The Importance of Recognizing Roles in Teams for Higher-Quality Work in Preschools and Schools

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Abstract

The authors of this article analysed the importance of recognizing roles in teamwork experience for work experience quality work between preschool teachers and teachers in preschools and schools. Teamwork is a complex area, which includes communication, collaboration, and reacting to stressful situations. Accordingly, it is absolutely necessary for preschool teachers and primary school teachers to have good communication skills, management of potential conflict situations, approaches to identification and management of different work situations, as well as approaches to coping with stress and working with different people. The purpose of the empirical study was therefore to analyse and compare different roles in teamwork at preschool (between preschool teacher and her assistant) and primary school, especially in first grade, where the teacher and preschool teacher work together in the classroom. During the empirical research, conducted on a population of preschool teachers and teachers in the first grade of primary school (sample size was 140), the authors found that all different roles appear as important and more or less equal; maybe some more preschool teachers and teacher seem to take on the role of team worker or implementer. The authors did not observe important statistical differences considering work experience or level of education, but there are, as expected, differences considering work position.

Keywords: preschool teacher; teacher; roles; teamwork; collaboration; communication.

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1. Introduction

A team is an organizational unit comprised of objectives toward which tasks are directed, team members who are working together, team leaders who guide the work process, and communication or a process of a mutual exchange of information, know-how, and experience (Rozman, Kovač, & Koletnik, 1993). Polak (2009) emphasizes that the most important elements of teamwork are constant collaboration, cohesiveness, and good communication among team members, who must work as an integrated unit. This means that they must accept one another as professionally competent and equal partners, whose common goal is to motivate children’s desire to learn, to progress, and to make discoveries.

As an organized form of institutional education, preschool pedagogy recognizes teamwork between the preschool teacher and the assistant, and in first grade between the teacher and the preschool teacher. Jurman (1995) emphasizes here that their work must be adapted to the age and developmental characteristics of the children or pupils, and they must understand the particularities and traits of team collaboration/teaching, as this is their common task, which leads to quality in teaching and progress.

2. Teamwork and the Factors Involved in Teamwork

Teamwork is a type of activity conducted by a group (two or more) of pedagogic experts or professionals on the basis of direct collaboration and towards common goals (Retuznik Bozovičar, 2010). For teamwork the spirit of joint planning is important, as well as constant mutual collaboration, close ties, unobstructed communication, and an honest exchange of opinions (Polak, 2009). Teamwork sees the emergence of a social phenomenon which involves tightly linked individuals who see themselves as part of a collective and who are prepared to defer to the common objective above their own personal ones; this phenomenon is called “collectivism” (Retuznik Bozovičar, 2010). Teamwork can be conducted in one or more phases: team lesson planning, team instruction, and team evaluation. The common objectives in teamwork lead to instruction of a higher quality, as well as the development of children in preschool (Polak, 2009). The conceptual, systemic, and curricular levels of preschools show that teamwork emerges in preschool education among the principles of realizing the curriculum’s objectives (Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2006).

The work obligation of the preschool teacher is to prepare for pedagogy, as well as planning and implementing life and work at the preschool, as well as the involvement of parents. The work obligation of the preschool teacher’s assistant is to collaborate with the preschool teacher in planning and preparing educational material within the class (Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2006). Kurikulum za vrtce (Curriculum for Preschools) (Bahovec, 1999), in the principle of team planning and implementing preschool education and professional training defines team planning and implementation of early childhood education within the class, between classes within schools, and with other educational, professional, and other institutions. Regardless of whether it is a team in the class (2 people) or a team of 2 or more classes at the preschool (several people), or a team comprised of preschools and other institutions, traits can be recognized which are common to all teams (Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2006). Children in preschool must also be actively included in teams, into which they must be divided randomly (Hansen Kristen, 2001).

In the first grade of primary school, the class teacher and the preschool teacher form a team. Polak (2009) emphasizes that the preschool teacher in this team has the same status as the class teachers. The preschool teacher uses their knowledge and teaching methodology to make children’s transition between preschool and school as easy as possible. Polak (2009) and Pretnar (2000) agree that both are expected to collaborate well as a team, to work well with parents, to implement interesting methods and forms of class work, and to effectively use technology. In doing so it is important that they exchange opinions and experience, that they work together on curricular and extracurricular activities, and that they come to an agreement on how to arrange the classroom. Their mutual complementation, collaboration, and support are also important.

