



The Lifelong Education of the Teachers in the Republic of Macedonia

Rozalina POPOVA

rozalinapopova@yahoo.com

(University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje, R. Macedonia)

Ljupco KOSKAROV

(University of Audio and Visual Arts, Skopje, R. Macedonia)

Received: 23.07.2016; Accepted: 30.09.2016

Abstract: *This paper analyzes important issues related to the lifelong education of the teachers in the Republic of Macedonia. The goal of the research, which is a part of the project Permanent Education of the Teachers (the current situation and challenges), is to get an idea about the current situation and the need for permanent education of the elementary school teachers in the Republic of Macedonia. We analyzed the forms and content of the permanent education, and the need for this type of education while taking into consideration: the location of the school (urban or suburban area), work experience, type of initial education, gender and ethnicity. The sample of 288 teachers from 11 schools from Skopje (the city and the rural environment) was formed by stratified random sampling and an assessment sample, based on the goals of the research and the different characteristics of the respondents. The calculations in the research were made with the statistical package SPSS 17.0. The research was carried out in five planned stages from 2010 to 2012. The gathered data confirms the fact that the existing forms and content of the permanent education do not meet the needs of the elementary school teachers in full. This implies that we need a new concept of permanent professional and pedagogical training of the teachers based on their needs and modern scientific accomplishments.*

Keywords: lifelong education, teachers, forms and content

Introduction

The changes in the education system, i.e. the reforms which are carried out at a very fast rate in the primary and secondary education, do not require only an adequate education of the teaching staff but also permanent

education, i.e. professional and pedagogical training. The continuous professional development of the teachers is a very important social and personal need. We must not forget the fact that the nature of the teaching profession is specific. The teachers educate staff, share knowledge, conduct modern projects in the area of education and introduce innovations. In order for them to be successful in all this, they need to constantly enrich and develop their professional, pedagogical and general cultural fund with new knowledge. This requires the teachers to constantly work on their professional and pedagogical training in order to meet the current and future needs (Попова-Коскарова, 1997).

The permanent education of the teachers as a need and something that is essential

The role of the teachers is getting increasingly more important in a society that changes rapidly. Hence, parallel to the initial education, a lot of attention is paid to the permanent education of the teachers, i.e. their professional and pedagogical training. The nature of the teaching profession requires the teachers to learn permanently, as well as to follow the accomplishments in the profession and systematically progress in it. *This is why the formal and informal education, i.e. the so-called lifelong education are equally important.*

On the other hand, the processes of globalization impose increasingly greater expectations from the teachers. Their competencies cover the areas of integrated (intercultural) education, global learning, ICT in the education, the media, etc. It is important to increase the quality and efficiency of the initial education of the teachers in order to improve their professional development and implement the principle of lifelong education. The teachers need to recognize and understand the importance of the new knowledge and competencies, and this must be valued by the institutions in which they work, i.e. the schools.

The acquiring of new competencies as something that is necessary for creating an innovative, quality, and efficient educational process, first of all requires changes in the traditional initial education, accompanied by quality university education, in which the teachers will not be dominant and other different learning methods, such as discussion, analytical-synthetic approach and critical thinking will be used. This will help the teachers learn different techniques and strategies for a successful educational process characterized by quality. As a matter of fact, it is not a coincidence that one of the indicators for a quality school (together with the syllabi, curricula, school climate, resources, and students) is the teacher (Индикатори..., 2010:9).

Many researches and other information show that the existing system of professional pedagogical training of the teaching staff in the Republic of Macedonia only partially meets the needs of the teachers. This is why we need to carry out reforms on a largerscale, i.e. we need to develop a complete system for permanent education of the teachers and collaborate more with all the subjectswhotraining teachers and are involved in their professional development. The faculties of pedagogy need to take a greater

role here since they are the carriers of the initial education of many primary school teachers. Special emphasis should be placed on the internal development of the teachers in the schools. New forms of work in the school and outside of it need to be developed on the grounds of the experiences in the world. The needs for professional development of the teachers should be analyzed continuously and differentiated programs for work with them need to be created. The professional development must be in function of the teaching practice (Тимовски & Долгоска, 1997).

