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*Вълва Теодора Димитрова**Марчева-Йошовска Петя Веселинова***MENTORING IN THE CONTEXT OF TEAM WORK
FOR EFFICIENT INCLUSION**

Ключевые слова: инклюзивное образование, работа в команде, наставничество, образование на протяжении всей жизни.

В монографии обсуждается проблема совместной работы в рамках повышения квалификации без последующей сертификации начинающих педагогов. В теоретической части сделан краткий анализ нормативных документов, специализированной педагогической и методологической литературы. В разделе исследований представлено авторское исследование отношения педагогов к повышению компетентности посредством участия в неформальном и неформальном обучении с помощью наставников. Исследование предназначено для студентов, школьных педагогов и преподавателей университетов.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, teamwork, mentoring, lifelong learning.*

The monograph examines the problem for the role of team within the time of continuing qualification, without subsequent certification of starting-up teachers. Analysis has been made of the normative documents, specialized pedagogic and methodological literature. The research section provides the author's investigation of educational staff attitude to improve the pedagogic competency thru participation in formal and informal education with the assistance of mentors. The monograph is intended for students, teachers and university lecturers.

Introduction: The processes of the world globalization set up incessant demanding requirements before the educational institutions, related to improvement of work quality, achievement of greater competitiveness, optimization of organizational structure etc. In that regard the role of collective/team educational staff cooperation to improve

the organizational efficiency is acknowledged on all educational levels. The need for *team work* is conditional of the necessity to plan and coordinate the activities of pedagogical and non-pedagogical specialists in inclusive education in order to unite the separate activities and achieve synergy effect.

Set-up of the problem

Starting point – with regard to the investigated issue the main point is that on the stage of practical preparation to implement the complex and multi-functional pedagogic activity in the process of integration and support, the crucial role is the responsibility of the mentor. According to T. Valova, «when refer to the role of mentor, we should emphasize that he/she is a model for others to follow, teaching, supporting, counseling and approach to less experienced internship in order to encourage his/her professional improvement». Transfer of skills (in compliance to needs) to pedagogic ability, that is – professional competency, according to the author, is to be achieved by mentoring, that «flows as a process of interaction among mentor and mentored, the mentor having personal superiority in given subject field and exercise qualified and professional impact on thinking, behavior and actions of mentored» [1, p. 1213].

That gives grounds to team to characterize the mentoring: *not formal and/or formal* (defined on the type of study); *continuing education /training* (defined on the type of study and obtaining, expanding and improvement of professional qualification) upon completed preliminary educational level or type of education.

According to I. A. Coetzer, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) refers to any activities aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers by means of orientation, training and support [4, p. 78]. For the purposes of this study the authors accept the thesis, that to implement the plans for professional development of *educational staff* in order to overcome the shortage of qualified personnel, educational institutions should provide information, time and support for continuing qualification on work place. The specialists also should take responsibility for their own achievements

and additional qualifications. Despite, being new or established, the educators should organize themselves, improve, share experience and be trained to respond the demands of developing students' audience. As a consequence *on how and if the teachers are ready during their careers to absorb new skills*, that shall help to respond to changing needs of society, depends to greater degree the functioning of school as training community. Thus the implementation of professional progress thru mentoring, exercised in small pedagogic teams (within weekly working hours and in accordance the employment of the staff), secures qualification of the work place [2, p. 289–304].

Considered through the prism of *lifelong learning*, mentoring provides valuable professional experience thru development of already obtained and addition of new key skills. They are regulated in REGULATIONS №12 dated 01.09.2016 on the statute and professional development of teachers, principals and other pedagogic specialists. Art. 7. of the Regulations defines the basic functions of the positions «senior teacher» and «major teacher», related to *mentoring*. The following *activities* have been marked: assisting the newly appointed teachers, rendering of methodological support, motivation for professional improvement and career development of more experienced educators as mentors. The conditions for *methodical* and *organizational support* have been regulated in cases of low evaluation as result of attestation; consultation and assistance aimed in career development etc [4, p. 6]. The functions of the experienced educator with regard to newly appointed have been specified, actually to «carry out methodical and organizational support to newly appointed teachers/ educators and/or perform mentor's functions regarding graduate-trainee teachers» [4, p. 87].

Analyzing mentoring in field of andragogy, the team defines it as *modern educational technology and specific methodology for continuous improvement of personal and professional competencies*. In view of practice-applicable aspect we characterized it as *systematic team activity*, used to transfer knowledge from mentor to unskilled educator or specialist.