Numerous authors are of the opinion that the development of teams is not random, but progresses in expected phases recognizable in all teams’ development. There are five such phases, which come in subsequent order: formation (forging friendships and orientation towards tasks), storm (individuals’ character traits which often lead to conflicts), normalization (calming, order, harmony), results (collaboration, problem solving), and (achieving the set objectives). We recognize these phases at all levels of teamwork between preschool teachers and their assistants, and
2.1. Motivation for Teamwork

Teamwork is determined by various psychological factors. Motivation is important for uniting members within a team, as well as for forming the team itself. The process of encouraging and developing teamwork is founded on the simultaneous encouragement of the pedagogic staff’s reflexivity. Guided thinking can make it possible for an individual to get in touch with their own conceptions, perceptions, and previous experience (Polak, 1999). A group can become a team when the work environment is also an environment of trust and the promotion of ideas, opinions, disagreements, feelings, and questions, and where the members are prepared to understand one another (Rozman, 2006).

The fundamental sources of motivation for teamwork are related to various psychological needs, which individuals fulfil within the team itself (Polak, 2009). These are the need for security, the need for acceptance, the need for approval and recognition, and the need for self-realization (Polak, 2012). The need for security is fundamental, as it increases the rules in a team, as well as respect for them. Satisfied needs for acceptance are seen in the individual’s expression of emotions, and they make open communication between team members possible. The needs for approval and recognition include the needs for self-respect as well as respect for others. The need for self-realization is, according to Maslow, a psychological need of the highest order. It guides the individual, making it possible for them to realize or become a product of the extent of their possibilities and potentials (Polak, 2009). Hansen Kristen’s (2001) estimation is that motivation is the most important psychological factor for achieving objectives, and for the smooth operation of a successful team.

2.2. The Cohesion of Team Members

The tendency to stick together, both in a physical as well as a psychological sense, is called interconnectedness. In a broader sense it is the result of a group/team decision for group work and for developing a mutual bond, which team members form by deciding that they will present and reveal themselves to other members of the team (Polak, 2009). Team members exchange opinions, experience, difficulties, feelings, and give feedback to one another. Interconnectedness grows on the basis of a common vision and common objectives, and is confirmed by the positive co-dependency of the team members. It develops most intensively when the team members work together to solve a problem, and when they spend their time together in an entertaining way. Low interconnectedness results when individuals work on a team, although membership in said team does not appeal to them (Polak, 2009). The concept of attractiveness of team membership is an extremely important component of interconnectedness and improves team decisions during time crunches (Polak, 2001). The consequences of a lack of trust between team members include unacceptable wastes of time and energy. Instead of seeking a common solution, individuals are focused on critiquing each other and protecting personal interests. A lack of trust hinders the flow of information and causes incorrect understanding of certain behaviours (e.g. disagreement can be understood as intentional and destructive) (Babnik, 2007).

3. The Basic Dimensions of Teamwork

“For successfully implementing and developing teamwork in educational institutions we must understand its complex psychosocial, communicative, pedagogic, and other dimensions” (Polak, 2009, str. 35). By getting to know various types of teams, we can expand the possibilities and methods of teamwork; by analysing the structure and roles within a team, we can ensure its greater effectiveness; by establishing open communication and rules for a team, we forge appropriate relationships; if we respect the size of the team and temporal factor, then we contribute to more coordinated work within the team.

Teamwork is based on various models, and can be implemented by various groups of preschool teachers, preschool teacher’s assistants, as well as primary school teachers. Both Retuznik Bozovičar (2010) and Polak (2009) stress that there are several types of teams, which are determined by different criteria:
working teams: connected into working units where everyday work is carried out in a collaborative manner, yet
the team members work together independently;
- task-oriented teams: organized for the duration of performing a task. Their work is founded on the principles of
a true team approach;
- a leadership team: comprised of experts in leadership positions. This type of team establishes very specific team
objectives;
- authoritatively guided teams: led by selected individuals who are authorities in a given field. The leader has a
special role, namely responsibility for the team’s operations;
- self-led teams: these are autonomous, democratic, and independently led, and are spontaneously and voluntarily
formed between preschool teachers and primary school teachers.
- coordinated or mixed teams: a combination of all types of teams. Members are extremely committed to the set
tasks.

