digital infrastructure and technology presents a significant challenge, particularly in rural areas. The digital divide between urban and rural regions limits access to educational resources and prevents the equal distribution of educational opportunities.

Recommendations for improvement

Ensuring a greater number of scholarships, subsidies, and free programs for adults, especially for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, can significantly increase access to education. Encouraging local communities to develop educational programs tailored to the specific needs of their population can increase the effectiveness of educational initiatives. Investing in digital

resources and technologies can enable broader access to educational content and increase the flexibility of learning, which is especially important for working adults. Increasing cooperation between governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector can contribute to the development of relevant educational programs that meet labor market needs. Organizing awareness campaigns about the significance of lifelong learning can motivate more adults to engage in educational activities, increasing overall participation and contributing to social inclusion.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the vital role of adult education in navigating the rapid economic, technological, and social changes facing contemporary society. By analyzing adult education programs across the European Union, it becomes clear that while some member states have developed accessible and high-quality systems, others face significant challenges that hinder participation and outcomes. Countries like Germany and Sweden show how strong institutional support and adequate funding can lead to successful programs that enable adults to enhance their skills and qualifications. On the other hand, countries like Italy and Spain, which face socioeconomic disparities and limited resources, struggle to provide the same level of access. However, the growing interest in adult education in these regions, particularly in fields such as IT and digital skills, suggests a potential for progress if properly supported. These findings also underscore the increasing importance of lifelong learning in today's fast-changing world. The digital revolution has created a demand for skills such as digital literacy, programming, and data management, alongside soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Adult education not only helps individuals remain competitive in the workforce but also supports broader goals of social inclusion and personal growth, from integrating marginalized groups to promoting active participation in society. To move forward, addressing existing disparities and making adult education systems across the EU more inclusive, flexible, and resilient is essential. While detailed strategies have been outlined earlier in this study, the broader focus should be on ensuring that these efforts lead to meaningful change. By increasing accessibility, fostering collaboration across sectors, and leveraging digital innovation, member states can build a stronger foundation for lifelong learning that benefits individuals and society. Adult education is more than just an economic tool—it is a pathway to empowerment, equality, and progress. By embracing these opportunities and addressing the challenges, the EU can create an education system that prepares its population for the future and supports sustainable growth and development for years to come.

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METODE ISTRAŽIVANJA U MEĐUJEZIČNOJ PRAGMATICI

Sažetak: Cilj je ovoga rada dati pregled različitih istraživačkih metoda koje se rabe u međujezičnoj pragmatiki za ispitivanje razvoja pragmatičke kompetencije učenika stranoga jezika. Metode prikupljanja podataka u međujezičnoj pragmatiki dijele se u tri kategorije, a to su metode istraživanja govorne interakcije, upitnici te usmena i pisana samoizvješća. Govorna interakcija analizira se kroz prikupljanje autentičnih podataka te metode navođenog razgovora i igranja uloga. Upitnici (test dopunjavanja diskursa, višestruki izbor i skala procjene) su najčešće rabljene metode u istraživanjima međujezične pragmatike zbog jednostavnog procesa konstrukcije i primjene. Treća vrsta metoda prikupljanja podataka uključuje usmena i pisana samoizvješća (intervjui, dnevници i verbalni protokoli). Za svaku metodu navedene su prednosti i nedostaci te dani primjeri istraživanja. U zaključku rada donosi se prijedlog mogućeg istraživanja razvoja pragmatičke kompetencije učenika stranoga jezika u hrvatskom obrazovnom kontekstu.

Ključne riječi: govorna interakcija, upitnici, usmena i pisana samoizvješća, pragmatička kompetencija, učenici stranoga jezika

UVOD

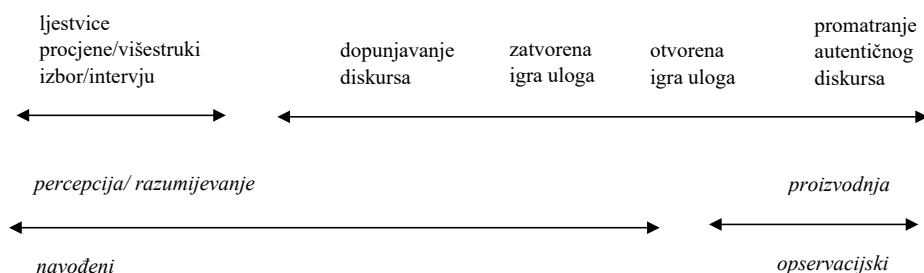
Osnovni je cilj učenja i poučavanja stranoga jezika komunikacijska kompetencija, odnosno osposobljavanje učenika za komunikaciju na stranome jeziku. Pragmatička sastavnica komunikacijske kompetencije često je „nevidljivi”

ili „manje očiti” dio učenja i poučavanja stranoga jezika i uobičajeno se u literaturi spominje kao treća (ili četvrta) sastavnica komunikacijske kompetencije, nakon lingvističke (gramatičke) i sociolingvističke kompetencije (ZEROJ, 2005). Ova je sastavnica također rjeđe predmetom istraživanja nego ostale sastavnice komunikacijske kompetencije. Istraživanjem razvoja pragmatičke kompetencije učenika stranih jezika bavi se međujezična pragmatika (engl. *interlanguage pragmatics*). Međujezična pragmatika naziva se „hibridom druge generacije” (Kasper i Blum Kulka, 1993) jer pripada dvjema disciplinama: usvajanju drugoga jezika i pragmatici. Provođenje istraživanja u okviru međujezične pragmatike otežava činjenica da takva istraživanja ispituju „tajna pravila” jezika (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001) koja su učenicima, ali i istraživačima koji nisu izvorni govornici nekog stranog jezika, puno manje očita nego, primjera radi, sintaktička pravila. Namjera je ovog rada stoga bila prikazati metode istraživanja u međujezičnoj pragmatici, kao i primjere istraživanja, u svrhu usustavljanja prikaza navedenih metoda i poticanja promišljanja o budućim istraživanjima međujezične pragmatike u hrvatskom obrazovnom kontekstu.

Istraživanja pragmatičkog razvoja kod učenika stranoga jezika svoju metodologiju preuzimaju od kros-kulturalne pragmatike i međujezične pragmatike. Navedene dvije discipline istraživačku metodologiju preuzimaju od raznih društvenih znanosti kao što su deskriptivna lingvistika, sociologija, lingvistička antropologija, razvojna pragmatika, kognitivna psihologija, psiholingvistika i socijalna psihologija (Kasper i Rose, 2002). Kasper i Dahl (1991) u svom često citiranom članku *Research methods in interlanguage pragmatics* prikazuju metode istraživanja u međujezičnoj pragmatici kao svojevrсни kontinuum s obzirom na „ograničenja koja nameću podatcima” (1991, str. 216). Ta se ograničenja odnose na stupanj do kojega su podatci već unaprijed određeni strukturom samog instrumenta koji se rabi u istraživanju te modalitetom jezične uporabe. Kasper i Dahl (1991, str. 217) na sljedeći način prikazuju različite metode prikupljanja podataka u međujezičnoj pragmatici (slika 1):

Slika 1.

Metode prikupljanja podataka s obzirom na stupanj kontrole i jezični modalitet (prema Kasper i Dahl, 1991).



Slika 1 odražava „tenzije između želje za strogo kontroliranim zadatcima jezične proizvodnje koji daju usporedive jezične uzorke i želje za integracijom proučavanja autentičnog diskursa u istraživanja međujezične pragmatike” (Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford, 2005, str. 1). Metodama istraživanja prikazanim na lijevoj strani slike (ljestvice procjene/višestruki izbor /intervju) prikupljaju se podatci o načinima na koje sudionici istraživanja razumiju pragmatičke aspekte nekog jezika (u slučaju međujezične pragmatike, riječ je najčešće o govornim činovima). Ove su metode „strogo kontrolirane” u smislu pažljive i dugotrajne pripreme instrumenta koji sudioniku dozvoljava minimalnu, odnosno nikakvu slobodu u davanju odgovora, a istraživač ima gotovo potpunu kontrolu nad aspektom istraživanja vezanim za metodologiju.

Središnje mjesto na slici 1. zauzimaju postupci kao što su test dopunjavanja diskursa te zatvorena i otvorena igra uloga. Ove metode također svojom strukturom u određenoj mjeri ograničavaju sudionike pri davanju odgovora, a podatci koji se njima prikupljaju odnose se na učeničku jezičnu proizvodnju. Metodom promatranja (opservacije) autentičnog diskursa, koja je prikazana na desnoj strani slike, također se prikupljaju podatci vezani za govornu proizvodnju sudionika istraživanja. Za razliku od ostalih spomenutih metoda, opservacija po svojoj strukturi, osim prisutnosti istraživača, ni u kojoj mjeri ne ograničava učeničku jezičnu proizvodnju. Potrebno je još napomenuti da su u ovom članku Kasper i Dahl (1991) dali pregled 39 istraživanja međujezične pragmatike, čime su pridonijeli usustavljanju ove znanstvene discipline u smislu pregleda i podjele metoda istraživanja.

Kasper i Rose (2002) pristupili su podjeli metoda prikupljanja podataka u međujezičnoj pragmatici nešto drukčije nego Kasper i Dahl (1991). Metode su podijelili u tri kategorije: govorna interakcija (autentični diskurs, navođeni razgovor, igra uloga), upitnici (test dopunjavanja diskursa, višestruki izbor, skala procjene) te pisana i usmena (samo)izvješća (intervjui, dnevnici, verbalna izvješća). U ovom ćemo radu opisati navedene metode po spomenutom redoslijedu, navesti njihove prednosti i nedostatke i dati primjere relevantnih istraživanja.

GOVORNA INTERAKCIJA

U svrhu istraživanja govorne interakcije u međujezičnoj pragmatici rabe se sljedeće metode prikupljanja podataka: autentični diskurs, navođeni razgovor (rasprava na zadanu temu i sociolingvistički intervju) i igra uloga. Kasper i Rose (2002) navode da ove metodološke opcije dijele temeljno obilježje, naime, ostvaruju se kroz interaktivnu usmenu jezičnu proizvodnju čime omogućavaju ispitivanje različitih obilježja usmenog diskursa.

Autentični diskurs odnosi se na prikupljanje autentičnih govornih događaja u okviru neke institucije, najčešće sveučilišta. Ova se vrsta podataka prikuplja

vođenjem bilježaka (engl. *field notes*) te audio i videosnimanjem (Kasper i Rose, 2002). Cohen (1996) navodi sljedeće prednosti podataka prikupljenih zapisivanjem/snimanjem prirodnog govora:

- istraživač stječe uvid u učestalost kojom se u prirodnom govoru pojavljuje određena vrsta govornog čina
- podatci su spontani
- podatci odražavaju ono što govornici doista kažu, a ne ono što misle da bi rekli
- govornici reagiraju na prirodnu situaciju, a ne na izmišljenu i vjerojatno nepoznatu situaciju
- komunikacijski događaj ima posljedice u stvarnom svijetu
- navedeni događaj može biti izvor bogatih pragmatičkih struktura.

Ovakav pristup prikupljanju podataka nosi sa sobom i određene poteškoće:

- govorni čin koji je predmet proučavanja ne mora se često pojavljivati u prirodnom govoru
- teško je kontrolirati varijable kao što su spol i razina znanja
- prikupljanje i analiza podataka uzimaju puno vremena
- u podacima možda neće biti dovoljan broj primjera za diskurzivno obilježje koje proučavamo ili tih primjera uopće neće biti
- uporaba opreme za snimanje može biti ometajući činitelj
- uporaba bilježaka kao dopune ili umjesto snimanja oslanja se na pamćenje.

Kao što je već spomenuto, istraživanja autentičnih govornih događaja u kojima sudjeluju neizvorni govornici nekog jezika usmjerena su u najvećem broju slučajeva na institucijski diskurs, kao što su konzultacije s profesorom. Za razliku od svakodnevnih razgovora, u kojima sugovornici uglavnom imaju ista diskurzivna prava i obveze, interakcija unutar institucije odvija se u okviru institucijskih ciljeva i zadataka zbog čega takvu interakciju možemo opisati kao svrhovitu, strukturiranu, predvidljivu i često podložnu ponavljanju (Kasper i Rose, 2002; Kasper, 2008). Ovakav oblik diskursa – koji je autentičan, ali istovremeno ograničen raznim društvenim pravilima – pogodan je za interkulturalnu i kros-kulturalnu usporedbu, ali i za razvojna istraživanja (Kasper, 2008). Naime, jedan od glavnih razloga zbog kojega istraživači izbjegavaju prikupljanje autentičnih podataka nemogućnost je kontroliranja raznoraznih varijabli koje utječu na komunikaciju te dugo vremensko razdoblje koje je potrebno da se prikupi dovoljna količina podataka, odnosno da se diskurzivno obilježje koje je predmet istraživanja u diskursu pojavi dovoljan broj puta. Kod institucijskog diskursa većina varijabli je već poznata te postoji mogućnost istraživanja brojnih diskurzivnih obilježja. Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford (2005) navode da je prednost institucijskog diskursa to što nalikuje prirodnom eksperimentu: djelomično je „kontroliran”, odnosno unaprijed strukturiran, no

struktura i „kontrola” posljedica su djelovanja sudionika unutar institucije, a ne ograničenja nametnutih istraživanjem. Također, institucijska interakcija dio je konteksta i nosi sa sobom društvene posljedice za sudionike (Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford, 2005).

Autorice velikog broja istraživanja institucijskog govora upravo su Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford, a ovdje sažeto navodimo postupak i zaključke dvaju dostupnih nam istraživanja iz 1996. godine. Hartford i Bardovi-Harlig (1996) analizirale su zahtjeve poslane e-poštom autoricama istraživanja (autorice su ujedno bile profesorice sudionicima istraživanja). Prikupljanje je podataka trajalo godinu dana, a u istraživanju su sudjelovali i izvorni i neizvorni govornici engleskoga jezika. Zahtjevi su analizirani s obzirom na emotivni učinak koji su imali na autorice te potom podijeljeni na one koji su imali pozitivan emotivni učinak i one koji su imali negativan učinak. Analiza je također provedena s obzirom na lingvistički oblik svakog zahtjeva, što uključuje uporabu modifikacije, razinu nametanja, sadržaj zahtjeva, sadržaj obrazloženja kojega su studenti dali za postavljanje zahtjeva te spominjanje, odnosno priznavanje „troška” kojega ispunjavanje zahtjeva ima za autorice istraživanja. Rezultati su pokazali da nije bilo velike razlike između izvornih i neizvornih govornika vezano za lingvističko oblikovanje zahtjeva. U negativnim zahtjevima najčešće je rabljena strategija s glagolom *želim* (engl. *I want/I need*). Uporaba ove strategije ne ostavlja prostor za pregovaranje te na određeni način uvećava prava onoga tko zahtjev postavlja, ali i obveze osobe kojoj je zahtjev upućen. Uporaba interne modifikacije bila je postojana za pozitivne i negativne zahtjeve u podacima prikupljenima od izvornih govornika. Negativni zahtjevi neizvornih govornika bili su drukčiji – u prosjeku su zadržavali manje od jedne oznake uljudnosti (engl. *please*) po zahtjevu. Što se tiče određivanja vremenskog okvira izvršavanja postavljenog zahtjeva, u pozitivnim zahtjevima on nije spominjan ili je ostavljeno profesorici na volju da ga sama odredi, dok su u negativnim zahtjevima studenti sami određivali rok. Spominjanje „troška” bilo je češće u pozitivnim zahtjevima za obje grupe. Autorice na kraju ističu da postoje brojni činitelji koji utječu na to hoće li zahtjev biti shvaćen kao pozitivan ili negativan te da studenti moraju te činitelje uzeti u obzir pri oblikovanju zahtjeva.

U drugom istraživanju iz 1996. Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford su na osnovi rezultata longitudinalnog istraživanja iz 1993. u kojem su sudjelovali izvorni i neizvorni govornici (studenti lingvistike) analizirale obilježja jezičnog unosa (engl. *input*) kojem su studenti izloženi. Podatci za longitudinalno istraživanje iz 1993. prikupljeni su za vrijeme studentskih konzultacija s profesorom koji im je dodijeljen kao savjetnik. Svrha je tih konzultacija da student, uz specifičnu savjetnikovu pomoć i informacije, organizira raspored za idući semestar i odabere kolegije koji najbolje odgovaraju njegovim potrebama. Prikupljeni su korpus autorice analizirale s obzirom na ostvarenje govornog čina prijedloga i govornog čina zahtjeva. Rezultati longitudinalnog istraživanja

pokazali su da se pragmatička kompetencija neizvornih govornika poboljšala u smislu njihovog uspješnog sudjelovanja u oblikovanju vlastitog rasporeda. Naime, studenti (neizvorni govornici) su, kako je vrijeme prolazilo, naučili davati vlastite prijedloge te su puno rjeđe odbijali prijedloge savjetnika. Obje grupe u međuvremenu su naučile i pravila institucije. Na mikrorazini, međutim, neizvorni govornici uvelike su se razlikovali od izvornih govornika. Naime, iako su savladali institucijska pravila, njihova pragmatička kompetencija nije bila na dovoljno visokom stupnju da bi ta pravila uporabili kroz lingvistički i pragmatički ispravno oblikovane zahtjeve i prijedloge. Neizvorni govornici tako nisu pokazali nikakav napredak u uporabi interne modifikacije (ublaživača; engl. *downgraders*). Izvorni su govornici ublaživače rabili u svim svojim prijedlozima (Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford, 1993).

