

SOCIAL WORK AS A TOOL FOR ANOMIE CORRECTION ON SECOND STAGE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract: Anomie is a sociological term that expresses the state that we can describe as a condition without law or rules. In the school environment, the condition is manifested by the failure to comply with the rules, and broken relationships between students as well as in relation to teachers and authorities in general. A state of anomie in the school environment reduces the effectiveness of the teaching process and creates an environment for the emergence of pathological phenomena that can affect the development of students and cause long-term negative consequences. In the pilot study, we selected the specific school environment that manifested the signs of anomie. Subsequently, we carried out research on the chosen environment with specific attention to the manifestations but also the perceptions of an anomic state in the school environment. We decided for our own research method, because the available methods from social sciences were developed for the needs of other target groups and are not suitable for the school environment. The study results show specific manifestations of anomie in the behavior and thinking of students and teachers. It was confirmed that teachers and poor emphasis on the validity of the existing rules have a great impact on the emergence of anomie. The tendencies to develop pathological phenomena in the anomic environment were also confirmed. The study results in the specific findings that should be part of a holistic preventive programme.

Keywords: Anomie, values, pathological phenomena, reduction, teaching process.

1 Introduction

Social work is a profession that involves a wide range of responsibilities and one of them is participation in resolutions and assistance in the field of social and pathological factors in society. Many authors also include anomie there, a phenomenon that has not been studied sufficiently yet. For its multidimensionality and a low interest of professionals in the field of social work, it is almost invisible and unknown. The studies on anomie were conducted by sociologists – Schenk at the social level, and Ondrejko (2010) at the level of families in 2008. In the field of social work, we did not find any empirical studies on anomie. Therefore, our research is unique and imperfect in this respect. We implemented it in the school environment which is another unexplored area in the research of anomie. Some sociologists refer to anomie as to the Boudon's rebus. Boudon argues that sociology shall address important, generally complex problems and explain them. The problem is a rebus, a riddle or a puzzle and it must be "unravelling" or "put together" into a coherent image that would explain why it happened just like that, or why people acted just like that, or why they believed just what they believed, etc. In studying the problem, we will also try to find a way how to study anomie in the context of social work and to find appropriate solutions for practice of social workers collaborating with schools. The initial attempt in the study was to focus on four areas, using the Schenk's recommendation for measuring anomie in which he points to a common denominator in every single area.

An authority, a bearer of certain values and creator of norms that result from its spiritual orientation and personal attitudes, forms an environment that forms people who are subject to its influence. In our case and understanding of the studied issue, it is a link and a reciprocal chain influence from the highest authorities of the country, i.e. politicians who are responsible for the operation of the country and its institutions, to the staff of public institutions, to parents of children and to the child – student.

Anomie is a state that occurs during a period of significant changes in society. It results in:

- the loss of values that were significant and valid in society and formed a non-institutionalised regulatory system of behaviour in society;
- the gradual breakdown of norms and mistrust of the sanction system which form the institutionalised regulatory system of behaviour in society;
- the gradual social numbness and diminishing social interaction;
- the mistrust of the state authorities and state institutions;
- the lack of certainty, the ambiguity of the future and objectives of society;
- indifference, helplessness which can lead to suicide.

2 Methodology

School social workers focus on the individual's ability to cope with the environmental demands and on the environment itself which influences the behavior. It can be a supportive, flexible, but also rigid or deficit environment with lacking resources, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the aspects preventing the optimal functioning of the individual, particularly the resources, expectations linked to individual roles and finally legislation, policy measures, social policy instruments, etc. (Skyba, Šoltéssová, 2014). Thus, anomie also affects state institutions, not just societies in general. Since research on anomie in the school environment was not conducted in Slovakia and we did not find foreign studies on anomie focused on schools, it was necessary to elaborate a brand-new model. We chose one primary school, with a sample of second-stage students and teachers. We focused our study on four areas: Norms; Values; Social opinions; and Personal attitudes. A link between the four areas are the authorities – teachers and parents as the bearers of norms, values and personal attitudes. A teacher as part of a state institution whose required qualification is a master's degree in teaching. The teacher must meet the regulations of the Ministry of Education, i.e. he is an executive unit of a specific state sector. In this case, the student is the receiver of certain norms, values and personal attitudes. Thus, he is influenced by the set of information presented in the school environment. He is also influenced by the home family environment which absolutely influences the school environment. We tried to study these areas by both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study itself is a probe for the future in this field of research, because it is indeed not easy to handle this topic. In the context of social work, we will try to identify and describe specific manifestations of anomie and propose their inclusion in the preventive activities of social workers, which is also our main research objective.