3.1. Roles in Teamwork

Team members take on various tasks. The world-renowned theoretician and researcher on teamwork, Belbin, has
studied roles within a team, and found that its effectiveness depends on the personal traits of the team members
(Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2006). All workers should have two fundamental roles: implementary and collaborative. The
implementary role is in essence synonymous with the work our employer has hired us for. We form the team role
only when we are already in the team, and it encompasses behaviour and collaboration in a specific team.

Belbin stresses that teams work best when their roles are clearly established and balanced. Belbin’s roles, as
summarized by Polak (2009), are as follows:
- plant: comes up with ideas and suggestions, solves difficult problems and roadblocks, is happy to ignore details
of protocol and practicality;
- resource investigator: finds and seeks out new options, forges new contacts, negotiates, builds upon others’
ideas;
- coordinator: leads the work of the team, motivates others, clarifies objectives;
- shaper: challenges others, puts pressure on them, looks for ways to overcome obstacles, enjoys conflict
resolution, sometimes implements unpleasant measures;
- monitor/evaluator: reviews all the possibilities, precisely thinks and makes judgment,
- team worker: listens, guides, prevents misunderstandings, encourages collaboration;
- completer finisher: works practically, systematically solves problems and tasks, works hard to achieve the
objectives;
- implementers: carries out all the details, attentive to mistakes;
- specialist: gives initiative, offers expertise and special skills, follows high professional standards, is uninterested
in the work of others.

Literature from the field also describes numerous other categories of team roles. Some overlap with Belbin’s
descriptions, others demonstrate the authors’ specific views on the dynamics of teamwork. Lepičnik Vodopivec
(2006) renamed and explained the characteristic roles in a team, taking inspiration from Belbin:
- implementer: is conservative, loyal, and predictable;
- coordinator: peaceful, trusts themselves;
- shaper: is intense, dynamic, always on the move;
- innovator: an individualist, serious and unconventional;
- resource investigator: extroverted, generous, communicative;
- monitor evaluator: serious, cold, prudent;
- team worker: socially oriented, unobtrusive, and sensitive;
- completer finisher: loyal, meticulous, precise, eager.

3.2. The Importance of Communication within a Team

Communication is extremely important for teamwork, as it facilitates the flow of information and resources
between team members. Different people often have vastly different interpretations of the same situation, so it is important that the recipient confirms to the sender that they received the message, and the sender’s job is to make sure that the recipient also understood the message properly (Babnik, 2007). Both verbal and non-verbal communication in teamwork are the fundamental tool for understanding one another, as they make mutual interaction possible within a team, and ensure the team’s cohesion with the social environment (Polak, 2012). Whenever verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication are uncoordinated, we believe the latter, as it is more difficult to control (Hansen Kristen, 2001).

“Communication can be constructive (builds relationships within a team) or destructive (ruins relationships within a team). Sometimes the team member is not even aware of the destructive nature of their communication; in addition, the cause of their destructivism is not necessarily related to teamwork” (Polak, 1999, p. 21).

Communication in a team should encompass:
- giving and receiving information or guidance related to specific tasks;
- giving additional information to other team members based on their needs and wishes;
- asking others for additional information which increases the understanding of the discussion;
- receiving various bits of information which are unrelated to the team’s tasks;
- demand for feedback related to the work of individuals in the team;
- receiving and giving feedback related to the work of individuals in the team as well as of other team members;
- encouraging the expression and acceptance of compliments on a job well-done (Chivers, 1995; summarized in Polak, 2009, p. 51).

One author (Polak, 2012) formulated a table with 4 elements of communication and their characteristics:
- speaking: communicating personal ideas, opinions, proposals;
- listening to one’s personal speech: Reflecting on what one has said, on the length of speech and ways of polishing it, innuendo, provocation, incorrect or hasty assumptions, disguising or concealing ignorance, judgment;
- listening: listening to other people’s ideas, opinions, and suggestions;
- listening to one’s own listening: Reflecting on one’s listening, constant thinking, haste in coming to assumptions, finishing others’ sentences mentally, analysing, the absence of active listening, and formulating a reply.