U članku iz 1996. Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford detaljno analiziraju ulogu jezičnog unosa u konzultacijama s mentorom s obzirom na napredak, odnosno stagnaciju prisutnu u podacima prikupljenima od neizvornih govornika. Ovo je istraživanje, dakle, svojevrsni nastavak istraživanja iz 1993. Analiza je napravljena s obzirom na sljedeće aspekte unosa: savjetnikovo eksplicitno poučavanje o strukturi intervjua, priroda samog čina savjetovanja u kojem se razgovor odvija jedan-na-jedan (zbog čega studenti nemaju priliku promatrati druge studente koji bi im mogli poslužiti kao model), savjetnik kao izvor jezičnog unosa, potencijalni učinak stereotipnih stajališta na jezični unos te ograničenja u gramatičkoj i pragmatičkoj kompetenciji samih studenata (zbog čega im je dostupni jezični unos zapravo neuporabljiv). Analiza je pokazala da savjetnici gotovo svaki intervju započinju tražeći od studenata prijedlog rasporeda. Tijekom intervjua savjetnici studentima daju iscrpne informacije vezane za izbor kolegija. Autorice su primijetile da savjetnici nikad ne ispravljaju lingvistički pogrešno oblikovan prijedlog ili odbijanje prijedloga. Autorice također smatraju da bi za neizvorne govornike bilo korisno promatrati izvorne govornike u situaciji u kojoj moraju nešto predložiti ili odbiti. Određeni dijelovi savjetnikovih iskaza također mogu poslužiti kao izravan izvor unosa – autorice navode konkretne primjere koje neizvorni govornici mogu uporabiti u svojim odgovorima no zaključuju da se unos ipak nije pretvorio u prihvata (engl. *intake*). Moguće je i da neki studenti imaju stereotipno mišljenje da Amerikanci nisu odveć ljubazni, zbog čega se ni oni nisu trudili biti ljubazni u razgovorima. Također je moguće da je gramatička kompetencija neizvornih govornika na nižem stupnju od pragmatičke, zbog čega ne rabe neke potencijalno korisne konstrukcije. Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford (1996) na kraju zaključuju da su potrebna daljnja istraživanja da bi se detaljno utvrdilo na koje sve načine institucijski govor utječe na usvajanje stranoga jezika.

Kao što je spomenuto u uvodu rada, za istraživanje govorne interakcije u međujezičnoj pragmatici rabi se i navođeni razgovor. Navođeni razgovor (engl. *elicited conversation*) definira se kao „bilo koji razgovor organiziran u svrhu

prikupljanja podataka” (Kasper i Rose, 2002, str. 84). U istraživanjima se rabe dvije varijante ove metode prikupljanja podataka: rasprava na zadanu temu (eng. *conversation task*) i sociolingvistički intervju. U raspravi na zadanu temu od sudionika se traži da razgovaraju o nekoj temi ili da zajednički postignu cilj kojega je unaprijed postavio autor istraživanja. Ovisno o ciljevima istraživanja, upute za ovu vrstu zadatka mogu biti više ili manje detaljne.

Billmyer (1990) je uporabila raspravu na zadanu temu kao metodološki okvir svog istraživanja. U istraživanju su sudjelovali neizvorni govornici engleskoga jezika iz Japana te izvorni govornici engleskoga, a autorica je željela dati odgovor na pitanje hoće li eksplicitno poučavanje formalnih pravila govorenja ubrzati razvoj govornog čina komplimenta i odgovora na kompliment kod učenika stranoga jezika. Sudionici su bili podijeljeni u dvije grupe, kontrolnu i eksperimentalnu. Eksperimentalna je grupa bila eksplicitno poučavana o pravilima za davanje komplimenata. Članovi su se ove grupe također svaki tjedan za vrijeme trajanja semestra nalazili s američkim studentima japanskoga jezika da bi vježbali konverzaciju na engleskom jeziku. Konverzacija između studenata na tim je sastancima imala određeni cilj: od studenata se tražilo da naprave određeni zadatak, odnosno usmjere razgovor tako da od sugovornika dobiju kompliment. Studenti su u tu svrhu jedni drugima pokazivali fotografije obitelji i kuće ili se pohvalili nekim postignućem. Analiza rezultata pokazala je da su studenti koji su bili eksplicitno poučavani oblikovali veći broj prikladnih komplimenata nego studenti iz kontrolne grupe. Ovi su studenti također bili vještiji u određivanju prikladne teme i prikladnog konteksta za davanje komplimenata. Dakle, grupa koja je bila eksplicitno poučavana i sudjelovala je u razgovorima s neizvornim govornicima približila se govornoj normi izvornih govornika više nego kontrolna grupa. Billmyer (1990) zaključuje da formalno poučavanje pravila jezične uporabe unutar razreda može pomoći učenicima da na prikladan način komuniciraju s izvornim govornicima stranoga jezika izvan učionice.

Rabeći metodu sociolingvističkog intervjuja, Sawyer (1992) je ispitao usvajanje čestice *ne* kod 11 učenika japanskoga kao drugog jezika. Čestica *ne* često se rabi u japanskom jeziku, i to na kraju rečenice i znači „Zar ne?” ili „Ne misliš li i ti tako?”. Intervju je bio strukturiran, no učenici su se u svojim odgovorima, ako su to željeli, mogli odmaknuti od teme pitanja. Istraživanje je trajalo godinu dana, a učenici su intervjuirani četiri puta u pravilnim razmacima. Analiza učeničkih odgovora pokazala je da usvajanje čestice *ne* počinje njezinom uporabom u formulaičnim izrazima. Analiza je također pokazala da su učenici, nakon godinu dana života u Japanu, ovladali jezikom u tolikoj mjeri da mogu primjereno odgovarati na pitanja o sebi i zemlji iz koje dolaze. Međutim, samo je jedan od učenika na produktivan način rabio česticu *ne*, zbog čega nije bilo moguće potvrditi postojanje razvojnog slijeda za spomenutu česticu. Obrazlažući ograničenja istraživanja, autor napominje da format intervjuja nije

„prirodna situacija” za prikupljanje konverzacijskih podataka, s obzirom na to da je razmjena informacija bila jednostrana, a učenici su u četiri navrata odgovarali na vrlo slična pitanja. Upravo „asimetričnost” intervjuja Kasper i Rose (2002) navode kao glavni nedostatak ove metode prikupljanja podataka.

Još jedan način prikupljanja podataka vezanih za istraživanje govorne interakciju u međujezičnoj pragmatici igra je uloga. Kasper i Rose (2002, str. 86) igru uloga definiraju kao „simulacije komunikacijskih susreta temeljene na opisima uloga”. Igra uloga najčešće se provodi u parovima, a upute se učenicima daju ili usmenim putem ili ispisane na karticama. S obzirom na stupanj interakcije razlikuje se zatvorena igra uloga (engl. *closed role-play*) i otvorena igra uloga (engl. *open role-play*) (Kasper i Dahl, 1991). U zatvorenoj igri uloga učenici trebaju dati svoj odgovor na opis situacije odnosno, ovisno o vrsti govornog čina koja se istražuje, na standardiziranu uvodnu primjedbu sugovornika/istraživača. Odgovor je učenika, dakle, organiziran kao „jednosmjerni govorni čin” (Kasper, 2008, str. 288) kojim je zatvorena igra uloga završena. S obzirom na to da ovakav format ne dopušta višestruku izmjenu replika među sugovornicima, primjenjivost je zatvorene igre uloga „prilično ograničena” (Kasper, 2008, str. 289). U otvorenoj igri uloga postoji početni opis situacije te podjela uloga, no tijek i rezultat međudjelovanja nisu ni na koji način određeni (Kasper i Rose, 2002). Kasper i Dahl (1991) navode da je međudjelovanje u otvorenoj igri uloga „stvarno” u kontekstu te aktivnosti. Kasper (2008) smatra da otvorena igra uloga u smislu odvijanja i cilja komunikacije može biti više ili manje složena. Najmanje je složena ona otvorena igra uloga koja od sudionika traži komunikaciju u određenim rutinskim govornim situacijama uz postizanje zajedničkog cilja i uporaba formulaičnog jezika. Puno je složenija igra uloga koja sudionike stavlja u nepoznate im i nestrukturirane situacije u kojima se od njih traži uporaba složenih jezičnih konstrukcija i pregovaranja u svrhu postizanja dogovora oko divergentnih komunikacijskih ciljeva. Složenost zadatka, dakako, ovisi o ciljevima istraživanja.

Najvažnija razlika između otvorene i zatvorene igre uloga temelji se na činjenici da se otvorena igra uloga odvija kroz „veći broj izmjena i diskurzivnih faza” (Kasper i Rose, 2002, str. 87) odnosno „u potpunom diskurzivnom kontekstu” (Kasper i Dahl, 1991, str. 228). Za razliku od autentičnog diskursa, otvorena igra uloga omogućava istraživačima analiziranje konverzacijskih aspekata neovisno o kontekstu i ciljevima komunikacije, istovremeno im dozvoljavajući uporabu uloga i konteksta u kojima će sudionici upotrebljavati točno određene govorne činove s obzirom na cilj istraživanja odnosno specifičan opis situacije i podjelu uloga (Kasper i Rose, 2002). Nadalje, Kasper i Dahl (1991) navode da je važna prednost otvorene igre uloga to što nalikuje autentičnim razgovorima s obzirom na preuzimanje prava na riječ, donošenje improviziranih odluka o daljnjem tijeku komunikacije vezano za sugovornikov doprinos komunikaciji, pregovaranje lokalnih i globalnih ciljeva, sekvencijalnu

organizaciju govornog čina te odabir strategija ovisno o tijeku komunikacije. Razlika između autentičnih podataka i igre uloga temelji se na tome što u suštini igre uloga stoji cilj istraživača, a ne sudionika u komunikaciji. Golato (2003), pak, iznosi cijeli niz nedostataka igre uloga kao metode prikupljanja „kvaziautentičnih” podataka:

- iako su sudionici u igri uloga u interakciji jedan s drugim, kontekst njihove interakcije najčešće je izmišljen, odnosno nije stvaran; situacije u igri uloga u potpunosti su konstrukt samog istraživača osmišljen u skladu s ciljevima istraživanja, ne autentičnim komunikacijskim potrebama učenika
- ako polazimo sa stajališta da kontekst igre uloga nije stvaran, onda sudionici postaju glumci koji glume neku situaciju onako kako je oni zamišljaju; sudionici samo iznose svoja vjerovanja o ulogama koje (najčešće) u životu nikad nisu imali
- u igri uloga ne postoje sociolingvističke varijable koje su u autentičnoj komunikaciji itekako važne
- za razliku od razgovora u stvarnom životu, verbalne interakcije i radnje izvedene u okviru igre uloga nemaju nikakve posljedice za sudionike u stvarnom svijetu
- prevođenje, transkribiranje i analiza igre uloga zahtijeva puno vremena.

Liddicoat i Crozet (2001) analizirali su učeničku izvedbu u igri uloga u kojoj su trebali dati odgovor na pitanje „Jesi li proveo ugodan vikend?”. Sudionici su bili australski studenti francuskoga jezika, a pitanje o vikendu bilo je izabrano zbog zanimljive kulturološke razlike u tumačenju ovog pitanja. U australskom engleskom ovo je pitanje formulaično, odnosno predstavlja samo ritual pozdravljanja na poslu nakon vikenda zbog čega je i odgovor formulaičan. Dakle, pitanje se postavlja samo kurtoazno i najčešće ne rezultira dubljom raspravom. Kod francuskoga jezika situacija je dijametralno suprotna – ovo je pitanje za njih istinsko pitanje, odnosno najčešće označava početak detaljne rasprave. S obzirom na to da je u ovom istraživanju naglasak bio na poučavanju pragmatičkih aspekata stranoga jezika, različitost u kulturalnom poimanju istog pitanja kod Francuza i Australaca u više je puta predstavljena i objašnjena studentima u okviru modula o govornom jeziku i kulturi. Liddicoat i Crozet (2001) studentske su odgovore na ovo pitanje snimili prije samog početka modula, za vrijeme trajanja modula i godinu dana nakon što su studenti odslušali modul želeći utvrditi utjecaj eksplicitnog poučavanja na usvajanje interakcijskih normi. Kao metodu prikupljanja podataka izabrali su igru uloga zato što su smatrali da im jedino ta metoda, u situaciji u kojoj studenti rabe francuski samo u pedagoškom okviru, daje mogućnost prikupljanja korpusa usporedivih govornih podataka. Analiza podataka pokazala je da su studenti neposredno nakon poučavanja u svoj govor integrirali elemente vezane za

„francusko” tumačenje pitanja o vikendu, odnosno elemente koji nisu bili formulaični. Dakle, razvili su „svijest o sustavu” vezanom za kulturalna očekivanja govornika ciljnoga jezika. No, učenici nisu u jednakoj mjeri usvojili diskurzivna obilježja. Iako su svoje odgovore u velikoj mjeri prilagodili kulturalnim normama stranoga jezika na razini sadržaja, na razini lingvističkog oblikovanja iskaza nisu bili toliko uspješni. Autori zaključuju da ovakve i slične aktivnosti – u kojima se kod učenika podiže svijest o konverzacijskom stilu i sadržaju – mogu rezultirati promjenama u učeničkom međujeziku. Interakcijske norme mogu i trebaju biti dio poučavanja i učenja stranoga jezika.

Tateyama (2001) je ispitala učinak eksplicitnog i implicitnog poučavanja na uporabu formulaičnog izraza *sumimasen* (hrv. *oprosti*) kod učenika na početnom stupnju učenja japanskoga kao stranoga jezika. Autorica navodi da su ispričavanje, izražavanje zahvalnosti i skretanje pažnje tri osnovne funkcije ove formule. Tijekom osam tjedana nastave eksplicitna grupa četiri je puta dobila detaljna objašnjenja o trima funkcijama *sumimasen*, odnosno sudjelovala je u nizu eksplicitnih metapragmatičkih aktivnosti koje su uključivale i gledanje videa. Implicitna grupa u takvim aktivnostima nije sudjelovala, osim što su gledali iste videosnimke uz uputu da obrate pozornost na formulaične izraze u govoru. Uz igru uloga, u istraživanju su uporabljeni i drugi instrumenti (test višestrukog izbora, test dopunjavanja diskursa, intervju). Analiza rezultata pokazala je da, što se tiče igre uloga i testa višestrukog izbora, između eksplicitne i implicitne grupe nema značajnih razlika. Autorica navodi da je moguće da je period poučavanja bio previše kratak da bi se pokazala učinkovitost različitih uvjeta poučavanja. Autorica navodi i neke druge činitelje koji su mogli utjecati na rezultate, kao što su: motivacija učenika, uporaba japanskog van razreda te općenito bolji akademski uspjeh kod implicitne grupe.

Rabeći interaktivnu igru uloga, Hassall (2003) je istražio kako australski studenti indonezijskog jezika oblikuju zahtjeve u svakodnevnim situacijama u usporedbi s izvornim govornicima. Analiza je pokazala da su i studenti i izvorni govornici rabili iste vrste strategija u oblikovanju svojih zahtjeva (izravne, konvencionalno i nekonvencionalno neizravne strategije). Studenti su veoma često rabili strategiju „izražavanje želje/potrebe” (podvrsta izravnih strategija), koju su izvorni govornici rabili vrlo rijetko. Razlika se također pokazala i u uporabi imperativa, kojim se izvorni govornici veoma često rabe, a studenti vrlo rijetko. Obje grupe ispitanika u više su od 40 % zahtjeva rabile konvencionalno neizravne zahtjeve, no razlikuju se u uporabi modalnih glagola: izvorni govornici svoje su zahtjeve oblikovali uglavnom upotrebljavajući rabeći *can*, a studenti *may/be allowed*. Studenti su također češće rabili nekonvencionalno neizravne strategije nego izvorni govornici. Hassall (2003) smatra da je uporaba konvencionalne neizravnosti kao glavne strategije neizvornih govornika izravna posljedica pozitivnog transfera iz materinskog jezika te formalne jednostavnosti ove vrste pitanja. Učestalou uporabu strategije

„izražavanje želje/potrebe” (engl. *want statement*) kod studenata indonezijskog autor objašnjava željom za učinkovitošću i jednostavnošću. Rijetka uporaba imperativa objašnjena je transferom iz materinskog jezika – autor navodi da izvorni govornici australskoga engleskoga izbjegavaju rabiti imperativ za oblikovanje zahtjeva. Nekonvencionalno neizravne strategije koje su učenici rabili zapravo su pseudo-strategije. Uporabu glagola *may/be allowed* autor objašnjava njihovom prezentacijom u udžbenicima u kojima se glagol *can* uvijek veže uz sposobnost, a glagol *may/be allowed* uz dozvolu. Hassall (2003) zaključuje da provedena analiza potvrđuje tezu da za obilježja učeničkog međujezika (u ovom slučaju prikazana na primjeru govornog čina zahtjeva) uvijek postoje višestruka objašnjenja.

UPITNICI

U usporedbi s istraživanjem govorne interakcije, vrste istraživačkih pitanja na koja je moguće dobiti odgovor uporabom upitnika nužno su ograničene:

Isključena iz istraživanja upravo su ona pragmatička obilježja koja su specifična za usmeni interaktivni diskurs – bilo koji aspekt vezan za dinamiku razgovora, preuzimanje prava na riječ i konverzacijski mehanizmi vezani za to, sekvenciju aktivnosti, koordinaciju između govornika i slušatelja, obilježja govorne proizvodnje koja mogu imati pragmatičku važnost, kao što su vremenske varijable, i svi paralingvistički i neverbalni elementi. (Kasper i Rose, 2002, str. 89).

Kasper i Rose (2002) nadalje ističu da su upitnici, usprkos svojim ograničenjima, najčešće rabljena metoda prikupljanja podataka u međujezičnoj pragmatiki. Potrebno je napomenuti da istu tvrdnju ponavljaju i ostali autori koji su o istraživanjima međujezične pragmatike pisali s metodološke perspektive (Kasper i Dahl, 1991; Golato, 2003; Kasper, 2008). Jedan od razloga za učestalu uporabu upitnika taj je da se ovaj instrument često rabi kao pogodno i brzo rješenje za prikupljanje velike količine podataka, no to je, smatraju Kasper i Rose (2002), pogrešan razlog. Upitnike treba rabiti onda kada je njihova uporaba opravdana ciljevima istraživanja.

