

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMPONENTS OF EDUCATION COORDINATORS' SELF-PERCEPTION AND THEIR DIFFICULTY IN APPLYING THEIR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyse the relationship between the self-perception level among the education coordinators and their difficulty in applying their professional competences. Two research instruments have been used. The self-perception level among the education coordinators was measured by a scale questionnaire created by Božik (2016). Their difficulty in applying professional competences was examined using our own scale questionnaire. The internal structure of the questionnaires was analysed using the exploratory factor analysis. The first questionnaire consisted of 6 dimensions (positive evaluation of one's own work; limits of one's own work influence; attractiveness of the coordinator's function; perception of the coordinator's status; opportunity for further professional development; cooperation with colleagues). The second questionnaire consisted of 4 dimensions (preventive, diagnostic, cultivating, and consulting). The reliability of these dimensions was identified using Cronbach's Alpha; the first questionnaire achieved the value of 0.66 – 0.81 and the latter the value of 0.88 – 0.94. The research sample consisted of 215 respondents. Except for the "cooperation with colleagues" dimension representing the external factor in the development of coordinators' self-perception – which showed statistically significant, yet trivial positive correlation with the difficulty of implementing the preventive competency – all dimensions pertaining to the construct showed statistically significant positive correlation regarding their difficulty with applying their professional competences. Weak and stronger direct dependencies have both been identified.

Keywords: education coordinator, self-perception, professional competences, exploratory factor analysis

1 Introduction

Currently, an increase in problematic behaviour among pupils can be observed. Schools as professional educational institutions are trying to eliminate deviant behaviour of all kinds to facilitate personality development in pupils, and the education coordinators play an important role in this process. Research shows they are addressing a broad range of behavioural problems in pupils such as addictive substance abuse (Jinez et al., 2009; Zelinková, 2011; Emmerová, 2016), truancy (Kamarášová, 2012; Adefunke, 2015; Slovíková, 2015), bullying (Dulovics, 2014; Tłuściak-Deliowska, 2016), cyberbullying (Emmerová et al., 2015; Borzucka-Sitkiewicz & Leksy, 2018), different forms of violence (Niklová & Šajgalová, 2016; Bellová et al. 2019), etc.

Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (School Act), Section 130 specifies that the position of the education coordinators (formerly the prevention coordinator) is a part of the system of educational consulting and prevention system at primary and high schools. They are teachers who manage and guide prevention in a number of areas related to behavioural problems in students. Act No. 189/2019 Coll. (Act on teaching staff and vocational training employees as amended), Section 38 defines the tasks of the education coordinators at schools: besides coordinating the primary prevention of drug addiction and other socio-pathological phenomena, they also manage the cross-sectional topics in the school programmes of education, or informatisation and education using information and communication technologies.

According to Emmerová (2017a), the function of the education coordinator is assigned to the selected teacher by the headmaster for the period of 1 year based their voluntary interest, personality features, and specialised skills.

These factors are decisive, since the education coordinator should pay attention to primary prevention in all years of the primary and high schools; provide monitoring of problematic behaviour in pupils; manage the preventive activities, focus on actual risks, and make these activities entertaining by facilitating pupils' participation (Emmerová, 2017b).

Taking into consideration the aforementioned determinants participating in the selection of suitable teacher candidates for this position as well as the requirements regarding efficient primary prevention, it is obvious that the coordinator should be a person with a harmonic attitude towards themselves, pupils, their parents, colleagues, and teaching profession as such. According to Průcha, Walterová and Mareš (2009) who draw from Syřišťová et al. and Kariková (2011), the coordinator should be a self-confident person capable of objective self-assessment who develops their potential and can decide independently. They should also be able to manage stress, critically evaluate the reality, and adapt to existing conditions. The synthesis of these qualities could be referred to as the ability of professional reflection, which consists of self-perception, self-assessment, and behaviour (Hupková, 2006). These components play an important role in a teacher's personality and professional development.

Self-perception is considered of key importance – it is a cognitive structure in the person's consciousness that significantly influences their actions. It is the way an individual perceives themselves, and it also develops in relation to their surroundings (Kareem & Ravirot, 2014; Helus, 2018). Kosová (2007) claims that self-perception is based on the generalised idea of a person about themselves in terms of their own successfulness, which results from rational as well as emotional interpretation of different external evaluations. According to Ruisel (2008), self-perception belongs among the adaptive characteristics; it is a framework that helps us regulate our information processing, our motives, emotional states, and self-evaluation in terms of our skills. It is an important part of the personality component in every person. Through self-perception, the person distinguishes themselves from their physical and social environments, and realizes their own mental state. Meta-cognition enables them to efficiently communicate the work-related issues, establish relationships with other people, and facilitates the achievement of their goals.

Helus (1982) points out that self-confidence (in terms of being able to manage one's learning activities) is more important for pupils' school performance than their intelligence. Hamachek (1995) confirms this idea through his research; he proved there was a relationship between self-perception and school performance, as well as between self-perception and academic skills. Ugur's research (2015) also proved that pupils' self-perception changes according to the way they are perceived by their peers in terms of selected attributes. Changing self-perception in teachers may also prove a possible way to develop their potential as indicated by multiple pieces of research (Guskey, 1988; Zlatković et al., 2012; Yeung et al., 2014).

