



## Socio-Demographic Factors and the Level of Teachers' Motivation in Slovak National Schools in Hungary

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**Introduction.** The research paper seeks to identify the level of motivation of Slovak educators teaching in Hungary in the context of a low level of teachers' motivation in Central and Eastern Europe. The aim of the paper is to show the relationship between socio-demographic factors (age, gender, type of school) and the degree of teachers' motivation at Slovak national schools in Hungary. The results of research on motivation in relation to gender, age and type of school are shown to be inconsistent and yield varying findings.

**Materials and Methods.** This paper is based on the data collected in the survey conducted in 10 Hungarian counties between January and April 2019, using a sample of 139 teachers of ethnic schools (monolingual, bilingual and schools teaching the ethnic language as a separate subject). We processed the obtained research results using methods of descriptive statistics and methods of inferential statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient; Mann-Whitney U test; Kruskal-Wallis H test).

**Results.** The results showed that there was no correlation between the teacher's age and teaching motivation ( $p > 0.05$ ). No statistically significant differences were found between gender and teaching motivation when using the Mann-Whitney test. Using a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test, the existence of significant differences in the level of motivation of teachers working at various types of schools was confirmed. The research showed that teachers of bilingual schools were the most positive in relation to motivation, and the lowest average scores were achieved by teachers in schools where Slovak is taught as a subject. The age and gender of teachers were not significant in relation to the evaluation of the degree of motivation for teaching Slovak.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** The results presented in the article will be beneficial not only for pedagogical researchers, but especially for Slovak teachers in Hungary, as research of this kind was conducted for the first time.

**Keywords:** motivation, Slovak teacher, ethnic education, Hungary, Slovak national schools

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Оригинальная статья

## Социально-демографические факторы и уровень мотивации учителей в словацких национальных школах Венгрии

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**Введение.** В настоящее время одной из актуальных проблем этнических меньшинств является обеспечение доступа к образованию и школьной инфраструктуре. В существующих исследованиях по указанной проблематике преобладают региональные исследования. В связи с этим необходимо дополнить трансграничный международный сравнительный индивидуальный анализ для более эффективного применения рабочих методологий и решений. Цель статьи – показать взаимосвязь между социально-демографическими факторами (возраст, пол, тип школы) и степенью мотивации учителей словацких национальных школ Венгрии.

**Материалы и методы.** Для изучения проблемы был проведен опрос, в котором приняли участие 139 учителей этнических школ в 10 областях Венгрии (одноязычных, двуязычных и школ, в которых этнический язык преподается как отдельный предмет). Обработка полученных результатов проводилась с использованием методов описательной и логической статистики (коэффициент корреляции Пирсона, U-критерий Манна – Уитни, H-критерий Краскала – Уоллиса).

**Результаты исследования.** В результате исследования авторы установили, что корреляции между возрастом учителя и мотивацией к обучению нет ( $p > 0,05$ ). Статистически значимых различий между полом и учебной мотивацией при использовании теста Манна – Уитни не обнаружено. С помощью непараметрического теста Краскала – Уоллиса подтверждено наличие значимых различий в уровне мотивации учителей, работающих в разных типах школ. Анализ показал, что учителя двуязычных школ были наиболее позитивными в отношении мотивации, а самые низкие средние оценки получили учителя в школах, где словацкий язык преподается как предмет. Возраст и пол учителей не имели значения при оценке степени мотивации к обучению словацкому языку.

**Обсуждение и заключение.** Материалы статьи будут полезны словацким учителям в Венгрии, поскольку исследования подобного рода проводились впервые.

*Ключевые слова:* мотивация, словацкий учитель, этническое образование, Венгрия, словацкая национальная школа

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### Introduction

The intense rate of globalization, increasing migration and the still unresolved historical minority issue are an alarming problem (not only) in today's Europe. The Member States of the European Union (EU) have many statistics at their disposal which point to the necessity to address this situation.

One of the most pressing minority problems is the provision of minority education and minority school infrastructure. Part of the functioning of the EU and its efforts to minimize racism, discrimination and other forms of social exclusion is the regular mapping of integration, inclusion and equal access to education for minorities and migrants

in individual EU Member States<sup>1</sup>. According to Brind, Harper, Moore, there is a growing consensus at European level that promoting education as a key player and an important factor in integration and European cohesion can support, improve and save minority education<sup>2</sup>.

Only local or regional research predominate in current research efforts on the above issue. Cross-border, international, comparative case-by-case analyses are to be complemented in order to apply working methodologies and solutions more effectively. The research responds to the current tenor in the social sciences and humanities by linking interdisciplinary methods and seeks to emphasize the importance of Slovak minority education in Hungary, whose current situation is deplorable and paradoxically depends on its quality to maintain the next generation of Slovak minority identity in Hungary.

