

## School pedagogue in the Serbia

### Pedagog szkolny w Serbii

**Key words:** a school pedagogue, personal and professional characteristics of a school pedagogue, work profile of a school pedagogue, school, research on a work profile of a school pedagogue.

**Słowa kluczowe:** pedagog szkolny, cechy osobowościowe i zawodowe pedagoga szkolnego, profil pracy pedagoga szkolnego, szkoły, rozwój szkoły, badanie profilu pracy pedagoga szkolnego.

**Streszczenie.** Tematem artykułu jest profil pracy pedagoga szkolnego oraz jego wkład w rozwój szkoły w Republice Serbskiej. Praca zawiera dwie części – teoretyczną i empiryczną. W części teoretycznej analizie poddany został profil pedagoga szkolnego, jego cechy zawodowe i osobowościowe, podano obszary pracy pedagoga szkolnego oraz osoby, z którymi współpracuje i którym świadczy pomoc doradczą. W artykule przeanalizowano rozwój szkolnictwa i wkład pedagoga szkolnego w rozwój szkoły. W empirycznej części pracy określono profil pracy pedagoga szkolnego – w procentach określono obszary pracy pedagoga szkolnego, oraz który typ doradztwa dla uczniów i nauczycieli przeważa. Równocześnie określono, jak ważne jest doradztwo dla uczniów i nauczycieli z punktu widzenia nauczycieli.

A school pedagogue is a professional internal employee of school (especially of primary schools, but also of kindergarten and secondary schools) in the Republic of Serbia. This profession has been established and integrated into life and work of schools since 50th years of the 20th century and since then this profession has been improving. Their work is governed by specific legislative, methodological and pedagogical documents [*Zakon 72/09, Pravilnik 5/2012* etc.]. Moreover, professional association of school pedagogues [*Pedagoško društvo Srbije*], is constituted in the year 1949 in the Republic of Serbia. This association represents the interests of these professional staff and contribute to their professional development. Students are being prepared to pursue this profession at universities and faculties of pedagogical studies for a period of five years.

This study deals with the work profile of a school pedagogue and analyzes his contribution to the development of schools. Moreover, it presents selected research results. Detailed analysis of the profession of school pedagogue in the school system

in the Republic of Serbia were processed in the master thesis (Huravik, 2014), under the guidance of mentor M. Matulčíková.

**Work profile of a school pedagogue.** School pedagogue enters into his work complexly, with the whole personality, so it is essential that within profile of school pedagogue we also mention his personal and professional characteristics.

Authors dealing with these issues (Sapundžić, 2012, p. 6; Trnavac, 1993, p. 40; Jurić, 1989, p. 17) indicate the required **personal characteristics** as follows:

- high intellectual capabilities – verbal, logical,
- good communication skills and cooperative relationships with colleagues,
- developed emotionality and control of emotions, also the enthusiasm for their work,
- moral autonomous and stable personality,
- a high level of tolerance towards others and tolerance to frustration,
- boldness and openness in revealing the truth and dealing with the problems (in a team and company),
- good behavior and language culture,
- the general pedagogical culture and pedagogical tact,
- patience, persistence, accuracy and hard-working,
- sincerity and objectivity,
- sense of humor and cheerful facial expressions.

According to Lj. Sapundžić (2012, p. 6) these personal characteristics are relevant because from the school pedagogue is expected good cooperation with all actors of the educational process. Also, these personal characteristic have major importance because school pedagogue influences by personal example. Moreover, these characteristics play an essential role in the creation of his professional authority.

Cited authors further mention the **professional characteristics** of school pedagogue. They state the following:

- high expertness,
- special knowledge of school pedagogy, methodology of work of the school pedagogue and methodological competence,
- the need for continuous professional improvement and self-education,
- critical and creative thinking at work,
- good planning skills and organization of their work and the work of others,
- skills and habits, knowledge of procedures (use of tools, interviewing in counselling, management of meetings, processing of statistical data and research results etc.),
- successful mediation in resolving conflicts,
- analytical skills and self evaluation,
- teamwork and the leadership of team,
- professional ethics (Sapundžić, 2012, p. 6; Trnavac, 1993, p. 40).