Usually, mentoring is performed in *small team*, consisting of experienced professional and new specialists. Team work is a complex of continuous and dynamic (mental and performing) processes of voluntary professional cooperation that turn into improved results of research and solving of specific problem. A crucial moment in those processes is the development of such relations that lead to improvement of knowledge, skills and competencies of team members-the most important resource of the team. In that context mentoring is reviewed as *indivisible part of the team work*. Conditions are created to realize actual support for the educators to implement the *objectives, tasks and functions for integrating education in Bulgaria*.

Conforming to the TALIS study, teachers' co-operation implies teachers working together in groups or teams to improve educational processes and outcomes, but such professional collaboration¹ is still relatively rare [7]. That directed the team efforts to investigate the attitudes of new educators and specialists for inclusion in educators' team to realize mentoring.

Accepting the arguments for professional collaboration¹ in the frame of teamwork, visualized by TALIS study, *the major objective* of investigation is to establish and analyze the attitudes of primary school teachers to work in a team.

Materials and Methods

Contingent for performance of questionnaire survey are primary school teachers in general secondary education schools from Pleven district.

1. *Methods for theoretic survey*: theoretic analyses of literature sources with regard to investigated issue; content-analysis of international and national programs and normative documents, regulating team work.

2. *Methods for establishment of empiric results: sociologic methods* – non standardized author's questionnaire; *mathematic-statistical processing and analyses of survey results* – SPSS 20; *graphic methods* for visual representation of obtained results.

Demographic profile of interviewed primary school teachers

Total number of interviewed primary school is 81. Teachers' observed profile is based on the following control factors: *gender; educational qualification degree; professional qualification.*

After summarizing, without claims of completeness, we present the processed and analyzed results of the conducted survey. It was attended by 66 women constituting 81,5% and 15 men (18,5%) (Figure 1).

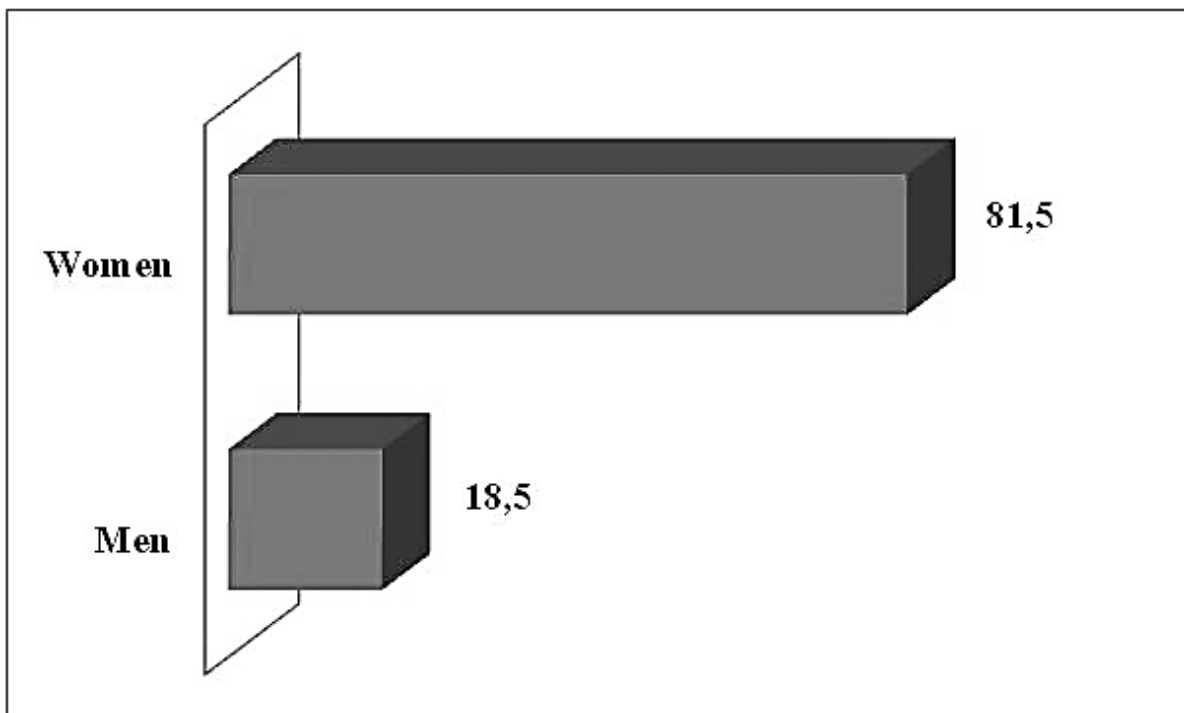


Fig. 1. Distribution by sex (in %)

Frequency distribution by sex is visualized on table 1.