The professional development of the teachers in the Republic of Macedonia is also planned by documents which regulate the educational activities, such as: The Law for Primary Education in the Republic of Macedonia, the National Program for Development of the Education in the Republic of Macedonia until 2015, The Concept for Nine Year-Long Primary Education in the Republic of Macedonia (2007), as well as other important documents.

Methodology of the research

The subject of the research in the project is *the permanent education of the elementary school teachers in the Republic of Macedonia*. In this project permanent education refers to the professional and pedagogical training of the elementary school teachers in the primary education.

Main objectives of the research is to analyze the current situation and the needs for permanent education of the elementary school teachers. Hypotheses of the research:

General hypothesis:

A-hypothesis:

The existing forms and content of the permanent education do not fully meet the needs of the elementary school teachers.

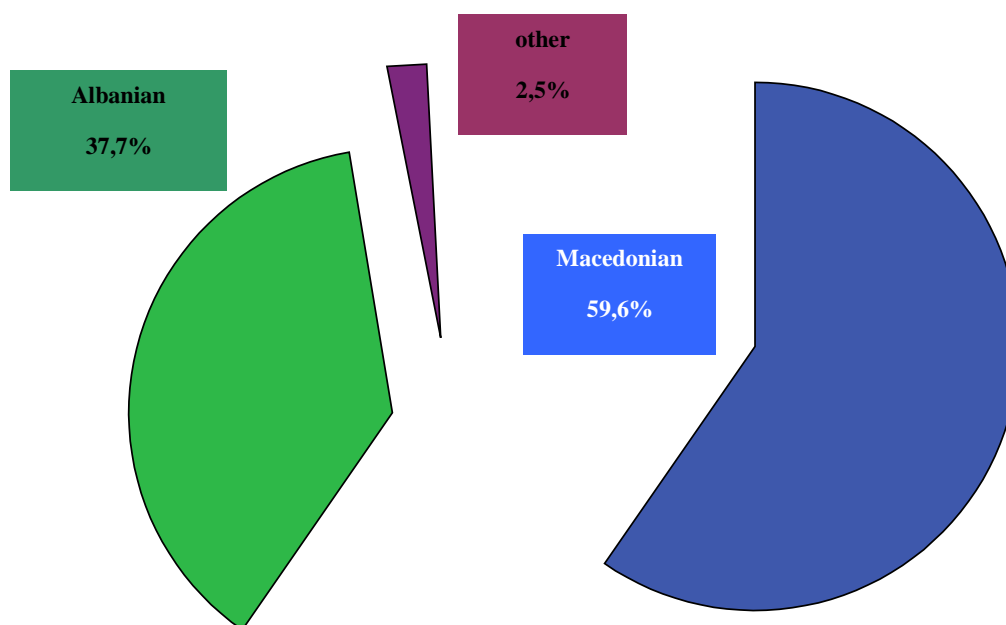
Other hypotheses:

1. The needs for permanent education of the elementary school teachers differ depending on the school they work in.
2. The needs for permanent education of the elementary school teachers differ depending on their work experience.
3. The needs for permanent education of the elementary school teachers differ depending on the type of their education.
4. The needs for permanent education of the elementary school teachers differ depending on their gender.
5. The needs for permanent education of the elementary school teachers differ depending on their ethnicity, i.e. the language of instruction.

The research sample was created by *a random stratified selection and an assessment sample*. It consists of 288 elementary school teachers who teach grades I-Vin 11 schools located in urban and suburban areas.

Results

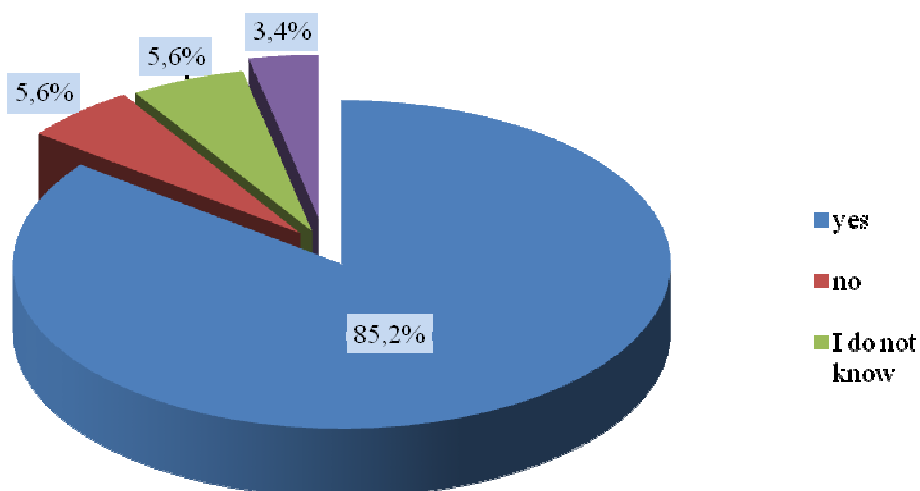
Figure 1. Structure according to the nationality



