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Does Physical Activity of Preschool Teachers Impact the Planning and Implementation of Movement Activities in the Kindergartens?

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The authors of this paper compared the views of Slovenian and Portuguese preschool teachers about the importance of play and movement for the preschool children. In the paper, they focused on the question: Does physical activity of preschool teachers (spontaneous or planned) impact the planning and implementation of movement activities in their kindergarten group? They also analyzed the influence of subjective theories on the planning of movement activities and the realization of the curriculum objectives in the field of movement. Most of the preschool teachers in Slovenia and Portugal give priority to natural forms of movement in nature and play, allowing the movement of the fingers, palms, and hands. Research has shown a link between physical activity of preschool teachers and their views on the importance of the implementation of the movement activities of preschool children. The authors also noted that the quality of the implementation of the education process in kindergartens in the area of movement activities depends on their subjective theories to a great extent and on the level of professional competence referred to the discussed topic.

Keywords: preschool education, curriculum, the area of movement, subjective theories

Introduction

The research on the subject of children and movement was for the first time performed by authors Tatjana Devjak and Mojca Juriševič from the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, in 2000, immediately after the adoption of the new Curriculum for Kindergartens in 1999 (Devjak & Juriševič, 2000). After a few years, the need for the new research has arisen with the curricula and practices in kindergartens for the curricular area of movement. Movement is one of the six curricular areas (in addition to movement, there are also language, art, society, nature, and mathematics). Curriculum for Kindergartens is the fundamental document that provides professionals a platform in preschool education for their work. The document derived from the assumptions (and knowledge) that children perceive and understand the world holistically, that they develop and teach in active relationship with their social and physical environment, and that in kindergartens in interaction with their peers and adults, they develop their own sociality and individuality.

The survey was conducted again in Slovenia in 2008, and in 2009, we published comparative results in an article *Play and Movement in the Preschool Children* at a conference in Athens (T. Devjak & S. Devjak 2010).

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In the same year, however, the Erasmus exchange of professors in Portugal gave birth to the idea of a comparison of the views of preschool teachers in Slovenia and Portugal on movement and movement activities in preschool and on cooperation between kindergartens and parents. In this paper, we present the first part of the research—the views of preschool teachers of both countries on the implementation of movement activities of preschool children.

The basic objective of preschool education in Portugal is the children' physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. In Portugal, curricular development is the responsibility of the preschool teachers who should take into account the general objectives of preschool education. Portuguese curriculum, which is not shared by all children' age groups (Order No. 5 220/97, August 4), is a group of principles to support the educators in their decisions regarding their practice of leading and developing the educational process with the children, and is also a common reference for all teachers of the National Preschool Network, for organizing the educational component and guaranteeing significant learning. Guidelines of the Ministry of Education place emphasis on education—as opposed to protection and care. These guidelines also recommend artistic activities, modeling, storytelling, and play as a method and model of learning (Lepičnik, 2010). In Portugal, they do not have a specific document for infants and toddlers at the national level, and kindergartens generally determine the objectives and activities of preschool education by themselves (Marjanovič, 2009).

The purpose of this paper is to present the importance of the movement for the preschool children after the adoption of Curriculum for Kindergartens (1999) and the importance of subjective theories on the implementation of physical activity in kindergartens, and also to present an analysis of the views of the Slovenian and Portuguese preschool teachers on their own physical activity and how this affects their work in the realization of the objectives in the area of the movement in the preschool children.

Curricular Area of Movement and Preschool Teachers Subjective Theories

The Importance of Movement for Preschool Child in Curriculum for Kindergartens

In Curriculum for Kindergartens (1999) for the area of movement, there are only objectives which constitute the framework within which the preschool professionals can choose between contents and activities. At the level of implementing the curriculum, the preschool teachers connect, built on, and complement contents and activities in various ways. Preschool teachers can help themselves with manuals, in which there are examples of work didactically and methodically explained, showing all the important stages of the educational work, such as planning, educational work, observation, and evaluation.