The ability of team members to constructively communicate especially comes to light in conflicts, which are an integral part of teamwork, as well as stress, which often follows such a conflict or is its direct cause in the nature of individual work. As Polak (2009) emphasizes, the perception of both the preschool and primary school teacher’s professional roles has changed along with the introduction of various pedagogic innovations, as well as with changes regarding the view of pedagogy itself. Everyday tasks that pre- and primary school teachers face contribute to the stress and the psychological and physiological demands of a profession in education. The overlap or simultaneity of various roles that educational workers face in a given set of circumstances also causes stress.

Due to precisely this, it is a good idea to implement, encourage, and develop the teamwork of preschool teachers, their assistants, and primary school teachers when it can be used to ensure:
- greater effectiveness of pedagogy than an individual would be capable of,
- personal and professional development of team members, and
- a feeling of belonging to the team.

The term “greater pedagogic effectiveness” is hard to define, as it encompasses a very broad meaning. Preschool teachers define effectiveness in the educational process on the basis of personal experience and observation (Polak, 1999, 2009, 2012). There simply are no comparative empirical studies which would test in more detail the effectiveness of team-based pedagogy in comparison with individual teaching. The main reason for this are the methodological obstacles involved in this type of research, especially the inability to control all the variables which influence the effects of teamwork. Among the hard-to-define signs of greater educational effectiveness of teamwork, teachers and preschool teachers list more flexible work, faster and more thorough planning, greater safety on excursions and field work, a more interesting class, the ability to conduct several activities at the same time, and similar benefits. Pedagogic effectiveness itself is not sufficient; teamwork must ensure that all team members develop professionally and personally, and that they will be motivated for common tasks (Polak, 2009; Lepičnik
3.3. Characteristics of Effective Teams

Teams can be categorized based on their effectiveness. Brajša (1995) identifies:
- unsuccessful teams: results of work are worse than the sum of the knowledge, capabilities, and specialties of the individual members.
- average teams: results of work conform to the sum of the knowledge, capabilities, and specialties of the individual members.
- successful teams: results of work exceed the sum of the knowledge, capabilities, and specialties of the individual members.

Polak (1999) assesses the basic conditions of effective teamwork in the field of pedagogy and education, which include common objectives and the positive co-dependency of team members. The objectives the team sets for itself should be in accordance with the educational objectives and with children’s needs. Positive co-dependence means that in achieving common objectives team members are dependent on one another in terms of the positive traits of each individual. Here the teams of preschool teachers are put together to reach three basic objectives which must occur strictly in the following order: more effective pedagogy; personal and professional development of the team members; a feeling of belonging as the source of motivation.

The characteristics of an effective or successful team according to Parker (1990) are:
- the atmosphere of the team must not be bureaucratic – this unites the efforts of the team, and tension is a rarity;
- members are given instructions for work and tasks in advance, objectives are clear and the members adopt them as their own. They speak openly about problems and seek solutions for them;
- communication between members is open, relaxed, and goes in both directions. Team members listen to each other and nobody is afraid to express their opinion. Criticism is not taken as a personal attack, but rather as something which is constructive and which contributes to a solution;
- decisions are made by consensus, so the solution is acceptable for all parties. If someone disagrees with a decision, they say so openly, and the team tries to take that into consideration;
- leadership passes from member to member, as is dictated by the circumstances and of course the capabilities of the team members. There is no struggle for leadership;
- the team regularly monitors its own work and is self-critical.

The effectiveness of a team can be measured by the work result the employees achieve. The team’s effectiveness is also dependent on the desire of its individual members for continuing to collaborate in the team, on the satisfaction of the members themselves, and on other personal circumstances. All the factors listed are important for long-term planning as well as for the success of the team as a whole (Gatewood, Taylor & Ferrell, 1995). For a team’s successful, constructive functioning, it is important that all the various roles are represented; when there are not enough team members, it is important that one (or more) person(s) “play(s)” several roles. Some authors (Aranda, Sranda, & Conlon, 1998) go as far as to relate the skills of teamwork to the roles themselves, where they stress the skills of mutual understanding, active collaboration, and the teamwork skills which are related to activities within the team and the differences between its members. Polak (2012) even adds that for effective teamwork, members should also be well-versed in problem solving, as this will make it easier to define problems, face them openly, and ultimately solve them. The atmosphere within the team is largely dependent upon the identification of obstacles, the resolution of difficulties and conflicts, and the problem-solving strategies employed (Polak, 2012).