Najčešće rabljeni upitnici u međujezičnoj pragmatiki su zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa (engl. *Discourse Completion Task/DCT*), test višestrukog izbora (engl. *Multiple Choice Test/MCT*) i skala procjene (engl. *scaled-response questionnaire*). Ovi se upitnici razlikuju po vrsti odgovora koja se očekuje od sudionika istraživanja. Zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa implicira „otvoreni” odgovor, naime, od sudionika se traži da napišu odgovor za koji smatraju da je koherentan i prikladan u danoj situaciji. Kod višestrukog izbora i skale procjene učenicima su odgovori već ponudeni, a od njih se traži da izaberu onaj koji drže najprikladnijim. U ovom dijelu rada detaljnije ćemo prikazati navedene vrste upitnika.

U literaturi se zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa često naziva testom dopunjavanja diskursa te se ova dva termina rabe kao sinonimi (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum Kulka i sur., 1989; Rose, 1994; Rose i Ono, 1995; Fukushima, 2003; Liu, 2006; Barron, 2003). Kasper i Dahl (1991, str. 221) ističu da je DCT „često rabljena i često kritizirana” metoda prikupljanja podataka u kros-kulturalnoj i međujezičnoj pragmatici. Želeći istaknuti učestalost uporabe ove vrste upitnika, Bardovi-Harlig i Hartford (1993) ovu su tvrdnju potkrijepile jednostavnom statističkom analizom: od 39 istraživanja međujezične pragmatike koja su u svom članku usustavili Kasper i Dahl (1991), u 11 istraživanja (31 %) uporabljen je test dopunjavanja diskursa kao jedini izvor podataka, a u još 8 istraživanja uporabljen je kao jedan od instrumenata. DCT je, dakle, uporabljen u 19 od 39 istraživanja (54 %). U samo 2 od 39 istraživanja kao metoda prikupljanja podataka uporabljeno je promatranje prirodnog jezika.

Kasper i Dahl (1991, str. 221) definiraju zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa kao pisani upitnik koji „uključuje određeni broj kratkih opisa situacija kojima slijedi kratki dijalog s praznim mjestom za govorni čin koji se istražuje”. Od ispitanika se traži da upišu odgovor za koji misle da pristaje u dani kontekst. Kontekst je oblikovan na takav način da učenik odgovara rabeći upravo onaj govorni čin koji je predmet istraživanja. „Konvencionalni” odnosno „klasični” oblik DCT-a sadrži i odgovor sugovornika, što je još jedan element konteksta koji čini planirani ilokucijski čin govornika eksplicitnim.

Ovdje navodimo jedan takav primjer:

At the professor's office

(U nastavnikovu uredu)

A student has borrowed a book from her teacher, which she promised to return today. When meeting her teacher, however, she realizes that she forgot to bring it along.

(Studentica je posudila knjigu od nastavnika i obećala ju je danas vratiti. Međutim, kad je srela nastavnika, shvatila je da je zaboravila ponijeti knjigu.)

Teacher: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you. (Miriam, nadam da ste donijeli knjigu koju sam Vam posudio).

Miriam: _____

Teacher: OK, but please remember it next week. (U redu, ali molim Vas, sjetite se donijeti je sljedeći tjedan).

(preuzeto iz Blum-Kulka i sur., 1989).

U svojoj klasifikaciji pragmatičkih testova Brown (2001) spominje i usmeni zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa (engl. *oral discourse completion task/ODCT*). Usmeni zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa sastoji se od niza situacija snimljenih na diktafon. Od sudionika se traži da poslušaju snimku i kažu naglas što bi u toj situaciji rekli, također snimajući svoje odgovore. Rose (2000) je u svom kros-sekcijskom istraživanju razvoja međujezične pragmatike kod učenika osnovnoškolske dobi iz Hong Konga rabio jednu varijantu usmenog zadatka

dopunjavanja diskursa koju je nazvao crtani zadatak usmene proizvodnje (engl. *cartoon oral production task/COPT*). Temelj svake situacije uključene u COPT čini ilustracija situacije uz njezin kratki opis. Svakoj je ilustraciji zajednički lik dječaka koji je učenicima opisan kao njihov vršnjak koji se, kroz ilustracije u zadatku, susreće s istim svakodnevnim situacijama kroz koje i sami sudionici istraživanja prolaze (školske i obiteljske situacije poput traženja pomoći oko domaćeg rada, posuđivanja knjige i igrice od brata i sestre). Prikupljanje podataka odvijalo se tako da je učenicima najprije rečeno da pogledaju pojedinu ilustraciju, potom im je pročitani kratki opis situacije nakon čega su zamoljeni da svoj odgovor snime na diktafon. Također je potrebno napomenuti da su u istraživanju, uz učenike engleskoga kao stranoga jezika, sudjelovali i učenici-izvorni govornici kantoneškoga kako bi bilo moguće ispitati prisutnost pragmatičkog transfera iz prvog jezika. Da bi im kontekst bio što bliskiji, izvornim je govornicima rečeno da je dječak čije su svakodnevne situacije predstavljene kroz instrument učenik jedne od osnovnih škola u Hong Kongu, dok je učenicima engleskoga kao stranoga jezika rečeno da je riječ o dječaku iz Hong Konga koji je emigrirao u Kanadu te sad pohađa školu tamo gdje, naravno, govori samo engleski. Rose (2000) navodi da je to situacija koja je poznata većini ljudi u Hong Kongu, uključujući i učenike osnovnoškolske dobi. Sličan se kontekst pojavljuje u upitniku uporabljenom za nastavak ovog istraživanja, samo što su ovaj put sudionici bili učenici iz srednje škole (Rose, 2009). U ovom instrumentu, međutim, zbog administrativnih razloga nije bilo dozvoljeno rabiti ilustracije, iako je to bila prvotna autorova namjera. Dakle, upitnik je kontekstualiziran na ovaj način kako bi instrument dobio na autentičnosti, a učenici se mogli što bolje poistovjetiti s dječakom iz upitnika. Još jedna prednost ovog instrumenta je to što omogućuje uključivanje učenika na početnom stupnju učenja u istraživanje. Naime, učenici ne moraju čitati opis situacija i davati pisane odgovore rabeći strani jezik. Upravo je zato Flores Salgado (2008) u svojoj disertaciji rabila modificirani COPT kao glavni instrument da bi ispitala razvoj govornog čina zahtjeva i govornog čina isprike kod meksičkih studenata na tri razine učenja engleskoga jezika.

S obzirom na to da je zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa, odnosno neki njegov oblik, instrument koji se u istraživanjima međujezične pragmatike često rabi, valjanost je ovog instrumenta bila predmetom brojnih istraživanja. Prvo istraživanje kojem je cilj bio ispitati valjanost DCT-a proveli su Beebe i Cummings 1996. godine. Autorice su usporedili podatke prikupljene testom dopunjavanja diskursa i podatke dobivene preko telefonskih razgovora s fokusom na govorni čin odbijanja. Tema telefonskog razgovora koja je uporabljena za oblikovanje situacije u DCT-u bila je autentična: jedna od autorica nazivala je nastavnike engleskoga jezika kako bi ih zamolila da volontiraju na konferenciji TESOL-a u New Yorku. Analiza je pokazala da između autentičnih podataka i podataka prikupljenih DCT-om postoje brojne razlike. Podatci prikupljeni

DCT-om razlikovali su se u količini govora, načinu izražavanja te rasponu uporabljenih semantičkih formula. U telefonskim razgovorima izgovoreno je četiri puta više riječi nego što je napisano u testu dopunjavanja diskursa. Beebe i Cummings ovo objašnjavaju samim formatom DCT-a. Instrument se, naime, sastoji od opisa situacije i nekoliko praznih crta za pisanje odgovora zbog čega sudionici nužno sažimaju svoje odgovore. Sam format instrumenta nalikuje na test, a situacije su najčešće izmišljene. Sve navedeno rezultira kraćim i sažetim odgovorom u kojima se ključne formule potrebne za ispunjavanje društvenih zahtjeva rabe odjednom, odnosno najčešće bez razjašnjavanja i modificiranja iskaza. Autorice navode da „pisane igre uloga usmjeravaju odgovor prema manje pregovaranja, manje izbjegavanja odgovora, manje ponavljanja, manje elaboracije, manje raznolikosti i, na kraju, manje govora” (Beebe i Cummings, 1996, str. 71). Rezultati su također pokazali da su telefonski razgovori bili raznolikiji od pisanih odgovora u smislu različitih formula i strategija koje su sudionici rabili. Međutim, analiza sadržaja pokazala je da pisani upitnici točno odražavaju sadržaj izražen u prirodnom govoru. Beebe i Cummings (1996) smatraju da ovakvi rezultati legitimiraju uporabu DCT-a u istraživanjima s obzirom na to da se pokazalo da izvorni govornici na DCT odgovaraju pisanjem stereotipnih odgovora koji sadržavaju „formulaičnu jezgru semantičkog sadržaja” (1996, str. 75). Na kraju članka autorice zaključuju da je DCT „vrlo učinkovit” instrument kao sredstvo za:

- brzo prikupljanje velikih količina podataka
- stvaranje početne klasifikacije semantičkih formula i strategija koje će se vjerojatno pojaviti i u prirodnom govoru
- proučavanje stereotipnih uvjeta za društveno prikladan odgovor
- stjecanje uvida u društvene i psihološke činitelje koji najvjerojatnije utječu na govor i izvedbu
- utvrđivanje kanonskog oblika govornih činova u umu govornika nekog jezika.

Potrebno je naglasiti da su se ovim argumentima, kojima se podupire kontinuirana uporaba DCT-a za prikupljanje podataka, kasnije služili brojni autori i to najčešće oni koji su u svojim radovima rabili DCT te su prednosti ovog instrumenta odgovarale ciljevima istraživanja (npr. Hill, 1997). Autorice također naglašavaju da instrumenti poput DCT-a ne odražavaju prirodni govor u smislu načina izražavanja u stvarnim interakcijama, raspona uporabljenih formula i strategija, duljine odgovora i broja iskaza, dubine emocija koje oblikuju odgovor u stvarnoj komunikaciji, broja modifikacija te broja pojavljivanja nekog govornog čina u diskursu. Beebe i Cummings (1996, str. 80–81) navode da testovi dopunjavanja diskursa „ne daju prirodni govor, no nigdje se ni ne tvrdi da to mogu”, no zato „pružaju dobru ideju o stereotipnom obliku govornog čina”.

Yuan (2001, str. 272) napominje da su „ograničeni napori napravljeni da se procijeni valjanost” testa dopunjavanja diskursa te svom opsežnom istraživanju vrednuje sljedeće metode prikupljanja podataka u istraživanjima govornih činova: pisani test dopunjavanja diskursa, usmeni test dopunjavanja diskursa, bilješke i autentična komunikacija (intervjui sa sudionicima). Yuan (2001, str. 273) također navodi da s obzirom na ograničeni broj istraživanja o metodama prikupljanja podataka „ne postoji konačan dokaz koji pokazuje da je test dopunjavanja diskursa točna, valjana ili prikladna metoda prikupljanja podataka o govornim činovima”. Govorni je čin u fokusu ovog istraživanja kompliment (i odgovori na kompliment), a sudionici u istraživanju bili su govornici dijalekta mandarinskoga kineskog kojim se govori u gradu Kunmingu u Kini. Test dopunjavanja diskursa uporabljen u istraživanju sastavljen je na osnovi promatranja autentičnog govora. Dio ispitanika na ovaj je test dalo svoje pismene odgovore, a dio usmene, koji su bili snimani diktafonom. Autentične podatke Yuan (2001) je zapisivala odmah nakon što ih je čula ili na kraju dana i na taj je način prikupila ukupno 256 autentičnih govornih događaja. Da bi se utvrdila valjanost pojedinih metoda prikupljanja podataka, izračunate su srednje vrijednosti za sljedeće varijable: duljina odgovora, broj čestica za označavanje iznenađenja ili oklijevanja (npr. *umm*, *ah*, *well* itd.), broj ponavljanja, broj inverzija i broj izostavljanja. Rezultati t-testa za svih pet varijabli pokazali su da se sve navedene varijable značajno više rabe u usmenim odgovorima i kod komplimenata i kod odgovora na komplimente. Odgovori na usmenom testu dopunjavanja diskursa bili su dva puta dulji nego odgovori na pisani test. Ostala su obilježja također bila puno učestalija na usmenom nego na pisanom testu.

Autentični podatci analizirani su s obzirom na ista obilježja. Pokazalo se da su u autentičnim govornim događajima inverzije, ponavljanja, čestice za označavanje iznenađenja ili oklijevanja i izostavljanje vrlo česte pojave, puno češće nego u bilo kojem obliku DCT-a. No, prema učestalosti pojavljivanja ovih obilježja odgovori na usmenom testu puno su bliži prirodnom diskursu nego odgovori na pisanom testu i to je, navodi Yuan (2001), svakako prednost usmenog DCT-a. Glavni nedostatak ovog instrumenta ograničenje je koje postavlja sam njegov format. Naime, ne postoji mogućnost pregovaranja između „sugovornika” na testu i osobe koja popunjava upitnik zbog čega sudionik treba izreći sve u samo jednom iskazu. Ovakva je situacija rijetka u prirodnoj komunikaciji gdje su replike višestruke, kraće i brzo se izmjenjuju.

Što se tiče bilježaka i intervjuja, Yuan (2001) navodi zanimljiv primjer u kojem pokazuje da je glavni nedostatak bilješki njihova ovisnost o istraživačevu pamćenju. Naime, dvije su sudionice zajedno davale odgovore na usmeni DCT i pri tom su, u neformalnoj konverzaciji, izgovorile nekoliko komplimenata koji su također snimljeni na diktafon. Iste je komplimente autorica zapisala u svoje bilješke. Usporedba stvarnog razgovora i bilježaka pokazala je da su autoričine bilješke bile kraće od stvarnog razgovora i nepotpune. Autorica na

kraju zaključuje da podatci prikupljeni usmenim testom dopunjavanja diskursa daleko više nalikuju prirodnom govoru s obzirom na istražena obilježja te da je DCT bolja metodološka opcija ako je fokus istraživanja na prirodnom govoru. Autorica također napominje da, općenito gledano, odabir metodologije ovisi o istraživačkim pitanjima i postavljenim ciljevima istraživanja.

Golato (2003) je proveo istraživanje u kojem je usporedio snimke prirodnog govora i test dopunjavanja diskursa u kontekstu odgovora na komplimente. Situacije na testu oblikovane su na osnovi snimaka stvarnih razgovora. Nakon detaljne analize primjera iz autentičnog korpusa i statističke usporedbe podataka dobivenih testom dopunjavanja diskursa i podataka iz snimaka autentičnih razgovora, autor zaključuje da DCT nije prikladan instrument za istraživanje stvarnog govora. Golato također ističe važnu razliku između testa dopunjavanja diskursa i autentičnih podataka: DCT je zadatak u kojem postoji svojevrsna odgoda, odnosno učenici imaju vremena za razmišljanje što će napisati, dok je autentični diskurs nužno spontan i oblikuje se u stvarnom vremenu. Test dopunjavanja diskursa prikladniji je dakle za istraživanje onoga što ljudi misle da bi rekli nego za istraživanje onoga što stvarno kažu. Autor na kraju zaključuje da test dopunjavanja diskursa nikako ne može biti uporabljen za istraživanje autentičnog govora.

Istraživanja opisana u ovom dijelu rada (Beebe i Cummings, 1996; Yuan, 2001; Golato, 2003) ukazuju na nedostatke testa dopunjavanja diskursa. Test dopunjavanja diskursa, međutim, ima prednost važnu za ispitivanje pragmatičkih obilježja i razvoja pragmatičke kompetencije u međujeziku učenika stranoga jezika. Ta se prednost odnosi na ispitivanje obilježja pragmatičkog znanja učenika. Naime, od učenika stranoga jezika, koji uče jezik u neautentičnoj sredini od nastavnika koji su i sami neizvorni govornici tog jezika, ne možemo očekivati autentičan i prirodan govor koji spominju autori gotovo svih istraživanja koja se bave metodološkom potvrdom DCT-a. Kasper i Rose (2002, str. 95–96) tvrde sljedeće:

Kad su pažljivo konstruirani, testovi dopunjavanja diskursa daju korisne informacije o pragmatolingvističkom znanju govornika o strategijama i lingvističkim oblicima uz pomoć kojih se izvršavaju komunikacijski činovi, i o njihovom sociopragmatičkom znanju o kontekstualnim činiteljima pod kojima su određeni strateški i lingvistički izbori prikladni. Rabe li govornici ili ne iste te strategije i oblike u stvarnom diskursu je druga stvar, ali odgovori na upitnik ukazuju nam koje su strategijske i lingvističke mogućnosti spojive s načinom na koji sudionici razumiju pragmatičke norme drugoga jezika i koji kontekstualni činitelji utječu na njihove izbore. U razvojnim pragmatičkim istraživanjima drugoga jezika zanima nas istražiti kako se razvija znanje učenika drugog jezika za razliku od razvoja u izvedbi pod puno zahtjevnijim uvjetima konverzijskih susreta. Za takve istraživačke svrhe, DCT je učinkovita opcija, bez obzira na to utjelovljuju li podatci koje dobijemo interakciju licem-u-lice.

