

Evaluation of Primary Prevention of Risk Behaviour in Preschool Education Institutions from the Perspective of Teachers

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Abstract

The contribution presents the issue of factors influencing the level of primary prevention of risk behaviour in preschool education institutions, perceived also within the dimensions of school climate. It further presents the outcomes of a survey focused on evaluation of the level of primary prevention of risk behaviour from the perspective of kindergarten teachers (mainly women teachers) in the Czech Republic.

Key words: primary prevention, risk behaviour, kindergarten, preschool education, school climate, needs, kindergarten woman teacher/man teacher

Abstrakt

Příspěvek se zabývá problematikou faktorů ovlivňujících úroveň primární prevence rizikového chování v institucích předškolního vzdělávání, která je vnímána také v rozměrech školního klimatu. Dále uvádí výsledky průzkumu zaměřeného na hodnocení úrovně primární prevence rizikového chování z pohledu učitelů mateřských škol (zejména žen – učitelek) v České republice.

Klíčová slova: primární prevence, rizikové chování, mateřská škola, předškolní vzdělávání, klima školy, potřeby, mateřská škola učitelka/učitel.

Introduction

The following contribution pays general attention first to selected factors that are presumed to have influence on the level (quality) of primary prevention of risk behaviour in preschool education institutions, or namely kindergartens in the Czech Republic. It emphasizes the factor of teacher (woman teacher) and deals with teachers' evaluation of primary prevention of risk behavior at their workplaces. The issue of primary prevention in preschool education institutions has been dealt with for a long time, and the area of determining factors is perceived as very important. Now the project IGA_PdF_2014018 titled "Kindergarten School Climate Respecting the Needs of a Child as a Protective Factor of Primary Prevention of Risk Behaviour" is carried out; the discussed area is significantly reflected in it. The project data are collected by means of both the qualitative and quantitative research strategies. What is accentuated is kindergarten school climate and respect for the needs of children attending kindergartens; the personality of a teacher plays the key role in both the cases. We would like to present the issue not only in the framework of theoretical thinking but mainly from the viewpoint of the data of our realized project, not published so far; these have become one of the starting points of the current project.

1 Primary prevention of risk behaviour

Any conceivable intervention, in the sense starting with preventing something and early intervention to therapeutic intervention up to relapse prevention, can be called prevention. Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention is distinguished on the basic level in the contemporary practice. These terms were introduced by G. Caplan in his work "Principles of Preventive Psychiatry" (1964). The level of primary prevention is carried out within preschool education; i.e. the one that is focused on the entire population, without examining the level of danger. Primary prevention is divided into nonspecific and specific prevention. Specific prevention focuses its attention to particular groups of risk behaviour, tries to reduce the influence of risk factors in narrowly defined phenomena (e.g. aggressive behaviour). (Scheitenhauer, H., Hayer, T., Niebank, K., 2008) Non-specific primary prevention is focused on general circumstances of the development of an individual's personality, including all activities supporting healthy life style and acquisition of positive social conduct by means of meaningful use and organization of spare time, e.g. hobbies, sports and spare time activities and other programmes leading

to compliance with certain social rules, healthy development of personality, responsibility for oneself and one's conduct. (*Metodické doporučení k primární prevenci rizikového chování u dětí, žáků a studentů ve školách a školských zařízeních*, č.j. 21291/2010-28). The dominant position at kindergarten is occupied by nonspecific prevention due to its character. (Kocourková, V., Šafránková, A., 2012)

Risk behaviour is understood as ways of uncertain conduct having the potential of harms relating to one's own life or environment (living conditions in society) (Raithel, J., 2011). Thus the risks for individuals (social, health, economic etc.) are increasing.