4. Objectives

The objectives of the empirical study were to analyse and compare various roles in teamwork in preschool (between the preschool teacher and their assistant) and primary school, especially in the first grade, where the teacher and preschool teacher work together in the classroom. We were particularly interested in differences between work experience, education and work position.

5. Methodology of Research
The research methods used were the descriptive and the causal non-experimental method of empirical pedagogic research.

The research sample contained the population of preschool teachers, preschool teachers’ assistants, and teachers in the first grade of primary school, and included 140 respondents.

All respondents were categorized into 4 different levels of employment/work experience (up to 9 years of work experience, 10 to 19 years of work experience, 20 to 29 years of work experience, and those with 30 and more years of work experience), 3 different levels of education (secondary school, associate’s degree, university), and 4 different levels of work position (preschool teacher at preschool, preschool teachers' assistant, teacher, and preschool teacher at school). Based on the data, the largest group was represented by those who had between 20 and 29 years of work experience (51 respondents), have secondary school education (82 respondents) and are being employed as teacher or preschool teachers' assistant (both 43 respondents). The smallest groups were those with 30 or more years of work experience (13 respondents), have an associate's degree (19 respondents) and are employed as preschool teachers in a school (22 respondents).

We gathered data through a standardized questionnaire and the study was anonymous.

The data that collected with the questionnaire was computer processed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. To test the differences in team roles between different respondent groups based on work experience, education, and work position, we used the general F-test in combination with Levene’s test. In cases where the premise of homogeny was not justified, we performed the Welch’s test.

### 6. Results and Discussion

| Team Role           | Work Experience | Sample Size | Arithmetic Mean \(\bar{x}\) | Standard Deviation \(s\) | Homogeneity of Variances Test \(F\) | Homogeneity of Variances Test \(P\) | Difference in Arithmetic Mean Test \(F\) | Difference in Arithmetic Mean Test \(P\) |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Implementer         | Up to 9 years   | 47          | 16.4255         | 7.10402         | 0.590           | 0.622           | 0.786           | 0.504           |
|                     | 10-19 years     | 29          | 16.0690         | 5.25718         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 20-29 years     | 51          | 15.4510         | 6.73295         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 30 years and more| 13         | 13.3846         | 6.39711         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Coordinator         | Up to 9 years   | 47          | 7.3793          | 3.76463         | 0.870           | 0.458           | 0.928           | 0.429           |
|                     | 10-19 years     | 29          | 8.2549          | 3.89278         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 20-29 years     | 51          | 8.0769          | 4.17256         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 30 years and more| 13       | 7.8097          | 3.78590         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Shaper              | Up to 9 years   | 47          | 4.6207          | 3.77410         | 0.772           | 0.511           | 0.948           | 0.419           |
|                     | 10-19 years     | 29          | 4.6154          | 3.17644         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 20-29 years     | 51          | 4.6154          | 3.17644         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 30 years and more| 13       | 4.6154          | 3.17644         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Innovator           | Up to 9 years   | 47          | 6.1379          | 4.50970         | 1.772           | 0.155           | 0.479           | 0.697           |
|                     | 10-19 years     | 29          | 7.0196          | 8.66369         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 20-29 years     | 51          | 6.3846          | 3.27970         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 30 years and more| 13       | 6.3846          | 3.27970         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Resource investigator| Up to 9 years   | 47          | 8.5106          | 5.01247         | 2.053           | 0.109           | 0.589           | 0.623           |
|                     | 10-19 years     | 29          | 7.1379          | 3.46126         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 20-29 years     | 51          | 8.0980          | 3.66199         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 30 years and more| 13       | 8.0980          | 3.66199         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Monitor evaluator   | Up to 9 years   | 47          | 7.5319          | 5.11966         | 0.957           | 0.415           | 1.369           | 0.255           |
|                     | 10-19 years     | 29          | 8.3103          | 4.13265         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 20-29 years     | 51          | 6.3333          | 3.79825         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 30 years and more| 13       | 7.5385          | 4.59375         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Team worker         | Up to 9 years   | 47          | 16.1702         | 7.18785         | 1.652           | 0.180           | 0.559           | 0.643           |
|                     | 10-19 years     | 29          | 16.4483         | 5.88331         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 20-29 years     | 51          | 18.1176         | 9.79928         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 30 years and more| 13       | 18.1176         | 9.79928         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Completer-finisher  | Up to 9 years   | 47          | 6.6809          | 4.58308         | 0.539           | 0.656           | 0.667           | 0.574           |
|                     | 10-19 years     | 29          | 7.6897          | 4.93604         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                     | 20-29 years     | 51          | 6.6471          | 4.49366         |                 |                 |                 |                 |
The results of the general F-test of the differences between the arithmetic mean in the other team roles do not demonstrate a statistically significant difference with work experience as a factor. There are nonetheless some differences; those surveyed with less work experience (up to 19 years) most often play the role of implementer (up to 9 years $- \bar{x} = 16.4255$; 10-19 years $- \bar{x} = 16.0690$), connector (up to 9 years $- \bar{x} = 9.0638$), and resource investigator (up to 9 years $- \bar{x} = 8.5106$). Those with more work experience (more than 20 years) more often work as completer finishers (30 years and more $- \bar{x} = 8.2308$) and team workers (20-29 years $- \bar{x} = 18.1176$; 30 years and more $- \bar{x} = 18.1538$).