Rose i Ng (2001) navode da je u nekim slučajevima moguće promatrati interakciju učenika na stranom jeziku, no kontekst u kojem se neki jezik uči kao strani općenito ne nudi takve mogućnosti. Istraživač koji želi promatrati komunikaciju na nastavi stranoga jezika susrest će se s dvije vrste problema. Prva vrsta problema su oni administrativno-tehničke prirode koji variraju od poteškoća s pronalaženjem škola, nastavnika i učenika koji su voljni sudjelovati u istraživanju do organizacijskih poteškoća vezanih za raspored nastave, odnosno mogućnost prekidanja iste zbog provođenja istraživanja. Druga vrsta problema odnosi se na samu komunikaciju unutar razreda. Naime, iskustvo, ali i brojna istraživanja, pokazali su da se komunikacija u razredu uglavnom odvija po obrascu iniciranje – odgovor – povratna obavijest (engl. *initiation – response – feedback*; IRF) te su primjeri „prave” spontane komunikacije zaista rijetki. Dakle, može se dogoditi da se neko diskurzivno obilježje ili govorni čin koji želimo istraživati u razrednoj komunikaciji pojavljuje vrlo rijetko ili se uopće ne pojavljuje. Zbog svega navedenoga, Rose i Ng (2001, str. 154) zaključuju da je uporaba pisanih instrumenata „neizbježna”: „Htjeli bismo razjasniti, međutim, da smo potpuno svjesni ograničenja upitnika, posebice s obzirom na informacije koje njima dobivamo. Ključno je razumjeti da su upitnici neizravna mjerila...” Nadalje, Rose i Ng (2001) ističu da su upitnici podložni određenoj količini redukcionizma, s obzirom na to da naprosto nije moguće u kratke opise situacija od kojih je sastavljen DCT uključiti sve društvene varijable koje utječu na slične situacije u stvarnom životu. Autori (2001, str. 155) također smatraju da je vrlo važno naglasiti da su upitnici „inherentno umjetni”:

Mnogi istraživači koji rabe DCT djeluju pod (često implicitnom) pretpostavkom da podatci koje su prikupili predstavljaju (ili mogu predstavljati) ono što ljudi zaista kažu ili naprave u interakciji licem u lice, baš kao što oni koji kritiziraju dopunjavanje diskursa kao valjani postupak prikupljanja podataka to rade tvrdeći da (popunjavanje diskursa) ne predstavlja stvarnu uporabu jezika. I pristalice i kritičari DCT-a u potpunosti promašuju smisao. Upitnici ne mjere izravno društvenu (ili lingvističku) radnju, te se od njih to ne može očekivati, niti ih se treba kritizirati zato što to ne rade.

Poput klasičnog oblika testa dopunjavanja diskursa, test višestrukog izbora također se popunjava pisanim putem. Ova vrsta upitnika se sastoji od kratkih opisa situacija, a za svaku situaciju ponuđeno je nekoliko mogućih odgovora. Učenici moraju izabrati onaj odgovor koji prema njihovu mišljenju najbolje odgovara opisanoj situaciji. Dakle, broj mogućih odgovora ograničen je, što znači da je ograničen i broj mogućih strategija za oblikovanje komunikacijskog čina koji se proučava. Slijedi primjer iz istraživanja koji su proveli Rose i Ono 1995. godine:

Your friend gave you a ticket for a concert next Saturday, but unfortunately, you have to work at your part-time job that day. Your senior (senpai) in the

club you belong to also works part-time at the same place. You know that she doesn't have to work on Saturdays. What would you say or do?

- a) I would say, "Can you work instead of me next Saturday?"
- b) I would not go to the concert.
- c) I would say, "I can't work next Saturday and I don't know what to do."
- d) I would say, "Please work instead of me next Saturday."

Prijatelj ti je dao kartu za koncert sljedeću subotu, ali nažalost moraš ići na svoj honorarni posao. Tvoj nadređeni u klubu kojemu pripadaš također radi tamo na pola radnog vremena. Znaš da ne treba raditi u subotu. Što bi rekao ili učinio?

- a) *Rekao bih: „Možete li raditi umjesto mene sljedeću subotu?“*
- b) *Ne bih otišao na koncert.*
- c) *Rekao bih: „Ne mogu raditi sljedeću subotu i ne znam što učiniti.“*
- d) *Rekao bih: „Molim Vas, radite umjesto mene sljedeću subotu.“*

U polju međujezične pragmatike test višestrukog izbora rabi se za proučavanje pragmatičkog razumijevanja iskaza (Fukushima, 2003), produktivne uporabe govornih činova i rutina (Rose i Ono, 1995) te provođenje metapragmatičke procjene (Koike, 1989). Brown (2001) navodi da je prednost ovog instrumenta to što je riječ o pisanom upitniku za koji sudionicima ne treba puno vremena. Zbrajanje odgovora također ne predstavlja problem. Nedostatci su ovog instrumenta to što se ispituje samo pisana receptivna jezična proizvodnja, a ne potiče se usmena proizvodnja ili samopromišljanje. Liu (2006) ističe da za razliku od drugih formata u kojima se rabi višestruki izbor u upitniku ove vrste, izbor odgovora temelji se na prikladnosti, a ne na točnosti. Dakle, distraktori na testu dopunjavanja diskursa s višestrukim izborom nisu točni ili netočni, već više ili manje prikladni s obzirom na opisanu situaciju. Na osnovi rezultata istraživanja koje su proveli Rose (1994) i Rose i Ono (1995), Fukushima (2003) zaključuje da je prednost testa s višestrukim odgovorom to što proširuje izbor mogućih odgovora. Naime, među ponuđenim odgovorima može biti i odgovor koji ispitanici smatraju najprikladnijim u danoj situaciji, ali ga se sami nisu mogli sjetiti. Također, ova vrsta upitnika traži puno manji kognitivni angažman od „klasičnog” testa dopunjavanja diskursa. Od sudionika se traži samo da procijene koji je od ograničenog broja odgovora najprikladniji s obzirom na opisane kontekstualne činitelje i njihovo vlastito praktično iskustvo dok se u klasičnom testu dopunjavanja diskursa od sudionika traži da najprije odaberu strategiju oblikovanja nekog govornog čina, a potom je i izreknu ili napišu u lingvistički i pragmatički prihvatljivoj formi.

Skala procjene, kao treća vrsta upitnika spomenuta u ovom radu, sastoji se od detaljnog opisa situacije u kojem su naznačene kontekstualne varijable. Nakon opisa situacija slijedi niz pitanja u kojima se od sudionika traži da procijene vrijednost određenih varijabli. Iako Kasper i Rose (2002)

navode da skala procjene nije instrument koji se često rabi u istraživanjima međujezične pragmatike, ovaj instrument ipak ima nekoliko primjena u takvim istraživanjima. Kao prvo, ljestvice se mogu rabiti kao prvi korak u razvoju instrumenta za glavno istraživanje. Tateyama (2001) je u svrhu oblikovanja glavnog upitnika za istraživanje pragmatičke transferabilnosti proveo tri preliminarna istraživanja. Između ostaloga, uz pomoć skale procjene ispitao je kako sudionici percipiraju kontekstualnu prikladnost za pet japanskih neizravnih strategija zahtijevanja. Kasper i Rose (2002) smatraju uporabu skale procjene za metapragmatičku procjenu izrazito vrijednom zato što omogućava spoznaju o tome kako sudionici procjenjuju kontekstualne varijable koje se kasnije primjenjuju u glavnom instrumentu (sociopragmatička procjena). Ove spoznaje istraživači rabe pri oblikovanju instrumenta poboljšavajući kontrolu nad tim varijablama. Kasper (2008, str. 295) smatra da „takve informacije ne bi trebale biti temeljene na intuiciji istraživača”. Skala procjene često služi kao nadopuna podacima prikupljenih drugim instrumentima (najčešće nekim oblikom testa dopunjavanja diskursa). Barron (2003) navodi glavni nedostatak ove vrste upitnika, a to je činjenica da se skalom procjene kontekstualni činitelji svode na statičke vrijednosti, a u stvarnosti su ti činitelji „fluidni i ponekad se mijenjaju unutar interakcije” (2002, str. 95).

PISANA I USMENA (SAMO)IZVJEŠĆA

Većina istraživanja govornih činova u okviru međujezične pragmatike temelji se na nekom obliku testa dopunjavanja diskursa (Yamashita, 1996). Međutim, instrumentom kao što je test dopunjavanja diskursa ne možemo ispitati kognitivne procese koji stoje u pozadini jezične proizvodnje učenika stranoga jezika te se zbog toga u većini istraživanja njihov glas zapravo „ne čuje”. Pisanim i usmenim (samo)izvješćima se prikupljaju metalingvistički odnosno metapragmatički podatci koji nam služe za bolje razumijevanje kognitivnih procesa kroz koje prolaze učenici pri oblikovanju govornih činova (Cohen i Olshtain, 1993). Uporabom ove vrste instrumenta mogu se, tvrdi Cohen (2004), dobiti „jedinствени podatci” o kognitivnim procesima. Glavna svrha uporabe (samo)izvješća jest otkriti na koje informacije učenici obraćaju pažnju za vrijeme izvedbe zadatka te kako njihova percepcija situacije utječe na odgovore koje daju (Cohen, 2004). Kasper i Rose (2002) u ovu vrstu prikupljanja podataka uključuju intervjue, glasno navođenje misli (verbalno izvješće) i dnevnike.

Intervju se definira kao metoda u kojoj se podatci prikupljaju „ispitivanjem sudionika o tome kako i kada rabe određeno jezično obilježje u danom zadatku” (Martínez-Flor, 2004, str. 138). Kasper i Rose navode (2002) da su istraživački intervjui posebna vrsta govornog događaja koji ima svoje varijante ovisno o strukturi samog intervjua, njegovoj duljini i mediju (licem u lice,

telefonski, elektronski mediji). Međutim, sve varijante dijele dvije osnovne karakteristike, a to su interaktivnost i utjecaj kontekstualnih činitelja. I jedno i drugo obilježje, dakako, moraju biti uzeti u obzir pri tumačenju podataka. S obzirom na to da se intervju sastoji od pitanja i odgovora, Kasper (2008, str. 296) navodi da je odgovor uvijek oblikovan pitanjem, odnosno da je uvijek prisutan proces zajedničke konstrukcije odgovora istraživača i sudionika te je zbog toga problematično tretirati intervju kao „eksternalizacije stabilnih, dekontekstualiziranih vjerovanja i znanja”.

Tateyama se u svom istraživanju iz 2001., uz igru uloga i višestruki izbor u svrhu triangulacije podataka, koristila i intervjuom. Pitanja iz intervjuja odnosila su se na proces planiranja u pripremanju odgovora za sudjelovanje u igri uloga, učeničku procjenu samog procesa poučavanja kojem su bili izloženi te na njihove prijedloge o alternativnim načinima poučavanja pragmatike. Analiza je pokazala da je izvedba studenata koji nisu planirali što će reći u igri uloga bila lošija. Neki su studenti pažljivo planirali što će reći, no ono što su zapravo rekli razlikovalo se od onoga što su planirali. Pokazalo se također da na izvedbu pozitivno ili negativno utječe i njihova upoznatost sa zadatkom, odnosno jesu li se studenti u svakodnevnom životu susreli sa zadatkom opisanim u igri uloga. U procesu planiranja odgovora studenti su razmišljali na dvama jezicima, materinskom i stranom (engleski/japanski). Što se tiče procesa poučavanja, studenti iz eksplicitne grupe naglasili su da su im upravo eksplicitna objašnjenja o rutinskim izrazima bila iznimno važna za razumijevanje uporabe tih istih izraza.

Za razliku od intervjuja i dnevnika, gdje se kroz samoizvješće dobivaju podaci o prošlim ili hipotetičkim događanjima izvučenima iz konteksta, verbalno je izvješće „sudionikov istodobni ili retrospektivni verbalni izvještaj o procesu razmišljanja za vrijeme aktivnosti rješavanja problema” (Smagorinsky, 1998, str. 157) Postoje dvije vrste verbalnog izvješća. To su glasno navođenje misli (engl. *think aloud*) koje se odvija istovremeno s rješavanjem zadatka i retrospektivno izvješće (engl. *retrospective report*) koji učenik daje nakon aktivnosti. Kasper (2002, str. 298) daje sažeti prikaz teorije koja stoji u pozadini verbalnih izvješća:

Informacija procesirana u kratkoročnom pamćenju dok sudionik izvršava zadatak podložna je opisivanju i istinita je. Suprotno tomu, informacije koje nisu procesirane u kratkoročnom pamćenju, kao što su perceptualni procesi, motorni procesi i svi automatizirani procesi, nisu dostupne za opisivanje. Istinit opis moguć je i neposredno nakon dovršenja zadatka, dok su opažene informacije još u kratkoročnom pamćenju. Jednom kad su izvan kratkoročnog pamćenja, informacije će biti izgubljene ili enkodirane u dugoročnom pamćenju. S obzirom na to da pohranjivanje i dozivanje iz dugoročnog pamćenja zahtijeva daljnje procesiranje, najvaljanija su izvješća koja su istovremene ili neposredno konsektivne verbalizacije.

Kad se govori o introspektivnoj metodologiji u istraživanju međujezične pragmatike, kao primjer se najčešće spominje istraživanje Robinsonove iz 1992., u kojem je autorica rabila kombinaciju testa dopunjavanja diskursa i istovremenog i retrospektivnog verbalnog izvješća. Autorica je postavila sljedeća istraživačka pitanja:

- Mogu li se verbalnim izvješćem dobiti podatci koji će poslužiti za opisivanje pragmatičkog znanja učenika, kao i izvora tog znanja?
- Razlikuje li se vrsta podataka dobivenih verbalnim izvješćem s obzirom na stupanj jezičnoga znanja učenika?
- Koje se kategorije informacija mogu dobiti verbalnim izvješćem s obzirom na međujezično pragmatičko znanje govornog čina odbijanja u američkom engleskom?

U istraživanju je sudjelovalo dvanaest japanskih studentica. Test dopunjavanja diskursa sastojao se od šest situacija, a od sudionica je zatraženo da za vrijeme pisanja odgovora naglas govore sve o čemu razmišljaju i to na materinskom jeziku – ako je to jezik njihovih misli. Sudionice su prošle obuku u kojoj su dobile pisane i usmene upute i priliku za uvježbavanje načina davanja verbalnog izvješća. Neposredno nakon što su napisale dogovore popraćene glasnim navođenjem misli, Robinson (1992) je sve sudionice intervjuirala. Retrospektivni intervju sastojao se od pitanja vezanih za glasno navođenje misli, a autorica je sudionicama puštala snimku istog da ih podsjeti na izgovorene misli. Do kategorija za kodiranje podataka autorica je došla induktivnim putem, odnosno kategorije su se „nametnule” iz podataka: obilježja situacije, dokazi za planiranje iskaza, evaluacija alternativnih iskaza, indikacija pragmatičke i lingvističke poteškoće, iskazi vezani za znanje o govornom činu odbijanja u američkom engleskom i mogući izvori tog znanja, indikacije metodoloških poteškoća i jezik misli. Na osnovi analize autorica je zaključila da introspektivni podatci omogućuju uvid u strategije procesiranja jezika koje nisu dostupne analizom odgovora na testu dopunjavanja diskursa te da kombinacija glasnog navođenja misli i retrospektivnog intervjuja poboljšava informativnu vrijednost introspektivnih podataka. Robinson (1992: 50) smatra da su verbalna izvješća „praktično sredstvo generiranja i istraživanja hipoteza o usvajanju pragmatičkog znanja drugoga jezika”. Autorica je također zaključila da između učenika na različitim razinama znanja postoje određene kvalitativne razlike u dobivenim podacima. Analiza je ukazala i na postojanje razlika u informacijama dobivenima istovremenim i retrospektivnim verbalnim izvješćem. Sudionici su se, naime, povremeno s teškoćama prisjećali onoga što su izrekli u glasnom navođenju misli. Njihovi su odgovori u retrospektivnom intervju bili detaljniji od glasnog navođenja misli, često otkrivajući promišljanja o društvenim odnosima koja su utjecala na planiranje iskaza. Studentice su razmišljale i o pragmalingvističkim aspektima iskaza (moguće strategije za oblikovanje

odgovora) i sociopragmatičkim aspektima iskaza (procjena društvenih odnosa da bi odabrana strategija bila najprikladnija u danoj situaciji).

Cohen i Olshstein (1993) navode da u pragmatičkoj literaturi postoji detaljan opis strategija ostvarenja za cijeli niz govornih činova, no gotovo uopće nema opisa procesa uključenih u proizvodnju tih govornih činova neizvornih govornika. Dakle, namjera je ovih autora bila opisati načine na koje neizvorni govornici procjenjuju, planiraju i ostvaruju složene govorne činove kao što su isprika, pritužba i zahtjev. Petnaest je učenika engleskoga jezika s izvornim govornikom sudjelovalo u igri uloga u šest različitih situacija, po dvije za svaku vrstu govornog čina (isprika, pritužba, zahtjev). Sve su aktivnosti snimane. Nakon dvije igre uloga koje su se odnosile na isti govorni čin, uslijedio je retrospektivni intervju u kojem su postavljana pitanja vezana za činitelje koji su doprinijeli proizvodnji učeničkih odgovora. Retrospektivna verbalna izvješća analizirana su s obzirom na sljedeće aspekte: stupanj do kojega su iskazi unaprijed planirani, odabir jezika na kojem učenici razmišljaju (L1, L2 ili L3) pri planiranju i izvršenju iskaza, dosjećanje/odabir jezičnih oblika, stupanj do kojega sudionici obraćaju pažnju na gramatiku i izgovor i izvori za upotrijebljeni jezik. Rezultati su pokazali da su sudionici planirali svojevrsan „opći smjer” iskaza, ali ne i specifični vokabular i strukture koje će rabiti. Iskaze vezane za dosjećanje i odabir prikladnih jezičnih oblika Cohen i Olshstein (1993) podijelili su u sljedeće kategorije: „buka” u glavi, monitor, uporaba formulaičnog govora, preskakanje ili odustajanje od poruke, leksičko pojednostavljivanje ili izbjegavanje i sličnost, debata sa samim sobom, promišljanje, djelomično iskazivanje misli, iskazivanje drukčijih misli. Učenici su u određenoj mjeri pazili na gramatiku, a najveći dio uopće nije obraćao pozornost na izgovor. Na kraju članka autori iznose zanimljiva metodološka razmišljanja (uporaba igre uloga kao simulacije stvarne situacije, uporaba situacija u kojima sudionici nikad nisu bili, detaljnost opisa situacije uporabljene za stvaranje konteksta za igru uloga, uporaba tehnologije u istraživanju itd.).