According to the newest research in sociology, most students with Slovak ethnic background, who do not go to Slovak schools, lose their ethnicity. In this environment, schools became the decisive factor in maintaining Slovak language and culture and the Slovak population in Hungary<sup>3</sup>. Currently, the vast majority of Slovak families are not – or are only partially – able to pass on the linguistic and cultural heritage of their ancestors to their descendants. Significantly, students learn the basics of Slovak at school and meet Slovak culture there, and according to Uhrinová, these first experiences determine their lifelong attitude towards the Slovak minority<sup>4</sup>. The importance and

responsibility of ethnic schools and Slovak teachers has thus increased enormously.

Taking into account the historical, political, geographical and demographic background of Slovaks in Hungary, we can find the reasons for persistence of Slovaks in Hungary in the international environment despite considerable political tension between Slovakia and Hungary in the character of the Slovak minority in Hungary, its origin and functioning. The main characteristic of the Slovak minority in Hungary is that it is not a quasi-diaspora – as at the time of its creation they did not cross state borders (it was a *gradual* internal migration), and also the attitude of the so-called *Lost homeland*, at present the Slovak Republic, is not a relevant identification component for Slovaks living in Hungary. The Slovaks in Hungary have created a conglomeration of geographically concentrated rural communities with an age population characteristic of an advanced stage of assimilation (without significant prejudices against the ethnic majority, or without a strong cultural link to Slovak identity or local patriotism) [1].

Since the fall of the communist regime, the state has recognized all the rights and obligations of ethnic minorities in Hungary, allowing the members of these minorities to maintain and further develop their cultural traditions and education in their mother tongue. Pursuant to the Hungarian Act on National Public Education of 2011, and the Decree no. 20/2012 of the Ministry of Human Resources on the functioning and use of the names of educational institutions, the

<sup>1</sup> To this, The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) carried out research in 2004 focusing on the period 2001–2003, the output of which is a comparative study. The report concludes, inter alia, that overall, migrants and minorities tend to enrol in schools with lower academic demands. They are over-represented in vocationally-oriented fields and in special education. They finish school earlier and have higher dropout rates and sometimes they face segregation into “schools with special needs”. In addition to documenting inequality, discrimination and the exclusion process, the report includes examples of good practice in education. The report concludes with selected recommendations for the EU and its Member States. Luciak M. Migrants, Minorities and Education: Documenting Discrimination and Integration in 15 Member States of the European Union. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities; 2004. Available at: [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/186-CS-Education-en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/186-CS-Education-en.pdf) (accessed 20.02.2021). (In Eng.)

<sup>2</sup> Brind T., Harper C., Moore K. Education for Migrant, Minority and Marginalised Children in Europe: A Report Commissioned by the Open Society Institute’s Education Support Programme. Open Society Institute; 2008. (In Eng.)

<sup>3</sup> Homišinová M. Etnická rodina Slovákov, Chorvátov a Bulharov žijúcich v Maďarsku. Bekešská Čaba: VÚSM; 2006; Uhrinová A. Slovenský jazyk v Maďarsku očami používateľov. In: A. Uhrinová, M. Žiláková (Eds.) Slovenský jazyk v Maďarsku I. Bekešská Čaba: VÚSM; 2008. p. 92-224. (In Slov.)

<sup>4</sup> Uhrinová A. O slovenskom školskom systéme v Maďarsku. In: Z. Pavelcová (Ed.) Slováci v zahraničí, 33. Zborník Krajanského múzea Matice slovenskej. Martin: Matica slovenská; 2016. p. 43-55. (In Slov.)



Hungarian School Office corrects the activities of ethnic schools and mediates the ethnic language [2].

Currently, ethnic education is carried out following the Hungarian Act on the Rights of Ethnic Minorities<sup>5</sup> – at the request of eight parents, ethnic education may be organized in a particular municipality. In the 2018/2019 school year, there were 34 Slovak schools in Hungary: one monolingual, 4 bilingual and 29 schools teaching Slovak as a subject. In the monolingual school (in Budapest), the language of teaching is an ethnic (i.e. Slovak) language. In bilingual schools, (in Békéscsaba, Sátoraljaújhely, Szarvas and Tótkomlós), 50% of lessons are held in Slovak. At schools teaching the ethnic language as a separate subject, students are educated in Hungarian; however, the class time-table also contains Slovak language and literature, along with “Slovak studies”, amounting to 5 + 1 lessons per week (Informácia o školstve = Information on the education system, 5–6)<sup>6</sup>. In the 2018/2019 school year, 3,494 pupils studied at these schools. The number of teachers teaching Slovak or in Slovak was 147<sup>7</sup>.

In this study, we analyse the degree of motivation of teachers teaching at ethnic Slovak schools in Hungary, taking into consideration socio-demographic factors (age, gender and school type). We determined the degree of motivation using four factors – examples of teachers’ motivation to teach Slovak language – according to the Expectancy-Value Theory. These were as follows:

1. The personal priority of the teacher and/or interest in teaching;
2. The importance of Slovak in strengthening ethnic identity;
3. Mastery of Slovak as a benefit for students in the future;
4. Fulfilment of the educator’s work duties.

These items were chosen deliberately – we expect teachers working at Slovak ethnic schools to be interested in teaching Slovak. For this reason, we wanted to know which of these factors motivated them to the highest degree.