| Team Role         | Education          | Sample Size | Arithmetic Mean | Standard Deviation | Homogeneity of Variances Test | Difference in Arithmetic Mean Test |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                   |                    | n           | $\bar{x}$       | s                  | F                            | P      | F    | P   |
| Implementer      | Secondary School   | 82          | 15.3415         | 6.7827             | 0.041                         | 0.960         | 0.205 | 0.815 |
|                   | associate’s degree | 19          | 15.1053         | 7.6386             | 1.671                         | 0.192         | 0.744 | 0.477 |
|                   | University         | 39          | 16.7949         | 5.4152             | 0.744                         | 0.477         | 0.255 | 0.775 |
|                   | Secondary School   | 82          | 8.1585          | 4.48996            | 0.049                         | 0.952         | 0.049 | 0.952 |
|                   | associate’s degree | 19          | 8.8421          | 4.53705            | 0.041                         | 0.960         | 0.205 | 0.815 |
|                   | University         | 39          | 8.4359          | 4.01835            | 1.753                         | 0.177         | 0.049 | 0.952 |
|                   | Secondary School   | 82          | 3.5366          | 3.57700            | 2.521                         | 0.084         | 1.753 | 0.177 |
| Coordinator       | Secondary School   | 82          | 7.3780          | 4.60177            | 2.521                         | 0.084         | 1.753 | 0.177 |
|                   | associate’s degree | 19          | 6.5789          | 4.16754            | 0.645                         | 0.526         | 0.255 | 0.775 |
|                   | University         | 39          | 7.3333          | 4.29402            | 0.645                         | 0.526         | 0.255 | 0.775 |
|                   | Secondary School   | 82          | 18.2195         | 9.48686            | 0.645                         | 0.526         | 0.255 | 0.775 |
| Monitor evaluator | Secondary School   | 82          | 18.2195         | 9.48686            | 0.645                         | 0.526         | 0.255 | 0.775 |
|                   | associate’s degree | 19          | 6.5789          | 4.16754            | 0.645                         | 0.526         | 0.255 | 0.775 |
|                   | University         | 39          | 7.3333          | 4.29402            | 0.645                         | 0.526         | 0.255 | 0.775 |
|                   | Secondary School   | 82          | 18.2195         | 9.48686            | 0.645                         | 0.526         | 0.255 | 0.775 |
| Innovator         | Secondary School   | 82          | 7.3158          | 4.93348            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | associate’s degree | 19          | 7.3158          | 4.93348            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | University         | 39          | 5.6410          | 3.96357            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
| Monitor evaluator | Secondary School   | 82          | 8.0488          | 4.53764            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | associate’s degree | 19          | 8.2105          | 5.45261            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | University         | 39          | 7.8462          | 3.59487            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
| Completer finisher| Secondary School   | 82          | 7.3780          | 4.60177            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | associate’s degree | 19          | 8.2105          | 5.45261            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | University         | 39          | 7.8462          | 3.59487            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | Secondary School   | 82          | 18.2195         | 9.48686            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
| Completer finisher| Secondary School   | 82          | 18.2195         | 9.48686            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | associate’s degree | 19          | 8.2105          | 5.45261            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | University         | 39          | 7.8462          | 3.59487            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |
|                   | Secondary School   | 82          | 18.2195         | 9.48686            | 0.639                         | 0.529         | 0.481 | 0.619 |