However, as Božik (2017a) claims, the job of the education coordinator is often taken by teachers who perceive it as a necessary evil to gain enough working hours. In some cases, this position is not even rewarded financially. On the other hand, there are teachers who take this job because they believe in its importance. Niklová's research of 2009 confirmed this. The problem is that the professional development of education coordinators is not followed systematically, and little attention is paid to whether primary and high school teachers are actually capable of doing the job, or the factors that influence them in it (Božik, 2017b).

Multiple internal and external factors influence self-perception in helping professions. The way these people perceive their job as well as their performance limits, and having sufficient self-confidence in unexpected situations are all important, which naturally relates to their self-awareness, the ability to analyse their weak points, and finding ways to improve them. The social environment in which those activities are performed cannot be overlooked either, but more importantly, factors such as professional prestige related to the position may heavily reflect

in their ability to cope with the changes in their self-perception in the context of what is expected of them.

Self-perception consists of dimensions, which produce a lot of questions among the education coordinators, and it is necessary for us to answer them in the context of helping professions. They need to understand themselves and gain the necessary self-confidence, but they also need to evaluate themselves and their actual performance positively. Průcha, Walterová and Mareš (2009) add the following representations to these dimensions: Me (Who am I really?); evaluation (Who should I be?) or direction (Whom would I like to be?); expression of power (What can I do? Whom can I influence?); and expression of the role (What should I do? What is my task?).

Although in theory, prevention in schools should be provided by a specialised employee such as the social pedagogue, with proper education and training (Hroncová & Emmerová et al., 2015), in practice, these tasks are being delegated to teachers (Fenyvesiová, 2015). However, we believe that education coordinators lacking special training during their university studies are nevertheless able to provide prevention of behavioural problems in pupils as well as to be social pedagogues. They are able to address addiction and provide prevention if they believe they are capable of performing all necessary activities. Eventually, their self-perception can be reflected in their difficulty in applying their professional competences.

Professional competences of the education coordinators are elaborated in the Prevention Coordinators' Professional Standard (2017). These competences are divided into 3 main areas: pupil, prevention activity coordination, and self-development. Each of these competences is described using the required knowledge and capabilities, which should reflect in practice. These professional competences could be summarised as tasks required from the education coordinators as the professionals providing prevention in schools, and taking responsibility for the process. Pjatková et al. specifies these tasks as follows (2014):

- creation of the prevention plan in cooperation with the headmaster; it is based on the current National Drug Fighting Programme;
- and includes the initiation and coordination of preventive activities in cooperation with the school management as an integral part of the educational process;
- providing school consulting in prevention of drug and other addictions;
- providing preventive and educational consulting to the pupils and their parents;
- monitoring and methodological guidance for preventive anti-drug education and providing information to the teachers (e.g. systematic evaluation of the development of pupils at risk of drug addiction);
- establishing contacts between the schools and other consulting or specialised facilities including non-governmental organisations providing prevention;
- special treatment of pupils at potential risk of socio-pathological development (e.g. pupils from environments at risk of social pathology; pupils from disadvantaged environments);
- informing the pupils and their parents about the accessibility of services specialising in prevention and elimination of addiction;
- cooperation with the school's educational counsellor and pedagogic-psychological consulting and prevention centre to provide methodological assistance in prevention;
- constant education, improving capabilities related to primary prevention in schools and the related measures (strategies, approaches, methods);
- performing professional reflection in order to satisfy one's professional needs;
- presenting a healthy lifestyle (the education coordinator should be an example for the pupils) and the validity and efficiency of prevention.

To reflect these theoretical starting points, the following research questions have been proposed:

- RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the positive evaluation of coordinators' own work and their difficulty in applying their professional competences?
- RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the limits of coordinators' own work and their difficulty in applying their professional competences?
- RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the attractiveness of the coordinator's function and their difficulty in applying their professional competences?
- RQ4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the perception of the coordinators' status and their difficulty in applying their professional competences?
- RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the coordinators' opportunity for further professional development and their difficulty in applying their professional competences?
- RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the coordinators' cooperation with colleagues and their difficulty in applying their professional competences?

2 Research methodology

The self-perception level among the education coordinators was measured by a scale questionnaire created by Božik (2016). An explicit analysis of its components showed that both internal and external factors influence the coordinators' self-perception.

Of course, the extent to which the coordinators believe in themselves in their position as well as their belief in their ability to provide prevention and related activities (e.g. diagnostics, consulting) are very important. Other powerful factors include the way this position is perceived by the community of teachers (e.g. as a "punishment", no one wants to do the job, career advancement, etc.) and whether this position counts on professional development, which adds to the importance of education coordinators – optimal performance requires updating their knowledge and skills. Last but not least, the attitude of other teachers to the coordinator (underestimation, respect, perceiving the coordinator as an expert in addressing problematic behaviour in pupils) also plays its role. Pupils' parents should not be underestimated either – their perception of the school functions may influence pupils' attitudes towards the activities organised in order to support their personality development.