Since the motivation of Slovak teachers should be high to maintain Slovak ethnic identity in Hungary, it is necessary to know the current level of teacher motivation. The research carried out, as described above, allows the design of effective solutions to maintain the identity of Slovaks in Hungary through teaching their language. This study is part of a comprehensive research of Slovak education in Hungary, including almost the entire population of Slovak teachers in Hungary; it fills in the gap in the only partial research that had previously been carried out.

### Literature Review

After the revolution in 1989, the former perceived position of teachers as people having a dominant and important status began to change gradually. Modernization of society, progress of technology and the related current crisis of values in society have influenced the demands placed on the educational process and thus the current position of teachers in society and their public perception. The teachers’ personality – a basic predictor of successful education – has become the target of social pressures – degradation of status, low financial evaluation, limitation of powers – and also of their own frustrations – including burnout, loss of enthusiasm – which had a direct impact on their motivation to teach. In their paper, Magdová, Bozogánová and Berinšterová considered stress associated with the teaching profession, work with minority groups, communication with pupils’

<sup>5</sup> Hungarian Act CLXXIX of 2011 on the rights of minorities. These issues are also governed by the following: Hungarian Act CXC of 2011 on education; Decree 17/2013 (III. 1) of the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources on the guidelines of ethnic education.

<sup>6</sup> Informácia o školstve a vzdelávaní Slovákov žijúcich v jednotlivých krajinách so štatútom národnostnej menšiny. Materiál pre výbor NR SR pre vzdelávanie, vedu, mládež a šport. Available at: <https://www.uszz.sk/data/fce57df089241519623e627340d5611a.pdf> (accessed 20.02.2021). (In Slov.)

<sup>7</sup> Ďurkovská M., Tušková T. Téma slovenského národnostného školstva v Maďarsku v projektoch Slovenskej akadémie vied a Výskumného ústavu Slovákov v Maďarsku. In: M. Ďurkovská, T. Tušková (Eds.) *Reflexia slovenského národnostného školstva v Maďarsku v kontexte súčasnosti a ďalších perspektív jeho fungovania*. Košice; Békešská Čaba: SvÚ CSPV SAV; VÚSM; 2019. p. 6-18. (In Slov.)

parents and the work environment itself as problem factors [3].

Motivation plays a crucial role in the quality of education; ranging from the choice of the profession to reaching effective results and career growth. The effectiveness of teaching Slovak in Hungary has an added value, because its success is connected to maintaining the national identity of the next generation of Slovaks living in Hungary. Education in one's own mother tongue is one of the key areas of maintaining and developing one's language and ethnic identity.

The personality of teachers is directly proportionate to their success in teaching; success which requires full commitment<sup>8</sup>. The teacher's personal contribution limits the level of all metacognitive and cognitive activities necessary to teach students and to achieve good results [4; 5]. Studies show that effective motivation of teachers brings benefits to students as well as the teachers themselves. In general, motivation is an energy or a drive that activates people, but in practice, everybody understands motivation in a different way, considering their own specifics [6], and there is no unambiguous definition of the term [7]. The Oxford Dictionary and the Cambridge Dictionary define motivation as the reason why somebody does something or behaves in a particular way; they consider it as a synonym of enthusiasm<sup>9</sup>.

Motivation, as an important predictor of success in education – both in case of teachers and students – is influenced by several factors. In psychology, motivation has been extensively studied for more than half a century, during which many different theories of motivation emerged. Currently, the most common model is the one dividing motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation [8].

The most important extrinsic factors influencing the level of motivation include the

teacher's status in society and the related financial rewards, working conditions and the system of education per se [9]. Research conducted by Dolton and Marcenaro (2011) analysed in detail the correlation of the teachers' salaries and student performance in 39 countries based on OECD panel data collected at regular intervals over 12 years. Research suggests that a 10% increase in teachers' salaries could lead to a 5–10% increase in student performance [10]. Dolton's analysis of the status of the teaching profession, conducted in 2018, shows that in Hungary, the status rating of teachers is relatively low (index rating: 24.4), as Hungary ranked almost last in the ranking of the 35 countries surveyed<sup>10</sup>. According to Claeys, intrinsic and altruistic motivators include the "inner desire for personal and professional development"<sup>11</sup>.

For the purposes of systematic and complex analysis of motivation, Watt and Richardson recommend using the Expectancy-Value Theory instead of using the two-class (intrinsic and extrinsic) classification. This theory was developed in the 1950s and 1960s by John Williamson Atkins (1957), who claimed it was the basic framework for successful motivation. Jacquelynne Eccles and her colleagues used this theory in pedagogy in the 1980s and differentiated key factors influencing the expectations and values of individuals [9]. The authors considered the following to be key retrospective factors: cultural milieu (gender stereotypes, cultural stereotypes); beliefs and behaviours; aptitudes; previous achievement-related experiences. They considered the following to be prospective factors: individual perceptions of social beliefs, gender issues and stereotypes; the individual's interpretations of experiences (causes and control); affective memories; one's own goals and procedures (short-term and long-term goals, knowledge

<sup>8</sup> Holeček V. *Psychologie v učitelství praxi*. Praha: Grada; 2015. (In Slov.)