Table 1

Frequency distribution of interviewed persons (IP) as per sex

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Valid</i>	<i>Men</i>	15	18,5	18,5	18,5
	<i>Women</i>	66	81,5	81,5	100,0
	<i>Total:</i>	81	100,0	100,0	

Distribution by *sex* shows, that among the interviewed, *women* are predominating. Data show that there is still existing great feminization of the teacher's profession in modern Bulgarian school. As per *educational qualification degree (EQD)* the

distribution is follow: *the greatest* numbers of the persons have the degree of «*Master*»- 57, whose relative part is 70.4%. It suggests making the conclusion that interviewed persons have required educational attainment and professional experience to provide objective answers. The data are given in table 2.

Table 2

Frequency distribution of IP as per educational qualification degree

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Valid</i>	<i>Profesional Barchelor</i>	9	11,1	11,1	11,1
	<i>Barchelor</i>	15	18,5	18,5	29,6
	<i>Master</i>	57	70,4	70,4	100,0
	<i>Total:</i>	81	100,0	100,0	

On *second* place rank the persons with degree «*Bachelor*» – 15, representing 18.5%, and the least is the number of persons with educational attainment «*professional bachelor*» – 9, with relative share of 11.1%.

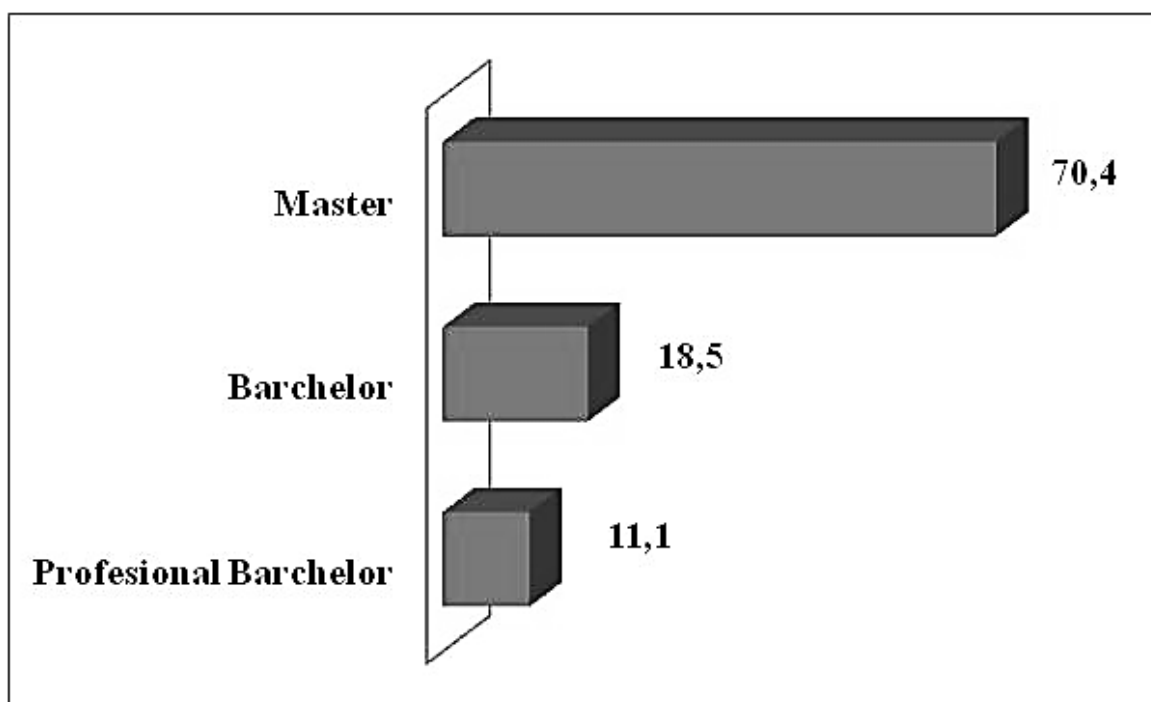


Fig. 2. Educational qualification degree (in %)

Cited data requires necessity to *search for opportunities to improve educational attainment of teachers in unison with the idea of lifelong study.*

The survey for the attitudes of the teachers proves that team work should be implemented on initial stage

The prevailing part of interviewed teachers (57, representing 70.4%) apply team work in daily routine school activities. The data are visualized in table 3.