In the scale questionnaire, the respondents were supposed to express how much they agree with 26 statements using a 5-point Likert scale (completely disagree – disagree – neither disagree, nor agree – agree – completely agree). There were 13 negative statements, which were re-poled before the data were evaluated.

The second scale questionnaire (designed by the authors) identified how difficult implementing professional competences is for education coordinators. The questionnaire was based on the Prevention Coordinators' Professional Standard (2017). In all three areas – pupil, prevention activity coordination, professional development – cardinal activities necessary to prove that the coordinator has the respective competency were selected. These were integrated into the research instrument in the form of respective items and the respondents used a 7-point frequency scale to provide their answers (it is difficult for me and I need help – it is always difficult for me – it is very often difficult for me – it is often difficult for me – it is difficult for me sometimes – I rarely experience difficulties – I never experience difficulties). There were 28 items in total.

Rovňanová's scale (2015) was used; in her research, she focused on evaluating the subjective difficulty experienced by students of teaching and secondary and high school teachers in the application of their professional competences. The use of this scale was justified by the fact that the sensitivity of the process needs to be taken into consideration when evaluating how difficult the coordinator job is for the given person, sometimes it

is hard for the respondent to evaluate how often they actually experience the difficulties. Skalková (1985) claims that in this case, discrimination sensitivity needs to be considered in the respondents' answers.

The final form of the scale questionnaires did not undergo a pilot study, since the coordinators' self-perception questionnaire was already used in Božik's research (2017b) in Slovakia, and the difficulty-identification questionnaire was based on the Prevention Coordinators' Professional Standard, where the competences are already operationalised (see proving competences).

The complex questionnaire was administered to the respondents online. They were also given the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the research instruments used. This item helped us exclude the questionnaires of respondents who claimed to find it difficult to provide answers (agree/disagree with statements, determine the frequencies) or were unable to respond. At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about having answered the questionnaire before to exclude duplicates – a frequent problem in questionnaire research. No such respondents were identified.

The selection of respondents can be characterised as available. They were targeted via the e-mail addresses pertaining to primary and high schools listed on the webpage of the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, in some cases the headmasters were addressed directly, and also via the e-mail addresses of the methodological-pedagogical centres. Data were collected from September to October 2018 (for one and a half month). The aim was generate as large a research sample as possible, because in the following months, this group of respondents is often targeted with other, often more demanding research.

The number of female respondents in the research file was greater ($n=187$; 86.98%) than their male counterparts ($n=28$; 13.02%). In terms of geographic distribution, most respondents in the research file were from the Prešov ($n=53$; 24.65%) and Košice ($n=33$; 15.35%) regions, followed by the Žilina ($n=27$; 12.56%), Banská Bystrica ($n=23$; 10.70%) and Trenčín ($n=24$; 11.16%) regions. The fewest respondents were from the Nitra ($n=21$; 9.77%), Trnava ($n=18$; 8.37%) and Bratislava ($n=16$; 7.44%) regions. Most respondents in the research file were primary ($n=164$; 76.28%) and high school ($n=35$; 16.28%) teachers. The respondents teaching at grammar schools formed the smallest group ($n=16$; 7.44%). 110 respondents consult the respective professional standard to find information on their professional competences ($n=110$; 51.16%). Almost half of them have no experience with the professional standard ($n=105$; 48.84%).

The information on the length of their professional practice was excluded eventually, because some respondents provided the length of their teaching practice instead of answering how long they have been working as coordinators, e.g. 30 years, which is obviously an incorrect answer as this job was only established in 2000. They were contacted via the e-mail addresses they voluntarily provided in the questionnaires to clarify the information. It turned out that some of them misread the question and automatically provided the length of their teaching practice as that particular question often occurs in research questionnaires. Therefore, the research instrument was adjusted and a demographic item was added to ask the respondents about both the length of their teaching as well as coordinating practice. Thus we prevented them from responding automatically without proper reading. The analysis of these two specific items showed that teachers with longer professional practice usually work as coordinators for a longer time as well (at least 2 years).

Identifying the questionnaire return-rate was deemed irrelevant. Since the questionnaire was distributed via schools, it was impossible to objectively determine how many respondents were really addressed. The total number of completed questionnaires that were returned was 268. During data evaluation, the final

number of usable questionnaires decreased to 215. The rest were excluded based on the assumption that respondents with short practice may not have yet had the opportunity to perform most of their professional tasks. Respondents with practice of (or shorter than) 1 year were excluded.

The internal structure of the scale questionnaire focusing on the coordinators' self-perception level was analysed using exploratory factor analysis instead of the confirmatory one, because its dimensions were selected without using factor analysis – the author allocated the items based on their contents (Božik, 2016) 6 latent variables were identified, which partially correspond with the questionnaire components proposed by the author. The main component method with the orthogonal Varimax rotation proved to be a suitable alternative in terms of factor interpretation (see Table 1). Standard variable exhaustion was identified (66.58%). The Bartlett's Sphericity Test refutes the hypothesis that the correlation matrix represents a unit matrix ($0.000 < 0.001$). The KMO Test for Sampling Adequacy (0.784) shows that factor analysis is a suitable method for analysing the collected data. The minimum factor loading per item to be included was 0.40. The factor loading was not supposed to exceed 0.40 in two or more factors at the same time.

