

# TEACHING STAFF ORIENTATION IN CZECH SCHOOLS

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## Abstract:

A critical point at the beginning of the cooperation between a teacher and the school is the orientation process when the teacher becomes familiar with the conditions and requirements of work at the school. Successful orientation of teachers is the responsibility of headmasters and deputy headmasters involved in managing and leading teachers. The goal of the paper is to present the main findings of the authors' questionnaire survey on human resource management in Czech schools and define the current challenges of headmasters and deputy headmasters of Czech schools in the teaching staff orientation. The survey was conducted during the school year 2018/2019. The respondents were headmasters and deputy headmasters of Czech nursery, primary and secondary schools. The relevant data were obtained from 84 schools. The results show that surveyed schools are able to successfully master the teaching staff orientation, however they need to apply a more systematic approach to the orientation process as well as to the human resource management.

## **Introduction**

Nursery, primary and secondary schools, that provide preschool, primary and secondary education, naturally play an important role in every society. They systematically prepare children and youth for a successful life in the society (Bohlmark, Gronqvist, & Vlachos, 2016). This is very important because well-educated and successful people determine the future prosperity of the society (Laskowska & Danska-Borsiak, 2016). In this context, it is clear that the effectiveness of preschool, primary and secondary education depends on people, especially on teachers whose knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation determine the quality of education in schools.

The teaching staff represents the most valuable source of any school and headmasters or deputy headmasters who want to achieve excellent performance of their schools should pay special attention to management and leadership of their teachers (Litsareva, 2015). To achieve expected performance of schools by achieving desired performance of their teachers, the headmasters and deputy headmasters need an optimal system of human resource management based on proven policies and practices that will enable them to efficiently attract, employ, stabilize and develop enough qualified and motivated teachers (Runhaar, 2017).

The human resource management policies and practices applied in schools should also include policies and practices related to the teaching staff orientation that should help teachers to become familiar with the conditions and requirements of work at the school. The orientation process begins the relationship between teachers and schools. It introduces

teachers to their working and social environment. It allows them to learn their tasks, duties and responsibilities as well as to meet their superiors and colleagues (Kim, Chai, & Park, 2015). By proper orientation, teachers can start being productive quickly. It also reduces teaching staff turnover due to misunderstandings and unfulfilled expectations (Hacker, 2003). Successful orientation of teachers is definitely one of the most important responsibilities of headmasters and deputy headmasters involved in managing and leading teachers to perform agreed work, achieve desired performance and meet expected goals of the school.

## **1. Goal and method**

The goal of the paper is to present the main findings of the authors' questionnaire survey on human resource management in Czech schools and define the current challenges of headmasters and deputy headmasters of Czech schools in the teaching staff orientation.

Achieving the goal of the paper is based on the analysis of available scientific literature on school and human resource management and the results of the authors' questionnaire survey on human resource management in Czech schools.

The survey was conducted during the school year 2018/2019. The questionnaire included 10 multiple choice questions focused on the approach to human resource management and the teaching staff orientation. The respondents were headmasters and deputy headmasters of Czech nursery, primary and secondary schools. The relevant data were obtained from 84 schools, including 21 nursery schools, 43 primary schools, 12 nursery and primary schools, and 8 secondary schools.

The data analysis was based on the calculation of relative frequencies (as a share from the total number of schools) and the evaluation of the dependence of responses on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers (10 or less, 11-49, 50 or more) using contingency tables and chi-square tests of independence.

## **2. Results of the authors' questionnaire survey**

This chapter presents the main findings of the authors' questionnaire survey focused on the approach to human resource management and the teaching staff orientation in Czech schools.

Both the theory and practice of human resource management show that applied human resource management policies and practices affect the ability of any school to achieve expected school's performance through achieving desired teachers' performance. According to the results of the authors' questionnaire survey, 83% of respondents agreed that they analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of their schools, 79% of respondents agreed they define strategic objectives, policies and practices of human resource management in their schools, 83% respondents agreed that they plan the implementation of human resource management policies and practices in their schools, and 86% of respondents agreed that they evaluate the effectiveness of human resource management policies and practices in their schools.