Table 3

Frequency distribution of IP as per attitudes of the implementation of team work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	57	70,4	70,4	70,4
	I can't decide	6	7,4	7,4	77,8
	No	18	22,2	22,2	100,0
	Total:	81	100,0	100,0	

Only 18 of interviewed persons, representing 22.2% – give negative answer.

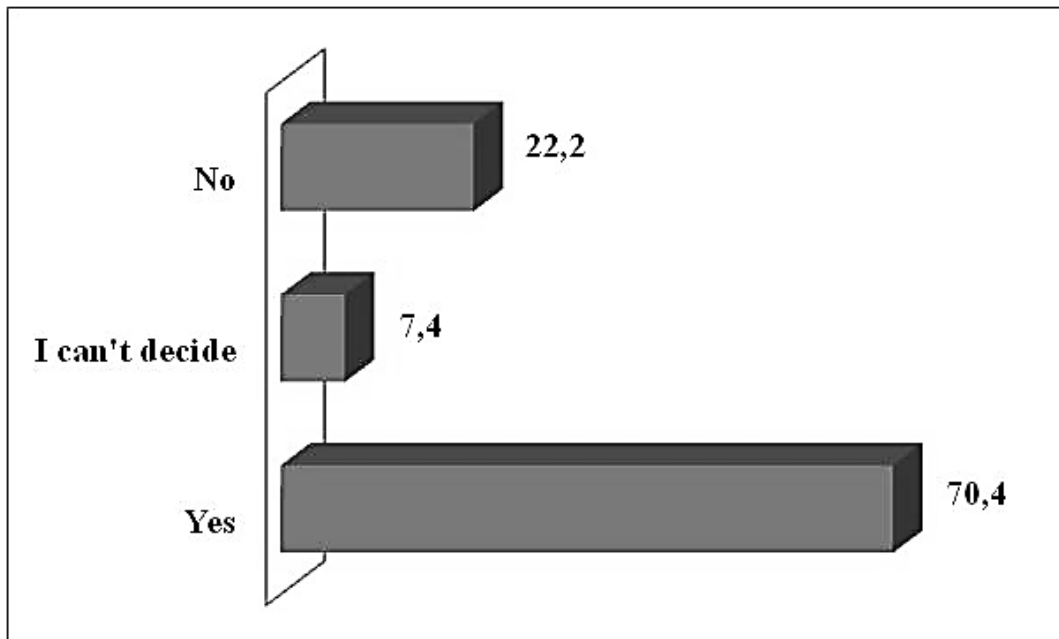


Fig. 3. Attitudes of the implementation of team work (in %)

The results support the statement that Bulgarian teacher is experiment and apply innovation approaches of pedagogic interaction in his/her work that would lead to *improvement of educational process quality in Bulgarian school*.

Self-evaluation of the preparation to be used in team work

Prevailing part of interviewed teachers (69, representing 85.2%) share the opinion that they feel *prepared to use team work activities* (as summarized in table 4).

Table 4

The preparation to be used in team work

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Valid</i>	<i>Yes</i>	69	85,2	85,2	85,2
	<i>I can't decide</i>	6	7,4	7,4	92,6
	<i>No</i>	6	7,4	7,4	100,0
	<i>Total:</i>	81	100,0	100,0	

Insignificant part, only 12 of interviewed persons, with relative share 14.8%, is not confident to apply team work activities.