In terms of exploratory factor analysis, 7 items were eliminated. First, an item with higher factor loading in 3 factors was excluded (My colleagues consider the function of coordinator an opportunity to make some extra money.). It was followed by an item with factor loading below 0.40 (Parents see the coordinator as a waste of money.). The third excluded item had factor loading higher than 0.40 in two factors (The cooperation with other school staff to provide prevention is very formal and impersonal). Three more items with extracted communality below 0.50 were also excluded (The school management helps draft the prevention plan.; The parents see the position of coordinator as a difficult and responsible one.; I consider the position of coordinator very useful at school.). Eventually, one more item that did not match the "opportunity for further professional development" factor was eliminated (The position of coordinator is allocated to a teacher with nothing better to do.). These steps proved correct as they increased the explained variability (66.58%) in comparison to the original state (60.97%).

The "positive evaluation of one's own work" factor consisted of items representing the coordinators' level of satisfaction with their job, or how much they believe they can arouse interest regarding the issue of addiction among the pupils. In this dimension, Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.758.

The "limits of one's own work influence" factor consisted of items representing how much the coordinators believe that they can actually influence the pupils' behaviour in comparison to other factors such as their family and peers. In this dimension, Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.757.

The "attractiveness of the coordinator's function" factor consisted of items representing how the coordinators perceive this position in terms of personality development and professional advantages. In this dimension, Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.759.

The "perception of the coordinator's status" factor consisted of items representing the importance ascribed to the position of coordinator. In this dimension, Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.697.

The "opportunity for further professional development" factor consisted of items representing the motivation for taking the coordinator job in terms of the accessibility of further training and establishing contact with experts in social pathology. In this dimension, Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.809.

The "cooperation with colleagues" factor consisted of items representing the coordinators' assessment of their cooperation with other school staff. In this dimension, Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.657.

Cronbach's alpha for the whole research instrument was 0.818.

Table 1: The components of self-perception in education coordinators (rotated factor loading matrix)

Items pertaining to individual factors	Factors						
	α	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
(I) Positive evaluation of one's own work	0.758						
I am objective and just when it comes to problem solving.		0.821	-0.158	0.156	0.017	-0.095	0.002
I can support my pupils when they face social pathology issues.		0.791	0.071	0.118	0.077	0.157	0.038
I am satisfied with the way the programmes and activities that I organize turn out.		0.646	0.265	-0.008	0.113	0.214	0.097
I can arouse enough interest in the topic of addiction among the pupils.		0.633	0.239	0.269	0.034	0.206	0.031
(II) Limits of one's own work influence	0.757						
I am really unable to manage severe cases of social pathology.		0.083	0.775	0.151	0.159	-0.061	0.018
I have little influence on the pupils in comparison with their parents.		0.119	0.772	0.061	-0.157	0.024	0.058
I have little influence on the pupils in comparison with their peers.		0.183	0.715	0.059	-0.091	0.057	0.209
I do not have the opportunity to influence the pathological behaviour in the pupils' parents.		-0.099	0.703	0.121	0.235	0.134	-0.088
(III) Attractiveness of the coordinator's position	0.759						
I perceive the position of coordinator as an opportunity for career growth.		0.044	0.082	0.829	0.071	-0.034	-0.144
For me, the position of coordinator represents an opportunity for personality development and self-actualisation.		0.174	0.203	0.728	0.041	0.313	0.049
The position of coordinator is merely a formal one.		0.155	0.044	0.669	0.066	0.161	0.329
I value the position of coordinator as much as I value teaching academic subjects.		0.374	0.184	0.549	-0.024	0.276	0.000
(IV) Perception of the coordinator's status	0.697						
I consider the position of coordinator underrated at school.		-0.088	0.029	0.078	0.814	-0.082	-0.012
My colleagues do not value the position of coordinator at all.		0.162	-0.020	0.089	0.761	0.037	0.187
My colleagues do not know what a coordinator actually does.		0.168	0.098	-0.053	0.695	0.234	0.245
(V) Opportunity for further professional development	0.809						
The position of coordinator gives me the opportunity to take courses and undergo training.		0.096	0.028	0.161	0.095	0.867	0.050
The position of coordinator gives me the opportunity to establish contact with experts in social pathology.		0.239	0.053	0.221	0.008	0.835	0.077
(VI) Cooperation with colleagues	0.657						
My colleagues often try to give me advice on prevention methods.		0.012	0.048	-0.070	0.126	0.021	0.835
The cooperation between the coordinator and other school staff fails due to different opinions on drug use.		0.072	0.096	0.151	0.189	0.083	0.795
<i>Eigenvalue</i>		2.51	2.47	2.24	1.93	1.87	1.63
<i>variance %</i>		13.22	13.00	11.79	10.16	9.83	8.58

