Przegląd Badań Edukacyjnych
Educational Studies Review
ISSN 1895-4308
nr 41 (1/2023), s. 69–96

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

ORYGINALNE ARTYKUŁY BADAWCZE

Dorota Pankowska
Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin, Poland
e-mail: dorota.pankowska@mail.umcs.pl
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4175-2340

Janusz Kirenko
Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin, Poland
e-mail: janusz.kirenko@mail.umcs.pl
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6525-4007

Małgorzata Samujło
Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin, Poland
e-mail: malgorzata.samujlo@mail.umcs.pl
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1029-6020

Teachers' Perceptions of Their Own Competences in View of the Demands of the Professionalisation of the Teaching Profession

http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/PBE.2023.004

Abstract
Professionalism in the teaching profession plays a significant role in the execution of complex tasks and is based on relevant competences of varying scope and nature. The study conducted in a group of 2151 teachers from the Lubelskie Voivodeship in Poland focused on teachers' perceptions of their professional competences in terms of their importance, difficulty and degree of mastery. This article presents partial results obtained from a broader research project that focuses on the nature of competences divided into three categories: interpretive, prag-

matic and transgressive. The study used a 40-item questionnaire, describing different areas of teachers' knowledge, skills and activity, which operationalized broader groups of professional competences. Statistical analyses examined socio-demographic variables: gender, work experience, professional advancement grade, position held, and type and location of the educational establishment.

The analysis of the results showed that teachers differentiate their perceptions of competences according to their nature, ranking pragmatic competences as the most important, followed by interpretive and transgressive competences, respectively. They consider the skills and activities associated with transgressive and pragmatic competences to be more difficult than those associated with interpretive competences. While assessing the mastery of competences, a similar level is observed for interpretive and pragmatic competences and a lower level for transgressive competences. On the basis of these results, it can be concluded that the teachers primarily pay attention to knowledge and practical skills related to the performance of professional tasks, with less appreciation of aspects related to interpretive and transgressive competences. This approach seems insufficient from the perspective of the ongoing professionalisation of the teaching profession and the challenges of 21st-century education.

Keywords: teacher, teacher competences, professionalisation of the teaching profession, teacher education, perception of own competences.

Introduction

The professionalisation of the teaching profession along with its consequences constitute an important area of reflection in pedeutology at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. The term pedeutology can be applied to the profession and its status as well as to the quality of teachers' activities (Gołębniak, 1998, pp. 114–118; Kawecki, 2004, pp. 14–23; Sokołowska-Dzioba & Pankowska, 2007, pp. 215–223; Gołębniak & Zamorska, 2014, pp. 26–54; Urbaniak-Zając, 2016, pp. 9–15). This is determined by the needs of a modern, dynamically changing society and requires systemic changes, because, as J. Madalińska-Michalak (2021, p. 256) writes, "developing teachers' professionalism, identifying new areas of their responsibility along with strengthening teachers' socio-professional position, strengthening the attractiveness of this profession, is indispensable in efforts aimed at increasing the quality of education." However, in this article, we will refer to the latter understanding of professionalism, resulting from the specificity and complexity of the teacher's professional role (Rubacha, 2000, pp. 101–132) and actions taken in situations of

high unpredictability and responsibility, posing significant problems, as well as entangled in broad social, ethical and relational contexts. Justifying the specificity of teacher's professionalism, H. Kwiatkowska (2008, pp. 169–170) draws attention to the necessity of combining professional competence – conceived as technical, instrumental proficiency, necessary in the performance of everyday tasks – with scientific, theoretical proficiency, requiring analytical and interpretive skills and continuous professional development. Following U. Oevermann's concept, D. Urbaniak-Zając (2016, p. 62) writes: "professional mastery consists in the ability to use scientific knowledge to understand the individual, specific situation" and its conditions; however, this is possible only when this knowledge is confronted with experience. In this context, competences, which according to J. Erpenbeck and V. Heyse (as cit. in Hunziker, 2018, p. 40) "have their basis in knowledge, are constituted through values, take the form of skills, are consolidated through experience and are realised through the will," form an essential component of teacher professionalism.[1]

Theoretical and methodological basis of the research

An analysis of a number of typologies of teacher competences allows us to identify a variety of criteria used to distinguish and structure them. These criteria take into account, *inter alia*, teacher's tasks and functions, the goals of education, the structure of activities and the demands associated with contemporary challenges (Pankowska, 2016, pp. 187–194). There has been a gradual shift away from typologies defining only tasks limited to instrumental proficiency towards approaches that reveal the necessity of broadening the catalogue of competences related to social transformations (for instance, in the field of IT, media and multicultural education) and those that elucidate the nature and structure of competences in relation to changes in the process of professionalisation of the teaching profession.

[1] It is worth noting that not all conceptions of teacher professionalism use the category of competences (Gołębniak & Zamorska, 2014; Urbaniak-Zając, 2016, p. 225), which does not mean that they cannot be found or reconstructed as the basis for all professional activities undertaken by teachers and educators.

The importance of understanding events and examining one's own practice as the impetus and motive for consulting theory is exposed in J. Elliot's assumptions of "new professionalism." Uniqueness and contextualisation mean that teachers cannot merely act in a reactive, reproductive way in their work. Effective, on-going response to a given situation requires a reflexive approach, openness when interpreting complex teaching and educational situations (Kwiatkowska, 2008, pp. 183–186). The role of reflexivity in the integration of thinking and educational practice is also highlighted by D. Tripp (1996) in his concept of "professional judgement" or by M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, who emphasises the discursive and evaluative nature of knowledge. In this approach, the professional reflection of the teacher-educator is understood as a dynamic property of the individual, based on a rational and critical judgement of educational situations and their consequences for both the individual and the wider social environment, which can (and should) be developed in the process of preparation for the profession (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 1997, p. 19). This idea is also present in the international discourse, in which pedeutologists – in addition to in-depth knowledge and instrumental skills – emphasise many of the teacher's cognitive skills, based on analysis, interpretation of their own actions and their context, and readiness to respond to change (Caena, 2011). The importance of interpretive competences, as superior to technical ones, is also emphasised in Polish typologies by S. Dylak (1995, pp. 37–42) or R. Kwaśnica (2003, p. 203).