The needs for movement and play are the basic children' needs, movement is usually conditioned with perception of ambient, space, time, and oneself. Motor development is at the forefront, especially in the first year of life, and it is guided from the natural and simple forms of movements (climbing, creeping, walking, and running) to the compound and complex sporting activities. Positive incentives are fundamental motivational methods when working with youngsters. Play and movement play an important role in the social, emotional, and intellectual development. With elemental physical games, children learn basic sense, the importance of compliance with the rules of the game, and social skills. The curriculum in the field of movement must be adapted to different needs, interests, and abilities of children, because of the optimal contribution to their development and health (Devjak, Skubic, Polak, & Kolšek, 2012).

The global objectives of Curriculum for Kindergartens (1999) allow and encourage physical activity for children: (1) With movement, a child perceives and discovers his/her body, tries out what his/her body is

capable of, experiences joy and pride at the emerging competences and skills, and builds confidence in himself/herself; (2) With movement, a child explores, learns, and perceives the world around him/her; (3) Children with various indoor and outdoor activities develop their movement capabilities, conquer some physical concepts, and gradually learn about and conquer the basic elements of different sports categories; (4) Children learn about the importance of cooperation and respect and consideration of diversity; (5) With appropriate movement activities, a child also extends his/her knowledge from other areas; and (6) Through a variety of activities, a child begins to realize himself/herself, develops his/her own identity and self-esteem, and he/she is encouraged to consider what he/she can do for his/her own well-being and health. With regard to the methods and forms of work, however, the Curriculum for Kindergartens (1999) recommended: the natural forms of the movement (walking, running, jumping, crawling, etc.); the rhythmic dance and other more complex sporting activities (overcoming obstacles, activities with a ball, swimming, skating, skiing, etc.); a variety of methods (interpretation, demo, and talk) and forms (group exercise, exercising with complementary, additional tasks, etc.). Activities vary depending on the objective, content, duration, space, the role of the child, the running time that can be pre-defined or occasional, and the aim of promoting quality and diversified cooperation between the kindergartens, parents, and children (excursions, sport afternoons, winter open-air schools, etc.).

What is very important is the role of adults in performing movement activities with preschool children. Adults (in our case, the preschool teachers) offer adequate challenges, cater for a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in a group of children, promote, encourage, direct, redirect, correct, advise, assist, and are actively involved with the child/children. The preschool teachers must observe children, monitor, and analyze their motor development, and special attention must be paid to the highly talented and less physically able children. Also, it is important that the implementation of the movement activities is connected with other curricular areas by preschool teachers, such as language, nature, society, art, math, and personal hygiene; particularly after exercise, the most important is the safety of children (Videmšek & Kovač, 2001).

However, in spite of everything written, Turnšek (2008) posed a question: whether and how preschool teachers adequately convey in pedagogical practice their knowledge, gained in the process of formal education? The author is convinced that through study they gain theoretical insights that are "a kind of inventory of our knowledge, which one interprets and transforms in accordance with previous subjective assumptions—point of views, values, preferences, comprehensions, and personal theories about what the kindergartens task is, how a child learns, and what the role of the adults is" (Turnšek 2008). This is why we explain the concept of subjective theory and the significance of the impact of the so-called subjective theories on the work of preschool teachers[1] in the next chapter.

The Importance of Subjective Theories of Preschool Teachers About Education

Turnšek (2008) said that exploring of the subjective theories became concerned in time, when researchers, such as Jackson (1986, as cited in Turnšek 2008) and Apple (1992) started disclosing the dimensions of a hidden curriculum of the institutions. Belief and personal theories of preschool teachers about the nature of children, socialization, and role of adults in the upbringing of children are, in the words of the author, a part of the hidden curriculum and are also determined by it (Turnšek, 2008, p. 12). Subjective theories are guides for preschool teachers, a set of strategies, and "habitus for pedagogical practice in concrete situations" (Jug, 2008).

[1] In this article, we use the term preschool teacher for both genders.

Požarnik (2000, as cited in Turnšek, 2008, p. 12) wrote that "the subjective theories are mainly implicit and procedural in nature, often emotional and valuably colored, not entirely conscious and logical; as such, they are an important source of emotions and motivations for behavior". All of these personal conceptions of preschool teachers form their subjective theories of education and learning of preschool children.