Main research objective: To identify and describe the manifestations of anomie. Through the partial objectives, we will try to identify four areas of possible anomic manifestations.

Partial objective: To find out the opinions of teachers and students on the second stage of primary school on school norms, and what values students prefer.

1st research question: What is the opinion of the students on the second stage of primary school about school norms?

2nd research question: Which are the most common problems at school the teachers face with the students?

3th research question: What are the teachers' opinions on the values of the students on the second stage of primary school?

4th research question: What are the values preferred by the students on the second stage of primary school?

5th research question: What are the opinions of the students on the second stage of primary school on socially widespread views and politicians?

6th research question: What are the teachers' opinions on the school system and the teacher's social status?

7th research question: What would you like to change in the school system? What does not suit you and prevents you from quality teaching and education?

We chose the students on the second stage of primary school in the Nitra Region because their age corresponds to the early adolescent age, which is a period of transformation from childhood to adulthood, in which, according to the research on risk and antisocial behaviour, the development of risk behaviour was found already at the age of 12 years. The researchers in this area recommend focusing preventive and intervention programmes on children in the first stage of basic education before the age of 11 years (Sobotková a kol., 2014). The second stage is the sample of students of the fifth to ninth years of the primary school in the Nitra Region in the total number of 77. The study was conducted in March 2019.

We collected the data from 52 second-stage students, due to the high morbidity at school at the time. In the second data collection, we used a newly structured questionnaire and collected the responses from 65 out of 77 students. The second questionnaire focused more on relationships with the authorities and among peers and friends; we also detected common signs of students and their values which are crucial in the research on anomie as a certain global characteristic. There were 14 teachers, including three male teachers and 11 female teachers in the school. We included all 14 teachers in the study to get as much data as possible. The questionnaire was filled in only by ten teachers. Four teachers refused to participate in the study. One questionnaire was completed in an ironic nature with single-word statements; thus, we could not classify it as suitable for the use. Thus, in total, we received responses from nine teachers.

3 Results

Students' opinions on school norms and the preferred values in the students on the second stage of primary school in the Nitra Region.

Research question: *What is the opinion of the students on the second stage of primary school about school norms?*

Table 1. Percentage values of the statement ratings by the students on the second stage of primary school.

Statement rating by the students (marks from 1 to 5)	1 %(n)	2 %(n)	3 %(n)	4 %(n)	5 %(n)
I like when I have clear rules in school	21,56 (11)	41,17 (21)	31,37 (16)	0 (0)	3,92 (2)
The penalties for the violation of school rules are fair and effective	33,33 (17)	21,56 (11)	23,52 (12)	15,68 (8)	5,88 (3)
A teacher is a respectable authority for me	33,33 (17)	37,25 (19)	19,6 (10)	3,92 (2)	5,88 (3)
I can cope with and influence the problems that I have	33,33 (17)	39,21 (20)	21,56 (11)	3,92 (2)	1,96 (1)
A praise by teachers affects me positively	62,7	21,5	5,8	3,92	1,96

Research question: *Which are the most common problems at school the teachers face with the students?*

Only nine teachers of 14, i.e. 64.28 %, participated in the study. Therefore, we considered this number of teachers to be 100 %. Male participation was 100 %. One response by a female teacher was not included in the relevant statements, because the answers were in a single word and in an ironic nature.

The question about the most common problems the teachers face at school was answered as follows:

Table 2. The most common problems in school.

Categories	Frequency n (%)
Students' intolerance	3 (33,3%)
Students' indifference	4 (44,4%)
Students' failure to respect a authority	4 (44,4%)
Failure the respect the rules and violatios of the school rules	6 (66,6%)

Research question: *What are the teachers' opinions on the values of the students on the second stage of primary school?*

Table 3. General status of values in the students on the second stage of primary school.

Induced category	Description of the category
Education is not important	... children don't care about education...
Fame and money	... firstly, there is fake fame, immediately followed by lots of money ...