The teacher in a modern school is expected to accompany the student in the learning process, to understand the educational process and the needs, experiences and possibilities of children, to be solution-oriented, which requires competences related to activity and acting, such as enthusiasm, optimism, innovativeness, initiative, creativeness, giving impulse (Hunziker, 2018, pp. 31–37; pp. 192–193). This is in line with the concept of a creative teacher, capable of undertaking self-education and carrying out tasks that require open-mindedness and innovativeness (Schulz, 1989, pp. 78–79; Strykowski, 2007, p. 79). Creative competences are thus highlighted, which are important in the creation of one's own work environment and professional knowledge, but also in the development of specific (creative and self-creation) skills in students (Szempruch, 2012, p. 194). They provide oppor-

tunities for personal self-realisation and transgression,[2] relating both to the subject and the symbolic world, as well as to material and social reality. The aforementioned areas of transgression are closely linked to another relatively new category of competences – emancipatory competences. According to M. Czerepaniak-Walczak (1994, pp. 119–120), emancipatory competences are "a learnable, dynamic property of the subject that expresses itself in the readiness to go beyond limitations, in consciously claiming due rights, substantively arguing the need for them, paving the way for their attainment, achieving them and using them to improve oneself and the environment." Subjective emancipatory competences include innovativeness, rationality, responsibility and courage (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 1994, pp. 121–122). In this sense, emancipatory competences include both interpretive and creative competences, but are enriched with an element of action and ethical responsibility that goes beyond educational reality – for the sake of a wider social change, which adds a new dimension to teacher professionalism.

The research findings concerning teachers' competences presented in this article refer to the need to consider those that determine what Hoyle and Stenhouse call (as cit. in Gołebniak & Zamorska, 2014, pp. 29–33) extended professionalism. In the conception of D. Pankowska (2016, pp. 195–196), which is the starting point of the present study, different typological approaches were synthesised. It involves the traditional division of competences with regard to the teacher's basic tasks (related to education and upbringing), implemented in the following dimensions: subjective, educational and sociocultural, as well as according to their nature: interpretive, action-oriented and transgressive competences.

The results discussed below were obtained as part of a wider research project entitled "Professional competences and training needs of teachers in the Lubelskie Voivodeship."[3] This article analyses only the (previously non-examined) teachers' perceptions of competences according to their nature. Thus, three types of such competences were distinguished:

---

[2] Following J. Kozielecki (1997, p. 43), transgression is construed as the intentional crossing of the subject's boundaries, in this case – those relating to creativity and self-creation.

[3] The project was implemented by the team of the Department of Pedeutology and Health Education of the Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin in cooperation with the Lublin Self-Government Teacher Training Center (Pankowska, 2022).

- interpretive competences, referring to in-depth analysis, interpretation and evaluation of reality (including oneself, educational processes and students, social and cultural phenomena);
- pragmatic competences,[4] ensuring effective activity in the areas of typical teacher tasks (didactic, educational, organisational etc.) at every stage: planning, implementation and evaluation;
- transgressive competences, involving the creation of new qualities in terms of self-creation, innovativeness, pedagogical creativity and taking actions for the benefit of the wider environment.

The aim of this segment of the wider research was to determine how the surveyed teachers perceive their own competences according to their nature.

The following research questions were formulated:

1. How do teachers perceive their own interpretive, pragmatic and transgressive competences in terms of their: importance for their own work, degree of difficulty and degree of mastery?
2. Are, and if so, how are the perceptions of these competences differentiated by socio-demographic variables such as gender, work experience, professional advancement grade, position held, type and location of educational establishment?

The survey was diagnostic in nature and therefore no research hypotheses were formulated. The methodological tool used in the survey was the "Questionnaire of professional competences and training needs of teachers" (experimental version). It included a list of operationalised competences divided into 7 basic groups, resulting from the teacher tasks, and distinguished in the "competence matrix" developed by D. Pankowska (2016, p. 200): content-oriented and cognitive, didactic and organisational, diagnostic and research-oriented, educational, communicative, moral, IT and media-related. The tool included specific skills, scopes of knowledge and activities of teachers relating to these groups of competences, as well as took into account the internal division related to the differentiated nature of competences (interpretive, pragmatic, transgressive) in the distinguished groups. To assess the

[4] In the original conception of D. Pankowska (2016) they were referred to as "action-oriented."

diagnostic (internal) relevance, the competent judges (teaching and research staff and teaching staff members with extensive experience in teacher education, and practitioners – employees of a teacher training institution) method was used.[5]

Given the subject of analysis, 40 questionnaire items were grouped into the following competence categories: interpretive (9), pragmatic (23) and transgressive (8). For instance, the first group included skills or activities such as: "Reflection on values and goals in educational work"; the second: "Effective organisation of the educational process, use of various methods and forms of didactic work"; and the third: "The ability to create original educational and preventive programmes in relation to students' needs, interests and problems." The respondents' task was to indicate on a 5-point scale for each item to what extent a given skill/scope of knowledge/activity is important, difficult and mastered in their case.