Hassall (2008) je proveo istraživanje u kojem je kombinirao usmenu igru uloga i retrospektivno verbalno izvješće. U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 19 studenata indonezijskog jezika s jednog australskog sveučilišta podijeljenih u dvije grupe (studenti na niskom stupnju učenja i studenti na naprednom stupnju učenja). Analiza podataka pokazala je da su studenti na niskom stupnju učenja rjeđe razmišljali o pragmatici, a često o lingvističkom planiranju govornih činova. Hassall za ovakve podatke nalazi dva objašnjenja. Prvo se odnosi na kognitivnu „preopterećenost”, odnosno činjenicu da učenici na niskom stupnju učenja još uvijek ne mogu određene jednostavne jezične radnje obavljati automatski i podsvjesno. Takve radnje od njih zahtijevaju svjestan napor te zauzimaju većinu kapaciteta za procesiranje jezika. Drugo objašnjenje odnosi se na sam proces poučavanja stranoga jezika koji je tradicionalno usmjeren na propozicijsku jasnoću i točnost. Studenti na naprednom stupnju znanja

češće su razmišljali o pragmatici nego o lingvističkom planiranju. Hassall (2008) ponovno navodi dva objašnjenja. Prvo je objašnjenje da, s obzirom na napredan stupanj znanja jezika, ovi studenti određene jednostavne jezične radnje obavljaju automatski te imaju više vremena razmišljati o pragmatici. Drugo je objašnjenje da je ova grupa jednu godinu studija provela u Indoneziji gdje je zasigurno osvijestila važnost prikladne uporabe jezika. Rezultati su također pokazali da obje grupe studenata posjeduju solidno sociopragmatičko znanje, koje je za neke situacije ipak potpunije kod studenata na naprednom stupnju znanja indonezijskoga. U nekim se situacijama također pokazalo da učenici posjeduju znanje, no ne mogu mu pristupiti da bi ga ispravno uporabili. Pojavila se i obrnuta situacija u kojoj su učenici na prikladan način rabili neko jezično obilježje, no njihovo je znanje bilo površno i nepotpuno. Hassall (2008) na kraju zaključuje da su verbalna izvješća koristan instrument za otkrivanje mentalnih procesa koji su u pozadini pragmatičke izvedbe.

Također polazeći od pretpostavke da u istraživanjima međujezične pragmatike nema dovoljan broj istraživanja kognitivnih procesa kroz koje učenici prolaze pri proizvodnji govornih činova, Félix-Brasdefer (2008) u svom je istraživanju ispitao kognitivne procese i percepcije studenata španjolskoga jezika na primjeru govornog čina odbijanja. Uporabljene su dvije metode prikupljanja podataka: otvorena igra uloga i retrospektivna verbalna izvješća. Analiza podataka napravljena je s obzirom na tri kategorije: kognicija (kognitivne informacije na koje su sudionici obraćali pažnju prilikom oblikovanja navedenog govornog čina), odabir jezika na kojem su sudionici razmišljali i učenička percepcija inzistiranja sugovornika nakon što su već odbili njegov/njezin poziv. Rezultati su pokazali da su učenici u procesu planiranja iskaza najčešće razmišljali o gramatici i vokabularu, što je rezultiralo interferencijom u komunikaciji. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) smatra da su učenici prečesto rabili „monitor” (Krashen, 1982), odnosno bili previše usmjereni na točnost iskaza. Iako su svi sudionici istraživanja boravili u zemljama španjolskog govornog područja te su bili svjesni određenih kulturoloških osobitosti pri oblikovanju ovog govornog čina, njihovo se pragmalingvističko znanje ipak pokazalo nedostatnim. Autor zaključuje da bi za studente bilo korisno eksplicitno poučavanje pragmatike jer bi to pridonijelo razvoju njihove sociokulturalne kompetencije. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) također smatra da su retrospektivna verbalna izvješća ključna za prikupljanje informacija o metalingvističkom znanju učenika i njihovim percepcijama sociokulturalnih informacija.

Temeljna karakteristika metode dnevnika jest da podatke obično unosi sudionik istraživanja sâm, zbog čega je ova metoda potpuno nestrukturirana i u potpunosti usmjerena na sudionika (Mihaljević Djigunović i Matijašević, 2002). Kasper i Rose (2002) navode da metoda dnevnika s intervjuom dijeli usmjerenost na prošla iskustva i subjektivne teorije. Dnevnik učenicima omogućava slobodan osvrt na sve vidove učenja jezika, čime je također

moгуće dobiti određeni oblik retrospektivnog izvješća. Istraživanja u kojima se rabi metoda dnevnika kao glavna metoda prikupljanja podataka u razvojnoj su pragmatiki rijetka. Najčešće se spominje Cohenovo (1997) istraživanje u kojem je autor vodio dnevnik o vlastitom ubrzanom učenju japanskoga kao stranoga jezika s fokusom na pragmatički razvoj. U svom dnevniku Cohen (1997) opisuje razne izazove s kojima se susreo u učenju jezika. Ti se izazovi odnose na sljedeće: sociopragmatički i pragmalingvistički transfer iz američkog engleskoga i drugih jezika koje je autor učio (zato što japanske sociokulturalne norme nisu eksplicitno poučavane zbog nedostatka vremena), nedostatak/izbjegavanje pravih komunikacijskih situacija za uporabu japanskog, povremeni nesklad između stila učenja i stila poučavanja, problemi s uporabom prikladnih sociolingvističkih izraza, uporaba prikladne količine riječi i informacija (autor je često želio biti rječitiji nego što mu je to znanje japanskog dopuštalo), ograničenje u pragmatičkom razvoju s obzirom na to da je tečaj bio držan u akademskom okruženju s malo kontakta s izvornim govornicima, teškoće s učenjem izraza za različite razine formalnosti. Cohen (1997) u zaključku naglašava da je s obzirom na formalne zahtjeve uspio naučiti materijal s tečaja, no navodi i da je njegova konverzijska sposobnost, odnosno sposobnost primjene naučenog u stvarnoj komunikaciji, ostala na vrlo niskom stupnju.

ZAKLJUČAK

U ovom se radu donosi pregled različitih metoda koje se rabe u istraživanjima međujezične pragmatike u svrhu ispitivanja razvoja pragmatičke kompetencije učenika stranoga jezika. Svaka je metoda detaljno objašnjena, što uključuje definiciju pojedine metode, njezine prednosti i nedostatke, prikaz relevantnih istraživanja te, gdje je bilo potrebno, primjere istraživačkih zadataka. Koliko je autoricama poznato, do sada nije bilo sličnog pregleda u hrvatskoj znanstvenoj i stručnoj literaturi.

U prvom dijelu rada opisane su metode istraživanja govorne interakcije. Najprije je opisano prikupljanje autentičnih govornih podataka koji su, s jedne strane, najmanje podložni kontroli i utjecaju istraživača i kao takvi vjerojatno najbolji izvor za opisivanje razvoja učeničke pragmatičke kompetencije. S druge strane, ovakve je podatke najteže prikupiti, a najveći je nedostatak autentičnog diskursa taj da se neka pragmatička struktura (što je u slučaju istraživanja pragmatičke kompetencije najčešće govorni čin) u govoru uopće ne mora pojaviti. Varijable vezane za provođenje istraživanja uporabom metoda navođenog razgovora i igre uloga mogu se u većoj ili manjoj mjeri kontrolirati, ovisno o ciljevima istraživanja, a prednost je ovih metoda u tome što se potrebni podatci ciljano prikupljaju. U radu su potom opisane razne vrste upitnika koji se rabe pri provođenju istraživanja u međujezičnoj pragmatiki, od kojih je u istraživanjima najčešći zadatak/test dopunjavanja diskursa

(*Discourse Completion Test/DCT*). Na kraju rada navedena je uporaba raznih vrsta samoizvješća kao načina da se istraže kognitivni procesi koji stoje u pozadini jezične proizvodnje učenika stranoga jezika.

Svi navedeni instrumenti od osobite su važnosti u istraživanjima razvoja pragmatičke kompetencije jer se njima prikupljaju korpusi podataka (najčešće govornih činova na stranom jeziku) koji potom mogu biti upotrebljeni u nastavi stranoga jezika kao primjeri za analizu i poučavanje raznih pragmatičkih situacija u stranom jeziku. Pritom je osobito koristan zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa kojim se relativno brzo mogu prikupiti velike količine podataka. Međutim, upravo se zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa u literaturi spominje kao jedan od manje autentičnih načina prikupljanja podataka u istraživanjima u okviru međujezične pragmatike. Upitnik ove vrste, dakle, ne daje i ne može dati podatke o tome kako bi hrvatski učenici stranoga jezika oblikovali neki govorni čin u stvarnoj komunikaciji na stranome jeziku. Međutim, to ne treba ni biti cilj nekog budućeg istraživanja. Rezultati dobiveni uporabom zadatka dopunjavanja diskursa mogu dati informaciju o trenutnom znanju i stavovima učenika (Rose, 2009) vezanima za oblikovanje nekog govornog čina na stranom jeziku, odnosno predodžbu o tome kako bi se hrvatski učenici snašli u situaciji u kojoj trebaju oblikovati govorni čin. Ta predodžba, dakako, ne mora odgovarati učeničkoj jezičnoj proizvodnji u stvarnoj komunikacijskoj situaciji jer je takvu situaciju u okolnostima u kojima naši učenici uče strani jezik teško postići. Kao što je ranije spomenuto, temeljni cilj istraživanja u okviru međujezične pragmatike u hrvatskom obrazovnom kontekstu bio bi ispitati znanje i stavove učenika vezano za oblikovanje govornog čina na stranom jeziku što bi moglo ukazati na razvoj njihove pragmatičke kompetencije. Isto tako, zadatak dopunjavanja diskursa može se rabiti kao instrument za provođenje istraživanja na svim razinama jezičnoga znanja, pa i s najmlađim učenicima. Ovo je osobito važno jer su istraživanja razvoja međujezične pragmatike kod učenika mlađe dobi (početnika) iznimno rijetka, kako u svijetu, tako i u Hrvatskoj.

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RESEARCH METHODS IN INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS

***Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of various research methods used in interlanguage pragmatics to examine the development of pragmatic competence in foreign language learners. Data collection methods in interlanguage pragmatics are categorized into three main types: methods for researching spoken interaction, questionnaires, and oral and written self-reports. Methods for researching spoken interaction include the collection of authentic data as well as guided conversation and role-playing. Questionnaires (discourse completion tests, multiple-choice questions, and rating scales) are the most commonly used methods in interlanguage pragmatics research due to the ease of construction and implementation. The third type of data collection method includes oral and written self-reports (interviews, diaries, and verbal protocols). For each method, advantages and disadvantages are discussed, and research examples are provided. The paper concludes with a proposal for a potential study on the development of pragmatic competence among foreign language learners within the Croatian educational context.*

***Keywords:** spoken interaction, questionnaires, oral and written self-reports, pragmatic competence, foreign language learners*

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of learning and teaching a foreign language is communicative competence, that is, enabling students to communicate in the foreign language. The pragmatic component of communicative competence is often an “invisible” or “less apparent” aspect of foreign language learning and teaching. In the literature, pragmatic competence is usually referred to as the third (or fourth) component of communicative competence, following linguistic (grammatical) and sociolinguistic competence (CEFR, 2001). This component is also less frequently the focus of research compared to other components of communicative competence. The study of the development of pragmatic competence in foreign language learners is the domain of interlanguage pragmatics. Interlanguage pragmatics is called a “second-generation hybrid” (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993) because it belongs to two fields: second language acquisition and pragmatics. Conducting research in interlanguage pragmatics is challenging, as such research examines the “secret rules” of language (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001), which are often less evident to non-native learners and researchers than, for example, syntactic rules.

This paper aims to present research methods in interlanguage pragmatics and examples of research to provide a systematic overview of these methods and encourage reflection on future interlanguage pragmatics research in the Croatian educational context. Research into pragmatic development in foreign language learners adopts its methodology from cross-cultural pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics. These two fields derive their research methodology from various social sciences, such as descriptive linguistics, sociology, linguistic anthropology, developmental pragmatics, cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, and social psychology (Kasper and Rose, 2002). In their frequently cited article, *Research Methods in Interlanguage Pragmatics*, Kasper and Dahl (1991) present research methods in interlanguage pragmatics as a continuum, based on the “constraints they impose on data” (1991, p. 216). These constraints refer to the extent to which data are predetermined by the research instrument used, as well as by the modality of language use. Kasper and Dahl (1991, p. 217) illustrate various data collection methods in interlanguage pragmatics as follows (Figure 1):

Figure 1.

Data collection methods based on the degree of control and language modality (according to Kasper and Dahl, 1991).

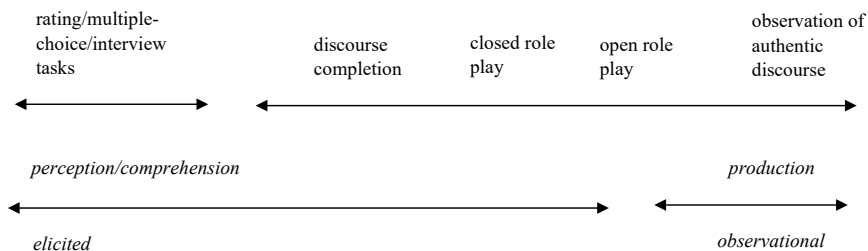


Figure 1 reflects “a tension between the desire for highly controlled production tasks that yield comparable language samples and the desire to integrate the investigation of authentic discourse into studies of interlanguage pragmatics” (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 2005, p. 1). The research methods shown on the left side of Figure 1 (rating/multiple-choice/interview) are used to collect data on how research participants understand the pragmatic aspects of a language (in the case of interlanguage pragmatics, this often involves speech acts). These methods are “strictly controlled” in the sense of careful and time-intensive preparation of instruments that allow participants minimal or no freedom in responding while the researcher maintains almost complete control over the methodological aspects of the research.

The central position in Figure 1 is occupied by methods such as discourse completion tests and closed and open role play. These methods also impose certain structural constraints on participants when responding, and the data they collect pertain to learners’ language production. The observation of authentic discourse, shown on the right side of Figure 1, also gathers data related to participants’ speech production. Unlike the other methods mentioned, observation, due to its structure and apart from the researcher’s presence, does not restrict learners’ language production. It is worth noting that Kasper and Dahl (1991) provided an overview of 39 studies in cross-linguistic pragmatics in their paper, contributing to the systematization of this scientific discipline by reviewing and categorizing research methods.

Kasper and Rose (2002) took a somewhat different approach than Kasper and Dahl (1991) did in categorizing data collection methods in interlanguage pragmatics. They divided the methods into three categories: spoken interaction (authentic discourse, guided conversation, role play), questionnaires (discourse completion tests, multiple choice, rating scales), and written and oral self-reports (interviews, diaries, verbal reports). This paper will describe these

methods in the specified order, outline their advantages and disadvantages, and provide examples of relevant studies.

SPOKEN INTERACTION

The following data collection methods are used to research spoken interaction in interlanguage pragmatics: authentic discourse, guided conversation (discussion on a given topic and sociolinguistic interview), and role play. Kasper and Rose (2002) state that these methodological options share a common feature – namely, they are realized through interactive spoken language production, enabling the examination of various features of spoken discourse.

Authentic discourse refers to collecting real speech events within an institution, most often a university. This type of data is gathered through note-taking (field notes) and audio and video recording (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Cohen (1996) lists the following advantages of data collected by recording/filming natural speech:

- the researcher gains insight into the frequency with which a certain type of speech act appears in natural speech
- the data are spontaneous
- the data reflects what speakers actually say, not what they think they should say
- speakers react to a natural situation, not to a fabricated and likely unfamiliar one
- the communication event has real-world consequences
- the event may be a source of rich pragmatic structures.
- This approach to data collection also has certain difficulties:
- the speech act being studied may not occur frequently in natural speech
- it is difficult to control variables such as gender and knowledge level
- collecting and analysing data takes a lot of time
- there may not be enough examples of the discourse feature we are studying, or there may be none at all
- the use of recording equipment can be a disruptive factor
- using notes as a supplement or replacement for recordings relies on memory.

As previously mentioned, research on authentic speech events involving non-native speakers has focused mostly on institutional talk, such as academic advising sessions. Unlike everyday conversations, where participants typically have equal discourse rights and obligations, interaction within an institution occurs within the framework of institutional goals and tasks, which makes such interaction purposeful, structured, predictable, and often subject to repetition (Kasper and Rose, 2002; Kasper, 2008). This form of discourse – authentic but

simultaneously constrained by various social rules – is suitable for intercultural and cross-cultural comparison, as well as for developmental research (Kasper, 2008). One of the main reasons researchers avoid collecting authentic data is the inability to control different variables affecting communication and the long period needed to collect sufficient data, i.e., for the discourse feature being studied to appear enough times in the discourse. In institutional talk, most variables are already known, and there is an opportunity to investigate numerous discourse features. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (2005) state that the advantage of institutional discourse is that it resembles a natural experiment: it is partially “controlled”, meaning it is pre-structured, but the structure and “control” are the result of the participants’ actions within the institution, not limitations imposed by the research. Additionally, institutional interaction is part of the context and carries social consequences for the participants (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 2005).