In connection with applied human resource management policies and practices, respondents strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed that applied human resource management policies and practices help them to achieve defined results of human resource

management, including necessary number and structure of employees (including teaching and non-teaching staff), required knowledge and skills of employees, expected satisfaction and motivation of employees, desired results and behaviour of employees, good orientation of employees, acceptable turnover of employees, sufficient number of students, or overall satisfaction of parents and other stakeholders (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** Results achieved in schools through human resource management (%)

	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
Necessary number and structure of employees	48	47	4	1
Required knowledge and skills of employees	21	74	4	1
Expected satisfaction and motivation of employees	20	67	11	2
Desired results and behaviour of employees	18	70	7	5
Good orientation of employees	37	58	2	2
Acceptable turnover of employees	40	45	12	20
Sufficient number of students	32	40	21	7
Overall satisfaction of parents and other stakeholders	24	69	6	1

Source: author

When it comes to the question of which of the applied human resource management policies and practices respondents considered most important, they stated employee selection (90%), employee compensation (80%), employee planning, employee evaluation, and employee development (71%), and employee orientation (64%).

In terms of the teaching staff orientation, only 49% of respondents stated that they provide orientation of teachers based on the orientation plan. The data analysis showed no significant difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers ( $p > 0.05$ ). We tested the null hypothesis that there is no difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers regarding the orientation of teachers based on the orientation plan (see Table 2). Since the test statistics was lower than the critical value, we failed to reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis. In other words, there was no difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers regarding the orientation of teachers based on the orientation plan.

**Table 2:** The orientation of teachers based on the orientation plan

Size of the school	Yes	No	$\Sigma$
10 or less teachers	9* (9.76)**	11 (10.24)	20
11-49 teachers	22 (22.94)	25 (24.06)	47
50 or more teachers	10 (8.30)	7 (8.70)	17
$\Sigma$	41	43	84

\*observed frequencies (O), \*\* expected frequencies (E)

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers regarding the orientation of teachers based on the orientation plan.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers regarding the orientation of teachers based on the orientation plan.

Level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$

$$\text{Chi square statistic } \chi^2 = \sum \left[ \frac{(P_{r,c} - E_{r,c})^2}{E_{r,c}} \right] = 0.874$$

Degrees of freedom (f):  $(r-1) \times (c-1) = 2$

Critical chi-square value  $\chi^2_{0.05}(2) = 5.991$

r – the number of rows in the contingency table, c – the number of columns in the contingency table

Source: author

The teaching staff orientation process in surveyed schools commonly takes about one year (58%) and includes the cooperation with experienced teachers (74%), the recommendation of literature (70%), the assignment of an experienced teacher (68%), the observation of classes of experienced teachers (65%), or the involvement of all colleagues (43%). On the other hand, only 11% of respondents stated that teachers are provided with the orientation brochure.

In terms of the leadership of the teaching staff orientation process in surveyed school, only 27% of respondents stated that the orientation of teachers is led by the headmaster. Headteachers usually introduce teachers to the school's strategies and policies. The leadership of the teaching staff orientation process is usually the responsibility of experienced colleagues who are in charge of it.

When it comes to the question of which barriers limit the development of the teaching staff orientation system in their schools, respondents stated excessive paperwork (70%), time-consuming activity (63%), and low budget (36%).

A proper teaching staff orientation process should reduce teaching staff turnover. In terms of the teaching staff turnover in surveyed school over the past year, 36% of respondents stated that it was 0%, 46% of respondents stated that it was up to 10%, and 18% of respondents stated that it was over 10%. The data analysis showed a significant difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers ( $p < 0.05$ ). We tested the null hypothesis that there is no difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers regarding the teaching staff turnover over the past year (see Table 3). Since the test statistics was higher than the critical value, we rejected the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis. In other words, there was a difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers regarding the teaching staff turnover over the past year.