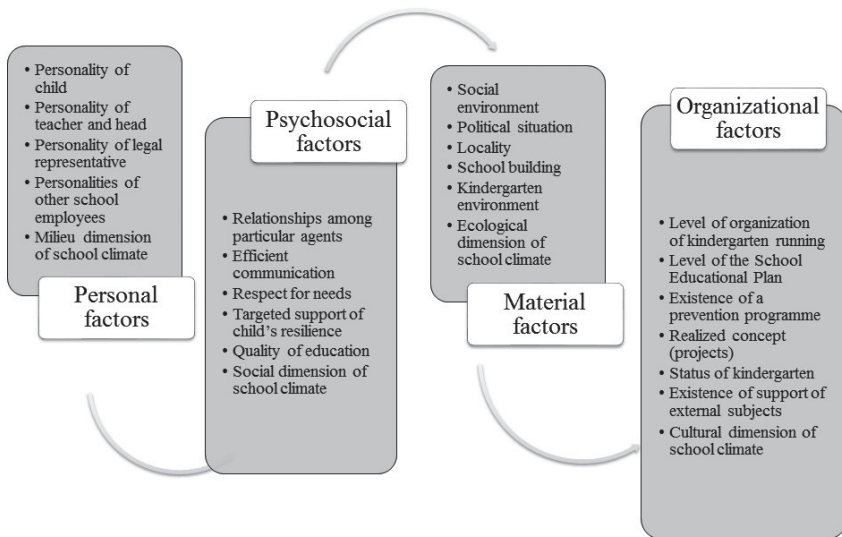
2 Presumed factors influencing the level of primary prevention of risk behaviour at kindergarten

Factors that can influence the level (qualitative side) of primary prevention of risk behaviour at kindergarten are of multidimensional character. Basically, it is possible to consider four main areas of agents; the common factor of these is school climate in its particular dimensions (see chart 1).

The *personal factors* include personalities of particular agents – internal school partners. An important role is played by the personality of a kindergarten teacher (temperament, character, duration of practice, gender). According to Bessoth (1989), the social dimension of school climate is determined by persons or groups of persons that are in direct or indirect contact with the school. The *psychosocial factors* include relationships among particular participants – internal and external school partners, team of teachers, quality of management, parents' participation etc. The quality of education is based on competences of a kindergarten teacher, the way of pedagogical thinking etc. According to Bessoth (1989), the social dimension of school climate is related to behaviour or patterns of behaviour of persons or groups of persons at school; also persons or groups of persons that are in direct or indirect contact with the school. According to our opinion, the *material factors* include both the generally social and political society reflected in the education process and namely the character and situation of the locality (village, town, excluded localities etc.). Further particularly the character of a school building (arrangement of furniture, size of the building and rooms) and the character of a kindergarten (e. g. arrangement of the furniture and its suitability for children; toys – quantity, selection). According to Bessoth (1989), the ecological dimension of school climate includes physical and material aspects of school. Only the level of organization of the running of a kindergarten will be mentioned in relation to *organization of a kindergarten*; we would like to emphasize not only organization of work in a class but also the number of children in a class. According to Bessoth (1989), the cultural dimension of school climate is determined by value patterns, norms, religion, expert competences and significance of all persons at school.

Chart 1

Selected factors that can influence the level of primary prevention of risk behaviour at kindergarten



[Reference: Smolíková, K. et al., 2004; Essa, E., 2011; IGA_PdF_2012_047 "Pedagogical Aspects of Prevention and Resilience in the Preschool Educational Institution" (Kocourková, V., Šafránková, A., 2012); IGA_PdF_2014018 "Kindergarten School Climate Respecting the Needs of a Child as a Protective Factor of Primary Prevention of Risk Behavior" (Kocourková, V., Kantorová, J., Šafránková, A., 2014); Bessoth, R., 1989.]

All the factors are interconnected and blended. Nevertheless, what should be pointed out is the role of personal factors and psychosocial factors very closely related to them. It is namely the personality of a teacher that can actively intervene and change the prevailing majority of other conditions (factors), and thus it plays the key role. This is why the personality of a teacher is one of the "areas" of our surveys. The survey that is to be presented here was focused on teachers' evaluation of primary prevention of risk behaviour at schools (their own workplaces) what can reflect the level of the given prevention to a certain extent too.

3 Evaluation of primary prevention of risk behaviour from the perspective of kindergarten teachers – a survey

The survey, focused on evaluation of primary prevention of risk behaviour from the perspective of kindergarten teachers, was carried out at the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013. It was part of the project IGA PdF_2012_047 "Pedagogical Aspects of Prevention and Resilience in the Preschool Educational Institution" (Kocourková, V. Šafránková, A.). The part that was carried out by means of quantitative design gave birth to a research tool consisting of typical questionnaire items, items of the scale type and Q-methodology. The entire research tool was transformed into the electronic form.

Some of the scale-type items (14 out of the total number of 38 items) were aimed at evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour by kindergarten teachers (some could have the function of kindergarten head at the same time). The outcomes of this part are to be published here.