According to N. Trnavac (1993, p. 39) school pedagogue has various job functions that are essentially as personality traits. As exemplary states that communicativeness and initiative, which are considered to be essential features of the modern man, who lives in urban areas, for the school pedagogue are at the same time job functions (initiator, coordinator, organizer). In these job functions Trnavac

classifies the following: observator, informant, consultant, adviser, implementer, researcher, analyst, innovator, disseminator, documentarist.

Profile of school pedagogue necessarily include the reflection of profile of his work. We analyze a model of school pedagogue that includes the fields of work, which are listed in the Program of work of all kinds of professional employees of school (5/2012, p. 3-8) [*Pravilnik br. 5/2012*] as follows:

- I. planning and programming of educational work of school,
- II. monitoring and evaluation of educational work of school,
- III. educational work with teachers,
- IV. educational work with children, resp. pupils,
- V. educational work with parents, resp. legal representatives of children,
- VI. educational work with school director, professional employees, teaching assistants and supporters of the child, resp. pupil,
- VII. educational work in teams and school councils,
- VIII. cooperation with relevant institutions, organizations, associations and local government,
- IX. maintenance of the documentation, preparation for work and professional improvement.

School pedagogue within these fields of work provides counselling to teachers, pupils, parents and school director. He has a common goal with the teachers – improving the educational work of school, therefore he is the collaborator to teachers at all stages of teaching, educational work with pupils and parents. Pupil has to see in him the person to whom he can trust, who understands him and provides certainty. School pedagogue helps pupils in the development of socialization, learning, interests, career orientation. The basis of his approach is respect for the child's personality and his well-being at school. Parents expect from school pedagogue help with learning or behavior of their child. In addition, the school teacher is trying to educate the parents in the educational and psychological disciplines. The school director expects from school pedagogue to present opportunities and solutions that can improve the school work, also to present various ideas for projects that could be implemented in the school. In addition to the above mentioned persons, school pedagogue collaborate with other professional employees – school psychologist and school special pedagogue. School pedagogue with the school psychologist form together one team, they can make together an annual plan and program of school work with marked special activities for everyone. School pedagogue, as opposed to the school psychologist, is more involved in the planning of school work and the methodical-didactic teaching issues. School pedagogue with special school pedagogue collaborate in relation to the requirements of the education program for pupils with special needs, also in examining knowledge, in the final marking, involvement of students into the work etc. (Sapundžić, 2012, p. 9-10)

As is apparent from the analysis of expert sources, in the foreground of the activities of school pedagogue is a creative work of planner and strategist of the whole educational process and advisory work in school, especially important is his educational role of direct contact with pupils. Also, the importance of his work is given by his active participation in the planning of school work, and particularly in the school development planning, which often results in reform changes, which carrier is

school pedagogue. He operates in various school teams, in which he is the initiator of educational innovation. He often makes the „link” in relations teacher – pupil, pupil – pupil, teacher – parent, teacher – teacher, among whom occasionally conflicting predetermine the school pedagogue on the role of facilitator, mediator. School pedagogue is facing a general direction and ultimate goal of all his activities, and that is **pupil** (Trnavac, 1993, p. 41; Sapundžić, 2012, p. 4-5).

### **Contribution of school pedagogue to the development of schools.**

Development of school is a continuous, systematic and creative process, which is based on the constant examining and exploring the authentic needs of schools and then fulfilling them.

Areas of changes, resp. areas of school development are the following spheres of school life, which is inevitable to ensure quality:

- **teaching and learning** (curriculum, status of pupils in the learning process, monitoring of pupils progress and providing them support, respect of gender specifics, giving feedback and assessments),
- **school climate** (atmosphere in individual classrooms and in the whole school, solving the conflicts),
- **internal and external relationships** (relationships between teachers and pupils, interpersonal relationships in the school community, cooperation with parents and the local community),
- **school management** (school leadership, organization of school work and life, presentation of school, administrative work, information flow and decision making process);
- **professional development of teachers** (continual education, increase of professional competency for the fulfillment of school tasks) (Kolektiv autorov, 2002, p. 33).

Based on the previous analysis, arises the question: what is the role of school pedagogue and how the work of school pedagogue contributes to the development of school?