In the past educational programs for preschool children, curricula were structured and closed. The new curricula are less structured and more open, and at the same time, they allow more autonomy of the preschool teachers, and are as such an expression of confidence in the professional qualifications of preschool teachers (Kroflič, 2001). This, however, at the same time shows the complexity of education. Why? Preschool teachers are on one side sticking to a formal legal point of their work (taking into account the curriculum), and on the other side, such openness can allow unintended, unwitting, and unwritten actions of preschool teachers. These unintentional and unconscious actions are, after Batistič (2003), ranked among the actions of hidden curriculum. Hidden curriculum is one aspect of the curriculum from which children can learn behaviors and acquire attitudes, values, and stereotypes, which are generally not accepted as desirable or positive. Adults communicate to children through indirect messages: their views, values, thinking, and judgment (Batistič, 2003). Turnšek (2008) noted, the common gesture of hidden curriculum is learning roles and adapting the institutional endowments. In doing so, she relies on Apple (1992), who said that hidden curriculum is seamless teaching at institutions, whose sense is that children acquire the competence for specific rules, norms, and values. The author, Turnšek (2008), later stated that other researchers (Batistič, 2000; Bahovec & Kodelja, 1996) got similar results, of hidden curriculum which teaches children obedience, diligence, passivity, adaptation, indiscrimination, subordination, etc..

The achievement of the objectives and principles of the curriculum for preschool children, in addition to preschool teachers education (as we have already noted), also affects their personal conceptions of education and learning of preschool children—his/her subjective view for the self-respect of educational work. The quality of the educational process in kindergartens is not specified only by programs or curricula, but also the preschool teachers, who are the head of educational process—they solve pedagogical or educational problems daily, they are organizers of the process, advisors to children, colleagues, parents, and mentors of the interns, and the list goes on (Špoljar, 1991). When we are faced with such a complex situation, we usually create a simplified model of this situation, said Polak (1997). Therefore, we can quickly encounter secularism or non-scientific theories on individual specificity and position in the social space. The author defines subjective theories as partial or total implied, relatively unchanging associations of several individual personal perceptions of specific areas of pedagogical work. Personal conceptions are formed in the process of acquiring knowledge, experience, and values within a specific social and school context, and show on the outside in the form of personal beliefs, conceptions, and schemes (Polak 1997).

As a synonym for subjective theories in the field of preschool education, there is the most frequently applied concept of implicit theory and implicit pedagogy (Miljak, 1993; Pešič, 1987, as cited in Turnšek, 2008). Subjective theories are primarily formed in the interaction with others, with people who are important for the party. Preschool teachers' subjective theories will on one side allow better performance, but are at the same time, to the author, the source of many wrong conclusions, partialities, and performances that do not correspond to reality. In the subjective theories, we can have elements of evaluation and/or emotional relations to various aspects of the educational work and their own role in it (Miljak, 1993; Pešič, 1987, as cited in Turnšek, 2008). Therefore, from our point of view, the influence of the subjective theories of preschool teachers to movement

of preschool children is even more important, such as how teachers understand the theory of the motor development of the child, what their point of view to curricular area of movement is, what their attitude towards their own body is, or whether they are sporty active. However, the specificity of the subjective theories in comparison with standpoints is that their rules are dependent on the practice (Turnšek, 2008). Subjective theories of pedagogic work are formed in the work itself and are depend on experience. Views, however, are formed of persons, events, and facilities, with which an individual does not have a direct experience. Subjective theories of preschool teachers are the dilemmas of a narrower field as a point of view, because they are uncovering the quandary of educational work, and at the same time represent a personal resolution of the dilemmas (Turnšek, 2008, p. 25).

Problem Definition and Methodology

With the survey, we wanted to display, compare, identify, and analyze: (1) the importance and the role of the movement in the development of preschool children; (2) the views of Slovenian and Portuguese preschool teachers on movement and on the implementation of movement activity in a group of children according to their subjective theories; (3) physical activity of preschool teachers and the impact of that on the implementation of the physical activities in a group of children; and (4) difficulties or obstacles preventing them from a high-quality implementation of physical activity with children in kindergartens.