The research tool was distributed via email to kindergarten heads asking them to forward it to teachers of the kindergartens. Of course, this way influenced returnability of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were sent to 4,175 email addresses; unfortunately some of them turned out to be defunct. The total of 888 questionnaires were returned; still, some had to be rejected, and thus 868 questionnaires were used for further processing. It means returnability was only around 20%.

The respondents evaluated prevention of risk behaviour at their schools in the total of 14 items (5-point scales) of the questionnaire:

- Cooperation of the Pedagogical-Psychological Counselling Centre on the issues of prevention of risk behaviour is optimum at the kindergarten where you work.
- Communication with children's families regarding prevention of risk behaviour is optimum at the kindergarten where you work.
- The objective of prevention of risk behaviour is set absolutely specifically and in writing at the kindergarten where you work.
- The content of prevention of risk behaviour at the kindergarten where you work is based on a clearly and specifically defined objective.
- The methods of prevention of risk behaviour at the kindergarten where you work are based on a defined objective and content.
- Parents of all the children are at least once a month informed of activities of prevention of risk behaviour at the kindergarten where you work.
- Parents of all the children actively participate in prevention of risk behaviour at the kindergarten where you work.

- You implement prevention of risk behaviour into your teaching activities by intent.
- A targeted analysis of problems occurring in the particular locality is carried out at the kindergarten where you work.
- A targeted analysis of internal resources is carried out at the kindergarten where you work.
- Regular (at least once in six months) diagnostics of children's knowledge and abilities in relation to prevention of risk behaviour is carried out at the kindergarten where you work.
- Regular (at least once a year) evaluation of preventive influence based on the set specific objectives is carried out at the kindergarten where you work.
- A targeted analysis of children's needs is carried out at the kindergarten where you work.
- A targeted analysis of protective and risk factors influencing particular children in relation to prevention of risk behaviour is carried out at the kindergarten where you work.

Value 1 was for the best evaluation and value 5 the worst one in the used scales (I absolutely agree, I rather agree, I do not have a clear opinion, I rather disagree, I absolutely disagree). It is the average number of points given by the respondents in the said 14 scales that can be one of the indicators of the level of prevention of risk behaviour.

Hypothetically, a difference was presumed in evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour depending on:

- the duration of the respondents' teaching practice,
- the region,
- the founder (state, private kindergarten),
- the school status (independent school, together with an elementary school),
- the school locality (town, village),
- the respondents' function in the kindergarten (head, teacher),
- the achieved level of education,
- the existence of a prevention programme,
- the size of the kindergarten (up to 50 children, over 50 children).

4 Outcomes of the survey

The duration of teaching practice

The respondents were divided into two categories according to the duration of their teaching practice: category 1 (practice up to 10 years), category 2 (practice over 10 years).

Table 1

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. duration of the respondents' teaching practice (Px)

Duration of teaching practice	t-tests; grouped: Px: 1 = up to 10; 2 = 11 and over (DATA __korig_trans)						
	Group over 10						
	Group up to 10 years						
	Average over 10	Average up to 10	t	sv	p	Number of valid 2	Number of valid 1
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.21	2.46	-4.165	866	0.000034	711	157

A statistically significant difference (signification $p = 0.000034$) was confirmed between the groups of the respondents according to the duration of their practice. The group of respondents with the duration of practice over 10 years evaluated the level of prevention significantly better than the group of practice up to 10 years. It is possible to presume an influence of one's experience and its reflection in evaluation and maybe even implementation of primary prevention of risk behaviour.

Regions of the Czech Republic

Table 2

Average evaluation of the level of prevention in particular regions of the Czech Republic

Regions of the Czech Republic	Analytic table of descriptive statistics (DATA __korig_trans)			
	N = 868			
	Average evaluation of the level of prevention		n	Standard deviation
Olomouc	2.23		158	0.724021
Hradec Králové	2.24		21	0.477354
Central Bohemian	2.20		28	0.584847
Central Bohemian	2.28		45	0.700417
Plzeň	2.21		83	0.652697
Capital of Prague	2.37		51	0.664377
South Moravian	2.21		101	0.639551
Liberec	2.24		67	0.713643
Moravian Silesian	2.32		30	0.772888

Regions of the Czech Republic	Analytic table of descriptive statistics (DATA_korig_trans) N = 868			
	Average evaluation of the level of prevention	n	Standard deviation	
Vysočina	2.32	95	0.753546	
Zlín	2.17	62	0.646772	
Pardubice	2.26	70	0.631841	
Karlovy Vary	2.377	31	0.652101	
South Bohemian	2.29	26	0.717799	
Σ	2.25	868	0.680369	

Differences between the averages in particular regions of the Czech Republic were not statistically significant (signification $p = 0.950245$).

