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Typology of Teachers in Terms of Perceived Students' Misbehavior – Differences in Teachers' Self-Efficacy

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Annotation. The aim of this paper is to identify the typology of teachers in the extent of perceived students' misbehavior and the differences in teachers' self-efficacy. We used our own questionnaire as a research tool aimed to identify the frequency of symptoms of misbehavior and the OSTES Questionnaire to identify the self-efficacy of teachers. We identified two types of teachers in terms of the extent of perceived students' misbehavior, which also exhibits significant differences in teachers' self-efficacy.

Keywords: *misbehavior, teachers' self-efficacy, cluster analysis, efficacy in instructional strategy, efficacy in classroom management.*

Introduction

The pedagogical and didactic competencies of teachers are the activities that can be observed and implemented in the educational process, namely: psychological aspect (i.e., personality and its manifestations – character, abilities, emotions, interests, and others) and praxeological aspect (manifested in the professional preparedness and proper implementation of different teaching activities). In addition to the above-mentioned pedagogical and didactic competencies, the success of the teaching profession also depends on the teacher's self-concept, i.e. the teacher's view of self as a professional whose task is to educate and train others. The way how teachers view themselves as professionals is significantly conditioned by their ability to view themselves as persons performing

various activities at school, and also the ability to process and evaluate feedback from their surroundings. One plane of the above self-concept is **self-efficacy**, which can be defined as the teacher's faith or belief that he/she can adequately evaluate and utilize his/her skills and competencies in teaching.

Self-efficacy greatly determines the success or failure of human activity and acts as a mobilizer of abilities, skills, and knowledge. Self-efficacy is associated with numerous aspects of the performance of the teaching profession, for example, it is a significant predictor of persistence and efforts of teachers (Bandura, 1988), effective organization, planning, and management of class (Giallo & Little, 2003), the teachers with a higher degree of self-efficacy have pupils with a higher degree of motivation (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012), they are satisfied with their work (Katsantonis, 2020) and, last but not least, they perceive fewer signs of inappropriate behavior on the part of the students (Kokkinos, 2007;Kulinna et al., 2006). The purpose of this study is to develop a typology of teachers in terms of the perceived students' misbehavior. This means that the teachers are divided into groups according to the extent to which they are confronted by inappropriate students' conduct. The resulting groups of teachers are then compared in terms of what the extent of their self-efficacy is, assuming that the teachers who are confronted with inappropriate messages at a higher rate reach lower levels of self-efficacy.

Literature Review

Students' misbehavior involves symptoms such as lack of attention, disobedience, and lack of engagement, which all hinder the teaching process. In particular, it may be a variety of symptoms such as in-class chatter, failure to perform tasks, verbal or physical aggression, indifference to education etc. According to the Institute of Educational Studies (IES), some teachers have one or more students in class who exhibit persistent problem behavior, interference, opposition, and unwanted or defiant behavior. These students create a chaotic environment in the classroom, which seriously undermines other students to receive appropriate instruction, and are instrumental in creating a negative atmosphere in class (In Florez & Gonzalez, 2015). The presence of even a single disturbing student in class lowers the academic performance of their peers – namely, according to Fletcher (2009), by a 10% standard deviation in math and reading. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom also causes other children to be exposed to higher levels of daily stress, which is associated with greater activation on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrecorticoral axis (HPA) and an increase in the level of cortisol (Lupien et al., 2009). Barela et al. (2018) point out that if misbehavior is not addressed, it can escalate into a graver and less manageable problems.

Scientific literature mentions the 80-15-5 principle in the context of inappropriate behavior, which stands for the approximate percentage of students in each class. Up to

80% of students follow the rules of conduct, 15% of students break them occasionally, and 5% of students violate them frequently (these individuals exhibit Oppositional Defiant Disorder, anger management disorder, spikes of fury, and possibly other disorders). Discipline in class is therefore determined by the hesitating 15% of students. These pupils behave well in one class, but disturb in another, and this behavior is also greatly influenced by the teachers themselves, their class management, authority, readiness, ability to make the class attractive, etc. (Holeček, 2014). We believe that it also includes teachers' self-efficacy, as suggested by the studies cited below.

The relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and behavioral problems in class were also studied by Giallo & Little (2003). The results showed a significant relationship between the level of moderate self-efficacy, the severity of problem behavior and classroom management. This means that the teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy do not tolerate problem behavior in class, and at the same time are able to manage problem behavior to a greater extent. As suggested by Zee (2016), the studies indicate that teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy create a more favorable atmosphere in the classroom, prepare tasks that push the students' abilities, make efforts to involve the students meaningfully, and manage the pupils with behavioral problems more effectively. The teachers with a lesser degree of self-efficacy are more vulnerable in the classes with behavioral problems and use less efficient strategies to deal with stress (Evans & Tribble, 1986; Parkay et al., 1988). The teachers with higher self-efficacy feel more confident in dealing with inappropriate students' behavior (Gordon, 2001) and they are more effective in managing classes and giving instructions (Dârjan, 2012). On the contrary, the teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy feel less competent in managing the behavior of pupils, they assume a less humanistic approach, using more negative consequences for students' misbehavior (Khani & Mizaee, 2015). According to the study by Lopes et al. (2017), self-efficacy is a construct that serves as a very good predictor of inappropriate behavior in class.

Based on the above, we believe that the teachers' self-efficacy also translates into coping with difficult situations, which also includes the management of inappropriate behavior on the part of students. In the above context, we formulate the following **primary aim of our research**: identify the typology of teachers in terms of the extent of perceived misbehavior by the students and the differences in teachers' self-efficacy. Having detailed the main aim, the following partial objectives can be formulated:

VO1: What is the typology of teachers in terms of the perceived signs of students' misbehavior?

VO2: Are there significant differences in the perceived professional fitness of teachers (self-efficacy) in the identified groups of teachers?

Methods

Research Sample

The sample consisted of 199 secondary school teachers in Slovakia, of which 150 (75.4%) were women and 49 (24.6%) were men. The mean age was 47.78 years (SD 10.132). The mean teaching experience was 21.12 years (SD 11.060).

Techniques and Data Collection Instruments

We used two research instruments. The first was a questionnaire of our own design, aimed at **identifying the frequency of signs of inappropriate behavior** on the part of the students on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often 4 = very often). Specifically, we investigated the following symptoms: ignorance, slander, ridicule, humiliation, inappropriately loud comments about the teacher, demonstrative rejection to answer or do the specified task, intentional damage to personal items, threats to involve influential acquaintances, threats to destroy personal property, threats of physical violence, threats via mobile phones/Internet, verbal attacks carried out using a mobile phone/Internet, dissemination of humiliating, ridiculing or embarrassing sound recordings/photos, threats or intimidation by mobile phone/Internet, creation of fake profiles on social networks, hacking an account (email, social network), sexual harassment, physical assault, attempted physical assault.

The second tool was the **OSTES Questionnaire** (*Ohio State Teachers' Efficacy Scale*). This is a 24-item self-assessment questionnaire aimed at evaluating how teachers view their teaching ability (teachers' self efficacy). The questionnaire was localized into Slovak by Gavora (2011) and its psychometric characteristics were also verified by Kohútová (2018). It consists of two separate factors (subscales):

- **Efficacy in instructional strategies** consists of 8 items (e.g. What are you able to do to adjust the difficulty of the subject matter to the students' skills?);
- **Efficacy in classroom management** consists of 7 items (e.g. What are you able to do to avoid students' disturbance?).

The internal consistency of efficacy in instructional strategies was at $\alpha = 0.920$ and efficacy in classroom management at $\alpha = 0.921$.

Finally, were queried the **demographic characteristics** of the teachers (sex, age, years of experience, size of school).

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed in IBM SPSS (version 22) by means of inductive statistics (Mann-Whitney U-test, chi-square). To assess the internal consistency of tests, we used the Cronbach's α coefficient. We used cluster analysis to identify the typology of teachers in terms of the manifestations of improper behavior. It is an exploratory multivariate

method of data analysis, which divides the dataset into several homogeneous subsets. It uses methods and algorithms to attribute the data with similar characteristics into a single cluster. The purpose is to categorize the objects into k (k > 1) groups, or clusters, using the p (p> 0) variables. It aims to organize the collected data into meaningful structures to create a taxonomy. Cluster analysis classifies units into clusters in a way that the similarity of two units belonging to the same group is maximum and similarity with the units outside the cluster is minimum.

In the following analyses, we used a two-step cluster analysis due to its advantages, which include the ability to create the clusters based on the categorical (discrete) and continuous variables, automatic selection of clusters (as well as the option to define the desired number of clusters) and the ability to effectively analyze large data sets.