The research was conducted online between 3rd September and 3rd November 2021. The questionnaire was addressed to more than 2,000 educational establishments in the Lubelskie Voivodeship (in Poland) via Education Authority Global Service System (*Globalny System Obsługi Kuratorium*). Participation in the research was anonymous and voluntary.

The study group comprised 2151 teachers, 86% of whom were women, corresponding to the feminisation of the teaching profession. The study included 126 teachers in leadership positions (principals, vice-principals), who accounted for 5.9% of the total respondents. The distribution of the socio-demographic variables surveyed in in the study is shown in Table 1.

[5] Work on further parametric evaluation and refinement of the tool is still in progress.

Table 1. Number of surveyed teachers according to selected socio-demographic variables

Variable		Total	
		n	%
Type of establishment	kindergarten	270	12.55
	primary school	1335	62.06
	high school	180	8.37
	vocational school	166	7.27
	care and education centre	20	0.93
	other	180	8.37
Location	urban commune	1028	47.79
	rural commune	904	42.03
	rural-urban commune	219	10.18
Position	teacher	2025	94.14
	management staff	126	5.86
Work experience[6]	below 5 years	220	10.23
	6–10 years	207	9.62
	11–15 years	274	12.74
	16–20 years	317	14.74
	over 20 years	1133	52.67
Professional advancement grade	trainee teacher	56	2.60
	contract teacher	308	14.32
	appointed teacher	427	19.85
	chartered teacher	1340	62.30
	not applicable	20	0.93

Source: Authors' research.

[6] The division into 5 years of work experience intervals up to 20 years was intended to increase the precision of this variable, whereas 20 years of work experience was considered sufficient to reach full professional maturity expressed most often in the form of attaining the chartered teacher degree, and thus further detailed divisions were abandoned.

In quantitative terms, considering the number of teachers in the Lubelskie Voivodeship in 2021,[7] the surveyed sample represented 5.5% of the total population. However, the proportion of different groups of teachers according to their professional advancement grade was unbalanced: 6.1% of chartered teachers, 5.4% of appointed teachers, 4.9% of contract teachers and only 0.8% of trainee teachers.

Presentation and analysis of research results

The average scores[8] (and other descriptive indicators) obtained by the respondents on interpretive, pragmatic and transgressive competences were compared with the assessment of their importance, difficulty and mastery as reported by the respondents (Table 2).

Table 2. Selected descriptive indicators for assessing the importance, difficulty and mastery of interpretive, pragmatic and transgressive competences

Variables	Ave	Med	Min	Max	SD	SK	KU
II	4.33	4.56	1.0	5.0	.70	-1.32	1.85
PI	4.44	4.65	1.0	5.0	.65	-1.65	3.22
TI	4.21	4.38	1.0	5.0	.71	-1.16	1.45
ID	2.46	2.33	1.0	5.0	.95	.33	-.64
PD	2.56	2.52	1.0	5.0	.94	.22	-.73
TD	2.58	2.63	1.0	5.0	.90	.14	-.60
IM	3.74	3.78	1.0	5.0	.71	-.65	.92
PM	3.71	3.78	1.0	5.0	.69	-.56	.80

[7] Retrieved 21 April 2023 from: https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/811,nauczyciele-w-osobach-i-etatach/resource/39877/table?page=1&per_page=20&q=&sort=.

[8] Due to the uneven number of items in each category of competences, a weighted average was used in the statistical analyses.

Table 2. (continued)

Variables	Ave	Med	Min	Max	SD	SK	KU
TM	3.54	3.63	1.0	5.0	.72	-.32	.25

II – interpretive importance; ID – interpretive difficulty; IT – interpretive mastery; PI – pragmatic importance; PD – pragmatic difficulty; PM – pragmatic mastery; TI – transgressive importance; TD – transgressive difficulty; TM – transgressive mastery

Source: Authors' research.

The average and median results for all respondents indicate that teachers' perceptions of competences vary according to their nature. Their subjective assessment of the importance of a particular type of competence seems to be particularly significant here. Teachers consider pragmatic competences to be the most important, followed by interpretive and transgressive competences, respectively. However, the results obtained for the last two categories are still high, exceeding the value of 4.0 on a 5-point scale. On the other hand, the skills and activities related to transgressive and pragmatic competences appear to teachers as more difficult than those related to interpretive competences, although teachers generally assess the level of difficulty in all groups as medium. In turn, the assessment of the degree of mastery of particular competences reveals similar level for interpretive and pragmatic competences (above 3.7) and a lower one in relation to transgressive competences (3.54). It can therefore be concluded that the respondents pay attention primarily to the knowledge and skills that are related to the performance of professional tasks, but they also appreciate the need to analyse and interpret different aspects of their work. In these areas respondents feel most confident in their skills. By contrast, they treat transgressive competences involving both creative action and broader social engagement differently. This is because they are assessed as the least important and simultaneously the most difficult and relatively least mastered by them.

A more detailed insight into the respondents' perceptions of competences is provided by an analysis of the results in the context of the following variables: gender, type and location of the educational establishment, work expe-

rience and professional advancement grade, and the position (managerial or not) held.

In the case of gender, the differences in the average results (calculated based on the t°-test for independent pairs) were found to be statistically significant only in terms of the assessment of the importance of different types of competences (Table 3).

Table 3. Assessment of the level of different types of professional competences according to the respondents' gender

Variables	Important				Difficult				Mastered			
	Ave F	Ave M	t°	d	Ave F	Ave M	t°	d	Ave F	Ave M	t°	d
Interpretive	4.36	4.12	5.55***	WE	2.45	2.55	-1.71 ~	WE	3.75	3.70	.95	–
Pragmatic	4.48	4.21	6.79***	ME	2.55	2.62	-1.12	–	3.71	3.70	.45	–
Transgressive	4.24	3.99	5.69***	WE	2.56	2.65	-1.61	–	3.54	4.56	-.45	–

*** – $p < .000$; ~ – nearly significant
F – female, M – male
d – Cohen's d; WE – weak effect; ME – moderate effect

Source: Authors' research.