The study was performed in Slovenia in 2008 (Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana) and in Koper in 2009 (Faculty of Education, University of Primorska), and included 133 preschool teachers, who participated in various continuing education and training programs at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana (N = 51) and at the Faculty of Education, University of Primorska in Koper (N = 82). In Portugal, in the district of Braganca, Escola Superior de Educação (N = 78), the study was carried out in 2009/2010. On average, teachers from Ljubljana had 17.9 years of work experience, and teachers from Koper had 1.6 years of work experience. Seventy-six percent of the preschool teachers included were regularly employed and 24% were working on temporary contracts.

On average, preschool teachers from Ljubljana had 17.9 years of service, 84% of them were working on students of preschool education, who already finished college for preschool teachers and were in the process of gaining high professional education (half of them were already working as preschool teachers in kindergartens), and all of them were in a regular employment relationship. Ten percent of preschool teachers already had a high professional qualification and were in a regular employment relationship, 6% of them did not have a relevant qualification and had only a job for a limited time.

On average, preschool teachers from Koper had 14.6% years of service. Sixty-one percent of them were in regular working relationship, 11% of them were in the process of gaining high professional qualification, and 4% of them had inadequate qualifications. Twenty-four percent of preschool teachers from Koper had a job for a limited time during the research, the rest of them were in working relationship for an indefinite time.

The sample in Breganca of Portugal contained 11% of students of preschool education, 61% of preschool teachers working in nearby kindergartens, who had a full time job in a regular working relationship. Twenty-four percent of preschool teachers had a limited time working agreement and 4% of preschool teachers did not have a relevant qualification and had a job for a limited time. On average, preschool teachers in Portugal had 10.6 years of service.

Data were extracted from the questionnaire, which was already in use (which we have already described in the introduction), comprised with the scale of views, rating scales, open and closed questions and alternative questions with yes or no answers. Slovene questionnaire was, for the purpose of research, first translated in Spanish, then a co-author of the research, assistant professor Manuel Luís Pinto Castanheira, Escola Superior de Educação, Instituto Politecnico de Bragança, translated it into Portuguese. For the purpose of this contribution, we present only part of the results of major research (Devjak, Skubic, Polak, & Kolšek, 2012), which was carried out in Slovenia and Portugal. Answers to open questions were processed in a qualitative manner and ranked into categories, where these seemed appropriate. The data obtained were processed by statistical software package SPSS-X PC 2007 and EXCEL 2007.

The Findings and Their Interpretation

Physical Activity (Spontaneous or Planned) of Preschool Teachers

Before asking preschool teachers something about curriculum objectives, examples of movement activities in kindergartens or the places where these activities are carried out, we wanted to determine whether they are physically active themselves. We investigated whether preschool teachers plan their physical activity or exercise spontaneously, and if planned, what they are dealing with. First, we will report the data for Slovenia.

We determined that on average 15% of preschool teachers are highly active, 47% active, and 33% occasionally active, and that 55% of preschool teachers plan their physical activity. Also, in addition to planned activities, preschool teachers are engaged in sport spontaneously. More than half of all preschool teachers (55.42%) occasionally bike, take a long walk (45.8%), and 12% of preschool teachers plan and carry out this activity regularly. Quite a few are engaged in hiking (15%) and running (10.8%), planned physical activity (over 30%), two practice dances, two deal with free climbing, three preschool teachers go to the gym, 8% ski and occasionally engage in many different activities, for example, aerobics (4%), with table tennis, tennis, roller skating, and tai-chi for two school teachers, basketball and volleyball per one per preschool teacher.

In Portugal, 54.4% of preschool teachers are very active, 35.5% of them identified themselves as active, and only 10.3% of them are occasionally active. Vast majority (63.5%) of preschool teachers plan their physical activity (they are physically active at least once a week), the rest of them are dealing with physical activity spontaneously. Answers to open questions regarding their activities were limited, mostly, they mentioned that they take walks, bike rides, and run, one of them is engaged in dance, swimming, and fitness, some of them take aerobic lessons.