The headteacher of the primary school in the Nitra Region perceives the absence of some values as a general phenomenon. The headteacher also perceives the reason why education is not important in the mistake of secondary schools which in their presentations promise students to be enrolled unconditionally despite the bad school results. Furthermore, she perceives a problem in the parents' attitude. "If you give a student a worse mark, he will go to another school. Will our school system go this way? Where will we get? Shall we be afraid to ask an engineer or a structural designer to design something, or see a doctor?" (All quotations are translated by the study author.) We gained the following responses from the questionnaire answered by the teachers:

Table 4. Which values do students find safety in nowadays?

Categories	Number of agreements and percentage
Friends	7 (77%)
Money and success	6 (66%)
Family	5 (55%)
Fun	4 (44%)

The question was answered by nine teachers. We state the categories with the most frequent agreements in the responses. Research question: *What are the values preferred by the students on the second stage of primary school?*

Table 5. Preferred values

Category	n (%)
Family	98%
Health	80,7%
Justice	76,9%
Friendship	76,4%
Entertainment	73%
Freedom	63,5%
Tolerance	59,6%
Honesty	57,8%
Career and success	44,2%
Education	38,4%
Physical attraction	36,5%
Money and wealth	34%
Faith	34%

Family was clearly the most important value for the students. It received $n98$ % of 1s (according to the rating by numerical marks at school). Health followed in the second place with a high percentage for 1s $n80.7$ %. Friendship was in the third place with $n76.4$ % for 1s obtained from the students. They were followed by: Justice $n76.9$ %; Entertainment $n73$ %; Freedom $n63.5$ %; Tolerance $n59.6$ %; Honesty $n57.8$ %; Career and success $n44.2$ %; Education $n38.4$ %; and Physical attraction, Money and wealth and Faith with the same number in the rating, i.e. $n36.5$ %. The opinions of the students on the second stage of the primary school in the Nitra Region on socially widespread views and politicians. Anomie is a social condition. That was the reason why we also asked about the views that often appear in society related to education. We asked about the politicians to find out the opinions about the highest authorities of the country that govern this country, who are lawmakers and law bearers. They are a role model for other members of the nation.

Research question: *What are the opinions of the students on the second stage of primary school on socially widespread views and politicians?*

Table 6. The students' opinions on the social statements.

Answer	1 (n)	2 (n)	3 (n)	4 (n)	5 (n)
If I want good job, I must get marks 1 at school.	29,4%	29,4%	31,4%	5,9%	3,9%
People who work honestly and do not lie earn a lot of money.	51%	9,8%	25,5%	9,8%	3,9%
If I want a good job, I must have good contacts, otherwise I will not get it.	21,5%	29,4%	35,3%	7,8%	7,8%

The students' answers suggest that they are either not interested in it, or they are mainly interested in money and not the citizens. They are perceived only through a negative view. The students' responses may suggest that they have their opinions from the home environment where politics is commented on through various dishonouring expressions about our officials. You cannot hear anything nice about them! The highest officials are the negative role models. The holders of law-making, values and work for the welfare of the nation are in the eyes of children only a bunch of thieves, unjust, selfish egoists who are not interested in the problems of people. This is really a very bad image of this governing authority of our country.

The opinions of primary school teachers in the Nitra Region on problems in the school system and the teacher's status in the social hierarchy. The teachers' opinions on the school system should point to the higher institutions responsible for school management. If the management by the Ministry of Education is positive, then the responses by the teachers must confirm this fact. The profession itself should be significant in society because it influences the standard of living of society. If it is so will be revealed to us in the teachers' statements.

Research question: *What are the teachers' opinions on the school system and the teacher's social status?*

"As we are treated by the country, the same way we are treated by parents; then the example is followed by children, i.e. students" (The headteacher of the primary school, 2019).

Table 8. What would you like to change in the school system?

Inducted categories	Description of the category
Return to the old type of education	... to return to education that was envied by the whole world ...
Professional staff at school	... we would need a good social worker who would remediate the school climate ...
Stricter and more accountable attitudes	... return to secondary school entrance interviews, stricter and more accountable attitudes ...
Encourage students to a trade	... for the more skilled, to renew workshops in school to enable them to find their way to a trade...