<sup>9</sup> The Oxford Dictionary. Heslo: *motivácia* [online]. Available at: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/motivation?q=motivation>; The Cambridge dictionary. Heslo: *motivácia*. [online]. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/motivation>.

<sup>10</sup> Dolton P., Marcenaro O., De Vries R., She P. *Global Teacher Status Index 2018*. London: Varkey Foundation; 2018. Available at: <https://www.varkeyfoundation.org/media/4867/gts-index-13-11-2018.pdf> (accessed 20.02.2021). (In Eng.)

<sup>11</sup> Claeys L. *Teacher Motivation to Teach and to Remain Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Texas at San Antonio. San Antonio: College of Education and Human Development; 2011. (In Eng.)



of the ideal self, the concept of one's own abilities, perception of tasks); expectations of success; subjective value of success; other choices and performance related to the results achieved [11; 12].

In this paper, we analysed the level of motivation of Slovak teachers in Hungary considering selected reasons – representatives of the possible motivation categories of the Expectancy-Value Theory. Firstly, we considered the teachers' personal motivation as the first factor increasing the motivation to teach Slovak. This corresponds to the perspective factor of motivation, namely the teachers' own goals and procedures. The cultural milieu and its importance are the motivation factor that we used to identify the source of motivation of Slovak teachers in Hungary; notably the fact that to strengthen the ethnic identity of Slovaks in Hungary, it is important and necessary to teach Slovak. The next motivation factor we analysed belonged to the category of beliefs and behaviours; specifically, the expected increase in teachers' motivation to teach Slovak in Hungary due to the benefits it may bring to the students and to the progress the students may achieve. Lastly, we determined the fulfilment of teachers' personal work duties, belonging to the motivational factor of "teachers' aptitudes".

Using the analogous research on the motivation of teachers, we analysed the degree of motivation in relation to gender, age and type of school of the teachers, and we tried to adjust the research sample size to that of existing research.

The results of research on motivation in relation to gender, age and type of school are inconsistent, and yield varying findings. According to the survey of the level of work motivation of primary school teachers, conducted by Ates and Ylmaz [13] on a sample of 343 respondents, the average work motivation score did not change significantly considering the respondents' gender. The level of motivation of men and women was very similar, and age had no effect on the respondents' motivation.

Wiyono also came to similar results, when examining the differences in teachers' work motivation in terms of gender, age and length of service on a sample of 88 teachers [14]. He concluded that there was no correlation between age, gender, length of service and work motivation. Although there are certain differences in the average work motivation scores of the respective groups, no significant difference has been proven. Teachers' work motivation is more dependent on the dynamic factors that the teachers perceive when working in their organizations. Wiyono [14] states that – based on several studies<sup>12</sup> – school management, the atmosphere at the workplace, organizational culture, conditions at school, growth opportunities and awards are the dynamic factors which have a significant influence on teachers' motivation to work. The research conducted by Wanakacha et al. [15] on a sample of 233 teachers also proved that there was no correlation between teachers' gender and their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

However, the research performed by Tee et al. [16] on a sample of 200 teachers yielded opposite results. It found that there was a small, but significant, correlation of the teachers' age and motivation – the higher the age of teachers, the higher their motivation. This result contradicted the findings of Güzel [17], who found that young teachers with 1–5 years of service had the highest motivation, and, conversely, teachers with 26+ years of service had the lowest motivation. Triyanto [6] also came to the same conclusion: the younger the teacher, the higher the motivation. Differences in motivation depending on the type of institution were also confirmed by the research done by Günbayi and Toprak [18]. They claim that teachers working at special schools are more motivated than those working at primary schools, because special pedagogy is a specific type of education that school principals often do not know well enough and therefore these teachers feel less pressure. This research also showed that female teachers were less

<sup>12</sup> Hughes R.L., Ginnet R.C., Curphy G.J. Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience. Boston: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.; 1999. (In Eng.); Lunenburg F.C., Ornstein A.C. Educational Administration, Concepts and Practices. Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning; 2000. (In Eng.)

motivated than their male counterparts. The authors explain the lower motivation of women by the conflict of roles and the workload of women due to their status – raising children and domestic duties, regardless of their performance at work. In their research, Günbayi and Toprak [18] also confirmed that teachers' motivation grows with their age.

The correlation between gender and motivation was also examined by Tee et al. [16] and Triyanto [6]. Their findings confirmed a significantly higher motivation of male teachers compared to female teachers. This may be due to the higher workload and stress levels experienced by female teachers, compared to their male counterparts [19]. According to research conducted by Güzel [17], women were more motivated in terms of professional factors.

Considering the correlation between the type of institution (state schools or private schools) and motivation, a significant difference was found in favour of teachers working at state schools. This finding was in line with Güzel's [17] study, which also showed that teachers working at state schools were more motivated than teachers working at private schools.