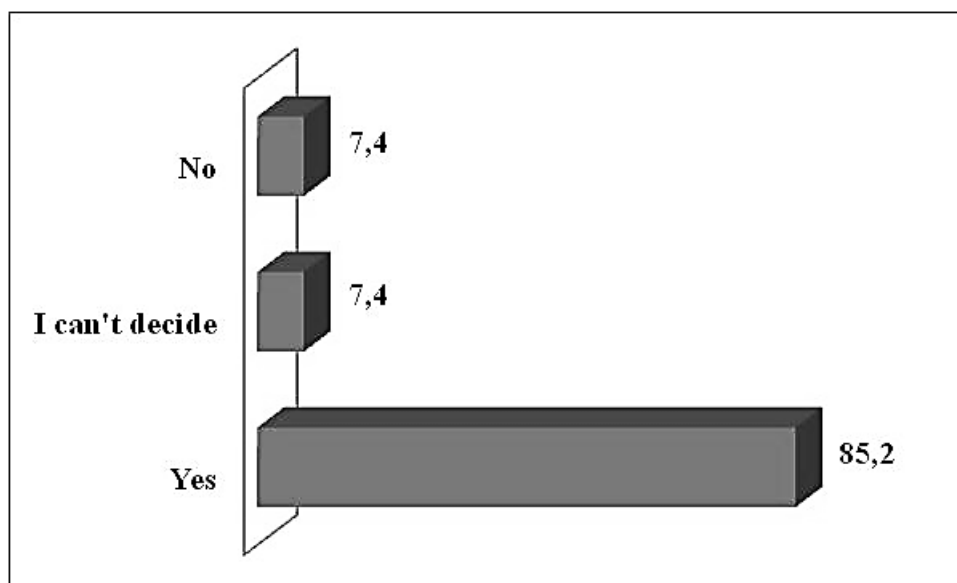


Fig. 4. Self-evaluation of the preparation to be used in team work (in %)

On the question «How frequently use team work in teaching hours?» the greatest number of answers is «every month». Those answers give 30 of interviewed persons, representing 37.0%.

Table 5

Frequency distribution of IP as per using team work in teaching hours

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Valid</i>	<i>Daily</i>	9	11,1	11,1	11,1
	<i>Weekly</i>	27	33,3	33,3	44,4
	<i>Monthly</i>	30	37,0	37,0	81,5
	<i>Several times a years</i>	6	7,4	7,4	88,9
	<i>I can't decide</i>	9	11,1	11,1	100,0
	<i>Total:</i>	81	100,0	100,0	

Slightly over one third of interviewed persons have answered that *use* team work *every week* (27 teachers with relative share of 33.3%). *Every day* use only 9 teachers (11.1%), and several times for year – only 6 IP, whose relative share is only 7.4% (fig. 5).

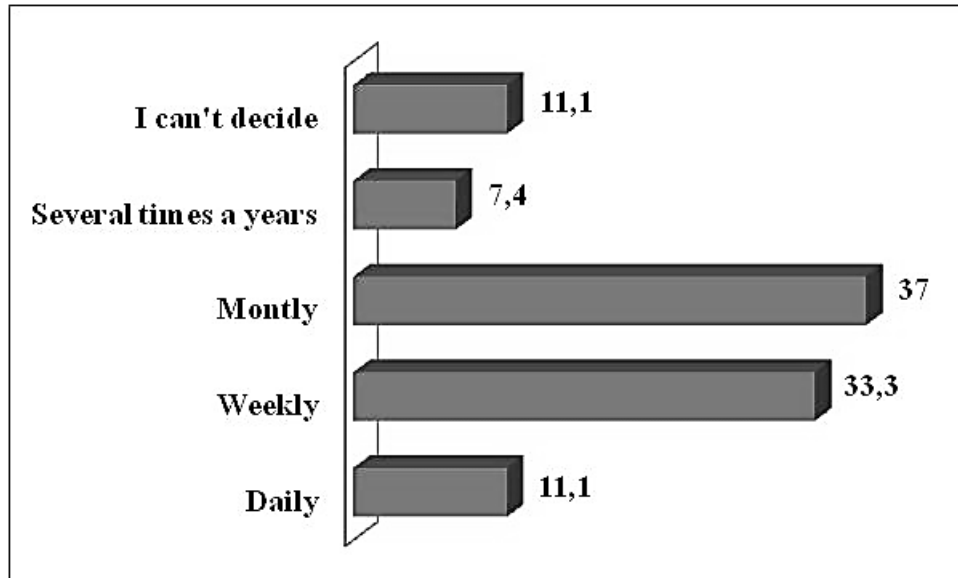


Fig. 5. Frequency of participation (B %)

The information leads to the conclusion that teachers should *search for* options to more frequently apply team work in teaching hours in order to *optimize* educational process on initial stage.

The results show that according interviewed persons team work is most *frequently* applied in Bulgarian language and literature classes. Such answers give 51 teachers, representing 16.67%.