Authors S. Kostović and M. Oljača (2012, p. 77-78) state that one of the most important conditions for the improvement of school work and its development is the existence and operation of professional employees, especially **school pedagogues** as the most widely profiled professional employees of school. According to cited authors, the school pedagogue is the only one agent in school that can unite and professionally and efficiently carry out complex tasks connected with an active pedagogical management. It is because school pedagogue can competently project and initiate, but also to guide and maintain processes linked to the improvement and development of the school.

School pedagogue has not only to gather knowledge about the characteristics of effective and successful schools, but also to influence the increase of values and positive attitudes towards the involvement of everyone in this process. This can be done through workshops and lectures for school staff, which the school pedagogue carries out on topics such as Development of school, Efficient operation of the school, Understanding the process of change, Identifying the obstacles in improving the work of the school, Complexity of changes and their implementation etc. (Kostović, Oljača, 2012, p. 85, 101-112).

The role of school pedagogue in the development of schools, besides those of **education**, is the application of his specific knowledge and experience, **initiation** of this process and its **monitoring** and **evaluation** of the results. These are a very important parts of the process of school development. Through this process, the school pedagogue strengthen his role and position in school, also increases professional capabilities, conclude new forms of cooperation, gains new skills, works in teams and makes decisions (Kolektiv autorov, 2002, p. 14, 17).

To carry out all school development processes effectively, it is important to obtain the understanding and friendly relationships, and to absent conflicting relationships. Therefore, one of the other role of the school pedagogue is **mediation**, in which he seeks the increase of understanding and the quality of relationships between employees (Sapundžić, 2012, p. 4-5).

Towards participants of the educational process and towards mentioned areas of changes, resp. school development, school pedagogue contributes mainly as follows:

- Contribution to the school director are the **ideas and projects**, opportunities and solutions from school pedagogue, which enhance the work of the school and could be implemented in the school (area of change: school management).
- Contribution to the teachers is the help of school pedagogue in **professional improvement** of teachers, which aims to improve the educational work of school and its development – in this respect, school pedagogue initiates organization of model and innovative lessons for the exchange of experience, advises and presents the professional pedagogical and didactic literature, recommends various seminars, conferences etc. (area of change: professional development of teachers). Also, school pedagogue provides assistance to teachers and takes part in the process of **analysis and evaluation** of teacher's work. Moreover, school pedagogue is a **collaborator** of teacher at all stages of teaching (area of change, resp. development: teaching and learning). In addition to that, school pedagogue provides assistance to teacher in educational work with pupils and their parents (areas of changes: school climate, internal and external relations).
- Contribution to the pupils are primarily **workshops, lectures and peer trainings**, which school pedagogue realizes with pupil on various topics such as conflict resolution, moral behavior, learning strategies, vocational orientation and so on. Moreover, school pedagogue encourages active students, who are members of the Student Parliament and other organizations, that with their actions contribute to the school to be better environment for learning and development. He also helps them to get involved in various projects and activities that are organized by professional and non-governmental organizations. With these activities, school pedagogue impacts at following areas of changes: teaching and learning, school climate, internal and external relations.
- Contribution to the parents are appropriate **forms and contents of collaborative work**, which school pedagogue offers to parents. These forms and contents are in line with the needs, possibilities and interests of parents. It may refer to the offer of pedagogical and psychological education of parents. School pedagogue prepares and implements **workshops and lectures** for parents with specialistic topics. He provides support to parents in their work with children and involves them in projects and school work. Thereby contributes to changes in the following areas: internal and external relationships, school management. (Sapundžić, 2012, p. 9, 130-132; Trnavac, 2008, p. 151-152, 253; Pravilnik 5/2012, p. 6-7)

Through his work, school pedagogue contributes to the development of school in all presented areas of changes.

**Analysis of the research results.** In the following part of the study, we will present analysis of selected results of research conducted in the Republic of Serbia in 2014. The aim of this part of research was to identify and evaluate the profile of the work of school pedagogue, ie. what is the percentage composition of his work areas and what is the predominant type of consulting activities with pupils and teachers. Also, another aim was to evaluate the importance of consulting activities of school pedagogue with pupils and teachers from the teachers' point of view.