### Materials and Methods

The data comes from a survey conducted in 10 Hungarian counties between January and April 2019, using a sample of 139 teachers from ethnic schools. The questionnaire was created as a joint effort of the Institute of Social Sciences of the Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Research Institute of Slovaks in Hungary.

In order to obtain answers about the functioning of the school system, the authors addressed several municipalities and teachers at all school grades (with the exception of

university departments), who were best suited to comment on the questions in the questionnaire. As the aforementioned schools were scattered throughout the country, the list of schools was obtained in cooperation with the Ethnic Slovak Self-Government in Hungary. All 34 schools teaching Slovak or in Slovak took part in the research.

*Objective and hypotheses.* The aim of the paper is to show the relationship between socio-demographic factors (age, gender, type of school) and the degree of motivation of Slovak teachers at ethnic schools in Hungary. Based on the available resources, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: We assume the existence of a negative significant correlation between motivation and age.

H2: We assume the existence of significant differences in the level of motivation of men and women (a higher motivation of women).

H3: We assume the existence of significant differences in the level of motivation of teachers working at various types of schools.

*Research sample.* Respondents were selected purposefully from schools – of all three types – teaching Slovak, both in cities and villages. The selection criteria were employment (working as an educator of Slovak or in Slovak) and the availability of the respondent, regardless of the identification criteria (age, location, gender). The return rate of the questionnaires was almost 95%.

The survey sample consisted of 11.7% of men and 88.3% of women<sup>13</sup>. Their average age was 48.7 years (SD = 10,017), ranging from 24 to 68. The average age of women was 49.49 years (SD = 9.712), while the average age of men was 43.44 years (SD = 10.954). 7.3% taught at monolingual schools, 48.2% at bilingual and 43.1% at schools teaching the ethnic language as

<sup>13</sup> Women make up about 79% of students in education and make up the largest share of teachers at all levels of the compulsory education sector (97% in primary school, 77% in secondary school and 64% in upper secondary sectors), so we could say that teaching in Hungary is mostly a female-dominated profession. The small proportion of men among educators is usually explained by their poor financial value. Although this factor plays an important role, it would not be right to reduce the whole problem to the issue of wages alone. Other factors probably contribute to the low status of the teaching profession and its low attractiveness for men: little room for personal autonomy and self-realization, directive, bureaucratic management style, poor career opportunities, too much bureaucracy, predominantly female workforce, etc. OECD. (2017). Hungary. In: Education at a glance 2017: OECD indicators. Paris, France: OECD.

a separate subject. 54% claimed to be of Slovak ethnicity, 18.2% claimed to be Hungarian, while 27.7% claimed to be both Slovak and Hungarian.

*Methods.* To analyse the correlation of the individual items (age, gender, type of school) and the motivation of teachers, the following questions were asked: *How would you rate your work as a teacher of Slovak?* Respondents had to choose the appropriate option from a scale; the score was then calculated using a seven-point scale, where 1 = “very negative” and 7 = “very positive”. In the case of a positive answer, they had to indicate the level of their motivation considering the factors applicable to teaching Slovak. They were offered the following options: 1. it is a personal priority of mine; 2. this is crucial to strengthen ethnic identity; 3. I consider mastering Slovak to be a benefit for students in the future; 4. I’m just doing my job. Respondents had to choose the appropriate option from a scale; the score was then calculated using a seven-point scale, where 1 = “definitely false” and 7 = “definitely true”.

*Statistical analyses.* We processed the obtained research results using the methods of descriptive statistics and methods of inferential statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient, Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis H test), using IBM SPSS software, version 21. For the age variable, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used. For the gender variable, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used, based on the unequal number of participants in the respective groups. For the type of school,

a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H test was used (due to the varying number of participants in the respective groups).

## Results

In this section we present the main results of the paper in three subsections corresponding to the 3 hypotheses. In the first subsection we focus on the correlation of teachers’ age and motivation, in the second we examine the correlation of gender and motivation, and in the third, the correlation of type of school and motivation.

*Age.* In the first subsection we examined the correlation between teachers’ age and motivation to teach Slovak in Hungary, using the Pearson correlation coefficient. The results showed that there was no correlation between them ( $p > 0.05$ ) – teachers’ age and teaching motivation had no relationship (Table 1).

*Gender.* In the second part, we examined the correlation of teachers’ gender and their motivation to teach Slovak, using the Mann-Whitney test. No statistically significant differences were found between the groups. The average scores for men and women were very balanced in almost all cases. The only exceptions occurred in case of the option “I’m just doing my job”, which achieved the lowest average score for both men ( $M = 4.81$ ,  $SD = 2.59$ ) and women ( $M = 4.74$ ,  $SD = 2, 38$ ). Respondents gave the highest average scores in case of the option “It is a personal priority of mine” – men: ( $M = 6.56$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ); women: ( $M = 6.57$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ) (Table 2).