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford are the authors of many studies on institutional discourse, and here, we briefly outline the procedure and conclusions of two studies from 1996. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) analysed requests sent via email to the authors of the study (who were also participants’ professors). Data collection lasted a year and included both native and non-native speakers of English. The requests were analysed based on their emotional effect on the authors and then categorized into those with a positive emotional effect and those with a negative effect. The analysis also examined the linguistic form of each request, which included the use of modification, the level of imposition, the content of the request, the justification students provided for making the request, and the acknowledgement of the “cost” of fulfilling the request for the authors. The results showed no significant difference between native and non-native speakers in terms of the linguistic structure of the requests. In negative requests, the most commonly used strategy was with the verb “I want” (e.g., I want/I need). The use of this strategy leaves no room for negotiation and, in a way, amplifies the rights of the requester while increasing the obligations of the person to whom the request is addressed. The use of internal modification was consistent for positive and negative requests in the data collected from native speakers. Negative requests from non-native speakers, however, differed – they included, on average, fewer than one politeness marker (e.g., please) per request. Regarding the timeframe for fulfilling the request, in positive requests, it was either not mentioned or left to the professor to decide, while in negative requests, the students themselves specified the deadline. Acknowledgement of the “cost” was more frequent in positive requests for both groups. The authors concluded that many factors influenced whether a request was perceived as positive or negative and that students must consider these factors when formulating their requests.

In the second study from 1996, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford analysed the characteristics of the linguistic input to which students were exposed, based on the results of a longitudinal study conducted in 1993 involving both native and non-native linguistics students. Data for the 1993 longitudinal study were collected during sessions with an assigned professor acting as an advisor. The purpose of these advising sessions was for the student, with the professor's specific guidance and information, to create a schedule for the next semester and choose courses that best fit their needs. The corpus was analysed concerning the realization of the speech acts of making proposals and requests. The results of the longitudinal study showed that the pragmatic competence of non-native speakers improved in terms of their successful participation in shaping their schedules. Over time, non-native students learned to make their own proposals and much less frequently rejected the professor's suggestions. Both groups learned the institutional rules in the meantime. On a micro-level, however, non-native speakers differed significantly from native speakers. Although they mastered the institutional rules, their pragmatic competence was not sufficiently developed to use these rules through linguistically and pragmatically well-formed requests and proposals. Non-native speakers showed no improvement in using internal modifications (mitigators, e.g., downgraders). Native speakers used mitigators in all their proposals (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1993).

In the article from 1996, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford provide a detailed analysis of the role of language input in academic advising sessions, focusing on the progress or stagnation present in data collected from non-native speakers. This research, therefore, is a continuation of their 1993 study. The analysis was conducted with respect to the following aspects of input: the advisor's explicit teaching of the interview structure, the nature of the advisory act itself, which takes place in a one-on-one conversation (thus, students do not have the opportunity to observe other students who could serve as models), the advisor as a source of language input, the potential impact of stereotypical viewpoints on language input, and the limitations in the grammatical and pragmatic competence of the students themselves (which is why the available language input is unusable). The analysis showed that advisors almost always began each interview by asking students for a proposed schedule. During the interviews, advisors provided students with extensive information related to course selection. The authors observed that advisors never corrected linguistically incorrect proposals or rejections of proposals made by the students. The authors also suggest that it would be beneficial for non-native speakers to observe native speakers in situations where they need to propose or reject something. Certain parts of the advisors' statements could also serve as a direct source of input – the authors provided specific examples that non-native speakers could use in their responses. However, they concluded that this input did not necessarily translate into intake. It is also possible that some students hold a stereotypical belief

that Americans are not particularly polite, which may have led them to make less effort to be polite in conversations. Similarly, the grammatical competence of non-native speakers might have been at a lower level than their pragmatic competence, which could explain their failure to use some potentially useful constructions. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1996) emphasized the need for further research to determine how institutional discourse influences second language acquisition.

As mentioned in the introduction to the paper, elicited conversation is also used in the research of speech interaction in interlanguage pragmatics. Elicited conversation is defined as “any conversation staged to collect data” (Kasper and Rose, 2002, p. 84). Two variations of this data collection method are used in research studies: discussion on a given topic (conversation task) and sociolinguistic interview. In the conversation task, participants are asked to talk about a specific topic or achieve a goal set in advance by the researcher collaboratively. Depending on the research goals, instructions for this type of task can be more or less detailed.

Billmyer (1990) used a conversation task as the methodological framework for her research. The study involved non-native English speakers from Japan and native English speakers, and the author aimed to establish whether explicit teaching of formal speech rules would accelerate the development of complimenting and responding to compliments in second language learners. The participants were divided into two groups, a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group was explicitly taught the rules for giving compliments. Members of this group also met weekly during the semester with American students of the Japanese language to practice English conversation. The conversation between the students at these meetings had a specific goal: students were asked to perform a task, namely, to steer the conversation in such a way that they would receive a compliment from the interlocutor. For this purpose, the students showed each other pictures of their families and homes or boasted about their achievements. The analysis of the results showed that students who were explicitly taught the rules produced more appropriate compliments than the control group. These students were also better at identifying the appropriate topic and context for giving compliments. Thus, the group that was explicitly taught and participated in conversations with non-native speakers was closer to the speech norm of native speakers than the control group was. Billmyer (1990) concludes that formal teaching of language usage rules in the classroom can help students communicate appropriately with native speakers of the foreign language outside of the classroom.

Using a sociolinguistic interview, Sawyer (1992) examined the acquisition of the particle *ne* by 11 learners of Japanese as a second language. The particle *ne* is frequently used in Japanese, typically at the end of a sentence, and means “Isn’t it?” or “Don’t you think so?”. The interview was structured, but the

students could, if they wished, deviate from the topic of the question in their answers. The study lasted one year, and the students were interviewed four times at regular intervals. The analysis of the students' responses showed that the acquisition of the particle *ne* began with its use in formulaic expressions. The analysis also showed that after a year of living in Japan, the students had acquired the language to such an extent that they could appropriately answer questions about themselves and their country of origin. However, only one of the students used the particle *ne* productively, which made it impossible to confirm the existence of a developmental order for this particle. Explaining the limitations of the research, the author notes that the interview format is not a natural situation for collecting conversational data, since the exchange of information was one-sided, and the students answered very similar questions on four occasions. The "asymmetry" of the interview is, according to Kasper and Rose (2002), the main drawback of this data collection method.

Another way of collecting data related to the study of speech interaction in interlanguage pragmatics is role play. Kasper and Rose (2002, p. 86) define role play as "simulations of communicative encounters based on role descriptions". Role play is most often conducted in pairs, with instructions given to students either orally or written on cards. Depending on the degree of interaction, role play is divided into closed role play and open role play (Kasper and Dahl, 1991).

In closed role play, students are required to respond to a described situation or, depending on the type of speech act being studied, to a standardized introductory remark by the interlocutor/researcher. The student's response is thus organized as a "single-turn speech act" (Kasper, 2008, p. 288), at which point the closed role play ends. Since this format does not allow for multiple exchanges between interlocutors, the applicability of closed role play is "quite limited" (Kasper, 2008, p. 289). In open role play, there is an initial description of the situation and an assignment of roles, but the course and outcome of the interaction are in no way determined (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Kasper and Dahl (1991) state that interaction in open role play is "real" within the context of that activity. Kasper (2008) believes that open role play, in terms of the course and communication goals, can be more or less complex. The least complex open role play requires participants to communicate in certain routine speech situations, achieve a common goal, and use formulaic language. Much more complex is a role play that places participants in unfamiliar and unstructured situations where they must use complex linguistic constructions and negotiate to achieve agreement on divergent communicative goals. The complexity of the task, of course, depends on the research objectives.

The most important difference between open and closed role play is the fact that open role play takes place through "many turns and discourse phases" (Kasper and Rose, 2002, p. 87) or "in its full discourse context" (Kasper

and Dahl, 1991, p. 228). Unlike authentic discourse, open role play enables researchers to analyse conversational aspects independently of the context and goals of communication, while also allowing them to use roles and contexts in which participants will perform precisely specified speech acts based on the research objective or a specific description of the situation and the role division (Kasper and Rose, 2002). Furthermore, Kasper and Dahl (1991) state that an important advantage of open role play is that it resembles authentic conversations in terms of turn-taking, making improvised decisions about the further course of communication depending on the interlocutor's contribution, negotiating local and global goals, sequential organisation of speech acts, and selecting strategies depending on the course of communication. The difference between authentic data and role play lies in the fact that, at its core, role play reflects the goal of the researcher, not the participants in communication. Golato (2003), however, presents a range of shortcomings of role play as a method of collecting "quasi-authentic" data:

- although participants in role play interact with each other, the context of their interaction is usually fictional, i.e., not real; the situations in role play are entirely constructs of the researcher, designed according to the research goals, not authentic communicative needs of students
- if we assume that the context of role play is not real, then participants become actors who act out a situation as they imagine it; participants only present their beliefs about roles that they (most often) have never had in real life
- role play lacks sociolinguistic variables that are highly important in authentic communication
- unlike real-life conversations, verbal interactions and actions performed within role play have no real-world consequences for participants
- translating, transcribing, and analysing role play requires a lot of time.

Liddicoat and Crozet (2001) analysed student performance in a role play activity where participants were asked to answer the following question: "Did you have a pleasant weekend?". The participants were Australian students of French, and the question about the weekend was chosen due to the interesting cultural difference in interpreting this question. In Australian English, this question is formulaic and represents merely a ritual greeting at work after the weekend, so the answer is also formulaic. The question is asked only out of politeness and typically does not result in a deeper discussion. In French, however, the situation is diametrically opposite – for them, this question is genuine, often marking the beginning of a detailed conversation. Since this study focused on teaching pragmatic aspects of a foreign language, the cultural difference in interpreting the same question by the French and Australians was repeatedly presented and explained to students in a module about spoken language and culture. Liddicoat and Crozet (2001) recorded student responses

to this question before the start of the module, during the module, and a year after students completed it, in order to assess the impact of explicit teaching on the acquisition of interactional norms. They chose role playing as their data collection method because they believed it was the only method that, in a situation where students use French solely in a pedagogical context, would allow them to gather a corpus of comparable spoken data. The data analysis showed that immediately after teaching, students integrated elements related to the “French” interpretation of the weekend question into their speech, meaning elements that were not formulaic. They developed “the awareness of the system” related to the cultural expectations of speakers of the target language. However, students did not equally acquire discourse features. Although they adjusted their responses to align with the cultural norms of the foreign language in terms of content, they were less successful in terms of linguistic form. The authors concluded that such activities, which raise students’ awareness of conversational style and content, could result in changes in students’ interlanguage. Interactional norms can and should be part of foreign language teaching and learning.

Tateyama (2001) investigated the effect of explicit and implicit teaching on the use of the formulaic expression *sumimasen* (meaning “excuse me” or “sorry”) among beginner learners of Japanese as a foreign language. The author noted that apologizing, expressing gratitude, and gaining attention were the three primary functions of this formula. Over the course of eight weeks of lessons, the explicit group received detailed explanations of the three functions of *sumimasen* on four occasions, and participated in a series of explicit metapragmatic activities, including watching videos. The implicit group did not participate in such activities, except for watching the same videos with instructions to pay attention to formulaic expressions in speech. Along with role playing, other instruments were used in the study, including multiple-choice tests, discourse completion tests, and interviews. The analysis of results showed that, in terms of the role play and multiple-choice tests, there were no significant differences between the explicit and implicit groups. The author suggested that the period of teaching might have been too short to show the effectiveness of the different teaching conditions. The author also noted other factors that might have influenced the results, such as student motivation, the use of Japanese outside the classroom, and generally better academic performance among the implicit group.

Using interactive role play, Hassall (2003) researched how Australian students of Indonesian formulated requests in everyday situations compared to native speakers. The analysis revealed that both students and native speakers used the same types of strategies to make requests (direct, conventionally indirect, and unconventionally indirect strategies). Students frequently used the strategy, which the author named “Want statement” (a subtype of direct strategies), which native speakers rarely employed. A difference also appeared

in the use of the imperative form, which native speakers often used, while students did so rarely. Both groups used conventionally indirect requests in more than 40% of the cases, though they differed in their use of modal verbs: native speakers primarily used “can” for their requests, while students used “may” or “be allowed”. Additionally, students tended to use unconventionally indirect strategies more often than native speakers. Hassall (2003) suggested that the use of conventional indirectness as the primary strategy among non-native speakers was a direct result of positive transfer from their native language and the formal simplicity of this question type. The frequent use of the “Want statement” among Indonesian language students was attributed to a preference for efficiency and simplicity. The rare use of the imperative was explained by transfer from the native language – the author noted that native speakers of Australian English avoided using the imperative for request-making. The unconventionally indirect strategies used by the students were essentially pseudo-strategies. The author explains the use of the verbs “may” and “be allowed” as being influenced by textbooks, where “can” is always associated with ability and “may/be allowed” with permission. Hassall (2003) concluded that the analysis supported the notion that features of learner interlanguage (in this case, illustrated by the speech act of requests) always have multiple explanations.

QUESTIONNAIRES

In comparison with the study of spoken interaction, the types of research questions that can be addressed using questionnaires are necessarily limited:

Excluded from investigation are precisely those pragmatic features that are specific to oral interactive discourse – any aspect related to the dynamics of a conversation, turn taking and the conversational mechanisms related to it, sequencing of action, speaker – listener coordination, features of speech production that may have pragmatic import, such as temporal variables, and all paralinguistic and nonverbal elements. (Kasper and Rose, 2002, p. 89).

Kasper and Rose (2002) point out that, despite their limitations, questionnaires are the most commonly used data collection method in interlanguage pragmatics. Notably, other authors focusing on the methodological aspects of interlanguage pragmatics research have echoed this claim (Kasper and Dahl, 1991; Golato, 2003; Kasper, 2008). One reason why questionnaires are often used is that they are often seen as a convenient and quick solution for collecting large amounts of data; however, Kasper and Rose (2002) argue that this is a mistaken reason. Questionnaires should only be used when their use is justified by the research objectives.

The most used questionnaires in interlanguage pragmatics are the Discourse Completion Task (DCT), the Multiple-Choice Test (MCT), and

the scaled-response questionnaire. These questionnaires differ in the type of response expected from research participants. The Discourse Completion Task implies an “open” response – participants are asked to write an answer they consider coherent and appropriate for a given situation. In the multiple-choice and scaled-response formats, participants are provided with pre-set answers and are asked to choose the one they find most appropriate. This section will examine these types of questionnaires in more detail.

In literature, the Discourse Completion Task is often referred to as the Discourse Completion Test, and the two terms are used interchangeably (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Rose, 1994; Rose and Ono, 1995; Fukushima, 2003; Liu, 2006; Barron, 2003). Kasper and Dahl (1991, p. 221) state that the DCT is a “much-used and much beleaguered” data collection method in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993), seeking to highlight the dominance of this type of questionnaire, supported this claim with a simple statistical analysis: of the 39 interlanguage pragmatics studies compiled by Kasper and Dahl (1991) in their article, 11 studies (31%) used the Discourse Completion Test as the sole source of data, and an additional 8 studies used it as one of the instruments. Thus, the DCT was used in 19 of the 39 studies (54%). The observation of authentic speech was used as a method of data collection in only 2 of the 39 studies.

Kasper and Dahl (1991, p. 221) define the discourse completion task (DCT) as a written questionnaire that includes a certain “number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study”. Participants are asked to write the response they think fits the given context. The context is structured in such a way that the participant responds using the specific speech act that is the subject of the investigation. The “conventional” or “classic” form of the DCT also includes the interlocutor’s response, which is another element of the context that makes the planned illocutionary act of the speaker explicit. Here is an example:

At the professor’s office

A student has borrowed a book from her teacher, which she promised to return today. When meeting her teacher, however, she realizes that she forgot to bring it along.

Teacher: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you.

Miriam: _____

Teacher: OK, but please remember it next week.

(Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

In his classification of pragmatic tests, Brown (2001) also mentions the oral discourse completion task (ODCT). The oral discourse completion task consists of a series of situations recorded on a tape recorder. The participants are asked to listen to the recording and verbally state what they would say in that situation, also recording their responses. In his cross-sectional study of

interlanguage pragmatics development among primary school students from Hong Kong, Rose (2000) used a variant of the oral discourse completion task, which he called the cartoon oral production task (COPT). The basis of each situation in the COPT was an illustration of the situation accompanied by a short description. A common character in each illustration was a boy, described to the students as their peer, who, through the illustrations in the task, encountered the same everyday situations that the research participants experienced (school and family situations such as asking for help with homework, borrowing a book or game from a brother or sister). Data collection proceeded in the following way: students were first told to look at each illustration, then a brief description of the situation was read to them, after which they were asked to record their response on the tape recorder. It should also be noted that native Cantonese speakers also participated in the study in order to examine the presence of pragmatic transfer from the first language. To make the context as familiar as possible to them, native speakers were told that the boy whose everyday situations were presented through the instrument was a student at one of the primary schools in Hong Kong, while students learning English as a foreign language were told that the boy was from Hong Kong, emigrated to Canada, and now attended school there where, of course, he spoke only English. Rose (2000) noted that this situation was familiar to most people in Hong Kong, including primary school students. A similar context appeared in the questionnaire used for the continuation of this research, except this time the participants were secondary school students (Rose, 2009). In this instrument, however, due to administrative reasons, illustrations could not be used, although this had been the author's original intention. Therefore, the questionnaire was contextualized in this way so that the instrument would appear more authentic, allowing students to better identify with the boy in the questionnaire. Another advantage of this instrument was that it allowed the inclusion of language learning beginners in the research. Namely, students did not have to read situational descriptions and provide written answers in a foreign language. This is why Flores Salgado (2008) used a modified COPT as the primary instrument in her dissertation to examine the development of request speech acts and apology speech acts among Mexican students at three levels of English language learning.