The Homogeneity of Variances Test shows that the presumption in one example is not justified ($P = 0.039$). In this case, we use Welch’s t test to study the statistically significant differences, which in this case ($P = 0.143$) are not present in terms of the education of those surveyed.
The results of the general F-test of the differences between the arithmetic mean in the other team roles also fail to demonstrate a statistically significant difference with education as a factor. Nonetheless certain differences do exist; those surveyed with a high level of education primarily occupy, within the structure of the educational system and the required levels of education, the position of teacher, as well as of preschool teacher. These more often than others see themselves or understand their role as that of implementer (16.7949), shaper (4.7436), and monitor evaluator (7.3333). Those surveyed with higher levels of education are primarily those who are working as preschool teachers (either in pre- or primary school), and they more often than others see themselves as complete finishers (8.1579), resource investigators (8.2105), and innovators (7.3158). Those surveyed with secondary school education are employed as assistants to the preschool teacher in preschools, and more often than others find themselves in the role of the team worker (18.2195).

Table 3. Results of Single-Factor Analysis of Variance in Team Roles based on Job Position.

| Team Role       | Work Position               | Sample Size | Arithmetic Mean | Standard Deviation | Homogeneity of Variances Test | Difference in Arithmetic Mean Test |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                 |                             | n           |                 |                    | F                             | P                                 |
| Implementer    | Preschool teacher (preschool) | 32          | 16.4688        | 6.83437            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Assistant of preschool teacher | 43          | 15.5814        | 7.14220            | 0.967                         | 0.410                             | 0.682                             | 0.565                             |
|                 | Teacher                     | 43          | 14.7209        | 6.57675            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 22          | 16.8182        | 4.67655            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (preschool) | 32          | 8.4375         | 3.92624            |                               |                                   |
| Coordinator    | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 43          | 7.6744         | 5.18111            | 0.998                         | 0.396                             | 0.654                             | 0.582                             |
|                 | Teacher                     | 43          | 8.9767         | 3.66118            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (preschool) | 22          | 8.1818         | 4.46826            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (preschool) | 32          | 4.1875         | 3.72816            |                               |                                   |
| Shaper         | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 43          | 3.5581         | 3.53420            | 0.059                         | 0.981                             | 0.769                             | 0.513                             |
|                 | Teacher                     | 43          | 3.3953         | 3.74255            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 22          | 4.6818         | 3.80959            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (preschool) | 32          | 5.0000         | 3.90203            |                               |                                   |
| Innovator      | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 43          | 6.2326         | 8.64880            | 0.469                         | 0.704                             | 0.878                             | 0.454                             |
|                 | Teacher                     | 43          | 7.3256         | 5.15808            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 22          | 6.1818         | 4.46826            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (preschool) | 32          | 8.1563         | 4.08861            |                               |                                   |
| Resource investigator | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 43          | 7.6512         | 4.86916            | 0.963                         | 0.412                             | 0.143                             | 0.934                             |
|                 | Teacher                     | 43          | 8.2326         | 4.65391            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 22          | 8.0909         | 3.54440            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (preschool) | 32          | 6.8125         | 4.69342            |                               |                                   |
| Monitor evaluator | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 43          | 8.0233         | 4.92075            | 1.789                         | 0.152                             | 0.701                             | 0.553                             |
|                 | Teacher                     | 43          | 7.1628         | 4.20844            |                               |                                   |
|                 | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 22          | 6.5909         | 3.47315            |                               |                                   |
| Team worker    | Preschool teacher (primary school) | 32          | 16.4688        | 9.35323            | 2.253                         | 0.085                             | 0.644                             | 0.588                             |
The results of the general F-test of the differences between the arithmetic mean in the other team roles do not demonstrate a statistically significant difference with work position as a factor. Given that the representation of (almost) all roles in a team is important for its successful functioning, the results are not all that unexpected. Nonetheless there are indeed some differences.

To get a better analysis and a more in-depth view of the division and important of the roles themselves, we ranked the team roles with regard to work position. Although we did not find statistically significant differences, some key differences nevertheless emerged regarding the work position a person has, and the obligations and competencies arising from said position, which we also wrote about in the theoretical part.