Compared to male teachers surveyed, female teachers consider all types of competences to be significantly more important. This may be due to women's greater identification with the profession.[9] The probability of such an explanation is strengthened by the results concerning the evaluation of the degree of difficulty and the degree of mastery of the competences, which are primarily determined by professional preparation, in which no significant gender differences were found.

[9] Such an explanation is suggested by the results of research into the motives for choosing a profession (Kawka, 1997, pp. 73–84; Kędzierska, 2012, pp. 186–196; Malinowska et al., 2014, pp. 75–76), evaluation of one's own professional group (Putkiewicz, 1999, pp. 56–62) or disillusionment with work (Kwiatkowska, 1997, pp. 44–45).

There are few differences linked to the type of educational establishment – there are no statistically significant ones when it comes to assessing the degree of difficulty of the different types of competences, and in the case of their importance, the only difference found is that between female teachers in kindergarten and the respondents working in primary schools – the former consider pragmatic competences less important (4.34) than those working in primary schools (4.47). It is worth noting that among the pragmatic competences listed in the questionnaire, many skills were mentioned that are less applicable in kindergarten (e.g. didactic and organisational, IT and media-related skills); hence, they did not seem as important to female teachers working with the youngest children as for other teachers. There was more variation in the area of assessing the mastery of the different types of competences (Table 4), although here, too, the lower scores of the female teachers from kindergarten can be explained by the specificity of their work.

Table 4. Self-assessment of the degree of mastery of professional competences by the teachers surveyed according to the type of educational establishment

Variables	F°	Type of educational establishment	Ave	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
IM	1.95~	kindergarten	3.62	**	*				
		primary school	3.75				**		
		high school	3.74						
		vocational school	3.76				*		
		care and education centre	3.67						
		other	3.81				**	**	
PM	1.89~	kindergarten	3.59	**		*			
		primary school	3.73				**		
		high school	3.73				*		
		vocational school	3.69						
		care and education centre	3.61						
		other	3.72						

Table 4. (continued)

Variables	F°	Type of educational establishment	Ave	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
TM	.59								

** – p < .01; * – p < .05; ~ – nearly significant.

Source: Authors' research.

As in the case of the assessment of the importance of competences, significant differences in the mastery of pragmatic competences are found in relation to kindergarten and primary school and "other" schools, but also high schools (although only at the p < .05 level). On the other hand, in terms of mastery of interpretive competences, variance is found in relation to primary school and vocational school. The lower scores for mastery of pragmatic competences may be due to the lack of need for kindergarten teachers to manifest certain skills, while the lower average scores for interpretive competences are puzzling. Given that also employees of care and education centres reported lower averages in terms of their mastery of these competences, one may wonder if this is related to the training process during pedagogical studies. Could it be that – in comparison to main field studies – they develop analytical and critical thinking skills to a lesser extent?

More statistically significant differences were found (ANOVA, LSD test) in the area of the perception of the different dimensions of interpretive, pragmatic and transgressive competences according to the location of the educational establishment (Table 5).

Table 5. Assessment of the level of professional competences by the teachers surveyed according to the location of the educational establishment

Variables	F°	Location	Ave	1.	2.	3.
II	3.43*	1. urban commune	4.33			*
		2. rural commune	4.29			**
		3. rural-urban commune	4.43	*	**	

Table 5. (continued)

Variables	F°	Location	Ave	1.	2.	3.
PI	2.70~	1. urban commune	4.43			*
		2. rural commune	4.42			*
		3. rural-urban commune	4.53	*	*	
TI	3.99*	1. urban commune	4.21			*
		2. rural commune	4.18			**
		3. rural-urban commune	4.33	*	**	
ID	4.87**	1. urban commune	2.39		*	**
		2. rural commune	2.50	*		
		3. rural-urban commune	2.58	**		
PD	3.38*	1. urban commune	2.51		~	*
		2. rural commune	2.59	~		
		3. rural-urban commune	2.67	*		
TD	5.14**	1. urban commune	2.52		*	**
		2. rural commune	2.61	*		
		3. rural-urban commune	2.70	**		
IM	3.49*	1. urban commune	3.78		**	
		2. rural commune	3.69	**		
		3. rural-urban commune	3.74			
PM	.88					
TM	3.38*	1. urban commune	3.58		*	
		2. rural commune	3.50	*		
		3. rural-urban commune	3.57			

** – $p < .01$; * – $p < .05$; ~ – nearly significant

Source: Authors' research.

Considering the assessment of the importance of competences, teachers from rural-urban communes perceive all types of competences as more important, compared to respondents from rural and urban communes. When it comes to the assessment of difficulty, the assessments are somewhat different: teachers from rural-urban and rural communes consider interpretive and transgressive competences to be more difficult than teachers from urban establishments, but the differences are much smaller for pragmatic competences. By contrast, when it came to assessing the mastery of competences – there were no differences in pragmatic competences, and in the other two types – it was teachers from rural schools who scored significantly lower than teachers from urban schools (especially in the case of interpretive competences). Such a result confirms the previous observation that the assessment of mastery of pragmatic competences, i.e. specific skills related to the performance of everyday professional tasks, which are most emphasised in teacher education, does not differentiate the respondents (or the differences are very small). Conversely, those aspects of teacher's work that are less measurable, more difficult to assess objectively, and usually neglected in teachers' professional preparation (interpretive and transgressive competences), may be more influenced by environmental factors. However, separate research would be required to explain the background of these differences.

