

Abstract of doctoral dissertation:

*Ethos of modern teacher in the opinion of
headmasters, teachers and parents of school and kindergarten students*

Ethos is defined in many different ways in the scientific literature. Some insist on the contents of ethos by emphasizing the leading role of values. Others focus on its extension by associating ethos with the culture or lifestyle issues. Apart from the type of ethos definition taken into consideration, it is an important conceptual category related to the person of the teacher. It allows to enter into the teaching work areas that have not been explored yet.

In the dissertation, an attempt to answer two main research questions was made:

1. How the ethos is defined by the three main factors in the children's education: the directors of institutions, teachers and parents?
2. Whether and to what extent the community of teachers is an ethos group nowadays?

In addition to the criteria of the respondents' role and type of institution with which they were associated (kindergarten or elementary school), the respondents were also differentiated by age and gender. The total of 20 directors of schools and kindergartens (10 in each type of educational institutions) and 132 teachers: 52 kindergarten teachers and 79 primary school teachers were examined, as well as parents (123 people) of children attending preschools (53 respondents) and schools (69 respondents). One parent and one teacher did not disclose the type of educational institution. The quantitative study (teachers and parents) was performed using identical paper and online surveys. The qualitative study (directors of institutions) used a semi-structured interview's questionnaire.

Statistical analyses were performed using STATISTICA 10 PL software. When performing statistical tests, the standard 5% level of statistical significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) was assumed. To examine statistically significant connection between the successive dependent variables and the two main independent variables, namely the role in relation to the child (parents versus teachers) and the type of educational institution (kindergarten versus primary school), logarithm-linear analysis was used. Regarding interaction effect, each of four groups:

kindergarten teachers, school teachers, parents of children attending kindergartens and parents of school pupils was compared with one another.

Connection of dependent variables with specific independent variable of age was also verified using logarithm-linear analysis. The main effect of age was examined by comparison between persons in early adulthood (< 35 years old) and those in their mid-adulthood (35-64 years old). Interaction effect was checked by making comparisons between the four groups: parents in their early and mid adulthood, and teachers at the same age.

The specific independent variable of gender was also taken into consideration in comparisons. Due to the fact that males represented only 13% of all participants (N = 32), for calculating the statistical significance of the connection between successive dependent variables and gender, Chi-Square Test was used.

Nonparametric Mann-Whitney U Test was used to make comparison between groups with regard to two dependent variables measured on the ordinal scale (p5 and p6).

For the analysis of responses given to open-ended questions, the text mining type of approach was used, allowing for the identification of the most frequent themes in the responses.

Data collected via interviews with the directors of schools and kindergartens were analyzed using grounded theory method. In these studies, the prompted text was used, which allowed for obtaining specific information related to the subject of dissertation research.

The initial stage of the study showed that ethos is a well known category and that the sheer manner of defining it does not differentiate respondents significantly. Respondents regarded ethos as the collection of values, norms and rules, and associated the defined category with a social group. However, the question about the validity of ethos showed the first differences: 61% of respondents perceived it as a still-valid category but, according to 39% of respondents, ethos was only a historical term.

For majority of respondents, ethos was a very important (41%) or important (42%) component of the teaching profession, however, it was parents rather than teachers - who more often indicated the great importance of ethos (50% of parents compared to 33% of teachers). This result demonstrates a variety of social requirements. They were confirmed in further studies in which teachers claimed that expectations towards them had grown, while parents believed that the same requirements had declined. This is where the factors responsible for the reported differences in assessing the importance of ethos can be located. Parents felt that social requirements had decreased, so the turn to the ethos of the teaching profession should be made, whereas teachers believed that the large increase of the

requirements had already taken place and there is no reason to burden them with further responsibility. Such diversity shows a regrettable lack of consensus in the perception of teachers' professional role by the two important factors of education - parents and teachers of children.

Hypothetical assumption about the relationship between teachers' motivation to work in their profession, and the ethos of teachers' group was confirmed. Both the query of literature associated with similar studies (Zowczak 2009, Janukowicz, Łukasik 2013), as well as the author's own research confirmed the relationship between these two conceptual categories. As many as 75% of the surveyed teachers and parents believed the motivation to engage in this profession to be very important for the ethos of teachers. However, respondents were not so consistent about the motivation of the teachers' professional group. Financial benefits, stabilization or the need of contact with children, differentiated the evaluative responses of teachers and parents who were associated with various educational institutions.

Respondents, when asked if they had ever met a teacher who could be considered a model in terms of ethos of the profession, generally answered in the affirmative way (87%). However, only 26% of respondents said that there are still many such teachers today. This significant distinction confirms, on the one hand, the importance of ethos, and on the other hand shows that the respondents noticed a negative change in this regard. It was also revealed that not only teachers are responsible for realization of the ethos content. Among the obstacles to the last-mentioned, the factors related to the educational institutions, the education system and the child's family were listed.

The study shows that ethos is not an outdated term nowadays associated with the old literature. The respondents are aware of ethos and its position among the requirements for teachers. However, significant differences in the assessment of former and present-day teachers are noted. The former ones are supposed to have represented the ethos of their profession often more proudly than teachers do today. There are no consistent requirements as to the ethical qualities of candidates applying for jobs at the educational institutions, as revealed in the interviews with the directors of institutions.

In response to the two main research questions posed at the beginning of this abstract, it should be noted that respondents were consistent in defining the concept of ethos. However, for parents it was more important than for teachers. Social requirements for teachers have changed and, according to the respondents, the community of teachers is slowly ceasing to be an ethos group nowadays.