A need for permanent education

The analysis of the results of the research concerning the permanent education of the elementary school teachers resulted in the conclusion that the elementary school teachers have positive attitudes and opinions about permanent education, especially the *need for lifelong education*. The type of education, the length of the work experience and the gender of the elementary school teachers, as independent variables of the research, do not play a role in determining the forms for permanent, professional and pedagogical training of the elementary school teachers. The majority of the teachers (85.21%) think that they *need permanent professional and pedagogical training*. The youngest teachers (less than 5 years of work experience) embrace this idea the most (Chi-square test $p < 0.05$). The enthusiasm understandably diminishes when the most experienced teachers are in question (over 20 years of work experience in the area of education).

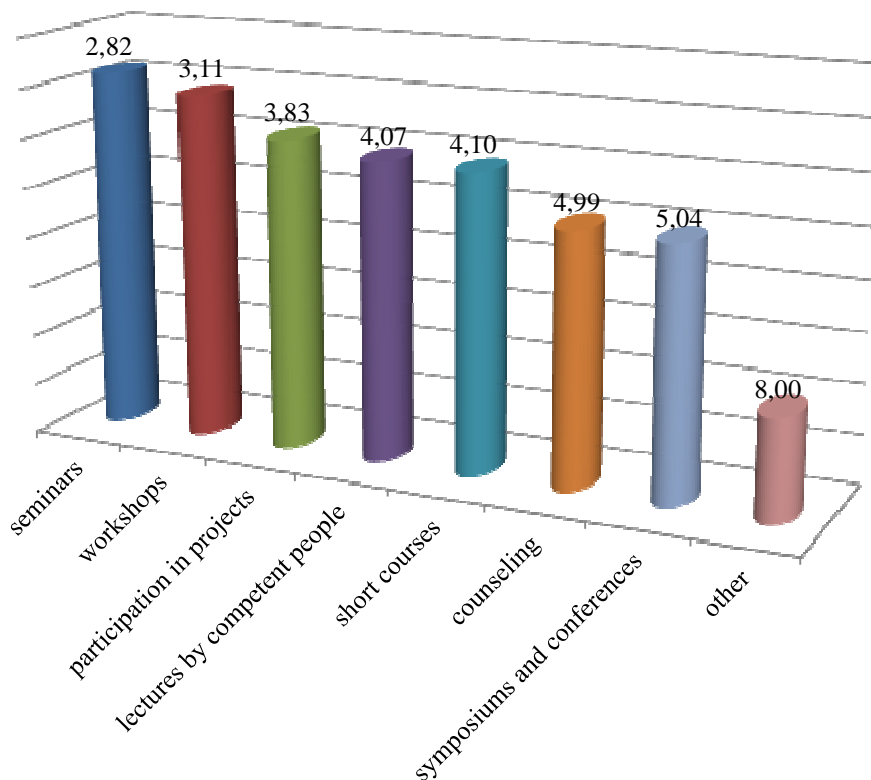
Figure 2. Need for lifelong education of the teachers



$$\chi^2=8,963 \text{ (df=3)} \quad C=0,244 \quad p=0,030^*$$

Which forms of lifelong education are used the most?