More pronounced differences are definitely visible based on the work experience of the teachers surveyed, especially in terms of their assessment of the importance and degree of mastery of the different types of competences (Table 6).

Table 6. Assessment of the level of professional competences by the teachers surveyed according to their work experience

Variables	F°	Work experience	Ave	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
II	5.58***	below 5 years	4.24		**			
		6–10 years	4.22		**			
		11–15 years	4.29		*			
		16–20 years	4.24		***			
		over 20 years	4.39	*		***	**	**

Table 6. (continued)

Variables	F°	Work experience	Ave	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
PI	8.88***	below 5 years	4.31		***			
		6–10 years	4.32		***			
		11–15 years	4.39		**			
		16–20 years	4.38		***			
		over 20 years	4.51	**		***	***	***
TI	2.86*	below 5 years	4.13					
		6–10 years	4.16		~			
		11–15 years	4.20					
		16–20 years	4.14		*			
		over 20 years	4.25			*	~	*
ID	1.99~	below 5 years	2.58		*			
		6–10 years	2.44					
		11–15 years	2.52					
		16–20 years	2.50					
		over 20 years	2.42					*
PD	3.65**	below 5 years	2.73		***		*	
		6–10 years	2.53					*
		11–15 years	2.61		~			
		16–20 years	2.63		*			
		over 20 years	2.50	~		*		***

Table 6. (continued)

Variables	F°	Work experience	Ave	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
TD	3.21*	below 5 years	2.70		**			
		6–10 years	2.57					
		11–15 years	2.64		*			
		16–20 years	2.65		*			
		over 20 years	2.52	*		*		*
IM	14.71***	below 5 years	3.49	***	***	***		
		6–10 years	3.58	*	***	*		
		11–15 years	3.73		*		*	***
		16–20 years	3.71		**		*	***
		over 20 years	3.83	*		**	***	***
PM	2.84***	below 5 years	3.40	***	***	***	*	
		6–10 years	3.54	*	***	**		*
		11–15 years	3.68		**		*	***
		16–20 years	3.71		*		**	***
		over 20 years	3.81	**		*	***	***
TM	12.88***	below 5 years	3.29	***	***	***	~	
		6–10 years	3.40	~	***	~		~
		11–15 years	3.73		*		~	***
		16–20 years	3.53		*		~	***
		over 20 years	3.63	*		*	***	***

*** – $p < .000$; ** – $p < .01$; * – $p < .05$; ~ – nearly significant

Source: Authors' research.

When assessing the importance of competences in relation to all their types, teachers with the longest work experience (more than 20 years) obtained the highest scores, which is probably associated with their reflection gained from long work experience and – perhaps – also a stronger identification with the profession. Professional experience also fosters a change in attitudes towards the level of difficulty of competences: teachers with the longest work experience – compared to those with less experience – score lowest on this scale, whereas statistically significant differences are mainly found among novice teachers, especially in the area of pragmatic competences. The results for the assessment of competence mastery are the clearest and most consistent with the logic of professional development. In all categories, the average scores increase in a linear manner and the differences are statistically significant almost in all categories – from the lowest in the group of teachers with less than 5 years of work experience to the highest in the group working in the profession for more than 20 years. Interestingly, the greatest similarity in all types of competences is found among respondents with 11–15 and 16–20 years of work experience. It seems, therefore, that the period between 10 and 20 years of work experience marks a time of relative professional stability with regard to the sense of one's own competences.

Another variable analysed was the professional advancement grade (according to the system in force until 2022 in Poland, encompassing four grades: trainee, contract, appointed and chartered teachers) (Table 7).

Table 7. Assessment of the level of professional competence by the teachers surveyed according to their professional advancement grade

Variables	F°	Professional advancement grade	Ave	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
II	1.48							
PI	5.09***	trainee teacher	4.36					
		contract teacher	4.36		**			*
		appointed teacher	4.39		*			*
		chartered teacher	4.48	*		**		**
		not applicable	4.03	*	*	*		

Table 7. (continued)

Variables	F°	Professional advancement grade	Ave	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
TI	1.22							
ID	1.52							
PD	2.83*	trainee teacher	2.85	*	*			*
		contract teacher	2.66		*			
		appointed teacher	2.55				*	
		chartered teacher	2.53			*	*	
		not applicable	2.31				*	
TD	2.42*	trainee teacher	2.79		~			*
		contract teacher	2.68		*			~
		appointed teacher	2.57					
		chartered teacher	2.55			*	~	
		not applicable	2.29			~	*	
IM	12.98***	trainee teacher	3.44	*	***			
		contract teacher	3.57	*	***			
		appointed teacher	3.69		**	*	*	*
		chartered teacher	3.81	*	***			
		not applicable	3.34	*	**			
PM	18.95***	trainee teacher	3.32	***	***	~		
		contract teacher	3.50	**	***		~	
		appointed teacher	3.66		***	**	***	**
		chartered teacher	3.79	***		***	***	**
		not applicable	3.34	*	**			

Table 7. (continued)

Variables	F°	Professional advancement grade	Ave	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
TM	11.98***	trainee teacher	3.25	*	***			
		contract teacher	3.37	*	***			
		appointed teacher	3.49		**	*	*	
		chartered teacher	3.62	**		***	***	*
		not applicable	3.26		*			

*** – $p < .000$; ** – $p < .01$; * – $p < .05$; ~ – nearly significant

Source: Authors' research.