The interview with the school headteacher was conducted in the form of a semi-structured interview that was not recorded but based on notes. In many areas, she expressed lack of satisfaction with the management by the Ministry of Education and the trends leading to the low level of students' qualification. Related to this topic, we also asked the teachers through the questionnaire in which we asked them specifically for changes.

Table 9. What would you like to change in the school system? What does not suit you and prevents you from quality teaching and education?

Category	Frequency n (%)
A change in the content of curriculum	4 (44%)
Greater respect and competence of a teacher	3 (33%)
Return to old education as it was 25 years ago	2 (22%)

One of the teachers could not respond because he was not in education long enough to be able to respond. Some of the responses were: ... "Paper would allow to write a lot, but I do not have time to write it"; ... "Much I would like to change; this page would not even take it all." ... or one of the responses was: "I would like to change the unchangeable, replace the ladies and gentlemen in the Parliament, ministries, theorists by people with experience who know what the real situation in education is and what its needs are."

5 Conclusions

The analysis of the statements that were scaled suggests that the students more like than not if they have clear rules in school. They perceive that the penalties for the violation of school rules are fair and effective. Although we also found the comments that they are fair but not effective. However, we had not defined it correctly in our questionnaire. It would certainly be better to divide this one statement into two statements – separately on effectiveness and separately on justice. We also received more positive than negative ratings related to the statement on respect to the teacher's authority. Thus, the students respect teachers. From these results, we did not find significantly negative attitudes towards the rules and teacher's authority.

Which means that if students respect an authority, they also respect the school rules. Evidently, the students' responses show no problems with teachers and satisfaction with the rules. This way, however, is mainly typical for students who want to achieve something in life through study. For students who see the perspective in a specific occupation, or whose parents care about their education. However, when we compare it with the opinions of the teachers who were asked about the problems they face in classrooms and at school most often, the most frequent responses included a lack of respect for the rules, a lack of respect for teachers' instructions, a lack of respect for authority, or indifference to education. If we take into account the results from the question about the teacher-student relationship, some teachers argue that it depends on the teacher and how he develops his relationship with students, whether he gains them, gives them clear boundaries, helps them, is interested in them, or he enforces respect based on his status towards students. Some teachers state that respect for a teacher is the result of the adults who do not have respect for teachers. The results from the category of social opinions will also confirm it. We are inclined to believe that the teacher gains respect more or less by his attitude, personality and ability to understand students and their needs at a given age. But the teacher's profession is a very challenging, significant occupation that must be done based on one's belief. The way towards today's students is much more challenging than at the time when what the teacher said was sacred, as stated by one of the teachers. The development is constantly progressing and brings new challenges. As Tokárová (2002) states on the present day as the time of globalisation where education meets significant social functions. Education has the potential to enable prevention, problem solving and acceleration of desired changes, but it depends on the ability of the pedagogical theory and practice to design future trends and respond to the current needs through education and school management policy. Which the teachers themselves are aware of. Students are a clear mirror of the time that does not bring clear rules, effective punishments and justice that they perceive so extremely sensitively. What students lack in their families is the clarity and effectiveness of rules that parents make for children and adhere to. Thus, they carry the problem with the rules from the family, as several teachers state. Vajda and Kósa (2005) state that the cause of family transformation is the fact that the possibilities of an individual for social integration are moving away from the family, and they attribute the differentiation of coexistence to anomie in society I. e., a lack of standards, which makes the reconciliation of important values of partners, life objectives and important decisions difficult. The importance is also played by a constant change in economic and labour circumstances, travelling for work between countries or regions, which makes permanent family integration impossible. Ondrejkoš (2010) states that social control requires the

existence of social norms and their bearers (such as the church, parents, science, school, public, justice, police); it also has its strategy (prevention, repression, legal policy, diversion, mediation) and sanctions (positive, negative). Insufficient social control results in insufficient social regulation and social corrosion and, lastly, social anomie. Our research points to weak respect for the teacher's authority, and thus there is a failure to respect the rules that this authority applies.

The results of studying anomie bring several findings that can be divided into three levels. The primary problems point to the gradual alienation, corrosion of relationships and loss of higher values. The secondary problems are in the area of addictions to technology and inability to spend free time creatively and healthily. The problems of intellectual development are tertiary. However, the levels are equal in their importance. The primary focus for social workers who work in the school environment is the area of interpersonal relationships.