Findings

RQ 1: What is the typology of teachers in terms of the perceived signs of students' misbehavior?

We have carried out cluster analysis to identify the subtypes of teachers. We adjusted the search criteria for an optimal number of clusters to a maximum value of 10 using the Schwarz Bayesian information criterion (SBIC). Using the above procedure, the system identified 2 clusters as an appropriate number, and these clusters are listed in Tab. 1.

Table 1

Clusters of Respondents by the Perceived Signs of Inappropriate Behavior on the Part of Students

Cluster	**1**	**2**
Description	**Teachers who faced inappropriate behaviour by the students less frequently**	**Teachers who faced inappropriate behaviour by the students more frequently**
Size	68.5% (126)	31.5% (58)
	AM	AM
Ridicule	0.12	1.33
Slander	0.70	1.91
Ignorance	0.90	2.24
Inappropriately loud comments about the teacher	0.07	1.67
Verbal insults or vulgarities	0.28	0.79
Humiliation	0.07	1.41
Verbal attacks carried out using a mobile phone/internet	0.06	0.69
Demonstrative rejection to answer or do the specified task	1.03	2.02

Tab. 1 also shows the absolute count and the corresponding percentage of the subjects relative to the total number of respondents (row *Size).* The row *Label* designates the individual clusters and the row *Description* shows a description of each category.

The first cluster consists of those respondents who experienced inappropriate behavior by the students only to a limited extent and/or perceived such manifestations in a limited way (e.g. ridicule has been experienced on average at AM 0.12, while the other group experienced it at AM 1.33). This cluster consists of 126 respondents (68.5%), which is slightly more than two-thirds of the entire research sample. Due to its nature, this cluster is termed "teachers with a lower degree of perceived students' misbehavior".

The second cluster consists of the respondents who – compared with the first cluster– faced inappropriate behavior by the students more frequently. For example, ignoring was perceived on average at AM 2.24, while the teachers from the first cluster only at AM 0.90 (see Table 1). This cluster consists of 58 respondents (31.5%), i.e. less than one third of the teachers. Due to its nature, this cluster is termed "teachers with a higher degree of perceived student misbehavior".

In summary, we can conclude that the teachers with a lower degree of perceived students' misbehavior experienced symptoms such as ridicule, defamation, inappropriately loud comments about the teacher, humiliation, verbal insults/swearing/vulgarisms, verbal attacks carried out using a mobile phone/Internet, demonstrative rejection to answer questions or do specified tasks, etc. in a significantly lesser extent.

We have also analyzed the differences among the demographic characteristics in the identified groups. We conclude that there is no significant difference in gender $\chi^2(1) = 0.034$, $p = 0.505$, years of experience (U-test = 3241.000, Z = -0.976, p = 0,329) and age (U-test = 3300.500, Z = -0.893, p = 0.372) between the relevant types of respondents. The only statistically significant difference was found in the size of schools where the teachers teach, with the teachers teaching at schools with a higher number of students (U-test = 2807.500, Z = -2.708, p = 0.007) perceiving fewer signs of inappropriate behavior.

RQ 2: Are there significant differences in the perceived professional fitness of teachers (self-efficacy) in the identified groups of teachers?

The above types of teachers were compared in terms of teachers' self-efficacy – see Table 2. We can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in efficacy in instructional strategies among the identified groups of teachers. This means that the ability to use the teaching strategies is similar both teachers with a lower and higher degree of perceived students' misbehavior.

On the contrary, a statistically significant difference was identified in the efficacy of classroom management, with the teachers with a lower degree of perceived students' misbehavior achieving a higher degree of self-efficacy in classroom management. The effect size of the differences was at 0.570 (Cohen d), i.e. medium effect.