The analysis of the results (ANOVA, LSD test) showed that in relation to importance assessment, differences only exist in the case of pragmatic competences, which are perceived as more important by chartered teachers compared to the other groups of respondents. With regard to the assessment of difficulty, slight differences are noticeable not only in pragmatic competences, but also in transgressive competences – trainee and contract teachers perceive them as more difficult than appointed and chartered teachers. It is worth noting that in this aspect, the results of teachers representing the two highest professional advancement grades are almost identical, which means that a sense of confidence in their ability to cope with professional tasks is already acquired by teachers at the third stage of their professional advancement. However, this is not equivalent to the assessment of the degree of mastery of particular skills, since for all types of competences their increase is linear and the differences are statistically significant, with the largest difference between the average scores obtained by chartered teachers and trainee teachers for pragmatic competences, slightly smaller for the other types of competences. The last variable examined was the position held by teachers in the educational establishment. Comparison was made between teachers in leadership roles and others (Table 8).

Table 8. Assessment of the level of professional competence by the teachers surveyed according to the position held

Variables	Important				Difficult				Mastered			
	Ave T	Ave MS	t°	d	Ave T	Ave MS	t°	d	Ave T	Ave MS	t°	d
Interpretive	4.31	4.61	-4.78***	ME	2.46	2.44	.25	–	3.73	3.89	-2.51*	WE
Pragmatic	4.42	4.66	-3.65***	ME	2.56	2.54	.23	–	3.71	3.80	-1.45	–
Transgressive	4.19	4.50	-4.74***	ME	2.58	2.58	-.11	–	3.54	4.64	-1.49	–

*** – $p < .000$; * – $p < .05$
T – teacher, MS – management staff
d – Cohen's d; WE – weak effect; ME – moderate effect

Source: Authors' research.

No differences were found between the two groups of respondents in terms of assessing the degree of difficulty of the competences examined; in the case of mastery, a significant but weak difference was only found for interpretive competences. Teachers in managerial position scored higher probably due to the need for a more holistic view of school reality, which prompts deeper reflection. The greatest differences were found in the perceived importance of all types of competences, especially interpretive and transgressive competences in favour of teachers in leadership roles. It is likely that the greater responsibility of principals for the functioning of the educational establishment, and perhaps also their longer work experience and higher professional advancement grade related to their status, makes them more appreciative of the importance of all types of competences, especially transgressive competences, which are important both to the quality of work and to the external image of the institution.

In order to find a more specific structure of socio-demographic variables to characterise the surveyed teachers within the specified groups, discriminant equations were calculated, and the obtained results were compared with each other. Discriminant analysis is a very useful tool to indicate the individual contribution of a variable in predicting group membership and to classify cases into different groups with greater-than-random accuracy. The variables

that have the largest (standardised) regression coefficients contribute most to the prediction of group membership. A stepwise procedure for sequential equations was applied here. This procedure allows a set of variables to be considered optimal when the significance of the explained incremental variance of the results is less than the assumed level of statistical significance (Table 9).

Table 9. Discriminant analysis of professional competences across socio-demographic variables of the teachers surveyed

Socio-demographic variables	Rank positions of the competence variables in the analysis and beyond								
	II	ID	IM	PI	PD	PM	TI	TD	TM
Type of establishment	b	b	4	3*	1	3	4	b	b
Location	4	1**	b	6	2	o	5	3	b
Position held	2**	b	3	5	b	o	1**	4	b
Work experience	3	2**	1*	2*	b	1	3	2~	2*
Professional advancement grade	b	3*	b	1*	b	4	b	b	b
Gender	1**	4	2*	4	b	2	2*	1***	1*

*** – $p < .000$; ** – $p < .01$; * – $p < .05$; ~ – nearly significant
b – beyond the model

Source: Authors' research.

The conducted discriminant analysis shows that the surveyed teachers' perceptions of their own competences of different nature vary according to both the dimension assessed and the individual socio-demographic variables. The smallest share of differentiating factors can be observed in the case of pragmatic competences – only the type of educational establishment (kindergarten teachers stand out here *negatively*) as well as work experience and gender (the longer teachers have worked and the higher the professional advancement grade they have achieved, the more they value these competences, with women valuing them more than men) are important to assessing their importance. Socio-demographic variables are not significant when it comes to assessing the degree of difficulty and the degree of mastery of these competences by teachers. This last result of the conducted discriminant analysis

is rather surprising, given the previous results of differential average scores, in which it was work experience and professional advancement grade that most strongly differentiated respondents' self-assessment of mastery of practical skills; moreover, the corelation was very consistent (greater experience was associated with higher mastery of pragmatic competences). Conversely, at the statistical level, an inverse corelation (significant but weaker) was also revealed between work experience as well as professional advancement grade and the perceived difficulty of pragmatic competences (they seemed easiest to the most experienced teachers).

For interpretive competences, the variance of discriminatory factors was greater. The importance of interpretive competences depended significantly on the position held and gender – both principals and female teachers considered them more important than male respondents and teachers in non-managerial positions. In turn, for mastery of these competences, work experience (a clear linear increase in average scores) appeared to be a significant factor in addition to gender (although average results for female and male respondents were almost identical). On the other hand, for perceived difficulty of these competences, in addition to work experience and professional advancement grade, the location of the educational establishment was also important (they seemed easier for teachers working in cities than for others).

Gender turned out to be a variable present in all dimensions of transgressive competences; however, the analysis of the average scores shows that they were significantly more important and non-significantly easier, but also less mastered, for women compared to men. In terms of transgressive competences, the position held within the establishment was also found to be a discriminating factor with regard to their importance (principals scored higher on average), and work experience with regard to their mastery (teachers' assessments increased proportionally to work experience).