Viewpoints of Preschool Teachers on Individual Movement Activities Performed With Children From Three to Six Year of Age in Kindergartens

Curriculum includes the examples of movement activities for children from three to six years of age, which can be implemented in kindergartens. We wanted to determine how each preschool teacher sees the importance of individual activity, so they were only allowed to mark one of the possible answers with each activity. Then, they were also asked to circle the numbers in the table in front of those activities that they personally most frequently use with their preschool group. They could also add some activities not included in Table 1.

Table 1
Viewpoints of Preschool Teachers on Individual Movement Activities According to the Institution of Employment

	n	$\bar{x}$	*s*	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*s*	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*s*	*z*	*z*
	LJ	LJ	LJ	KP	KP	KP	P	P	P	(P—LJ)	(P—KP)
A1	51	3.90	1.02	79	4.23	0.85	73	4.12	0.87	-1.27	0.75
A2	51	4.69	0.74	82	4.88	0.33	73	4.41	0.83	1.94	4.50
A3	50	4.00	0.81	81	4.10	0.75	73	4.62	0.59	-4.59	-4.77
A4	51	3.96	0.59	81	4.04	0.78	72	4.17	0.67	-1.80	-1.10
A5	51	3.94	0.71	81	4.05	0.63	74	3.78	0.82	1.14	2.25
A6	51	3.90	0.78	80	3.76	0.89	73	3.41	1.08	2.95	2.19
A7	50	4.02	0.93	81	4.10	0.78	73	4.14	0.98	-0.67	-0.27
A8	51	4.47	0.85	80	4.44	0.69	73	4.34	0.95	0.79	0.70
A9	51	4.67	0.81	81	4.60	0.61	74	4.65	0.87	0.12	-0.36

Notes. *n*—number, $\bar{x}$—arithmetic mean, *s*—standard deviation, and *z*—test.

A1—natural forms of movement, such as walking, running, climbing, etc., indoors.

A2—natural forms of movement, such as walking, running, climbing, etc., outdoors.

A3—performing activities in rhythm, moving the body to music, using various aids, and rhythmic and singing exercises.

A4—performing various ball and balloon games.

A5—moving by using various aids, such as bicycles, scooters, tricycles, etc..

A6 —games on ice and snow.

A7—water games.

A8—relax games and movement activities.

A9—movement games as a way of working with others.

KP—Koper.

LJ—Ljubljana.

P—Portugal.

Preschool teachers in Slovenia believe (see Table 1) that the most important physical activity for children is the natural forms of movement, such as walking, running, climbing, etc., in the nature (A2, *M* = 4.49 and 4.88), and this is actually implemented. Portuguese preschool teachers put this activity in the third place. Portuguese preschool teachers pay more attention to physical activity and play which allows interaction with others (A9, *M* = 4.65), which Slovene preschool teachers put it in the second place. We also determined, that the opinions of preschool teachers in Ljubljana and Koper were very uniformed, because of their belief, that the following physical activities are important for the development of preschool children and are also usually carried out in their own group of children: physical games as a form of cooperation with others (A9, *M* = 4.67 and 4.60), games and movement activities for relaxation (A8, *M* = 4.47 and 4.44) and implementing actions in rhythm, with your body, with music, with various props, and with rhythmic and singing games (A3, *M* = 4.00 and 4.10). It is interesting that the preschool teachers in Koper, highly assessed the water games (A7, *M* = 4.10), but it is not surprising, because Koper is a coastal town and in the summer time, there are many opportunities to implement a number of activities on the beach and pools. Portuguese preschool teachers put the implementation of activities in rhythm, with your body, with music, with various props, and with rhythmic and singing games (A3, *M* = 4.62) in the second place and put the natural forms of exercise in nature (A2, *M* = 4.41) in the third

place. Among the less important physical activities, which they also rarely carry out, the Slovenian preschool teachers included: games on ice and snow (A6), various games with balls and balloons (A4), in Ljubljana, are also natural forms of exercise indoors (A1). Portuguese preschool teachers put on the last two places movement with different accessories, bicycle, and scooter, (A5) and games on ice and snow (A6, M = 3.41). The differences are even more apparent from the chart (see Figure 1).