Table 6

Using of team work in subject disciplines

№	School discipline	Number of teachers responded
1.	Bulgarian language and literature	51
2.	Mathematics	30
3.	Music	45
4.	Man and Nature	39
5.	Man and Society	39
6.	Nature studies	36
7.	Fine Art	30

8.	Homeland	18
9.	Technology and entrepreneurship	9
10.	Foreign language	9
11.	Physical education and sport	0

On second place, 45 persons (14.71%) say that use team work in classes of *music*. Third position is occupied by subject disciplines *Man and Nature* and *Man and Society*, being used by equal number of teachers 39 (12.75%), and less in *Surrounding World* classes 36 C3, relative share 11.76%. On lowest ranking 30 teachers (9.80%) show the subjects – *mathematics* and *fine arts*. Extremely rare the classes in *foreign language* and *Technologies and Enterpreuning* are used in that aspect – barely 9 IP (2.9%).

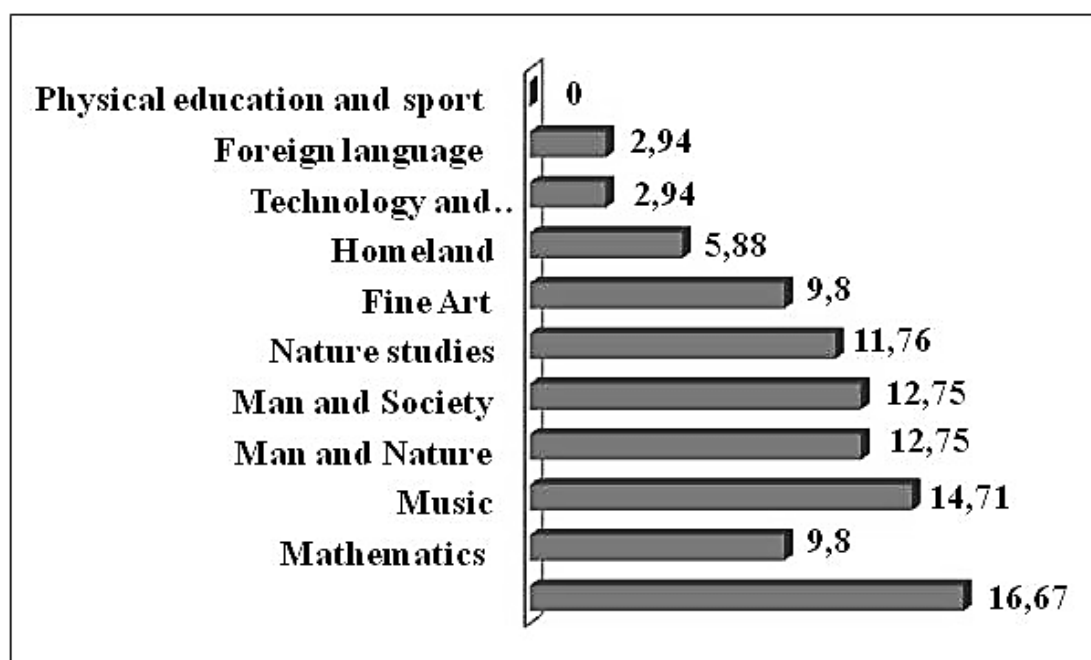


Fig. 6. Teaching subjects, used to apply team work

Survey of the primary school teachers experience to apply team work

Comparatively great part of the interviewed 69 teachers (85.2%) has *experience* in implementing the team work.

Table 7

Experience of teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	69	85,2	85,2	85,2
	I can't decide	3	3,7	3,7	88,9
	No	9	11,1	11,1	100,0
	Total:	81	100,0	100,0	

Extremely *small* part of teachers note that *have not* experience – barely 12 interviewed persons, representing 14.8%, share this problem.