Considering the aggregate results of the discriminant analysis, it is possible to arrange the socio-demographic variables from most to least represented as significantly discriminating against the dependent variable: gender (5), work experience (4), position held and professional advancement grade (2 each), and type and location of educational establishment (1 each). While the clear contribution of variables such as work experience and professional

advancement grade is understandable, gender seems a less obvious factor and thus is worthy of further in-depth explanatory research.

Conclusion

The surveyed teachers appear primarily as pragmatists. Specific skills directly related to the implementation of professional tasks are both most important to them and relatively better mastered than interpretive and transgressive competences. The latter are perceived by teachers as the least important, relatively difficult (similarly to pragmatic competences) and also the least mastered. This attitude is reasonable if one considers the reality of teachers' daily work and the need to deal with "here and now" situations along with a multitude of fairly routine tasks. Both the continuous analysis of educational reality and in-depth reflection on one's own work (especially at the axiological level or in wider social contexts), as well as personal transgression (creative self-realisation in the profession) and going beyond the micro-world of the educational establishment – may appear to teachers as a certain redundancy of their professional role. However, the way in which educational institutions have operated, which worked well in times of relative stability, may have a negative impact on the quality of work and the results obtained by students in a world of information overload, constant uncertainty and dynamic technological and social transformation. Experts (Kwieciński & Śliwerski, 2019; Madalińska-Michalak, 2021) have been warning for years that a school that perpetuates the existing order, without taking into account the broader context of reality, and teachers representing narrow practicalism, will be unable to prepare the young generation to properly function in the dynamically changing present and uncertain future.

This raises the question whether a certain deficiency in interpretive and transgressive competences, as compared to pragmatic competences observed in the present study (these were based on teachers' subjective perception, which may have been overly optimistic, not necessarily reflecting actual mastery of the examined competences), may be the result of the teacher education system. Considering the current (and previous) standards of teacher education (Sokołowska-Dzioba & Pankowska, 2007; Dz.U., 2019, item 1450), it can be seen that they are still primarily focused on pragmatic competences.

Even if the learning outcomes also assume the acquisition of selected skills and attitudes that form the basis of interpretive and transgressive competences, the systemic and organisational solutions and, above all, the small number of teaching hours allocated to psycho-pedagogical education with the simultaneous surplus of curricular content significantly limit the possibility to develop those skills during studies. Similarly, the implementation of teaching practice – if it is not well integrated into the study programme, which would allow for critical interpretation of and reflection upon the experiences thus gained (as has been postulated since the 1990s – Fish, 1996; Gołębniak, 1998; Strzelecka, 1999, pp. 53–70; Wiłkomirska, 1999, pp. 17–21) – can only confirm students in the pragmatic attitude towards the profession, modelled on the attitude of teachers who supervise their practice in educational establishments (Pankowska, 2011). This issue should be further researched and discussed.

References

Caena, F. (2011). Literature Review Teachers' Core Competences: Requirements and Development. Retrieved 26 January 2023 from:https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francesca-Caena-2/publication/344906332_Literature_review_Teachers'_core_competences_requirements_and_development/links/5f988c21299bf1b53e4b860b/Literature-review-Teachers-core-competences-requirements-and-development.pdf.

Czerepaniak-Walczak, M. (1994). Kompetencje emancypacyjne – ich znaczenie w procesie przemian społecznych [Emancipatory Competences – Their Importance in the Process of Social Changes]. *Forum Oświatowe*, 2(11), 115–125.

Czerepaniak-Walczak, M. (1997). *Aspekty i źródła profesjonalnej refleksji nauczyciela* [Aspects and Sources of Teacher's Professional Reflection]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Edytor.

Dylak, S. (1995). *Wizualizacja w kształceniu nauczycieli* [Visualization in Teacher Education]. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.

Fish, D. (1996). *Kształcenie poprzez praktykę* [Learning Through Practice]. Warszawa: CODN.

Gołębniak, B.D. (1998). *Zmiany edukacji nauczycieli. Wiedza – biegłość – refleksyjność* [Changes in Teacher Education. Knowledge – Proficiency – Reflexivity]. Toruń–Poznań: Wydawnictwo Edytor.

Gołębniak, B.D., & Zamorska, B. (2014). *Nowy profesjonalizm nauczycieli. Podejścia – praktyka – przestrzeń rozwoju* [The New Professionalism of Teachers. Approaches – Practice – Development Space]. Wrocław: Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa.

Hunziker, D. (2018). *Kompetencje bez tajemnic* [Competences without Secrets]. Słupsk–Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Dobra Literatura.

Kawecki, I. (2004). *Wiedza praktyczna nauczyciela* [Practical Knowledge of the Teacher]. Kraków: Impuls.

Kawka, Z. (1998). *Między misją a frustracją. Społeczna rola nauczyciela* [Between Mission and Frustration. The Social Role of the Teacher]. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Kędzierska, H. (2012). *Kariery zawodowe nauczycieli. Konteksty – wzory – pola dyskursu* [Professional Careers of Teachers. Contexts – Patterns – Fields of Discourse]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.

Kozielecki, J. (1997). *Transgresja i kultura* [Transgression and Culture]. Warszawa: Żak.

Kwaśnica, R. (2003). Wprowadzenie do myślenia o nauczycielu [An Introduction to Thinking About the Teacher]. In: Z. Kwieciński, & B. Śliwerski (Eds.), *Pedagogika* [Pedagogy], v. 2 (pp. 291–323). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Kwiatkowska, H. (1997). Oczekiwania nauczyciela wobec szkoły jako miejsca pracy [Teacher's Expectations Towards School as a Workplace]. *Edukacja*, 1, 41–51.