Figure 3. Average ranking of the forms for permanent professional and pedagogical training

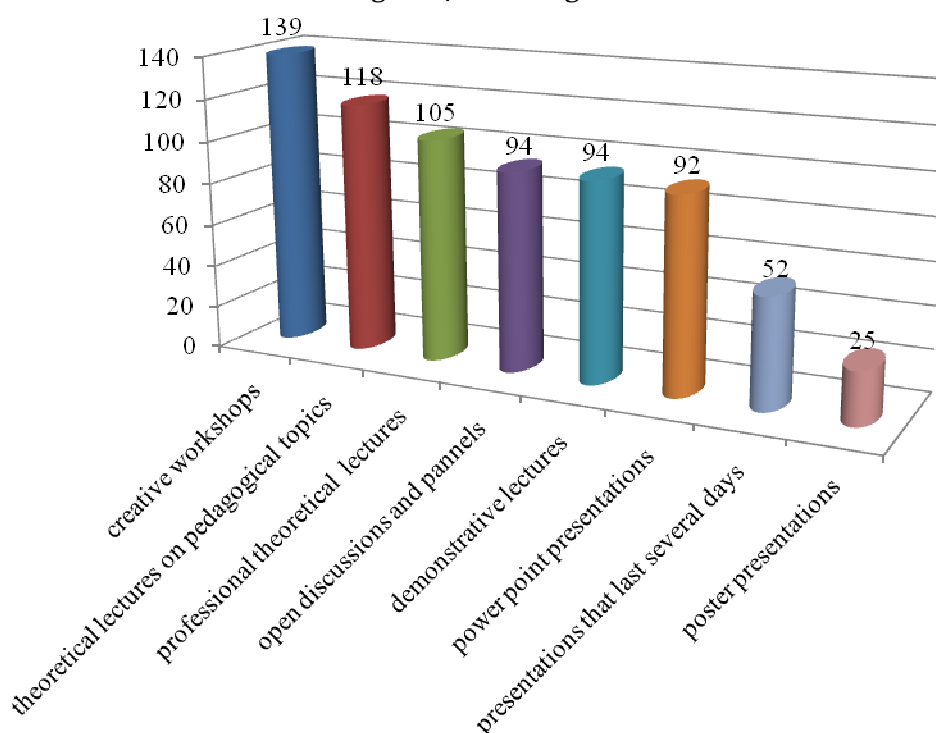


The seminars have the highest ranking among the forms for permanent professional and pedagogical training (Diagram 1). They are followed by workshops, participation in projects, etc. The counseling and the participation in symposiums and conferences are the lowest ranking forms, which is understandable since the elementary school teachers (the predominant profile in the sample) rarely attend events of this sort. The type of education, the language of instruction and the ethnicity of the elementary school teachers are not factors that influence and determine the choice of forms for professional and pedagogical development in this research.

What are the most commonly used forms for realization of content during the trainings?

The creative workshops (139) and the theoretical lectures on specific pedagogical topics (118) are among the most commonly used forms for realization of the content (Diagram 2), while the poster presentations (25) and the presentations that last several days (52) are the least commonly used.

Figure 4. Training forms

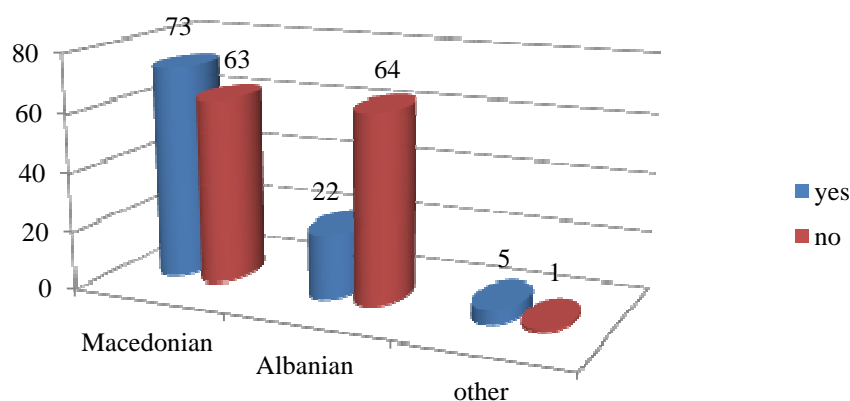


Possible reasons for the low interest of the teachers in permanent professional training

In terms of the gender, the male respondents rarely complain ($p < 0.05$) that the *training is not validated enough in the school and generally* compared to their female colleagues (Diagram 11c.). This is also the case with the Albanian teachers, who, unlike their Macedonian colleagues, rarely complain ($p < 0.000$) that the *training is not validated enough in the school and in general* (Diagram 11d.). The results imply that in the future the professional development of the teachers should be validated in order to increase their motivation for permanent education.

According to the statistical parameters (C coefficient of correlation) there is certain, but relatively low correlation among the surveyed teachers based on their *nationality*.