Ensuring the optimal conditions for physical, psychological and social development is a nationwide task which the country should include in school, health and social policy programmes. Primary prevention should have "the nature of immunisation against undesirable social phenomena" and, in the context of social work, it should aim the information and social competency at the whole population of children and youth (Rosová, 2018). Its basic principle is the development of knowledge and promotion of a healthy lifestyle through the motivation of an individual to adapt his behaviour to the values, attitudes and principles that are accepted by most of society. (Martin, Rojas, Kralik, 2020). The action related to education in family and its guidance are considered the basis of the primary prevention action. In terms of methods, it is important to act through education and edification, in the form of discussions, lectures, leisure activities or in the form of special activities in cultural, health or sports areas, etc. We could say that all activities preventing problems can be included there (Schavel, Čišecký, Oláh, 2008). If school social work is defined in legislation and also practically implemented in schools, it can become a major benefit in eliminating the negative phenomena and stimulating the positive phenomena in the school environment and in strengthening the families which together with the school will create a single educational community. The vision of the headteacher of the school in the Nitra Region is similar: to create a family-type school that deserves support not only from teachers, students, parents but also social workers who can methodically solve problems with the family and know the legislation that may help families in solving their problems. In some cases, we detected the signs of the dysfunctional family environment, family problems and school problems, but they related to individuals and cannot be generalised. They might be dealt with at school. Anomie is not a pathological condition; it is a social phenomenon that occurs in society at the time of significant changes which differ from the existing traditional values and the way of life. Anomie is a phenomenon that points to a change that is happening at the present time and points out that it is necessary to make a change in certain essential areas, so that this phenomenon does not have the nature of the pathological state of society. Norms shall lead to the regulation of inappropriate, ill behaviour. Values are another regulator of behaviour that act as a non-institutionalised means. And personal attitudes are the result of the whole human being with their abilities to perceive, feel, think and make decisions according to the situation and consequences that result from it. Therefore, it will be appropriate for the future to develop a preventive programme focused on human values, creativity, intellectual and intuitive skills of students and edification in self-knowledge as compensation for inadequate religious explanations of meaning of life and its expression. (Pavlikova, Zalec, 2019; Ambrozy, Kralik, Poyner, 2018). We cannot propose a specific solution for practice, because it is necessary to study this issue more profoundly and broadly in order to take specific steps from the anomic state to such a state of society in the future in which it will not be normal that we will produce appliances for two years; that we will devastate the resources only for the profit; and that we will not treat nature with respect and we will not

unnecessarily use the quantities of chemicals just to make something easier, or to achieve higher profits at the expense of human, even planetary health. Where it will not be normal that we will throw the waste into water and contaminate the air by emissions, despite the fact that we have ecological technologies that are energy-efficient but do not bring such profits to certain groups of people who own energetic strategic enterprises. We are inclined towards the theory of Damian Kováč, who understands the concept of social prevention through the optimization of bio-psycho-socio-cultural-spiritual behaviour, while he does not perceive integration as a given fact, but as a result of self-formation through cultivation. The integration is most effective through the system regulators such as wisdom, tolerance, pro-sociality, accountability, conscientiousness, frugality, humility and meaningfulness of life (Matula, 2011). The anomic state shall lead children, adults and all of us to the improvement of our decisions towards the values that are necessary for life and for the lives of other feeling beings. According to Ondrejko (2010), anomie has more in common with the disruption of the value system of a relevant culture and society than with the infringement and violation of the law. We can give recommendations to teachers for their practice, which would help them improve relations with their students, or help them in teaching. But a teacher in the heart and head is not a trained teacher. A person must be born like that or become like that. Therefore, those who would need to change their approach reject it. And those who are teachers in their heart, do not need help. The school cannot pay for assistance that we as social workers could provide because it cannot allocate money from the budget, although such a worker, according to the words of the headteacher, would be very useful in their school. Also, most teachers in the school would welcome assistance by a social worker who would address what now the teachers must deal with, besides teaching – educating, doing a lot of paperwork and tackling their personal problems. A social worker can act in social policy, the school environment and social work with the family. An excellent strategic action for social work is in the school. The preventive programmes that the country should include in its programmes in this field could be carried out by educated, competent and working-with-their-heart social workers in the school environment. Related to both teachers and social workers, it is not only about their expertise but also their understanding of students and the feeling about their profession.

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