Kwiatkowska, H. (2008). *Pedeutologia* [Pedeutology]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne.

Kwieciński, Z., & Śliwerski, B. (Eds.) (2019). *Pedagogika* [Pedagogy]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Liczba nauczycieli w 2021 r. według województw [Number of Teachers in 2021 by Voivodeships]. Retrieved 20 April 2023 from: https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/811,nauczyciele-w-osobach-i-etatach/resource/39877/table?page=1&per_page=20&q=&sort=.

Madalińska-Michalak, J. (2021). *Pedeutologia. Prawno-etyczne podstawy zawodu nauczyciela* [Pedeutology. Legal and Ethical Foundations of the Teaching Profession]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, doi: 10.31338/uw.9788323550105.

Malinowska, K., Smak, M., Walczak, D., & Wichrowski, A. (2014). Wizerunek nauczycieli [The Image of Teachers]. In: M. Federowicz, J. Choińska-Mika, & D. Walczak (Eds.), *Liczą się nauczyciele. Raport o stanie edukacji 2013* [Teachers Matter. Report on the State of Education 2013], (pp. 77–95). Warszawa: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Pankowska, D. (2011). *Praktyczne przygotowanie do zawodu nauczyciela. Raport z analizy programów praktyk pedagogicznych* [Practical Preparation for the Teaching Profession. Report on the Analysis of Teaching Practice Programs]. Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Zamościu.

Pankowska, D. (2016). Kompetencje nauczycielskie – próba syntezy (projekt autorski) [Teaching Competences – An Attempt at a Synthesis (Author's Project)]. *Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny*, 35(3), 187–209, doi: 10.17951/lrp.2016.35.3.187.

Pankowska, D. (2022). *Kompetencje zawodowe i potrzeby szkoleniowe nauczycieli województwa lubelskiego. Raport z adan ilościowych* [Professional Competences and Training Needs of Teachers in the Lubelskie Voivodeship. Quantitative Research Report]. Lublin. Retrieved 20 April 2023 from: https://www.lscdn.pl/pl/publikacje/publikacje-pozostale/13954,Kompetencje-zawodowe-i-potrzeby-szkoleniowe-nauczycieli-wojewodztwa-lubelskiego-.html.

Putkiewicz, E. (1999). *Ocena własnej grupy zawodowej* [Assessment of One's Own Professional Group]. In: E. Putkiewicz, K.E. Siellawa-Kolbowska., A. Wiłkomirska, & M. Zahorska (Eds.), *Nauczyciele wobec badań edukacji. Raport z badan* [Teachers Towards Education Reform. Research Report], (pp. 56–62). Warszawa: Żak.

Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 25 lipca 2019 r. w sprawie standardu kształcenia przygotowującego do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela. Dz.U. 2019 poz. 1450 [Decree of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of July 25, 2019 on the Standard of Education Preparing for the Teaching Profession. OJ 2019 item 1450]. Warszawa. Retrieved 20 May 2021 from: https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20190001450/O/D20191450.pdf.

Rubacha, K. (2000). *Pełnienie roli nauczyciela a realizacja zadań rozwojowych w okresie wczesnej dorosłości* [Playing the Role of a Teacher and the Implementation of Developmental Tasks in Early Adulthood]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK.

Sokołowska-Dzioba, T., & Pankowska, D. (2007). Lejtmotyw profesjonalizacji edukacji nauczycieli w kontekście obowiązujących standardów kształcenia [The Leitmotif of the Professionalization of Teacher Education in the Context of the Applicable Educational Standards]. In: Z. Bartkowicz, M. Kowaluk, & M. Samujło (Eds.), *Nauczyciel kompetentny. Teraźniejszość i przyszłość* [Competent Teacher. Present and Future], (pp. 215–223). Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.

Schulz, R. (1989). *Nauczyciel jako innowator* [The Teacher as an Innovator]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.

Strykowski, W. (2007). *Nauczyciel i jego kompetencje* [The Teacher and His Competences]. In: W. Strykowski, J. Strykowska, & J. Pielachowski (Eds.), *Kompetencje nauczyciela szkoły współczesnej* [Competences of a Modern School Teacher], (pp. 68–84). Poznań: Oficyna Ekonomiczna Wydawnictwa eMPi^2.

Strzelecka, A. (1999). Kształcenie przyszłych nauczycieli w różnych sytuacjach edukacyjnych [Educating Future Teachers in Various Educational Situations]. In: A. Brzezińska, D. Klus-Stańska, & A. Strzelecka (Eds.), *O nowe podejście w kształceniu nauczycieli* [A New Approach to Teacher Education], (pp. 53–70). Warszawa: MEN.

Szempruch, J. (2012). *Nauczyciel w warunkach zmiany społecznej i edukacyjnej* [A Teacher in Conditions of Social and Educational Change]. Kraków: Impuls.

Tripp, D. (1996). *Zdarzenia krytyczne w nauczaniu. Kształtowanie profesjonalnego osądu* [Critical Events in Teaching. Forming Professional Judgment]. Warszawa: WSiP.

Urbaniak-Zając, D. (2016). *W poszukiwaniu teorii działania profesjonalnego pedagogów: badania rekonstrukcyjne* [In Search of a Theory of Professional Educators: Reconstructive Research]. Kraków: Impuls.

Wiłkomirska, A. (1999). Teoria i praktyka – próba pojednania [Theory and Practice – an Attempt at Reconciliation]. In: M. Dagiel, D. Fish, J.Z. Górnikiewicz., M. Jaskulski, J. Pośpiech, A. Wiłkomirska, & N. Wasilewska (Eds.), *Studia edukacyjne* [Educational Studies], (pp. 17–21). Warszawa: MEN.