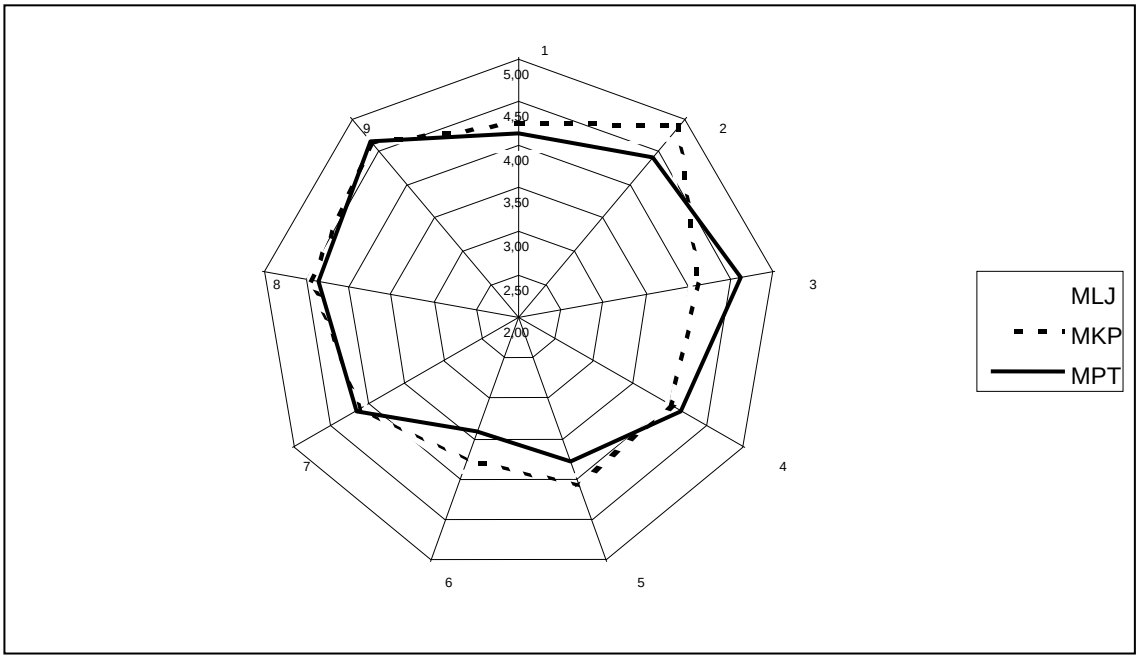

Figure 1. Comparison of Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers views on movement activities.
Notes. $\bar{x}$—arithmetic mean—M (LJ—Ljubljana, KP—Koper, and PT—Portugal).

We see that the preschool teachers in Ljubljana, Koper, and Breganca assessed almost identically actions of A9, A8, and A7, while they differ mainly in activities, such as games on ice and snow (A6), natural forms of exercise, such as walking, running, climbing..., indoors (A1), natural forms of exercise, such as walking, running, climbing..., outdoors, in the nature (A2), and the implementation of the rhythm, with body, with music, with various props, and with rhythmic and singing games (A3).

If we look at the results in terms of the importance of individual actions and the actual implementation of these activities, we see that they reflect the trend, confirmed by some studies, where the authors are looking for differences between behavioral willingness (intention, attitudes) and actual behavior (Rus, 1997).This means that, despite the fact that (in general) we know that something is good, useful, or worthwhile in situation “here and now” for various reasons, this cannot be realized. Below, we will try to highlight the results obtained in terms of external and internal factors, which we consider to explain the results obtained. These are factors, such as the environment and space for implementation of movement activities, problems, and obstacles that prevent the implementation of those activates (external factors), and professional competence of preschool teachers for the management and execution of movement activities as an internal factor that prevents or has an indirect impact on the implementation of movement activities with children in kindergartens.