Research tools were a questionnaire for school pedagogues and a questionnaire for teachers. The questionnaire for school pedagogues contained 26 items and was divided into four areas: who are school pedagogues in the Republic of Serbia, their current and ideal conditions for work, work of school pedagogues and their cooperation with teachers. The questionnaire for teachers contained 19 items that were similar to items for school pedagogue in order to find out the views of school pedagogues and teachers, and to compare their responses (more information in Huravik, 2014).

Respondents of the research were school pedagogues ( $n_1 = 51$  respondents school pedagogues) and teachers of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Serbia, which have professional employee school pedagogue at school ( $n_2 = 100$  respondents teachers). From this number of respondents school pedagogues, female respondents were  $n_1 = 47$  and a male  $n_1 = 4$ . Also, female respondents of teachers were  $n_2 = 82$  and  $n_2 = 18$  were male respondents.

In the following part, we will present the analysis of selected research results. First, we will list the percentage composition of the work areas of school pedagogue.

We were founding out the percentage composition of the work areas of school pedagogues through the open items, where our respondents school pedagogues wrote how much time per year of 100% dedicate to following work areas:

- a 1) planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation of educational work of school,
- a 2) educational work with teachers, pupils and parents,
- a 3) educational work in school councils, cooperation with relevant institutions, professional improvement,
- a 4) analytical and research work,
- a 5) maintenance of the documentation and preparation for the work.

The results are summarized in table number 1.

**Table 1. Percentage composition of the work areas of school pedagogues**

Work areas	Percentage composition (%)								Sum
a 1	20	30	20	30	20	2	15	10	147
a 2	50	30	40	40	40	80	40	70	390
a 3	10	20	15	10	10	10	30	5	110
a 4	10	10	15	15	10	3	10	5	78
a 5	10	10	10	5	20	5	5	10	75
$\Sigma$	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

The sample of our respondents school pedagogues shows that educational work with pupils, parents and teachers was the dominating area of their work. They spent almost half of their time space to this area of work (sum 390 resp. 49%). Another areas of work, which were dominant are following: planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation of educational work (sum 147 resp. 18%) and educational work in school councils, cooperation with relevant institutions, professional improvement (sum 110 resp. 14%). Their answer further indicated the area of analytical and research work (sum 78, resp. 10%) and finally the area of maintenance of documents and preparing for work (sum 75, respectively 9%).

Furthermore, we researched the predominant type of school pedagogues' counselling activities with pupils and teachers by monitoring the frequency of providing consultancy in the selected activities. The same activities were in the questionnaire for the teachers, where they assessed the importance of this activities. Respondents school pedagogues had a opportunity to circle stages of the assessment scale from 1 (never) to 4 (always) for each activity within counselling activities. On the other hand, respondents teachers rated the importance of each activity within counselling activities on the stages of the assessment scale from 1 (totally unimportant) to 5 (very important).

Firstly, we will present the frequency of counselling activities provided by respondents school pedagogues to **pupils**. Then will be presented the importance of these counselling activities rated by respondents teachers.

**Table 2. Frequency of counselling activities provided to pupils ( $n_1$ )**

Frequency of counselling activities provided to pupils	never (1)	rarely (2)	often (3)	always (4)	Sum ( $n_1$ )
Learning difficulties, learning strategies	0	5	30	16	51
Pupils' interests and meaningful leisure time	3	28	9	11	51
Emotional difficulties of pupils	0	11	25	15	51
Pupils' relationships with classmates	0	0	21	30	51
Pupils' relationships with teachers	0	5	22	24	51
Family situation of pupils	0	13	26	12	51
Vocational orientation	1	7	27	16	51
Workshops, training, lectures for pupils	0	8	29	14	51
$\Sigma$	4	77	189	138	

Our respondents school pedagogues almost always provided counselling to pupils in sphere of pupils' relationships with classmates ( $n_1 = 30$ ) and pupils' relationships with teachers ( $n_1 = 24$ ). They often provided counselling in area of learning difficulties and learning strategies ( $n_1 = 30$ ). Also, they often conducted workshops, training, lectures for pupils ( $n_1 = 29$ ), consulted vocational orientation ( $n_1 = 27$ ), family

situation of pupils ( $n_1 = 26$ ) and emotional difficulties of pupils ( $n_1 = 25$ ). Counselling, that they provided rarely occurred within the interests and meaningful leisure time of pupils ( $n_1 = 28$ ). Counselling within above activities that school pedagogues never provided occurs only at four respondents in sphere of the pupils' interests and meaningful leisure time and vocational orientation.