Since the discourse completion task, or some form of it, is an instrument frequently used in interlanguage pragmatics research, the validity of this instrument has been the subject of numerous studies. The first study aimed at examining the validity of the DCT was conducted by Beebe and Cummings in 1996. The authors compared data collected through the discourse completion task with data obtained from telephone conversations, focusing on the speech act of refusal. The theme of the telephone conversation used to design the situation in the DCT was authentic: one of the authors called English language teachers to ask them to volunteer at a TESOL conference in New York. The

analysis showed that there were significant differences between the authentic data and the data collected through the DCT. The data collected through the DCT differed in terms of speech quantity, style of expression, and the range of semantic formulas used. In the telephone conversations, four times more words were spoken than were written in the discourse completion task. Beebe and Cummings explained this by the very format of the Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The instrument consists of a description of the situation and several blank lines for writing responses, which forces participants to condense their answers. The format of the instrument resembles a test, and the situations are most often fictional. All of this results in shorter and more concise answers, where the key formulas needed to fulfil social requirements are used all at once, most often without clarification or modification of statements. The authors state that “written role plays bias the response toward less negotiation, less hedging, less repetition, less elaboration, less variety and ultimately less talk” (Beebe and Cummings, 1996, p. 71). The results also showed that telephone conversations were more diverse than written responses in terms of the different formulas and strategies used by participants. However, content analysis revealed that written questionnaires accurately reflect the content expressed in natural speech. Beebe and Cummings (1996) believe that these results legitimize the use of the DCT in research since it has been shown that native speakers respond to the DCT by writing stereotypical answers that contain “an almost formulaic core of semantic content” (1996, p. 75). At the end of the article, the authors conclude that the DCT is a “highly effective” instrument as a means for:

- quickly collecting large amounts of data
- creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that are likely to appear in natural speech
- studying stereotypical conditions for a socially appropriate response
- gaining insight into the social and psychological factors that are likely to influence speech and performance
- determining the canonical form of speech acts in the mind of a speaker of a given language.

It should be emphasised that these arguments – supporting the continued use of the DCT for data collection – have been later used by numerous authors, particularly those who have employed the DCT in their studies, where the advantages of this instrument aligned with the goals of their research (e.g., Hill, 1997). The authors also emphasise that instruments like the DCT do not reflect natural speech in terms of the way of expression in real interactions, the range of formulas and strategies used, the length of responses and the number of statements, the depth of emotions shaping the response in real communication, the number of modifications, and the frequency of a particular speech act in discourse. Beebe and Cummings (1996, p. 80–81) note that discourse completion tasks “do not give us natural speech, nor do they claim to do so” but

they “do seem to give us a good idea of the stereotypical shape of the speech act”.

Yuan (2001, p. 272) notes that “limited efforts” have been made to assess the validity of the discourse completion task. In her extensive research, Yuan evaluated the following data collection methods in speech act studies: written discourse completion tests, oral discourse completion tests, notes, and authentic communication (interviews with participants). Yuan (2001) also mentions that, given the limited number of studies on data collection methods, there is no conclusive evidence showing that the discourse completion task is an accurate, valid, or appropriate method for collecting data on speech acts. The speech act in the focus of her study was the compliment (and responses to compliments), and the participants in the study were speakers of the Mandarin Chinese dialect spoken in the city of Kunming, China. The discourse completion task used in the research was based on observations of authentic speech. Some of the participants provided written responses to the test, while others gave oral responses, which were recorded with a tape recorder. Yuan (2001) recorded authentic data immediately after hearing them or at the end of the day, thus collecting a total of 256 authentic speech events. To determine the validity of the data collection methods, the mean values for the following variables were calculated: response length, number of particles indicating surprise or hesitation (e.g., *umm*, *ah*, *well*, etc.), number of repetitions, number of inversions, and number of omissions. The results of the t-test for all five variables showed that all these variables were significantly more frequent in oral responses than in written responses, both for compliments and for responses to compliments. The oral responses to the discourse completion task were twice as long as the written responses. The other features were also much more frequent in the oral test than in the written one.

Authentic data were analysed based on the same variables. In authentic speech events, inversions, repetitions, particles indicating surprise or hesitation, and omissions were very common, much more than in any form of the DCT. However, regarding the frequency of these features, responses in the oral test were much closer to natural discourse than written responses, which, Yuan (2001) argues, is certainly an advantage of the oral DCT. The main drawback of this instrument is the limitation imposed by its format. Namely, there is no possibility for negotiation between the “interlocutor” in the test and the person completing the questionnaire, which forces the participant to make all their statements in a single utterance. This situation is rare in natural communication, where replies are multiple, shorter, and exchanged rapidly.

Regarding notes and interviews, Yuan (2001) provides an interesting example where she shows that the main drawback of notes is their dependence on the researcher’s memory. Specifically, two participants were giving oral responses to the DCT and, during informal conversation, they made several

compliments which were also recorded on a tape recorder. The author then noted the same compliments in her notes. A comparison of the actual conversation and the notes showed that the author's notes were shorter than the actual conversation and incomplete. The author concludes that data collected through oral discourse completion tests more closely resemble natural speech in terms of the examined features and that the DCT is a better methodological option if the focus of the research is on natural speech. The author also points out that, generally, the choice of methodology depends on the research questions and objectives of the study.

Golato (2003) conducted a study in which he compared recordings of natural speech and discourse completion tests in the context of responses to compliments. The situations in the test were shaped based on recordings of real conversations. After a detailed analysis of examples from the authentic corpus and statistical comparisons of data collected through the discourse completion test and data from authentic conversations, the author concluded that the DCT was not an appropriate instrument for studying real speech. Golato also highlighted an important difference between the discourse completion test and authentic data: the DCT is a task in which there is a kind of delay, meaning that students have time to think about what they will write, while authentic discourse is necessarily spontaneous and unfolds in real time. Therefore, the discourse completion test is more suited for studying what people think they would say rather than what they actually say. The author concluded that the discourse completion test could not be used to study authentic speech.

The studies described in this section of the paper (Beebe and Cummings, 1996; Yuan, 2001; Golato, 2003) point to the shortcomings of the discourse completion test. However, the discourse completion test has an important advantage for examining pragmatic features and the development of pragmatic competence in the interlanguage of foreign language learners. This advantage is related to examining the features of students' pragmatic knowledge. Specifically, we cannot expect authentic and natural speech from foreign language learners, who are learning the language in a non-authentic environment from teachers who are also non-native speakers of that language, which is mentioned by the authors of nearly all studies that deal with the methodological validation of the DCT. Kasper and Rose (2002, p. 95–96) argue the following:

Nevertheless, when carefully designed, DCTs provide useful information about speakers' pragmalinguistic knowledge of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented, and about their sociopragmatic knowledge of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate. Whether or not speakers use exactly the same strategies and forms in actual discourse is a different matter, but the questionnaire responses indicate what strategic and linguistic options are consonant with respondents' understanding of L2 pragmatic norms and

what context factors influence their choices. In L2 developmental pragmatic research, we may be interested in finding how L2 learners' knowledge develops as opposed to development in performance under the much more demanding conditions of conversational encounters. For such research purposes, DCTs are an effective option, regardless of whether the data they yield are representative of face-to-face interaction.

Rose and Ng (2001) note that, in some cases, it is possible to observe foreign language learners' interactions, but the context in which a language is learned as a foreign language generally does not offer such opportunities. A researcher wishing to observe communication in a foreign language classroom will encounter two types of problems. The first type concerns administrative and technical issues, ranging from difficulties finding schools, teachers, and students willing to participate in the study to organisational challenges related to class schedules and the potential disruption of lessons for research purposes. The second type of problem pertains to communication within the classroom itself. Indeed, experience, as well as numerous studies, have shown that communication in the classroom typically follows an initiation-response-feedback (IRF) pattern, and examples of "true" spontaneous communication are very rare. A discourse feature or speech act that the researcher wishes to study may appear very infrequently or not at all in classroom communication. Because of all this, Rose and Ng (2001, p. 154) conclude that the use of written instruments is "inevitable": "We would like to make clear, however, that we are fully aware of the limitations of questionnaires, particularly regarding the sort of information they yield. It is crucial to understand that questionnaires are indirect measures..." Furthermore, Rose and Ng (2001) highlight that questionnaires are subject to a certain degree of reductionism, as it is simply not possible to include all the social variables that influence similar situations in real life within the brief situational descriptions that make up the DCT. The authors (2001, p. 155) also emphasize that it is very important to point out that questionnaires are "inherently artificial":

Many researchers using DCTs have worked under the (often implicit) assumption that the data they yield are (or can be) representative of what people actually say or do in face-to-face interaction, just as those who have criticized discourse completion as a viable data collection procedure have done so on the assertion that it is not representative of actual language use. Both the advocates and critics of DCTs miss the point entirely. Questionnaires do not directly measure social (or linguistic) action, so they can neither be expected to do so nor criticized for not doing so.

Like the classic form of the discourse completion test, the multiple-choice test is also filled out in writing. This type of questionnaire consists of brief descriptions of situations, and for each situation, several possible responses are provided. Students must choose the response that they believe best fits the

described situation. Thus, the number of possible responses is limited, which means the number of potential strategies for shaping the communicative act being studied is also limited. Below is an example from a study conducted by Rose and Ono in 1995:

Your friend gave you a ticket for a concert next Saturday, but unfortunately, you have to work at your part-time job that day. Your senior (senpai) in the club you belong to also works part-time at the same place. You know that she doesn't have to work on Saturdays. What would you say or do?

a) I would say, "Can you work instead of me next Saturday?"

b) I would not go to the concert.

c) I would say, "I can't work next Saturday, and I don't know what to do."

d) I would say, "Please work instead of me next Saturday."

In the field of interlanguage pragmatics, multiple-choice tests are used to study pragmatic understanding of utterances (Fukushima, 2003), the productive use of speech acts and routines (Rose and Ono, 1995), and to conduct metapragmatic assessments (Koike, 1989). Brown (2001) points out that the advantage of this instrument lies in the fact that it is a written questionnaire, which requires little time from the participants. Additionally, calculating the responses is not a problem. However, the main drawbacks of this instrument are that it only assesses written receptive language production, and it does not encourage spoken production or self-reflection. Liu (2006) highlights that, unlike other formats where multiple-choice questions are used, the choice of answers in this type of questionnaire is based on appropriateness, rather than accuracy. In other words, distractors in the multiple-choice discourse completion test are not correct or incorrect, but rather more or less appropriate based on the described situation. Based on the results of research conducted by Rose (1994) and Rose and Ono (1995), Fukushima (2003) concludes that the advantage of a multiple-choice test is that it expands the range of possible responses. For example, among the options, there may be a response that participants consider most appropriate for a given situation, but that they could not recall themselves. This type of questionnaire also requires much less cognitive engagement than the "classic" discourse completion test. In the multiple-choice test, participants are only asked to assess which of the limited number of responses is most appropriate, considering the contextual factors described and their own practical experience. In contrast, the classic discourse completion test requires participants first to select a strategy for shaping a speech act, and then express or write it in a linguistically and pragmatically acceptable form.

The rating scale, as the third type of questionnaire mentioned in this paper, consists of a detailed description of a situation, including the contextual variables. After the description of the situation, a series of questions follows, asking participants to evaluate the value of certain variables. Although Kasper and Rose (2002) note that rating scales are not commonly used in

interlanguage pragmatics research, this instrument has several applications in such studies. First, scales can be used as a preliminary step in the development of a main research instrument. Tateyama (2001), for instance, conducted three preliminary studies to construct the main questionnaire for research on pragmatic transferability. Among other things, using a rating scale, she examined how participants perceived the contextual appropriateness of five Japanese indirect request strategies. Kasper and Rose (2002) consider the use of rating scales for metapragmatic assessment particularly valuable because they provide insight into how participants evaluate the contextual variables that will later be applied in the main instrument (sociopragmatic assessment). These insights help researchers shape the instrument, improving control over those variables. Kasper (2008) emphasizes that such information should not be based on the intuition of the researcher. Rating scales often supplement data collected by other instruments (usually some form of a discourse completion test). Barron (2003) points out the main disadvantage of this type of questionnaire: the fact that the contextual factors in the rating scale are reduced to static values, whereas in reality, these factors are “fluid, sometimes changing within a particular interaction” (2002, p. 95).

WRITTEN AND ORAL (SELF-)REPORTS

Most studies of speech acts within interlanguage pragmatics are based on some form of discourse completion test (Yamashita, 1996). However, instruments such as discourse completion tests cannot examine the cognitive processes underlying second language learners’ linguistic production. Consequently, in most studies, the learners’ voices remain “unheard”. Written and oral (self-)reports collect metalinguistic or metapragmatic data that help us better understand the cognitive processes learners undergo while formulating speech acts (Cohen and Olshtain, 1993). According to Cohen (2004), the use of such instruments can yield “unique data” on cognitive processes. The primary purpose of using (self-)reports is to uncover what information learners focus on during task performance and how their perception of the situation influences their responses (Cohen, 2004). Kasper and Rose (2002) include interviews, think-aloud protocols (verbal reports), and diaries in this type of data collection.

An interview is defined as a method in which data is collected by “asking participants about how and when they use a particular language feature in a given task” (Martínez-Flor, 2004, p. 138). Kasper and Rose (2002) describe research interviews as a specific type of speech event that varies depending on the interview’s structure, duration, and medium (face-to-face, telephone, electronic media). However, all variations share two fundamental characteristics: interactivity and the influence of contextual factors. Both features must be considered when interpreting the data. Since an interview consists of questions

and answers, Kasper (2008, p. 296) emphasizes that responses are always shaped by the questions, resulting in a co-constructed process between the researcher and participant. Thus, interviews cannot be treated as “externalizations of stable, decontextualized beliefs and knowledge.”

Tateyama (2001) used interviews alongside role plays and multiple-choice tasks to triangulate data. The interview questions addressed the planning process for responses during the role play, learners’ evaluation of the teaching process they were exposed to, and their suggestions for alternative approaches to teaching pragmatics. The analysis revealed that students who did not plan their responses performed worse in the role play. Some students carefully planned their responses, but what they said differed from what they had planned. It also emerged that performance was influenced by familiarity with the task, specifically whether students had encountered similar situations in real life. During the planning process, students thought in both their native and foreign languages (English/Japanese). Regarding the teaching process, students in the explicit instruction group emphasized that explicit explanations of routine expressions were crucial for understanding their use.

In contrast to interviews and diaries, which collect data on past or hypothetical decontextualized events through self-reporting, verbal reports are “participants’ concurrent or retrospective verbal account of thought processes during problem-solving activities” (Smagorinsky, 1998, p. 157). There are two types of verbal reports: think-aloud protocols, conducted simultaneously with task performance, and retrospective reports, provided after the activity. Kasper (2002, p. 298) provides a concise overview of the theory underlying verbal reports:

The information processed in short-term memory while a participant is carrying out a task is reportable and veridical. In contrast, information that is not processed in short-term memory, such as perceptual processes, motor processes, and all automated processes, is not available for report. Veridical report is also possible immediately after task completion, when the attended information is still in short-term memory. Once out of short-term memory, information will be lost or encoded in long-term memory. Since storage in and retrieval from long-term memory entail further processing, the most valid reports are concurrent or immediately consecutive verbalizations.

When discussing introspective methodology in interlanguage pragmatics research, Robinson’s 1992 study is frequently cited. In this study, the author combined a discourse completion test with concurrent and retrospective verbal reports. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- Can verbal reports provide data to describe learners’ pragmatic knowledge and its sources?
- Does the type of data obtained through verbal reports differ depending on the learners’ level of language proficiency?

- What categories of information can be derived from verbal reports concerning interlanguage pragmatic knowledge of the speech act of refusal in American English?

The study involved twelve Japanese female students. The discourse completion test consisted of six situations, and participants were asked to articulate their thoughts aloud while writing their responses, using their native language if it reflected their thought processes. The participants received training that included written and oral instructions and opportunities to practice providing verbal reports. Immediately after completing their responses, accompanied by think-aloud protocols, Robinson (1992) conducted interviews with all the participants. The retrospective interviews included questions related to their think-aloud protocols, and the author played recordings of the protocols to remind participants of their verbalized thoughts. Robinson developed categories for data coding inductively, meaning that the categories emerged from the data. These included: situational features, evidence of statement planning, evaluation of alternative statements, indications of pragmatic and linguistic difficulties, statements about knowledge of the speech act of refusal in American English and its potential sources, indications of methodological challenges, and the language of thought. Based on the analysis, Robinson concluded that introspective data offered insights into language processing strategies that were inaccessible through analysis of discourse completion test responses alone. She also found that combining think-aloud protocols with retrospective interviews enhanced the informational value of introspective data. Robinson (1992) considers verbal reports to be a practical means for generating and testing hypotheses about the acquisition of second-language pragmatic knowledge. The study also revealed qualitative differences in data between learners at different proficiency levels. Analysis indicated differences in the information provided through concurrent and retrospective verbal reports. Participants occasionally struggled to recall what they had articulated in think-aloud protocols, while their responses in retrospective interviews were more detailed, often reflecting considerations of social relationships that influenced statement planning. The participants also reflected on both the pragmalinguistic aspects of their statements (possible strategies for formulating responses) and the sociopragmatic aspects (evaluation of social relationships to select the most appropriate strategy for the situation).

Cohen and Olshtain (1993) note that pragmatic literature provides detailed descriptions of realization strategies for a wide range of speech acts but rarely addresses the processes involved in producing these acts by non-native speakers. They aimed to describe how non-native speakers evaluate, plan, and execute complex speech acts such as apologies, complaints, and requests. Fifteen English learners participated in role plays across six different situations, two for each speech act type (apology, complaint, request). All activities were

recorded. After completing two role plays involving the same speech act, participants underwent retrospective interviews in which they were asked about the factors influencing their responses. The retrospective verbal reports were analysed in terms of the following aspects: the extent to which statements were pre-planned, the choice of language used for thought (L1, L2, or L3) during planning and execution, the recall/selection of linguistic forms, the degree of attention paid to grammar and pronunciation, and the sources of the language used. The results showed that participants planned a general “direction” for their statements but not the specific vocabulary and structures they would use. Statements regarding recall and selection of appropriate linguistic forms were categorized by Cohen and Olshtain (1993) as follows: “noise” in the head, monitoring, use of formulaic expressions, skipping or abandoning a message, lexical simplification or avoidance, similarity, self-debate, reconsideration, partial articulation of thoughts, and articulation of different thoughts. Participants paid some attention to grammar, but most paid little to no attention to pronunciation. The authors also discussed methodological considerations at the end of their study, including the use of role plays as simulations of real-life situations, the inclusion of situations unfamiliar to participants, the level of detail in situational descriptions to create role play context, and the use of technology in research.