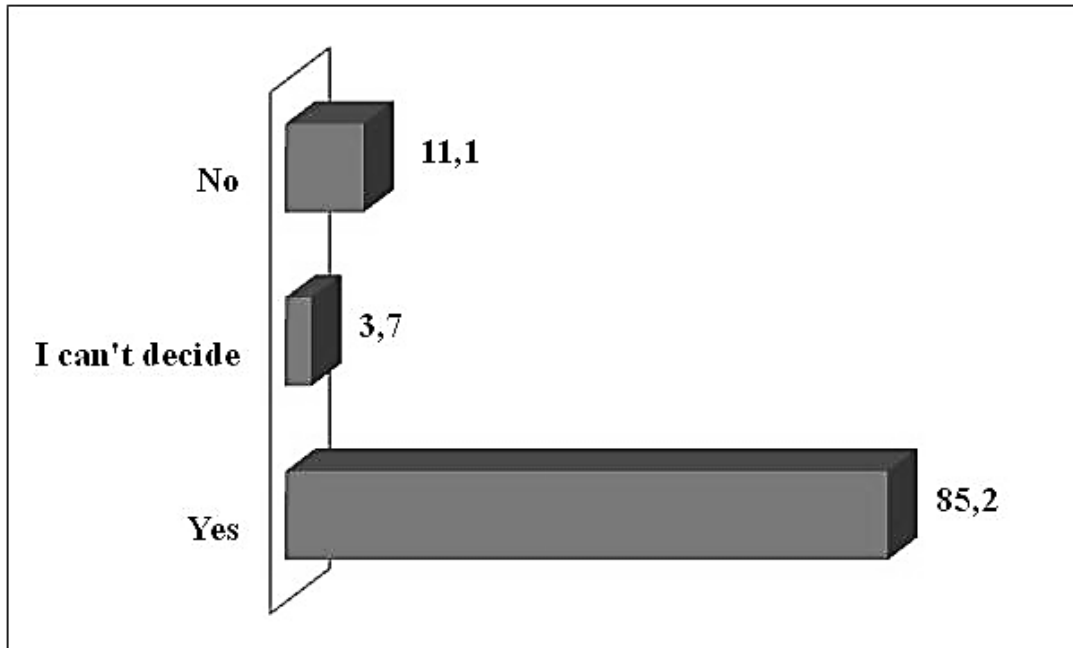


Fig. 7. Experience of teachers (in %)

Survey of teachers' opinion on manager of the team

Information show, that according 33% of IP organizer of educators' team is *major teacher*. According one fourth (26%) the team is established by initiative of the *Pedagogical council*, and 20% emphasize that the principal assigns the team. An insignificant part of the interviewed – barely 11%, share that in their school there is not pedagogical/educators' team and almost same percent of interviewed cannot decide.

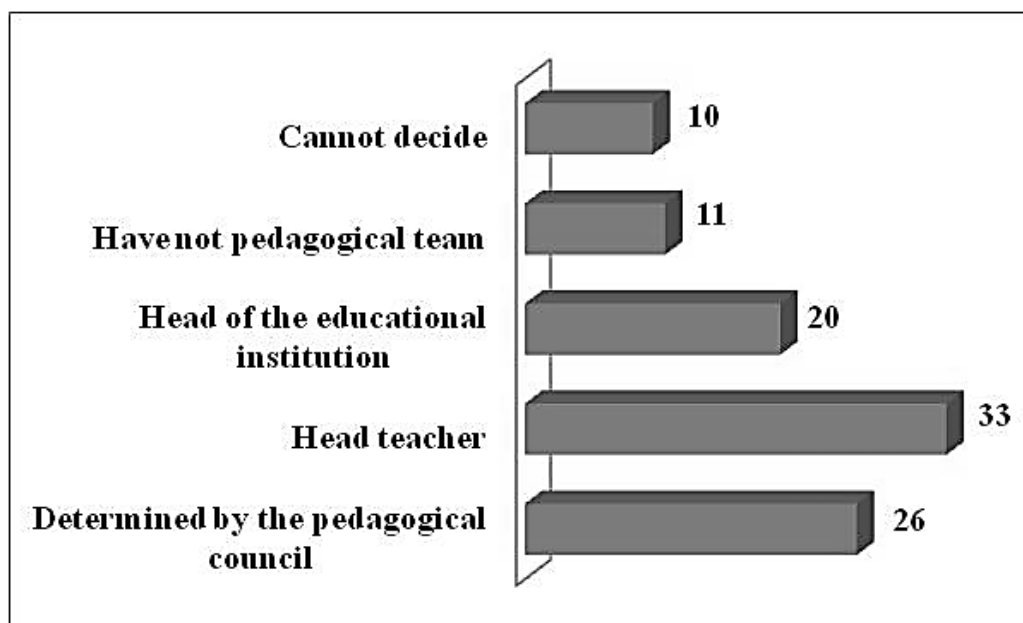


Fig. 8. Creator of a team (in %)

Survey of primary school teachers' readiness for team work

Almost one third of interviewed teachers (24 IP, representing 30%) point out that have professional competencies and feel *prepared to work in a team* (T. 8.).