**Table 3:** *The teaching staff turnover over the past year*

Size of the school	0%	Up to 10%	Over 10%	$\Sigma$
10 or less teachers	11* (7.14)**	9 (9.29)	0 (3.57)	20
11-49 teachers	17 (16.79)	20 (21.82)	10 (8.39)	47
50 or more teachers	2 (6.07)	10 (7.89)	5 (3.04)	17
$\Sigma$	30	39	15	84

\*observed frequencies (O), \*\* expected frequencies (E)

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers regarding the teaching staff turnover over the past year.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a difference in responses depending on the size of the school in terms of the number of teachers regarding the teaching staff turnover over the past year.

Level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$

$$\text{Chi square statistic } \chi^2 = \sum \left[ \frac{(P_{r,c} - E_{r,c})^2}{E_{r,c}} \right] = 10.689$$

Degrees of freedom (f):  $(r-1) \times (c-1) = 4$

Critical chi-square value  $\chi^2_{0.05}(2) = 9.488$

r – the number of rows in the contingency table, c – the number of columns in the contingency table

Source: author

### **3. Implications and recommendations**

The authors' findings compared to findings of other researchers in terms of the approach to human resource management in schools show that the necessity for schools to apply an optimal system of human resource management is increasingly acknowledged (Runhaar, 2017). Schools need to apply proven human resource management policies and practices that will enable them to efficiently attract, employ, stabilize and develop enough qualified and motivated teachers.

The application of human resource management policies and practices in schools should be based on a conceptual and systematic approach, including an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, a definition of strategic objectives, policies and practices of human resource management, a plan for the implementation of human resource management policies and practices, or an evaluation of human resource management policies and practices (Grencikova & Spankova, 2016). The main task is to create conditions in which employees (including teaching and non-teaching staff) will be striving for high standards of performance and development of their knowledge, skills and abilities (Litsareva, 2015).

The modern concept of human resource management implies that management and leadership of employees to perform agreed work, achieve desired performance and meet expected goals should be a fundamental responsibility of all managers in the organization (Fedorova, 2016). In nursery, primary and secondary schools, there are mainly headmasters who are competent and responsible for managing and leading other employees (including teaching and non-teaching staff) to achieve expected results, especially the expected quality of education (Egic, Tasic, & Sajfert, 2010). However, human resource management should to be the most important activity of all school leaders, including deputy headmasters or head teachers (Brauckmann & Schwarz, 2015).

In terms of the teaching staff orientation, the authors' findings show that surveyed schools are able to successfully master the teaching staff orientation, however they need to apply a more systematic approach to the orientation process. The teaching staff orientation should be based on the orientation plan and it should be led by a direct superior, that is by the headmaster, the deputy headmaster or the head teacher. It should also include the participation of other colleagues and the application of different approaches, such as the coaching or mentoring by an experienced colleague or the observation of classes of experienced teacher.

### **Conclusion**

The authors' questionnaire survey on the approach to human resource management and the teaching staff orientation in Czech nursery, primary and secondary schools showed that surveyed schools are able to efficiently attract, employ, stabilize and develop enough qualified and motivated teachers, however they should apply a more conceptual and systematic approach to the human resource management as well as to the teaching staff orientation.

To master the challenges in the teaching staff orientation, it should be based on the orientation plan, it should be led by a direct superior, and it should include the participation of other colleagues as well as the application of different approaches.

The authors' survey is quite unique by its focus on the approach to human resource management and the teaching staff orientation in Czech schools. Similar surveys are quite rare. The specific focus on Czech school as well as the relatively low number of respondents does not allow authors to draw general conclusions. However, the current authors' survey results are worth attention from leaders of Czech schools who are responsible for employing people (including teaching and non-teaching staff). The current authors' survey results open up new possibilities for further research in the field of human resource management and dealing with teaching as well as non-teaching staff orientation.

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