Table 2
Self-Efficacy in Teachers with a Lower and Higher Degree of Perceived Students' Misbehavior

		N	MR	AM	SD	U	Z	p	Cohen´s d
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies	Teachers with higher degree of perceived students' misbehavior	58	84.33	4.57	0.898	3180.000	-1.414	0.157	
	Teachers with lower degree of perceived students' misbehavior	126	96.26	4.72	0.872				
Efficacy in Classroom Management	Teachers with higher degree of perceived students' misbehavior	58	74.41	3.59	1.196	2604.500	-3.129	0.002	0.570
	Teachers with lower degree of perceived students' misbehavior	126	100.83	4.21	1.035				

Note. N = number/count, MR = mean rank, AM = arithmetic AM, SD = standard deviation, U-Mann-Whitney U-test, Z - standardized z-coefficient, p - significance, d - Cohen's d

Discussion

Our study was aimed at identifying the signs of students' misbehavior as perceived by secondary school teachers. We have established two research questions: in the first one, we have created a typology of teachers in terms of whether they perceive students' misbehavior to a higher or lower degree. In other words, we wanted to filter out those who are facing these manifestations to a greater extent, and we used cluster analysis to achieve this goal. This resulted in the identification of two groups of teachers: teachers with a lower degree of perceived students' misbehavior and teachers with a higher degree of perceived students'misbehavior. The group of teachers with a higher degree of perceived students' misbehavior consisted of 58 teachers (which represented 31.5% of the entire research sample). This group is facing e.g. ridicule on average at a level of 1.33 (while the other group only at a level of 0.12), and defamation at a level of 1.91 (while the other group only at a level of 0.70), etc.

It can be noted that approximately one-third of secondary school teachers are experiencing inappropriate behavior of students more often than normal. Next, we investigated whether there is a difference between the group of teachers with a higher degree of perceived students' misbehavior and the group of teachers with a lower degree of perceived students' misbehavior with respect to demographic characteristics. We can

conclude that the teachers in both groups are alike in terms of gender, age, and years of experience. The only difference was noted in the size of the school where the teaches teach: the respondents who teach in larger schools perceive fewer signs of inappropriate behavior on the part of students. The above can be explained by the fact that at larger schools there are professional employees such as school psychologists and school social workers whose job is to prevent and intervene towards maintaining a positive school atmosphere and eliminate unwanted and risky students' behavior. It is possible that such workers are absent at smaller schools in the Slovak educational system and the teachers do not have enough time or expertise to address such challenges and matters. Research suggests that in each class there is about 5% of pupils who show signs of inappropriate behavior, and the very presence of one such student may have a negative effect on other students, and subsequently on other aspects of the learning environment (e.g. atmosphere in class, lack of discipline, violations of rules, etc.). Each school should have professional staff who act in the direction of preventing inappropriate behaviors.

In the second partial objective, we wanted to know whether there were any significant differences in the perceived professional fitness of teachers (self-efficacy) in the identified groups of teachers. Teachers' self-efficacy consists of two factors: efficacy for instructional strategies (capacity to use instructional strategies) and efficacy for classroom management (capacity to manage class). We noted no significant difference in efficacy for classroom management. The perception of this ability is significantly different in the teachers with a higher degree of perceived students' misbehavior (efficacy for classroom management AM: 3.59) compared to those with a lower degree of perceived students' misbehavior (efficacy for classroom management AM: 4.21). This finding is consistent with the theoretical knowledge concerning classroom management efficacy (and faith in this ability). Our findings are consistent with the findings of Evans & Tribble, 1986; Parkay et al., 1988; Gordon, 2001; Giallo & Little, 2003; Dârjan, 2012; Zee, 2016; Khani & Mizaee, 2015; Lopes et al., 2017).

Based on the above results, we conclude that teachers must take responsibility for **class management** to avoid unwanted conduct. They must be good managers in class in order to control the processes in class in an organized fashion and create favorable conditions for effective teaching. In order for the teachers to teach students effectively, class management is an indispensable prerequisite. Teachers who prevent inappropriate students' behavior and shape the signs of such behavior into useful activities spend less time by resolving disciplinary problems and they dedicate more time to quality teaching.

According to Black et al. (2016), beginning teachers are most concerned about not being able to control the behavior of students, and students not perceiving them as an authority. These teachers usually do not have enough knowledge, experience, and skill to address and respond to inappropriate students' behavior and/or behavior that is not consistent with the teachers' expectations. It is therefore important to pay attention to the development of their educational and psychological competencies in undergraduate

teacher's preparation. We believe that the teacher's preparation faculties should not merely answer the question "what to teach?" – acquisition of content in the relevant subjects – but also the question "why and how to teach?" – acquisition of pedagogical and psychological disciplines.