The predominance of responses from respondents teachers pointed out that counselling activities provided by school pedagogue to pupils are primarily very important ( $\Sigma 467$ ) and important ( $\Sigma 235$ ). The data will be interpreted by merging the values of very important and important counselling activities, as well as merging totally unimportant and unimportant counselling activities. Our respondents teachers attributed the high level of importance in counselling provided to pupils in sphere of vocational orientation ( $n_2 = 94$ ), pupils' relationships with teachers ( $n_2 = 94$ ), and the pupils' relationships with classmates ( $n_2 = 92$ ). Also, these teachers considered as highly important the help of school pedagogue to pupils in learning difficulties and learning strategies ( $n_2 = 91$ ), also in emotional difficulties ( $n_2 = 88$ ). Moreover, they identified as greatly important to conduct workshops, training, lectures for pupils ( $n_2 = 86$ ) and to help pupils with family situation ( $n_2 = 85$ ). The low levels of importance were almost negligible. We found them marked mainly in sphere of family situation of pupils ( $n_2 = 4$ ), workshops, training, lectures for pupils ( $n_2 = 4$ ), and emotional difficulties of pupils ( $n_2 = 3$ ).

**Table 3. Importance of counselling activities provided to pupils ( $n_2$ )**

Importance of counselling activities provided to pupils	totally unimportant (1)	unimportant (2)	partly important (3)	important (4)	very important (5)	Sum ( $n_2$ )
Learning difficulties, learning strategies	0	0	9	28	63	100
Pupils' interests and meaningful leisure time	1	1	26	37	35	100
Emotional difficulties of pupils	0	3	9	21	67	100
Pupils' relationships with classmates	0	2	6	24	68	100
Pupils' relationships with teachers	0	1	5	24	70	100
Family situation of pupils	0	4	11	23	62	100
Vocational orientation	1	0	5	44	50	100
Workshops, training, lectures for pupils	0	4	10	34	52	100
$\Sigma$	2	15	81	235	467	

When we compare the level of importance of counselling activities, that marked respondents teachers, with the frequency of counselling activities, that marked respondents school pedagogues, we can mention the following observations. A high level of the importance of counselling, that respondents teachers attributed to sphere of pupils' relationships with teachers, as well as pupils' relationships with classmates, respondents school pedagogues provided almost always. Furthermore, the importance

of counselling, that respondents teachers attributed to fields of vocational orientation, learning and emotional difficulties, lectures and workshops for pupils, as well as family situation of pupils, respondents school pedagogues provided often. Based on these data, we can conclude that the high level of the importance of counselling to pupils in the mentioned spheres, which respondents teachers assessed, was provided by respondents school pedagogues very frequently.

In the next part of the study, we will deal with the counselling activities provided to **teachers**. Firstly, we will present the frequency of counselling activities provided by respondents school pedagogues to teachers. Then will be presented the importance of these counselling activities of school pedagogue rated by respondents teachers.

Our respondents school pedagogues provided counselling to teachers almost always in the sphere of maintenance of pedagogical documentation ( $n_1 = 25$ ), learning of pupils ( $n_1 = 18$ ), assessment and success of pupils ( $n_1 = 18$ ), as well as in sphere of cooperation with parents ( $n_1 = 16$ ). The counselling that they provided often includes sphere of didactic and methodological solutions ( $n_1 = 30$ ), professional development of teachers ( $n_1 = 30$ ) and the evaluation of teaching and self-evaluation ( $n_1 = 29$ ). They rarely provided assistance to teachers mainly in planning of work ( $n_1 = 13$ ). The lowest level of counselling activities (resp. stage never in our table no.5) did not occur.