Table 8

Teachers' readiness for teamwork

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	24	30	30	30
	I can't decide	29	36	36	66
	Disagree	28	34	34	100,0
	Total:	81	100,0	100,0	

Answers that *not feel prepared* or *cannot decide* give almost equal percent of IP, respectively 34% and 36%. The result lead to the conclusion that primary school teachers should participate in appropriate trainings – in that number and mentoring in order to improve the qualification regarding team work.

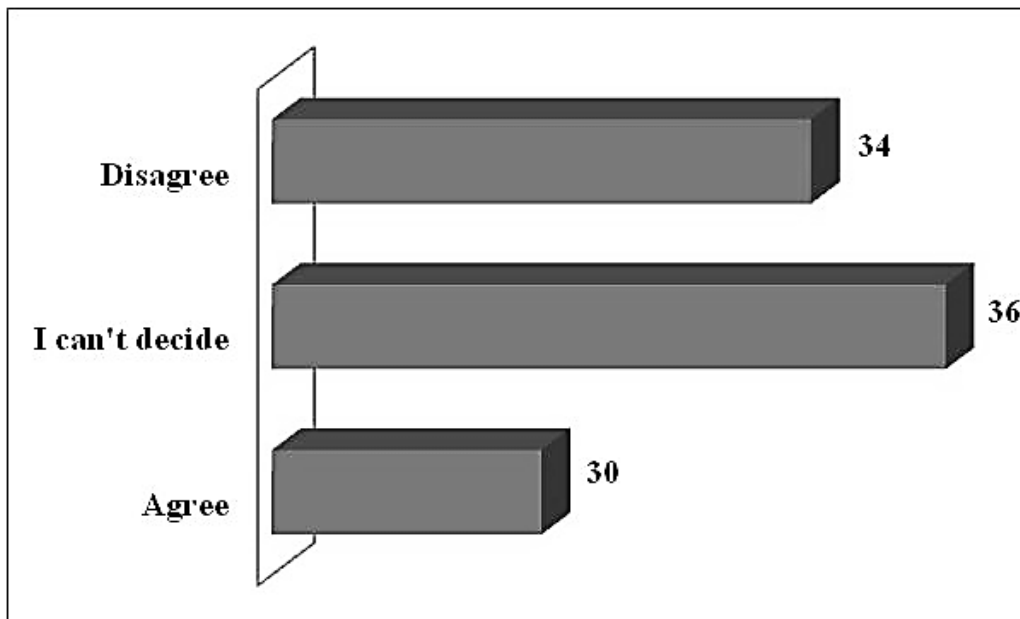


Fig. 9. Teachers' readiness for teamwork

I. Evaluation the frequency of team work implementation in teaching subjects at initial stage.

1. Prevailing part of IP implement team work in classes of various teaching subjects every *month*, and a little bit more than one third – *every week*. That information gives ground to recommend that teachers should search options to more frequently implement team work in view *optimization* of educational process at initial stage.

2. *There are existing* teaching subjects the educators are applying team work. The first preferences are related to the subjects: *Bulgarian language and literature, mathematics and music*. The remaining teaching subjects share almost equal ranking with little difference, so they are preferred in equal degree by teachers. The expression of those needs has national and personal specifics.

II. Evaluation of teachers' preparation to implement team work.

The process of improving the professional pedagogic competency is depends on following key factors: institutional; organizational; human; motivational. That gives the grounds the mentoring to be used as qualification format.

Contemporary pedagogical subjects (interviewed primary school teachers) *disclose* their reserves, regarding the restricted implementation of team work at initial

stage. That implied the significance of constituting educators' teams for comprehensive pedagogical, physiological and methodological training of starting-up teachers in the profession.

Trends of the survey: The global aim of the authors' team is to elaborate *methodological model* for the implementation of mentoring in everyday educational team work. In that sense the cooperation – within the team of mentor and mentoree is aimed to turn into joint training and self-training by sharing of ideas and practices on institutional level thus the educators receive satisfaction and commitment to the overall learning activity.

Conclusion: Team work gives new ideas and significance to continuing qualification of educators and specialists, being implemented on work place. The team shall continue the scientific researches on the issues that did not find answers in this monographic work, as well all others that shall emerge on the agenda in the conditions of changing reality in order to find the adequate solution.

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