In order to understand the internal structure of the scale questionnaire focusing on their difficulty in applying their professional competences, exploratory factor analysis was used (see Table 2). Four latent variables were identified. The main axis method with Promax rotation was used. Theoretically, individual factors may not be independent (Škaloudová, 2010; Kariková & Šimoniová-Černáková, 2016). Since the factors were correlated, the total value of the variable exhaustion cannot be determined after rotation. The Bartlett's Sphericity Test refutes the hypothesis that the correlation matrix represents a unit matrix ($0.000 < 0.001$). The KMO Test for Sampling Adequacy (0.937) shows that factor analysis is a highly suitable method for analysing the collected data. The minimum factor loading per item to be included was 0.40. The factor loading was not supposed to exceed 0.40 in two or more factors at the same time.

In terms of the exploratory factor analysis, 2 items with factor loadings higher than 0.40 in two factors at the same time were excluded (Coordinating cooperation with the educational consultant, form teacher, teaching staff and vocational training employees; Reflecting their own performance of the prevention coordinator's job).

The "preventive competence" factor consisted of items representing how difficult the performance of the job-related preventive activities is for the coordinators (from preparation to actual performance of preventive activities). In this dimension, Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.936.

The "diagnostic competence" factor consisted of items representing how difficult the performance of the diagnostic process is for the coordinators (from using diagnostic tools to the actual diagnosis). In this dimension, Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.896.

The “cultivating competence” factor consisted of items representing how difficult the performance of activities which help the coordinators identify with this role and job. In this dimension, Cronbach’s Alpha showed a value of 0.902.

The “consulting competence” factor consisted of items representing how difficult providing professional consulting is for them. In this dimension, Cronbach’s Alpha showed a value of 0.876. Cronbach’s Alpha of the research instrument as a whole was 0.961.

Table 2: The professional competences of education coordinators (rotated factor loading matrix)

Items pertaining to individual factors	Factors				
	<i>a</i>	I	II	III	IV
(I) Preventive competence	0.936				
Flexible response to offers from the external environment (project calls) and their inclusion in the plans		0.917	-0.026	-0.015	-0.104
Organisation of effective preventive strategies (guaranteed preventive programmes, peer programmes)		0.833	0.053	0.020	-0.156
Cooperation with specialised staff in drafting the school preventive programme		0.781	0.024	0.055	-0.087
Planning surveys to identify the needs of the given school or educational facility		0.675	0.162	0.018	0.008
Planning the prevention coordinator’s activity		0.667	0.056	-0.110	0.245
Evaluation of the prevention coordinator’s plan implementation		0.665	-0.087	0.027	0.192
Record-keeping		0.636	0.048	0.040	0.157
Evaluating the effectiveness of prevention based on pupils’ feedback		0.545	0.049	0.370	-0.081
Cooperation with the Centres for Educational and Psychological Consulting and Prevention		0.528	-0.054	0.148	0.062
Individual and group discussions with students regarding prevention		0.518	0.073	0.138	0.134
(II) Diagnostic competence	0.896				
Using the educational diagnostics tools to identify the specificities of a pupil’s social and cultural environment		0.048	0.871	-0.074	-0.035
Using the educational diagnostics tools to identify individual deviations in a pupil’s behaviour		0.140	0.863	-0.077	-0.108
Interpreting the results of educational diagnostics and drawing conclusions		0.078	0.785	-0.069	0.108
Proposing measures based on educational diagnostics		0.102	0.568	0.030	0.197
Identifying the issues in a pupil’s personality and social development		-0.221	0.564	0.381	-0.008
Identifying a pupil’s needs (e.g. based on personal contact or their own initiative)		-0.116	0.550	0.252	0.033
(III) Cultivating competence	0.902				
Being the expert in relation to pupils		-0.054	0.066	0.782	0.099
Being the expert in relation to the teaching staff and pupils’ parents or legal guardians		-0.038	-0.006	0.775	0.158
Presenting one’s own professional experience in specialised fora		0.001	0.213	0.660	-0.179
Using the feedback from the teaching staff as well as pupils for one’s own self-development		0.216	-0.060	0.640	0.001
Using different possibilities and forms of life-long learning		0.327	-0.134	0.617	-0.117
Cooperation with prevention coordinator at schools or in educational facilities		0.236	-0.004	0.535	0.067
Providing documents necessary to incorporate the methodological guidelines into the internal documents of the school or educational facility		0.306	-0.029	0.448	0.142
(IV) Consulting competence	0.876				
Providing consulting to pupils		0.005	0.017	-0.107	0.936
Providing consulting to legal guardians		0.109	-0.027	0.026	0.758
Providing consulting to the teaching staff		-0.109	0.040	0.146	0.753
<i>Eigenvalue</i>		<i>11.38</i>	<i>8.83</i>	<i>10.37</i>	<i>9.30</i>

The statistical significance of the relationships between the variables was verified at the significance level of 0.05. Non-parametric significance tests such as Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient and the Mann-Whitney U Test, since not all variables showed normal distribution within the file and its sub-files, which was verified using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test ($p < 0.05$). As for descriptive statistics, arithmetic mean (AM) and median (Me) were used.