Hassall (2008) conducted a study in which he combined oral role play and retrospective verbal reports. The study included 19 students of Indonesian from an Australian university, divided into two groups (low-level learners and advanced learners). Data analysis showed that low-level learners thought less about pragmatics and often focused on linguistic planning of speech acts. Hassall provides two explanations for these results. The first relates to cognitive “overload”, that is, the fact that low-level learners are still unable to perform certain simple linguistic actions automatically and subconsciously. Such actions require conscious effort and take up most of their language processing capacity. The second explanation relates to the process of foreign language teaching itself, which is traditionally focused on propositional clarity and accuracy. Advanced learners, on the other hand, thought about pragmatics more often than linguistic planning. Hassall (2008) again provided two explanations. The first explanation was that, given their advanced level of language knowledge, these students performed certain simple linguistic actions automatically and thus had more time to think about pragmatics. The second explanation was that this group spent one year studying in Indonesia, which undoubtedly raised their awareness of the importance of appropriate language use. The results also showed that both groups of students possess solid sociopragmatic knowledge, which was, however, more complete in some situations for advanced-level students of Indonesian. In some situations, it was also shown that students possess knowledge but cannot access it to use it correctly. The opposite

situation also appeared, where students appropriately used a linguistic feature, but their knowledge was superficial and incomplete. Hassall (2008) concludes that verbal reports are a useful instrument for uncovering the mental processes underlying pragmatic performance.

Additionally, owing to the assumption that research in interlanguage pragmatics lacks sufficient studies investigating cognitive processes learners undergo during the production of speech acts, Félix-Brasdefer (2008) investigated the cognitive processes and perceptions of Spanish language students through the example of the speech act of refusal. Two methods of data collection were employed: open role playing and retrospective verbal reports. The data analysis was conducted with respect to three categories: cognition (cognitive information participants focused on while formulating the speech act), the choice of language in which participants thought, and students' perceptions of the interlocutor's insistence after they had already refused their invitation. The results showed that during the process of planning their statements, learners most frequently thought about grammar and vocabulary, which led to interference in communication. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) concluded that learners excessively used the "monitor" (Krashen, 1982), meaning they were overly focused on the accuracy of their statements. Although all study participants had resided in Spanish-speaking countries and were aware of certain cultural nuances in the formulation of this speech act, their pragmatic-linguistic knowledge proved to be insufficient. The author concludes that explicit instruction in pragmatics would be beneficial for students, as it would contribute to the development of their sociocultural competence. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) also believes that retrospective verbal reports are crucial for gathering information about students' metalinguistic knowledge and their perceptions of sociocultural information.

The fundamental characteristic of the diary method is that data are typically recorded by the research participants themselves, making this method entirely unstructured and fully participant-centered (Mihaljević Djigunović and Matijašević, 2002). Kasper and Rose (2002) note that the diary method shares a focus on past experiences and subjective theories with interviews. Diaries allow students to freely reflect on all aspects of language learning, thereby offering a form of retrospective reporting. Studies using the diary method as the primary data collection tool are rare in developmental pragmatics. One notable example is Cohen's (1997) study, in which the author kept a diary documenting his accelerated learning of Japanese as a foreign language, focusing on pragmatic development. In his diary, Cohen (1997) describes various challenges encountered during language learning. These challenges include sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer from American English and other languages he had studied (as Japanese sociocultural norms were not explicitly taught due to time constraints), the lack of or avoidance of genuine communicative situations

for using Japanese, occasional mismatches between his learning style and the teaching style, difficulties in using appropriate sociolinguistic expressions, issues with providing an adequate amount of words and information (as he often wanted to be more verbose than his Japanese proficiency allowed), limitations in pragmatic development due to the course being conducted in an academic setting with little interaction with native speakers, and challenges in learning expressions for different levels of formality. In his conclusion, Cohen (1997) emphasised that he managed to learn the course material according to formal requirements but also noted that his conversational ability, or the ability to apply what he had learned in real communication, remained very low.

CONCLUSION

This paper provides an overview of different methods used in research on interlanguage pragmatics to examine the development of pragmatic competence in foreign language learners. Each method is explained in detail, including the definition of the method, its advantages and disadvantages, a review of relevant studies, and, where necessary, examples of research tasks. To the authors' knowledge, there has been no similar overview in the Croatian scientific and professional literature to date.

The first part of the paper describes methods for studying spoken interaction. It begins by discussing the collection of authentic spoken data, which is, on the one hand, the least influenced by researcher control and therefore likely the best source for describing the development of learners' pragmatic competence. On the other hand, such data is the most challenging to collect, and the primary drawback of authentic discourse is that a specific pragmatic structure (often a speech act in the case of pragmatic competence research) may not occur in speech at all. Variables related to conducting research using elicited conversations or role-play methods can be controlled to varying degrees, depending on the research objectives. The advantage of these methods lies in their targeted collection of necessary data. The paper then outlines various types of questionnaires used in interlanguage pragmatics research, with the most common being the Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The final section discusses the use of different types of self-reports to explore the cognitive processes underlying learners' language production in a foreign language.

All the instruments discussed are crucial in researching the development of pragmatic competence, as they allow for the collection of corpora (typically of speech acts in a foreign language) that can subsequently be used in foreign language teaching as examples for analysing and teaching various pragmatic situations. Particularly useful is the Discourse Completion Test, which enables the rapid collection of large amounts of data. However, the DCT is often cited in the literature as one of the less authentic ways of collecting data in

interlanguage pragmatics research. This type of questionnaire cannot and does not aim to provide information about how Croatian foreign language learners would perform a speech act in real communication. Nonetheless, this need not be the goal of future research. The results obtained from the DCT can provide insights into students' current knowledge and attitudes (Rose, 2009) related to performing a speech act in a foreign language and offer an impression of how Croatian learners might navigate situations requiring speech act formulation. This impression may not correspond to learners' actual language production in real communicative situations, as such situations are difficult to replicate in the context of foreign language learning in Croatia. As previously mentioned, the fundamental goal of interlanguage pragmatics research in the Croatian educational context should be to examine learners' knowledge and attitudes regarding speech act formulation in a foreign language, which could indicate their development of pragmatic competence. Furthermore, the DCT can be used as a research tool across all levels of language proficiency, including with the youngest learners. This is particularly important given the rarity of studies on the development of interlanguage pragmatics in younger learners (beginners), both globally and in Croatia.

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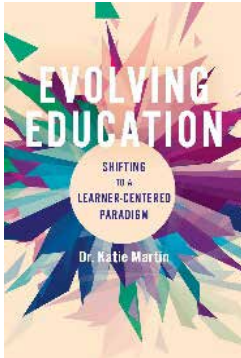
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MARTIN, K. (2021). *EVOLVING EDUCATION: SHIFTING TO A LEARNER-CENTERED PARADIGM*. IMPRESS.



Autorica je knjige *Evolving Education: Shifting to a Learner-Centered Paradigm* dr. Katie Martin, profesorica na diplomskom studiju obrazovanja na sveučilištu High Tech High i članica Odbora organizacije Real World Scholars iz San Diega. Dio je tima neprofitne organizacije *Learner-Centered Collaborative*, koja promiče obrazovanje usmjereno učeniku kao temelj stvaranja uspješne zajednice učenja. Svoje iskustvo stečeno radom u organizaciji podijelila je u knjigama *Inovacije usmjerene učeniku (Learner-Centered Innovation)* i *Razvojno obrazovanje (Evolving Education)*, koje na teorijsko-praktičan način potiču učitelje na organizaciju iskustava koja osnažuju sve učenike u razvijanju znanja, vještina i načina razmišljanja potrebnih za napredovanje u današnjem svijetu.

Knjiga *Razvojno obrazovanje: Prijelaz na paradigmu usmjerenu učeniku (Evolving Education: Shifting to a Learner-Centered Paradigm)*

sadrži tri glavna dijela podijeljena u više samostalnih poglavlja, a svim je poglavljima zajedničko to što prikazuju jedan dio koji je značajan za promjenu paradigme. Prvi glavni dio knjige naziva se *Učenički ishodi*, a ukratko govori o holističkom shvaćanju učenika. Drugi dio autorica naziva *Iskustva učenja* i u njemu navodi različite oblike učenja primjenjivih u paradigmi usmjerenoj učeniku. Posljednji se dio odnosi na *stvaranje povoljnih uvjeta za promjenu paradigme*, a naglašava važnost uloge odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika u oblikovanju budućnosti obrazovanja. Autorica vizualno prikazuje međuovisnost opisanih dijelova knjige, implicirajući da dijelovi utječu jedno na drugo i da do promjene u paradigmi ne može doći ako se jedan od navedenih dijelova zanemari.

Prvi dio knjige *Učenički ishodi* sastoji se od četiriju poglavlja koja prikazuju prve korake potrebne za odmak od paradigme usmjerene

učiteljima i školskim ustanovama. Ponajviše navodi važnost stvaranja kvalitetnog međuljudskog odnosa s učenicima, naglašavajući jedinstvenost svakog učenika i potrebu za njihovim holističkim shvaćanjem. Kroz poglavlja *Upoznavanje svojih učenika*, *Povezivanje s učenicima*, *Vjera u učenike* i *Redefiniranje uspjeha*, autorica usmjerava učitelje prema razumijevanju varijabilnosti kao norme u radu s učenicima, odnosa kao temelja učenja, učenikove neupitne sposobnosti za učenjem te definicije uspjeha na individualnoj razini. Uz kritiku današnjega standardiziranog obrazovanja koje teži prosjeku, navode se savjeti i alati kojima se potiče ostvarivanje individualnog pristupa učeniku, a od kojih je najistaknutiji „učenički profil” – alat kojim se određuju znanja, vještine i sposobnosti koje učenici trebaju imati, a koja su povezana s njihovim individualnim mogućnostima.

Drugi dio knjige *Iskustva učenja* čini pet poglavlja kojima se opisuje značaj učenja, ali i transformacija pogleda na učenje kao procesa koji je vezan uz učenika kao individue. Prvenstveno se navodi deset principa znanosti učenja kojima se teorijski obrazlaže učenje naglašavajući *proces* učenja koji uključuje trud, pogreške, refleksiju i pročišćavanje strategija. Zatim se opisuje *učenje usmjereno na kompetencije* i nalažu praktične strategije kojima se ono ostvaruje, a među kojima je najistaknutija uloga povratne informacije učenicima o njihovoj uspješnosti. Slijedi navođenje važnosti personaliziranog učenja

kojim se učenicima omogućuje odabir metoda i sadržaja učenja uz konkretno postavljene ciljeve, a zatim i osnaživanje učenja kritiziranjem učenikove pasivnosti te prevelike uključenosti roditelja i učitelja u učenikovo učenje. U posljednjem poglavlju prikazuje se autentično učenje u kojem učenici samostalno osmišljavaju i provode projekte, a iskazuje se i bit javne prezentacije njihovih rezultata radi poticanja osjećaja autorstva nad vlastitim učenjem.

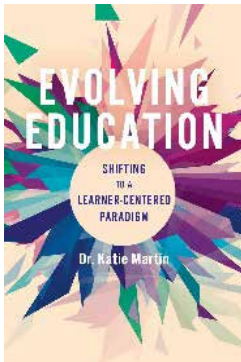
Posljednji dio knjige *Kako možemo stvoriti povoljne uvjete za promjenu k paradigmi usmjerenoj učeniku?* sadrži tri poglavlja koja povlače paralelu sa širom slikom obrazovanja i suvremenim obrazovnim sustavima te potrebom njihova redefiniranja. Autorica navodi kako je važno dizajnirati budućnost obrazovanja koje treba biti usmjereno učeniku, posebice u smislu razumijevanja i implementiranja procesa učenja – učenje je konstanta, a vrijeme i mjesto su varijabilni. Zatim naglašava potrebu za usmjeravanjem promjena njegovanjem razvojnog i otvorenog *mindseta* kojim prihvaćamo moć neuspjeha kao resursa promjene. Knjigu zaključuje pozivanjem na izazivanje statusa *quo* i daje praktične korake kojima se iskazuje kako raditi s ljudima i postići da napreduju, prvenstveno implicirajući na učitelje i njihov rad s učenicima.

Djelo teorijski prikazuje razlike između dviju suvremenih paradigmi u obrazovanju: one usmjerene učitelju (školi) i one usmjerene učeniku. Uz učestalo naglašavanje potrebe za promjenom aktualne paradigme u

kojoj su u većini slučajeva učitelji ili škola u centru obrazovnog sustava, autorica tijekom cijele knjige navodi primjere dobre prakse i primjere iz vlastitog života, a čitateljima daje uvid u strategije i aktivnosti koje su usmjerene promoviranju i ostvarivanju nastave usmjerene učeniku. Cjelokupna tematika knjige tako vezana uz promjenu odgojno-obrazovnog sustava, naglašavajući veliku ulogu praktičara u njezinu iniciranju i provođenju. Knjigom se želi osvijestiti širu zajednicu, školske djelatnike, roditelje, ali i sve ostale dionike obrazovnog sustava o važnosti isticanja individualnosti svakog učenika i prihvaćanja njihovih posebitosti s ciljem stvaranja prakse koja će se usmjeriti na pozitivne odnose s učenicima i njihovim jakim stranama.

Martin Hadelan

MARTIN, K. (2021). *EVOLVING EDUCATION: SHIFTING TO A LEARNER-CENTERED PARADIGM*. IMPRESS.



The author of the book *Evolving Education: Shifting to a Learner-Centered Paradigm* is Dr. Katie Martin, professor of graduate education at High Tech High and member of the Board of Real World Scholars of San Diego. She is part of the team of the non-profit organization Learner-Centered Collaborative, which promotes learner-centered education as the foundation for creating a successful learning community. She shared her experience gained from working in the organization in the books *Learner-Centered Innovation* and *Evolving Education*, which, in a theoretical-practical way, encourage teachers to organize experiences that empower all students in developing the knowledge, skills and way of thinking needed to advance in today's world.

The book *Evolving Education: Shifting to a Learner-Centered Paradigm*

contains three main parts divided into several independent chapters, and all the chapters have in common that they present one part that is significant for the paradigm shift. The first main part of the book is called *Student Outcomes*, and it briefly discusses the holistic understanding of students. The author's second part is called *Learning Experiences*, and it lists various forms of learning applicable in the learner-centered paradigm. The last part refers to *creating favorable conditions for the paradigm shift*, and emphasizes the importance of the role of educational professionals in shaping the future of education. The author visually shows the interdependence of the described parts of the book, implying that the parts influence each other and that a paradigm shift cannot occur if one of the mentioned parts is neglected.

The first part of the book *Student Outcomes* consists of four chapters that

outline the first steps needed to move away from the paradigm focused on teachers and schools. Most notably, she highlights the importance of creating quality interpersonal relationships with students, emphasizing the uniqueness of each student and the need for a holistic understanding of them. Through the chapters *Getting to Know Your Students*, *Connecting with Students*, *Believing in Students*, and *Redefining Success*, the author guides teachers toward understanding variability as the norm in working with students, relationships as the foundation of learning, students' unquestionable ability to learn, and the definition of success at the individual level. Along with a critique of today's standardized education that strives for averages, she provides advice and tools that encourage the realization of an individual approach to students, the most prominent of which is the *student profile* – a tool that determines the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students should have, which are related to their individual capabilities.

The second part of the book, *Learning Experiences* consists of five chapters that describe not only the importance of learning, but also the transformation of the view of learning as a process that is related to the student as an individual. First, it lists the ten principles of the science of learning that theoretically explain learning, emphasizing the learning process that includes effort, mistakes, reflection, and refining strategies. Then, it describes competency-based learning and prescribes practical strategies

for achieving it, among which the most prominent role is played by feedback to students on their success. This is followed by the importance of personalized learning, which allows students to choose learning methods and content with specifically set goals, and then the strengthening of learning by criticizing the student's passivity and the overinvolvement of parents and teachers in the student's learning. The last chapter presents authentic learning in which students independently design and implement projects, and the essence of public presentation of their results is also expressed in order to encourage a sense of authorship over their learning.

The final part of the book, *How Can We Create the Conditions for a Change to a Learner-Centered Paradigm?*, contains three chapters that draw parallels with the broader picture of education and contemporary education systems and the need to redefine them. The author states that it is important to design a future of education that should be learner-centered, especially in terms of understanding and implementing the learning process – learning is constant, while time and place are variable. She then emphasizes the need to guide change by cultivating a developmental and open-minded mindset that accepts the power of failure as a resource for change.

Finally, the book concludes with a call to challenge the status quo and provides practical steps that show how to work with people to progress,

primarily with implications for teachers and their work with students.

The work theoretically presents the differences between two contemporary paradigms in education: teacher-centered (school-centered) and student-centered. In addition to frequently emphasizing the need to change the current paradigm in which, in most cases, teachers or schools are at the center of the education system, the author provides examples of good practice and examples from her own life throughout the book, and provides readers with insight into strategies and activities aimed at promoting and implementing student-centered teaching. The entire theme of the book is thus related to the change in the education system, emphasizing the major role of practitioners in initiating and implementing it. The book aims to raise awareness among the wider community, school staff, parents, and all other stakeholders in the education system about the importance of emphasizing the individuality of each student and accepting their particularities with the aim of creating a practice that will focus on positive relationships with students and their strengths.

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