Table 1. Correlation between teachers’ age and motivation

Correlation items	Your age in 2019	How would you rate your work as a teacher of Slovak?	It is a personal priority of mine	This is crucial to strengthen ethnic identity	I consider mastering Slovak to be a benefit for students in the future
How would you rate your work as a teacher of Slovak?	-.045	1	–	–	–
It is a personal priority of mine	-.024	.413**	1	–	–
This is crucial to strengthen ethnic identity	.119	.365**	.676**	1	–
I consider mastering Slovak to be a benefit for students in the future	-.062	.533**	.636**	.605**	1
I’m just doing my job	.044	-.014	.022	.026	.001

Note. \*\*  $p < 0,01$ .



*School type.* In the third part we examined the correlation between the type of school where the teachers work and their motivation to teach Slovak. We used a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test. Statistically significant differences between the groups were demonstrated in the item concerning the teachers' rating of their own work ( $X^2 = 6.204$ ; s.v. = 2;  $p < 0.05$ ). Considering the respective groups, teachers of bilingual schools were the most positive ( $M = 6.09$ ;  $SD = 0.90$ ), while the lowest average score was achieved by teachers where Slovak is taught as a separate subject ( $M = 5.73$ ;  $SD = 0.86$ ). Differences were also found in the item concerning the role of teaching Slovak in strengthening the ethnic

identity ( $X^2 = 9.695$ ; s.v. = 2;  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, also in this case, teachers from bilingual schools agreed more with the corresponding statement ( $M = 6.52$ ;  $SD = 0.82$ ), contrary to teachers from schools teaching Slovak as a separate subject ( $M = 6.10$ ;  $SD = 0.96$ ). Even considering the statement "I consider mastering Slovak to be a benefit for students in the future" ( $X^2 = 6.775$ ; sv = 2;  $p < 0.05$ ), teachers from bilingual schools agreed most with it ( $M = 6.60$ ;  $SD = 0.04$ ), while teachers from schools teaching Slovak as a separate subject ( $M = 6.26$ ;  $SD = 0.97$ ) agreed least with it. No statistically significant differences were found in terms of other items ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

**Table 2. Descriptive characteristics – motivation of teachers by gender**

Items	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
How would you rate your work as a teacher of Slovak?	male	16	5.94	0.93	4.00	7.00
	female	121	5.92	0.88	4.00	7.00
It is a personal priority of mine	male	16	6.56	0.63	5.00	7.00
	female	120	6.57	0.69	3.00	7.00
This is crucial to strengthen ethnic identity	male	16	6.50	0.63	5.00	7.00
	female	119	6.31	0.93	3.00	7.00
I consider mastering Slovak to be a benefit for students in the future	male	16	6.44	0.73	5.00	7.00
	female	119	6.45	0.92	3.00	7.00
I'm just doing my job	male	16	4.81	2.59	1.00	7.00
	female	117	4.74	2.38	1.00	7.00

**Table 3. Descriptive characteristics – motivation of teachers by school type**

Items	Type of school	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How would you rate your work as a teacher of Slovak?	monolingual	10	5.90	0.74	5.00	7.00
	bilingual	67	6.09	0.90	4.00	7.00
	teaching Slovak as a separate subject	60	5.73	0.86	4.00	7.00



End of table 3

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is a personal priority of mine	monolingual	10	6.80	0.42	6.00	7.00
	bilingual	67	6.69	0.53	5.00	7.00
	teaching Slovak as a separate subject	59	6.39	0.83	3.00	7.00
This is crucial to strengthen ethnic identity	monolingual	9	6.44	0.73	5.00	7.00
	bilingual	67	6.52	0.82	4.00	7.00
	teaching Slovak as a separate subject	59	6.10	0.96	3.00	7.00
I consider mastering Slovak to be a benefit for students in the future	monolingual	10	6.50	0.71	5.00	7.00
	bilingual	67	6.60	0.84	3.00	7.00
	teaching Slovak as a separate subject	58	6.26	0.97	3.00	7.00
I'm just doing my job	monolingual	9	5.56	1.88	1.00	7.00
	bilingual	66	4.41	2.71	1.00	7.00
	teaching Slovak as a separate subject	58	5.02	2.04	1.00	7.00

### Discussion and Conclusion

The operation of the Slovak ethnic school system, as a complex phenomenon, has not yet been fully explored; in most cases, related studies were limited to partial surveys/researches<sup>14</sup> [20]. However, the results of these showed its decisive role in the life of Slovaks in Hungary, and also its critical, endangered current state<sup>15</sup>.