Based on the Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient results listed in Table 3, it can be stated that the questionnaire dimensions are mostly independent. A stronger direct dependency was identified between the “positive evaluation of one’s own work” and “attractiveness of the coordinator’s function” dimensions. The more the coordinators believe in their professional potential, which provides them with the background for providing prevention and assistance to their pupils, the more they perceive this job as a means of professional progress, and ascribe

a specific meaning to it. A stronger direct dependency was identified between the “opportunity for further professional development” and “attractiveness of the coordinator’s function” dimensions. If the coordinators’ professional development needs are saturated, their interest in doing the job increases. This is also supported by the stronger direct dependency between the “opportunity for further professional development” and “positive evaluation of one’s own work” dimensions. The more the coordinator can identify with their role through professional training, the more capable they feel to provide prevention with positive results.

The results in Table 4 show that there are statistically significant positive relationships between the dimensions of the questionnaire examining their difficulty in applying their professional competencies. Medium strong correlations are most frequent. Difficulty applying coordinators’ professional competencies is closely interconnected in terms of the

dimensions, which reflects the actual practice in different helping professions – successful application of the respective professional competences is determined by their complementarity. The difficulties with the application of preventive competence are determined by how difficult diagnosing pupils and prevention conditions are for the coordinators. On the other hand, the higher the quality of preventive activities (including diagnosing), the better the consulting provided by the coordinators, which also reflects in the way they declare their professionalism at school as well as outside of it, and last but not least, their personality and professional development efforts.

3 Research results

It seems that the more the coordinators believe in the effectiveness of their work and reflect its positive attributes, the

less their difficulty in applying most of their professional competences. Table 5 shows that except for the “cooperation with colleagues” component, the self-perception components in coordinators’ are in statistically significant positive relationships with the (lack of) difficulties.

Stronger correlations can be observed mainly between the “positive evaluation of one’s own work” dimension and their difficulty in applying all four competences; the “limits of one’s own work” dimension and their difficulty in applying cultivating, diagnostic and preventive competences; the “attractiveness of the coordinator’s function” dimension and difficulty applying preventive and cultivating competences, and finally, the “opportunity for further professional development” dimension and difficulty applying preventive and cultivating competences. The rest merely indicates direct dependencies.

Table 3: Intercorrelations between the self-perception dimensions in education coordinators

Self-perception dimensions in education coordinators		Positive evaluation of one’s own work	Limits of one’s work influence	Attractiveness of the coordinator’s position	Perception of the coordinator’s status	Opportunity for further professional development	Cooperation with colleagues
Positive evaluation of one’s own work	Spearman’s Rho	1.000	0.249	0.431	0.217	0.337	0.204
	p-value		0,000*	0,000*	0,001*	0,000*	0,003*
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
Limits of one’s own work influence	Spearman’s Rho	0.249	1.000	0.265	0.127	0.131	0.107
	p-value	0,000*		0,000*	0,063	0,055	0,118
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
Attractiveness of the coordinator’s position	Spearman’s Rho	0.431	0.265	1.000	0.182	0.401	0.137
	p-value	0,000*	0,000*		0,007*	0,000*	0,044*
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
Perception of the coordinator’s status	Spearman’s Rho	0.217	0.127	0.182	1.000	0.139	0.267
	p-value	0,001*	0,063	0,007*		0,042*	0,000*
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
Opportunity for further professional development	Spearman’s Rho	0.337	0.131	0.401	0.139	1.000	0.187
	p-value	0,000*	0,055	0,000*	0,042*		0,006*
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215
Cooperation with colleagues	Spearman’s Rho	0.204	0.107	0.137	0.267	0.187	1.000
	p-value	0,003*	0,118	0,044*	0,000*	0,006*	
	N	215	215	215	215	215	215

Table 4: Intercorrelations between the professional competences in education coordinators

Professional competences		Preventive competence	Diagnostic competence	Cultivating competence	Consulting competence
Preventive competence	Spearman's Rho	1.000	0.595	0.788	0.596
	p-value		0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
	N	215	215	215	215
Diagnostic competence	Spearman's Rho	0.595	1.000	0.625	0.549
	p-value	0,000*		0,000*	0,000*
	N	215	215	215	215
Cultivating competence	Spearman's Rho	0.788	0.625	1.000	0.627
	p-value	0,000*	0,000*		0,000*
	N	215	215	215	215
Consulting competence	Spearman's Rho	0.596	0.549	0.627	1.000
	p-value	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	
	N	215	215	215	215

Table 5: Relationships between the dimensions in coordinators' self-perception and their difficulty in applying their professional competencies