Figure 5. Correlation by nationality

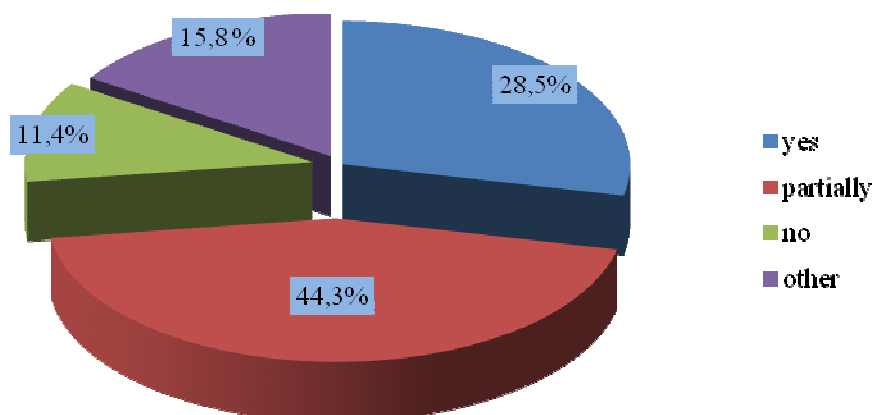


Is the content for professional and pedagogical training based on previous research work dealing with the needs of the teachers?

The number of respondents who are firmly convinced that the content practiced in the professional and pedagogical training is the result of a previously conducted research work dealing with the educational needs of the teachers is very small. Only 65 teachers (28.51%) answered affirmatively, i.e. they think that this is done on the grounds of research work. A significantly higher number of respondents 101 (44.30%) think that this is done partially.

Many male respondents answered this question affirmatively, thus showing greater trust (Chi-square test, $p < 0.05$) in the educational authorities, which is not the case with their female colleagues.

Figure 6. Training based on previous research work dealing with the needs of the teachers



When dealing with the question of the *applicability of the knowledge and skills acquired through the organized forms of professional and pedagogical training* we determined a statistically significant difference related to the *gender and the language of instruction*. The male elementary school teachers chose an affirmative answer (“it is useful”) more frequently (Chi-square test, $p < 0.01$) than their female colleagues. This is quite interesting because they show greater trust in the research work concerning the educational needs of the teachers when choosing content for professional and pedagogical training. They also prefer counseling and poster presentations as forms and ways of personal, professional and pedagogical training.

As far as the other independent variables (*type of education, length of work experience, primary school, etc.*) are concerned, there are no statistically significant differences.

In terms of the nationality (Table 9), the Macedonian teachers tend to be more reserved (“it is partially useful”) than their Albanian colleagues (“it is useful”) regarding the applicability of the knowledge and skills acquired during the training. However, the difference is not statistically significant.

Conclusions

The previously mentioned and the data from the research confirm the two main hypotheses, i.e.:

- ◆ The existing forms of the permanent education do not fully meet the needs of the elementary school teachers
- ◆ The existing content of permanent education does not fully meet the needs of the elementary school teachers.

Ultimately, we recommend for the process of organization and realization of the permanent education to be realized on the grounds of a complete analysis of the needs and the accomplishments in the practice, more specifically:

- ❖ the knowledge, skills and needs of the teachers,
- ❖ the needs of the school and the environment (the family, the society, etc.),
- ❖ the dynamic of the innovative elements in the field of education,
- ❖ the educational needs on a national level.

References

Индикатори за квалитетот на работата на училиштата (2011).

Скопје: Република Македонија, Министерство за образование и наука, Државен просветен инспекторат.

Попова-Коскарова, Р. (1997). Перманентното стручно и педагошко усовршување на наставничкиот кадар-неминовност на прагот на XXI век. In *Зборникот на трудови Перманентното образование и учење на прагот на XXI век* (pp. 185-190). Скопје: Универзитет Св. Кирил и Методиј, Педагошки факултет Св. Климент Охридски.

Тимовски, В., & Долгоска, П. (1997). Односот на наставниците кон формите на стручно и педагошко усовршување. In *Зборникот на трудови Перманентното образование и учење на прагот на XXI век* (pp. 172-184). Скопје: Универзитет Св. Кирил и Методиј, Скопје, Педагошки факултет Св. Климент Охридски.