Table 4: Ranked Types in Team Roles According to the Averages of Their Importance for Individual Work Positions.

| Range | Preschool teacher (preschool) | Assistant of preschool teacher (primary school) | Teacher (1st grade of Primary school) | Preschool teacher (1st grade of Primary school) |
|-------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Team worker                   | Innovator                                      | Team worker                         | Team worker                                   |
| 2     | Implementer                   | Team worker                                    | Implementer                         | Implementer                                   |
| 3     | Monitor evaluator             | Implementer                                    | Resource investigator                | Coordinator                                   |
| 4     | Resource investigator         | Coordinator                                    | Coordinator                         | Innovator                                     |
| 5     | Shaper                        | Completer finisher                             | Completer finisher                  | Resource investigator                         |
| 6     | Completer finisher            | Monitor evaluator                              | Innovator                           | Shaper                                        |
| 7     | Coordinator                   | Resource investigator                           | Monitor evaluator                   | Completer finisher                           |
| 8     | Innovator                     | Shaper                                         | Shaper                              | Monitor evaluator                             |

As we can gather from the ranked types, the roles “team worker” and “implementer” appear in the first two places under almost each type (for preschool teacher’s assistant in preschool they occupy second and third place, therefore still quite high). More or less all those surveyed, regardless of work position, have the same purposes, desires, motives, and ways of working. These are individuals who are described by the traits of the first and second role. According to the findings of some authors (Lepičnik Vodopivec, 2006; Polak, 2009; etc.), the main traits of the team worker are that they listen, orient, prevent conflicts, encourage collaboration, are generally socially oriented, unobtrusive, and sensitive. Completer finishers are conservative, loyal, and predictable people, who work practically, systematically solve problems and tasks, and work hard to achieve the objectives.

Since the preschool teacher and their assistant work together in the preschool teacher, just as the teacher and preschool teacher in primary school, we see that in their roles are encompassed almost all the roles which, according to many authors (Lepičnik Vodopivec, Belbin, Polak, etc.), must be present in a team. While the preschool teachers in preschools and the teacher in primary schools assess that, in addition to the already mentioned roles of team worker and implementer, their roles primarily include that of monitor evaluator and resource investigator, the preschool teacher’s assistant and the preschool teacher in primary schools see themselves mostly as innovators and coordinators. It is not enough that the roles in a partnership are well distributed, but that they also accord with the description and expectations involved in the profile of the given profession, or the competencies of the work position. Thus they contribute to the effective operation of the team, and especially to a higher quality of work both with children in day-care as with pupils in school.

7. Conclusion

Teamwork includes both team planning, carrying out the task, and evaluating it, which all team members
contribute to. Recognizing roles and their allocation among team members is accordingly important, as only this way can we ensure a high level of quality and seek possibilities for progress. The team works successfully and with a high level of quality whenever more or less all the roles are represented. Here it is also important, as we have shown with our research, that whenever a team is composed of only 2 people (in preschool this is the preschool teacher/assistant combo, and in primary school the teacher/preschool teacher combo), roles must be allocated such that they do not entirely overlap. This is of utmost importance for successful team implementation (that is the unified working of both professional workers for the benefit of children and/or pupils) and for the avoidance of potential conflicts. On the other hand the work obligations and competencies of the individual in a team at a preschool or in the first grade of primary school, as we found in the theoretical part, are defined already by the work position itself, which is why it is crucial that we are self-critical in light of our findings. Reasonable doubt arises in the reality of the results on the representation of roles in a team of individual survey-takers, or of their own perception in a particular role. All of those surveyed in our study are employed at a preschool or in first grade of primary school, and due to the organization of the educational system they must work in a team with another professional colleague. Every work position has a list of described work obligations.

Upon a detailed analysis, we realized that smaller, statistically insignificant differences exist. These findings helped us realize that a role which is represented in a team does not depend on education, work position, or work experience; the causes lie elsewhere. On the basis of our findings and many other insights into the development and multifacetedness of the individual, we expect that the person’s role is defined primarily by their individual personality. As this can change or develop due to various factors, including education, personal activities, and experiences, as well as general events in a person’s personal or private life, the importance of education or work position, while not negligible, is not decisive. It is precisely on this basis that we conclude that this research should be expanded in the future, including taking into account the development of an individual’s personality.

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