**Table 4. Frequency of counselling activities provided to teachers ( $n_1$ )**

Frequency of counselling activities provided to teachers	never (1)	rarely (2)	often (3)	always (4)	Sum ( $n_1$ )
Planning of work	0	13	25	13	51
Didactic and methodological solutions	0	6	30	15	51
Learning of pupils	0	7	26	18	51
Assessment and success of pupils	0	8	25	18	51
Cooperation with parents	0	9	26	16	51
Professional development of teachers	0	6	30	15	51
Pedagogical documentation	0	3	23	25	51
Evaluation of teaching and self-evaluation	0	7	29	15	51
$\Sigma$	0	59	214	135	

Respondents teachers marked the counselling, that school pedagogue provided to them, especially as very important ( $\Sigma 327$ ) and important ( $\Sigma 313$ ). The data will be interpreted by merging the values of very important and important counselling activities, as well as merging totally unimportant and unimportant counselling activities. Respondents teachers attributed the high level of importance of counselling provided to themselves by school pedagogue in the following activities: cooperation with parents ( $n_2 = 92$ ), learning of pupils ( $n_2 = 86$ ), professional development of teachers ( $n_2 = 82$ ), evaluation of teaching and self-evaluation ( $n_2 = 82$ ), as well as in maintenance of pedagogical documentation ( $n_2 = 79$ ). The lower levels of importance

were almost negligible. Respondents teachers marked them especially in sphere of work planning ( $n_2 = 8$ ) and didactic and methodological solutions ( $n_2 = 6$ ).

**Table 5. Importance of counselling activities provided to teachers ( $n_2$ )**

Importance of counselling activities provided to teachers	totally unimportant (1)	unimportant (2)	partly important (3)	important (4)	very important (5)	Sum ( $n_2$ )
Planning of work	2	6	25	34	33	100
Didactic and methodological solutions	0	6	18	41	35	100
Learning of pupils	0	2	12	41	45	100
Assessment and success of pupils	0	3	21	38	38	100
Cooperation with parents	0	0	8	36	56	100
Professional development of teachers	0	3	15	44	38	100
Pedagogical documentation	0	5	16	46	33	100
Evaluation of teaching and self-evaluation	0	5	13	33	49	100
$\Sigma$	2	30	128	313	327	

When we compare the answers of our respondents, we can conclude the following notion. On the one hand, respondents school pedagogues almost always provided counseling help to teachers in sphere of learning of pupils, cooperation with parents, as well as in maintenance of pedagogical documentation. On the other hand, respondents teachers attributed this help of school pedagogue with a high level of importance on the scale. Further activities, which teachers marked on the scale with the high level of importance, such as assistance in professional development of teachers and evaluation of teaching and self-evaluation, respondents school pedagogues marked as the activities, in which they often helped the teachers. Areas, to which teachers inclined less importance, as was the work planning, respondents school pedagogues marked as areas, in which they helped the teachers rarely. We found out that among respondents' answers exists agreement, resp. that when respondents teachers considered the help and support of school pedagogue in some of the area as more important, the more often this help respondents school pedagogues provided them, and vice versa.

**Conclusion.** In the profession of school pedagogue overlaps and merges the profession and personality. Whereas the school pedagogue enters to his work complexly, it is expected from him to possess the following personal and professional characteristics: the art of communication, stability of personality, cooperative relationships with colleagues, a high degree of tolerance of frustration, high professionalism and knowledge of school pedagogy, the need for continuous professional improvement and self-education. With his arrival to the school, changes the position of school director, teachers, pupils and parents – they all receive the professional employee, who cooperates with them, supports them and helps them to solve various problems. Great benefit is early detection and solving the problems of

pupils without their cutting off from school life and education process, resp. pupils acquire immediate help in their natural environment. Moreover, school pedagogue is equipped with special knowledge and competence that can use and implement on the development of school. His contribution to the school development is mainly in the fact that he can initiate and design processes of school improvement and development professionally and competently. Also, he can educate participants in the sphere of school development and he can track and evaluate processes of development. Profession of school pedagogue is greatly appreciated in the Republic of Serbia (as well as Croatia and Slovenia) and nowadays is regarded as the pedagogical standard of modern school (Trnavac, 1993, p. 8; Resman, 2000, p. 28).

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