Relationships between the coordinators' self-perception dimensions and difficulty in applying professional competencies		Preventive competence	Diagnostic competence	Cultivating competence	Consulting competence
Positive evaluation of one's own work	Spearman's Rho	0.437	0.412	0.472	0.357
	p-value	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
	N	215	215	215	215
Limits of one's own work influence	Spearman's Rho	0.324	0.397	0.441	0.193
	p-value	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,004*
	N	215	215	215	215
Attractiveness of the coordinator's position	Spearman's Rho	0.411	0.252	0.366	0.211
	p-value	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,002*
	N	215	215	215	215
Perception of the coordinator's status	Spearman's Rho	0.193	0.205	0.230	0.159
	p-value	0,004*	0,003*	0,001*	0,020*
	N	215	215	215	215
Opportunity for further professional development	Spearman's Rho	0.306	0.237	0.289	0.205
	p-value	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,003*
	N	215	215	215	215
Cooperation with colleagues	Spearman's Rho	0.140	0.124	0.107	0.084
	p-value	0,040*	0,069	0,116	0,223
	N	215	215	215	215

4 Discussion

Self-perception or the development of an opinion about oneself is of both descriptive and evaluative nature (Řičan, 2010; Cakirpaloglu, 2012). It is important for education coordinators as well as for other helping professionals to keep developing their ability of professional self-evaluation. According to Kouteková (2017) it is one of the most important abilities teachers should possess, as it is necessary for learning new things as well as professional responsibility. Hrabal a Pavelková (2010) studied professional reflection in teachers; they claim that self-knowledge results from self-perception – a complex and dynamic process depending upon multiple factors and circumstances. It represents the means of getting satisfaction from one's work.

The function of self-perception is understanding oneself (Macek, 2008). Self-assessment plays an important role as it represents one's emotional relationship towards themselves (Blatný, 2003) closely related to their self-respect. A teacher with positive self-assessment is able to improve themselves and compensate their weaknesses and according to Hartl & Hartlová (2010), it also reflects in their self-respect and self-confidence.

The research identified statistically significant stronger positive relationships between the "positive evaluation of one's own work" dimension and their difficulty in applying all four of the aforementioned professional competencies. It seems that the demonstrated dependency strength between the dimensions does, in fact, correspond with the reality. All self-assessment is determined by heteronomous assessment (Kosová, 2002; Slavík, 2018). Only a person who has internalised the assessment criteria can assess their own performance optimally. All

participants of the educational processes taking place at the school are judging the coordinators. However, their self-assessment is corrected and modified through the interactive cycle of assessment (Kouteková, 2015) in which different subjects enter. The performance measures are being constantly restructured.

Gavora and Majerčíková (2013) emphasize that besides professional competences, the teacher's self-perception, i.e. the idea they have about themselves as a professional in teaching and upbringing, is also very important. In our opinion, this claim also applies to education coordinators. Whether they perceive themselves as prevention experts largely depends on their ability of self-reflection in terms of their school activities, but also on their ability to process the feedback from their surroundings (colleagues, pupils, parents).

Božik (2017b) states that self-perception is a set of opinions an education coordinator has about themselves. Satisfaction with one's work or its lack thereof also deserves attention. Self-perception as a complex of ideas someone has about themselves incorporates stylised personality characteristics (Wiegerová et al., 2012). It is natural, because our primary purpose is to make others perceive us as a professional. It relates to the fact that there is a statistically significant stronger positive relationship between the "limits of one's own work" and applying cultivating, diagnostic, and preventive competences.

Self-confidence as the belief in one's own potential helps us set realistic goals. It represents positive self-perception (Rogers, 2014) – it is not self-conceit that distorts our self-image. Helping professionals in the school environment must be aware of certain limitations – as in every competence profile, but they should also believe that the activities they organise for pupils create a

broader influence, crossing the border of the school. The research by Ross and Bruce (2007) indicates that teachers who perceive themselves as capable professionals like experimenting and are show more endurance in overcoming obstacles.

The way education coordinators approach the activities pertaining to their position also depends on the incentives such as attractiveness of the job at schools and teachers' perception of the job. Our research identified a statistically significant stronger positive relationship between the "attractiveness of the coordinator's function" dimension and their difficulty in applying preventive and cultivating competences. There is a statistically significant weaker positive relationship between the perception of the coordinators' status and their difficulty in applying their professional competences. These findings can be explained by the fact that the position of coordinator may be desirable, because the teacher-coordinator gets not only to teach students (their main task), but also to influence their attitudes to substance and non-substance addiction, self-care, and behaviour towards other pupils. In further research it would be desirable to include control variables and pay attention to the way teachers become coordinators, who made the decision, and how they responded to the assignment.

Zemančíková's research of 2012 provided interesting findings – it showed that neither the management, nor the teachers have proper knowledge on what social pedagogues actually do. The question about their status at schools arose. We believe that the coordinators are in a similar situation.