Preschool teachers were also asked in what manner they planned movement activities for children in their group. There were many responses to choose from, and they selected those which are on average closest to the

actual situation in practice. Thirty-six percent of preschool teachers plan movement activities most often with their assistants in the department, 37% of preschool teachers include the planning of their assistants as well as the children, 9% of preschool teachers plan their work independently, 4% of preschool teachers plan only with the children, and 1.5% with other preschool teachers. More than 12% of preschool teachers chose the category "other" (with the heads of kindergartens, the parents, with parents and children, planning at study and other meetings of preschool teachers of other kindergartens located in the same local community or unit of the Board of Education, which covers the territorial scope of Slovenia). There were very similar results also in Portugal. Most preschool teachers (36%) plan movement activities with their assistants in the department, 20% plan them with their assistants and the children, 18% of them only take into account children' wishes, 17% plan movement activities with other preschool teachers within the kindergartens and only 3% of them chose category "other" but did not say how.

Problems Hindering the Implementation of Movement Activities

Preschool teachers in Slovenia and Portugal (see Table 2) believe that the environment in which they work with their preschool group is usually inappropriate for performing movement activities due to the lack of available space. Many Slovene preschool teachers wrote that they miss having a gym (only those preschool teachers whose departments are part of primary schools have this at their disposal). Even if they do have access to a gym, they can use it only rarely—that is, only when the primary school pupils do not have classes or are on vacation. Slovene preschool teachers stated that another problem is also the lack of appropriate equipment for performing sports or movement activities. Yet, another problem they list is the size of the group, which is usually too large[2].

Table 2

Problems and Obstacles That Hinder the Implementation of Movement Activities According to Preschool Teachers

Categories	*f* SLO	*f* %	*f* PT	*f*%
Inappropriate space	53	55	20	40.8
Too many children in the group	6	6	0	0
Inappropriate equipment, insufficient sports equipment	21	22	6	12.2
Funds	4	4	21	42.9
Lack of expertise and motivation	4	4	2	4.1
The presence of an additional teacher, assistant in the group, while movement activities are being performed	5	5	0	0
Lack of time	3	3	0	0
Total	96	100	49	100

Notes. All preschool teachers did not answer this question (SLO—Slovenia and PT—Portugal).

Preschool teachers see the reasons for this situation as the lack of funds. In Slovenia, nearly 70% of the funds required for the establishment and operation of preschools are provided by local communities, and 30% by parents. They believe that the solution is not to be found in the increase of the price of the preschool (to the

[2] Slovenian legislation stipulates that homogenous groups of children in the first (younger) age group (ages 1–3) consist of a maximum of 12 children, in the second (older) age group (ages 3–6) of a maximum of 17 children (for children three to four years old), and a maximum of 22 children in groups consisting of children four to five and five to six years old. In heterogeneous groups, the maximum number of children in the first age group should be 10, and in the second age group 19. For mixed-age classes, the maximum is 17 children (Article 34 of the Rules on the Norms and Personnel Conditions for Performing Preschool Activities, 2005).

detriment of the local community and parents), but in a greater financial contribution by the state and certain systemic solutions, such as arrangement or construction of appropriate facilities (such as a gym), purchase of appropriate sports equipment, and payment of above-standard services (e.g., swimming and skiing courses) for all Slovenian preschool children. Other solutions include hiring additional professional staff to help out in classes intended for movement activities. Teachers are also well aware that good will is not enough and self-critically assess that the issue of expertise and the question of how to correctly teach children how to swim, ski, ride a bike, etc., is also important. The problems that cause Slovene preschool teacher's difficulties in performing movement activities can be listed among the possible reasons for the discrepancies between their viewpoints on movement activities and their actual implementation.

Portuguese preschool teachers also put lack of funds in the first place among barriers, which prevents implementation of movement activities. They also have a very tight budget, but there are also exceptions, as they are everywhere. Let us mention, that during the visit of Portuguese kindergartens in Braganca we saw public and private kindergartens and we can say, that private kindergartens in Braganca are better equipped. Specifically, we must mention Catholic kindergartens in Braganca, which is above standard—outside and inside, there is state of the art equipment, gym, outside sports and game courts, culture hall, a lot of greenery and flowers, and a huge reception room and multipurpose room.