Currently, ethnic Slovak education in Hungary is facing a number of issues. There is no connection between the individual school levels (most pupils of primary schools do not continue their studies at Slovak grammar schools). In bilingual schools, more students will be needed to educate future teachers. The acute shortage of teachers is aggravated by the retirement of the current,

<sup>14</sup> Tóth A.J. O slovenskom jazyku v školách v Békešskej župe. In: A. Uhrinová, & M. Žiláková (Eds.) Používanie slovenského jazyka v Békešskej župe. Békešská Čaba: VÚSM; 2005. p. 182-201. Available at: <http://real.mtak.hu/124256> (accessed 20.02.2021). (In Slov.); Tušková T. Slovenský jazyk v univerzitnom bilingválnom prostredí. Békešská Čaba: VÚSM.; 2016. (In Slov.); Heldáková L., Kalistová A. Slovenský národný naratív v dejepise Slovákov v Maďarsku. In: M. Ďurkovičová, T. Tušková (Eds.) Reflexia slovenského národnostného školstva v Maďarsku v kontexte súčasnosti a ďalších perspektív jeho fungovania Košice; Békešská Čaba: SvÚ CSPV SAV; VÚSM; 2019. p. 37-52. (In Slov.)

<sup>15</sup> Divičanová A. Dimenzie národnostného bytia a kultúry. Békešská Čaba: VÚSM.; 2002. (In Slov.); Tóth A.J. Szlovák nyelvhasználat az iskolában. In: E. Uhrin, M. Zsilák (Eds.) A szlovák nyelv magyarországon. Bibliográfia és tanulmányok I. Békecsaba: Magyarországi Szlovákok Kutatóintézete; 2008. p. 244-263. (In Slov.); Tušková T., Uhrinová A. „Škola by sa len vtedy zachránila...“Príbeh slovenskej národnostnej školy v Tardoši. In: M. Zsilák, T. Tuška (Eds.). Slovenské inšpirácie z Tardoša 35. interdisciplinárny výskumný tábor Výskumného ústavu Slovákov v Maďarsku. Békešská Čaba: Výskumný ústav Slovákov v Maďarsku; 2018. p. 161-186. (In Slov.); Ďurkovičová M., Kentoš M. Perspectives of Slovak Ethnic Education in Hungary. In: P. Adamec, M. Šimáně, E. Kovářová (Eds.) Sborník z mezinárodní konference ICOLLE 2019 : udržitelnost ve vzdělávání: minulost, současnost a budoucnost. Brno: Mendelova univerzita; 2020. p. 49-56. (In Slov.)

older generation of teachers. As Szarka [21] concluded, this is a result of a number of factors, especially the following: issues present in the education of Slovak language originating in the previous political era, the dominance of Hungarian in the current school system, the consequences of the relatively weak identity of the Slovak community, the increasing demand and interest in studying widely spoken foreign languages – e.g. English, German – at schools, etc.

According to a paper written by the Office of Slovaks Living Abroad for the Committee for Education, Science, Youth and Sport under the National Assembly of the Slovak Republic (2017)<sup>16</sup>, the current key problems of the Slovak school system in Hungary are the following: insufficient language skills of Slovak language teachers, insufficient number of teachers participating in training events (many schools have only a single, thus not substitutable teacher) and lack of Slovak textbooks. The most significant issues are related to natural sciences, such as chemistry and physics.

The results of our research did not prove the hypothesis 1; in which we assumed that the increasing age of teachers affects the level of their motivation. The presented results show that there is no correlation between teachers' age and motivation in case of Slovak teachers in Hungary. The results of our research correspond to the findings of Ates and Ylmaz [13] and Wiyono [14], showing that age has no effect on the teachers' motivation.

The reason for not confirming the hypothesis may be that we did not examine the length of service of these teachers, which may be related to their level of motivation [17]. Length of service of the respondents need not correspond to their physical age, they may have started their teaching careers later, which is important for future research of teachers of Slovak ethnic education in Hungary. A further reason for failure to prove the hypothesis may be the unequal representation of respondents in terms of age, because almost 50% of teachers were aged 50–68 years.

Hypothesis 2 – the existence of significant differences in the level of motivation

of men and women (a higher motivation of women) – was not confirmed. Our assumption that women were more motivated than men was based on the research of Güzel [17], whose results confirmed the higher motivation of female teachers.

Our research did not confirm significant differences in the level of motivation between men and women, which contradicts the findings of Tee [16], Triyanto [6], Günbayi and Toprak [18] and Klassen and Chiu [19], whose research showed a higher level of motivation of men, which may be caused by higher workload and stress levels experienced by women. As in the case of age, our findings may have been influenced by the uneven gender structure of the respondents.

Hypothesis 3 – the existence of significant differences in the level of motivation of teachers working at various types of schools – was confirmed. Based on a qualitative experiment by Karakös & Kocabaş [22], which showed a correlation between teachers' motivation and the type of school [23], we assumed that the motivation of teaching staff working at ethnic schools having a “stronger” Slovak platform will be higher than the motivation of teachers teaching Slovak only a few times a week as a foreign language. In this case, it is important to note that we examined the correlation of motivation and Slovak identity – we assumed that a growing intensity of efforts to preserve Slovak identity in Hungary is accompanied by a higher the motivation of teachers to teach Slovak and/or in Slovak.