Real teaching experience involves the acquisition of professional knowledge to teach the relevant academic subjects, but also the acquisition of educational and psychological competencies. It is also important to observe other (training) teachers in the teaching process. The future teachers can see how training teachers steer the teaching process, handle difficult situations, manage class, etc., and learn it naturally and spontaneously (the advantage is that the "observer" immediately sees the consequences of the teacher's actions, and whether his/her activities lead to desired results, e.g. when a particular activity causes the problem pupils to conduct more effectively, the "observer" remembers this activity and can later use in his/her own practice). We hold that such a first-hand experience is very important especially for the beginning teachers until they acquire their own practical experience.

An even more sophisticated approach was used at the University of Central Florida where virtual reality (TeachMe™/TeachLivE™ Lab Technology) is implemented in undergraduate teachers' training. It involves virtual classrooms where the future teachers can practice their teaching skills before entering the real world (Black et al., 2016).

The importance of undergraduate teacher's preparation is also confirmed in the qualitative study by Tsouloupas et al. (2013). The aim of this study was to determine what factors influence the development of teachers' efficacy in handling students' misbehavior (TEHSM). Based on 24 individual interviews with teachers, they found that the key factors are (a) professional preparation and development from preservice through in-service years, (b) personal learning process, and (c) sources of support. In the above text, we were mostly focusing on the first factor, i.e. professional preparation, in the context of practical recommendations.

Research Limitations

We understand that our research has several limitations and restrictions. The first limit is the size of the research sample: in future research, we recommend working with a more representative research sample. Another limitation, which is inherent to the self-assessment scales, is the risk that the level of introspection may vary widely in the individual respondents, which is of course reflected in the subjective evaluation, e.g. in the perception of improper behavior. In the future, we recommend combining the questionnaire method e.g. with a long-term observation of interactions in class.

Conclusion

As shown above, self-efficacy greatly determines the performance of an individual (at a similar level of ability and skill, higher performance is achieved by those with higher levels of self-efficacy). It follows that the prerequisites for the teaching profession and the teacher's skills and competences are key, but it is also very essential for the teachers to believe that they have the potential to successfully implement the educational activities and expect that their activities lead to the desired outcomes (achievement of goals). Our research suggests that teachers' self-efficacy determines the perceived students' misbehavior, and the teachers who believe in their ability to effectively manage class encounter inappropriate students' behavior at a significantly lower rate.

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Mokytojų tipologija pagal suvokiamą netinkamą mokinių elgesį – mokytojų saviveiksmingumo skirtumai

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Santrauka

Žmogaus veiklos sėkmė ar nesėkmė tiesiogiai siejasi su saviveiksmingumu, kuris veikia kaip gebėjimų, įgūdžių ir žinių mobilizatorius. Saviveiksmingumas siejamas su daugeliu mokytojo profesijos sričių. Šiame straipsnyje apžvelgiama, kaip jis susijęs su blogu mokinių elgesiu. Šio straipsnio tikslas yra nustatyti mokytojų tipologiją suvokiamo studentų elgesio diapazone ir mokytojų efektyvumo skirtumus. Tyrimui buvo naudojami du tyrimo instrumentai. Tai griežtas klausimynas, sukurtas pačių autorių, kurio tikslas nustatyti netinkamo elgesio simptomų dažnį 5 balų Likerto skalėje, ir Ohajo valstijos mokytojų efektyvumo skalės (angl. OSTES) klausimynas, kurio tikslas nustatyti pačių mokytojų efektyvumą.

Duomenys buvo analizuojami IBM SPSS (22 versija) naudojant indukcinę statistiką (Manno-Whitney U testas, chi kvadratas). Siekiant įvertinti vidinį testų nuoseklumą buvo paskaičiuotas Cronbach'o α koeficientas. Buvo atlikta klasterinė analizė, nustatyta mokytojų tipologija pagal netinkamo elgesio apraiškas.

Pagal mokinių netinkamo elgesio mastą nustatyti du mokytojų tipai, bet tai neišryškino didelių mokytojų efektyvumo skirtumų. Tyrimas rodo, kad mokytojų saviveiksmingumas tiesiogiai siejasi su mokytojais, kurie sugeba spręsti netinkamo mokinių elgesio problemas, tačiau sutrikdo elgesį tų mokytojų, kurie nesugeba efektyviai valdyti klasės.

Esminiai žodžiai: *netinkamas elgesys, mokytojų saviveiksmingumas, klasterio analizė, mokymosi strategijos efektyvumas, efektyvumas klasėje.*

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