Approximately half of the respondents in the research file stated they did not use the Prevention Coordinators' Professional Standard to learn about their own professional competences. Respondents who use the Professional Standard to navigate their job achieved statistically significant better results in the "positive evaluation of one's own work" dimension ($p=0.019$; Mann-Whitney U test=4735.000; AM=3.82; Me=3.75; AM=3.70; Me=3.75), "limits of one's own work" ($p=0.000$; Mann-Whitney U test=3850.500; AM=3.00; Me=3.00; AM=2.63; Me=2.50), "attractiveness of the coordinator's function" ($p=0.007$; Mann-Whitney U test=4547.500; AM=3.60; Me=3.75; AM=3.29; Me=3.50) and "perception of the coordinator's status" ($p=0.013$; Mann-Whitney U test=4656.500; AM=3.07; Me=3.00; AM=2.79; Me=2.67).

They also achieved statistically significant better results in their difficulty in applying the preventive ($p=0.000$, Mann-Whitney U Test 3903.500; AM=6.05; Me=6.15; AM=5.51; Me=5.80), diagnostic ($p=0.000$; Mann-Whitney U test=3811.500; AM=5.40; Me=5.50; AM=4.92; Me=5.00), cultivating ($p=0.000$; Mann-Whitney U test=3982.000; AM=5.66; Me=5.86; AM=5.13; Me=5.43), and consulting ($p=0.030$; Mann-Whitney U test=4799.500; AM=5.99; Me=6.00; AM=5.71; Me=5.67) competences.

In supporting positive self-perception in coordinators it is necessary to check whether they are correctly informed about their tasks at school and about their exact professional competences. If these are not properly specified, difficulties arise. This also apply to other teachers who are not coordinators themselves, but their perception of the job significantly influences the way the prevention coordinator at their school perceives himself.

A statistically significant stronger positive relationship was identified between the "opportunity for further professional development" dimension and their difficulty in applying preventive and cultivating competences. Understandably, actually using the opportunity for professional development should help the coordinators resolve the problems arising in their practice, but it is equally important to emphasize the necessity to undergo further training, because it also influences whether they perceive their job as meaningful as well as their self-perception. Participating in specialised training can be a means of professional reflection (Auger & Bouchariat, 2005), which provides an opportunity to gain a different perspective on the

educational reality and work with pupils. We identify with the experts' opinions on pedeutology (Ellington, 2000; Kasáčová, 2014; Pollard et al., 2014; Kosová & Tomengová et al., 2015) who state that today, teachers cannot thrive without self-reflection and continuous education. Korthagen & Wubbels (2011) performed a long-term research that showed that teachers who perform professional reflection are interested in continuous self-improvement, more satisfied with their job, and believe in their professional skills more. It is one of the self-perception levels. These two findings can be also applied to coordinators and their job.

No statistically significant relationship was identified between the "cooperation with colleagues" dimension and their difficulty in applying their professional competences. There is a visible trivial positive correlation between this dimension and their difficulty in applying preventive competence, but no relevant conclusions can be drawn from it. It is surprising, given the fact that the respondents achieved the highest scores in this particular dimension (AM=3.93; Me=4.00), the "positive evaluation of one's own work" dimension (AM=3.76; Me=3.75), "opportunity for further professional development" (AM=3.74; Me=4.00). However, the question about the nature of this cooperation arises: if a coordinator is to apply their professional competences with fewer difficulties, it is not enough if their teacher colleagues respect them and the prevention methods they are using or if they share the attitude towards drug use. This dimension should be extended by more items or include a control variable in the questionnaire to identify what is the nature of cooperation between the coordinator and the teachers at school. Items aimed at identifying the school's attitudes towards prevention and its necessity as well as what kind of preventive programmes are being implemented there most frequently should also be added. According to Baginová and Belušková (2014), prevention effectiveness depends on the overall school philosophy, which guarantees a safe environment, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and focuses on the pupils.

As for the weaknesses of this research, the method of finding respondents for the research file should be improved. Available selection is a method limited in certain ways. The first limitation is that the research results cannot be generalised in a valid way and applied to the coordinators working at primary and high schools in Slovakia. Further research is desirable in the area. On the other hand, 215 of the coordinators represents 215 schools that participated in the research, which is a robust sample. Based on our possibilities, we opted for the available selection which means that more coordinators convinced that this job is meaningful may have participated in the research.

Based on the difficulty scores achieved by the respondents (AM=5.78; Me=6.00), diagnostic (AM=5.17; Me=5.33), cultivating (AM=5.41; Me=5.57) and consulting (AM=5.86; Me=6.00) competences, it is assumed that mainly coordinators with longer practice participated in it. The scores in the dimensions indicate that these coordinators do not experience that much difficulty in applying their professional competencies. This may have resulted in the fact that there were no statistically significant stronger correlations between the self-perception components in coordinators and their difficulty in applying their professional competencies. Experience with school prevention and related activities was not observed as a variable, which nevertheless influenced the dependency strength between variables in both research instruments. This distortion may also be explained by the fact that professional standards expose the teachers' (coordinators') weaknesses more than formative aspects of performance evaluation. This is pointed out by Kyriacou (2012) who argues that the lists of professional competences tend to emphasize the final aspect of teacher's work. Respondents may have been reluctant to disrupt their self-images, although that is what happens (Korthagen & Wubbels, 2011) in terms of professional reflection, when they were supposed to state how difficult it is for them to apply their professional competencies.

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