Considering the types of schools, the hypothesis has been confirmed. The motivation of teachers of Slovak ethnic schools in Hungary directly correlates with the type of school they teach at. We received the most positive evaluations at a bilingual school and the least positive at schools teaching Slovak as a separate subject. Our results also partially correspond to the findings of Güzel [17] and Tee [16], who confirmed the differences in the level of motivation of teachers working in state and private schools. Although the variable “type of school” used in the survey was not absolutely identical to the one used in the research of Güzel [17] and Tee [16],

<sup>16</sup> Informácia o školstve a vzdelávaní Slovákov žijúcich v jednotlivých krajinách so štatútom národnostnej menšiny. (In Slov.)



the differences in the level of motivation of teachers working at different types of schools were confirmed.

As a finding, we conclude there is no correlation between the teachers' motivation and their age or gender. On the contrary, it can be stated that there are significant differences in the correlation of the level of motivation and the types of institutions employing the teachers. Teachers of bilingual schools expressed the highest level of motivation, so we may assume that a potential increase in the number of bilingual ethnic schools would lead to an increase in the motivation of teachers and, possibly, to a more successful preservation of Slovak ethnicity in Hungary. Finally, it should be noted that Slovak schools located in other countries in the Lower Country (Romania, Serbia, Croatia) are facing similar problems as Slovak education in Hungary.

Our conclusions state the need to have and increase "subsystem" of national education of Indigenous Slovak minorities in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe, which each country is obliged to provide. There are significant differences in the level of provision of education for compatriots in individual countries. For example, the degree of assimilation of Slovaks in Hungary and partly also in Croatia, Poland and Ukraine does not allow the operation of schools with Slovak as the language of instruction to such extent as in Serbia and Romania for example. Bilingual national schools in order to maintain Slovak nationality, which could probably also apply to schools in other countries of the Lower Land<sup>17</sup>.

The importance of ethnic education lies mainly in strengthening ethnic identity and

culture. "Slovak schools should be here to guarantee that Slovaks survive in the Lower Lands. One of the means of achieving this goal is the Slovak language, whether in dialect or literary form"<sup>18</sup>. Currently, schools are the most important institutions in which the values, culture and identity of minorities are transferred, leading to a transfer of language patterns. The mother tongue is one of the basic pillars on which minorities build their identity, since preservation and reproduction of the mother tongue is crucial for their survival<sup>19</sup>.

The benefit of the study is that almost all teachers teaching Slovak or in Slovak (139 out of 147) at ethnic schools in Hungary took part in the survey. The uniqueness of this research lies in the fact that almost all teachers who speak Slovak or teach Slovak (with the exception of 8 teachers), so these results comprehensively map the state of almost the entire Slovak minority education in Hungary and draw attention to current issues and challenges.

This study has some limitations, these include the omission of the item "length of service" from the questionnaire and the impossibility to compare the correlation of the length of service and teachers' motivation. The authors are also aware of the ceiling effect found in the data – considering some items, the mean values on the 1–7 scale reached 6.8. However, owing to the high representativeness of the sample, this fact corresponds to reality. A certain limitation to the analysis is the unequal distribution of the respondents in terms of the respective institutions, as well as the gender structure of the respondents; however, this reflects current conditions.

<sup>17</sup> For more information about education in the countries of the Lower Land see: Hlásnik P., Chovancová K., Pečeňová E., Unc B., Zolňanová S. (Eds.) Slovenské národnostné školstvo a zachovanie národnostného povedomia v krajinách strednej, južnej a východnej Európy. Nadlak: Spoločnosť pre edukáciu a kultúru; 2019. (In Slov.); Homišinová M., Výrost J., Durkovská M. Spoločenskovedné súvislosti hovorenej slovenčiny mladej generácie Slovákov žijúcich v krajinách na Dolnej zemi (Chorvátsko, Srbsko, Rumunsko, Maďarsko). Košice: Spoločenskovedný ústav CSPV SAV; 2018. (In Slov.); Uhrinová A. O slovenskom školskom systéme v Maďarsku; Kokaisl P., Štolfová A., Zychová J., Hanuš P. a kol. Po stopách Slovákov ve východní Evropě. Polsko, Ukrajina, Maďarsko, Rumunsko, Srbsko, Chorvatsko a Černá Hora. Praha: Nostalgie; 2014. (In Slov.); Makišová A. Slovenčina na vysokých školách v Srbsku. In: Historické aspekty života dolnozemskej Slovákov. Nadlak: Vydavateľstvo Ivan Krasko; 2014. p. 237-243. (In Slov.); Štefanko O., Husárik P. Viac ako dve storočia slovenskej školy v Nadlaku. Nadlak: Vydavateľstvo Ivan Krasko; 2006. (In Slov.); Hlásnik P., Pasková B. Školy s vyučovacím jazykom slovenským v Rumunsku od vzniku po súčasnosť. In: P. Andruška (Ed.). Slovenčina a slovenská kultúra v živote zahraničných Slovákov. Nitra: UKF; 2002. p. 193-202. (In Slov.).

<sup>18</sup> Tóth A.J. O slovenskom jazyku v školách v Békešskej župe.

<sup>19</sup> Homišinová M. Etnická rodina Slovákov, Chorvátov a Bulharov žijúcich v Maďarsku.

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