Professional Competence of Preschool Teachers for Implementation of Movement Activities

It is interesting that a majority of Slovene preschool teachers (82%) estimate that they are well or extremely well qualified to lead and implement movement activities. Thirteen percent of preschool teachers from Koper estimate their professional competence as excellent, whereas, only 4% of teachers from Ljubljana believe the same. It should be mentioned that in Ljubljana and Koper, undergraduate studies and further education and training programs take place following the same programs and with the same instructors. Up until a few years ago, this had been even part of the same faculty of the University of Ljubljana. Almost all of the preschool teachers in Koper and Ljubljana, except for four, agreed with the need for additional professional training and education. They are especially interested in topics that provide them an opportunity to further develop, extend, and connect their knowledge in various areas (play, movement, sports, learning, developing children's abilities, and learning in preschool children by age)—that is, topics that would enable them to use a comprehensive approach to education (and learning) of preschool children. They are well aware of the importance of movement activities for preschool children, which is why they would like to achieve a higher level of competence in this area (i.e., the competence to perform these activities in practice). Among concrete topics that interest them, they list the following: getting to know activities and games for healthy development of individual parts of the body, the importance of sports for preschool children, movement and rhythm, a healthy lifestyle and the importance of movement for children's health, movement in relation to natural science, dance, rollerblading, folklore, mountaineering, and so on.

When Portuguese preschool teachers were asked how they think they are qualified for the implementation of the movement activities for preschool children, 91% of them answered that they think they are very well or well qualified for working with preschool children in the area of movement activities, only 9% of them were undecided. When we asked them if they would join a continuing education and training in the field of movement activities of preschool children, 92% of them answered yes. Regarding the question about the topics we gathered, we got almost identical answers as in Slovenia—they would like to educate in various fields, so

they would gain new knowledge and approaches and thus become more competent and professional for the implementation of the educational process in practice.

Conclusions

Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers rank children' movement among important activities. They pay attention to movement activities, they plan them and they feel satisfied in implementing them. Otherwise, they are aware that they can be doing much more for their healthy living, especially, in the case of movement. Some preschool teachers pay attention to the movement area, they are also defined themselves as active and are devoting their leisure time to sporting activities at least once a week. Slovenian preschool teachers take aerobics, go to fitness, or take Pilates. Again, others are involved in sports or movement spontaneously, when they have time, they like to walk, run, and cycle. The research also showed that both Slovene and Portuguese preschool teachers have the opinion that the most important movement activity for a child is the natural form of movement, such as walking, running, climbing, etc., in the nature, and this is also actually what they are doing. We found out that preschool teachers also like doing that themselves—they like to move in the nature, and therefore, in this finding it can be written, that their subjective theory had an effect on their views about the importance of the implementation of certain activities recorded in both curricula.

In their opinion, for the development of preschool children, the following movement activities are also important, which are also usually carried out by children in their groups: physical games as a form of cooperation with others, games, and physical activities for the relaxation and implementation of activities in the rhythm, with the body, with music, with various props, and with rhythmic and vocal games. It is interesting that preschool teachers in Koper, made a high estimate of the games in the water, which is not surprising, because Koper is a seaside city, and in the summer time, they are running a lot of activities on the beach and in the swimming pools. Among the less important movement activities, which are also rarely carried out, the Slovenian preschool teachers classified: games on the ice and snow, the implementation of a variety of games with a ball and balloons, in Ljubljana even natural forms of movement in an enclosed space. The Portuguese preschool teachers put in last two places movement with a variety of props, bike, scooter, and games on ice and snow.

Results of the research show that preschool teachers of both countries cite various causes that prevent the execution of individual movement activities in their group of children. These are inadequate space, lack of finance, lack of adequate devices for work, etc.. What is very important is the finding, that the Slovenian and Portuguese preschool teachers are willing to further educate to raise the quality of their work, Slovenian preschool teachers also indicated areas on which they must develop and deepen their knowledge. Both the Slovenian and Portuguese educators are prepared to further educate and train for the implementation of movement activity for preschool children also in order to acquire new knowledge and approaches and a more competent and professional knowledge to carry out the movement activity practice.

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