State/private kindergarten

Table 3

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. state/private kindergarten

State/private kindergarten	t-tests; grouped: pol4 (DATA_korig_trans)						
	Group state			Group private			
	Average state	Average private	t	sv	p	Number of valid state	Number of valid private
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.25	2.50	-1.568	866	0.1171	849	19

No statistically significant difference was proved (signification $p = 0.1171$).

Independent kindergarten/kindergarten together with an elementary school

Table 4

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. independent kindergarten/kindergarten together with an elementary school (pol5)

Independent/together with ES	t-tests; grouped: pol5 (DATA_korig_trans)						
	Group independent			Group together with ES			
	Average independent	Average together with ES	t	sv	p	Number of valid independent	Number of valid together with ES
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.23	2.30	-1.4901	866	0.136548	553	315

No statistically significant difference was proved (signification $p = 0.136548$).

School locality

Table 5

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. village/town

School locality	t-tests; grouped: pol6 (DATA__korig_trans)						
	Group town			Group village			
	Average town	Average village	t	sv	p	Number of valid town	Number of valid village
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.24	2.28	-0.80494	866	0.42107	514	354

No statistically significant difference was proved (signification 0.42107).

Function at the kindergarten

Table 6

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. (head + teacher)/teacher

(Head + teacher)/teacher	t-tests; grouped: pol7 (DATA__korig_trans)						
	Group 1: head + teacher			Group 2: teacher			
	Average head + teacher	Average teacher	t	sv	p	Number of valid head + teacher	Number of valid teacher
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.17	2.38	-4.08374	672	0.000050	301	373

A statistically significant difference was proved between evaluation of both the groups of respondents (signification $p = 0.000050$). The heads evaluated the level of prevention significantly better. Again, the influence of experience can be taken into consideration; still, it is possible to consider a pitfall when a kindergarten head tries to present the situation in a better light than in reality.

Achieved education

Table 7

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. education corresponding with university/corresponding with higher education

Variable	t-tests; grouped: pol8 (DATA__korig_trans)						
	Group 1: corrU Group 2: CORRhe						
	Average corrU	Average corrHE	t	sv	p	Number of valid corrU	Number of valid corrHE
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.28	2.28	0.004554	385	0.996369	332	55

No statistically significant difference was proved between evaluation by both the groups of respondents (signification $p = 0.996369$).

Table 8

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. education corresponding with university/corresponding with secondary education

Variable	t-tests; grouped: pol8 (DATA__korig_trans)						
	Group 1: corrU Group 2: corrSE						
	Average corrU	Average corrSE	t	sv	p	Number of valid corrU	Number of valid corrSE
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.28	2.22	1.259951	791	0.208059	332	461

No statistically significant difference was proved between evaluation by both the groups of respondents (signification $p = 0.208059$).

Table 9

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. education corresponding with higher education/corresponding with secondary education

Variable	t-tests; grouped: pol8 (DATA__korig_trans)						
	Group 1: corrHE Group 2: corrSE						
	Average corrHE	corrSE	t	sv	p	Number of valid corrHE	Number of valid corrSE
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.28	2.22	0.634222	514	0.526218	55	461

No statistically significant difference was proved between evaluation of both the groups of respondents (signification $p = 0.526218$)

Existence of a prevention programme

Table 10

Average evaluation of the level of prevention of risk behaviour vs. existence of a prevention programme

Prevention programme existing/not existing	t-tests; grouped: pol9 (DATA_korig_trans) Group not having elaborated a prevention programme Group having elaborated a prevention programme						
	Average not having	Average having	t	sv	p	Number of valid not having	Number of valid having
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.47	2.01	10.64832	866	0.000000	455	413

The existence of a statistically significant difference was proved between the groups (signification $p < 0.0000001$). Thus it is possible to say that teachers from schools where a prevention programme is elaborated evaluate the level of prevention of risk behaviour better. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that most schools that stated having elaborated a prevention programme are kindergartens running together with an elementary school. Independent kindergartens having a prevention programme are rather exceptions.

Size of the kindergarten

Table 11

Average evaluation of the level prevention of risk behaviour vs. size of the kindergarten

Size of the kindergarten	t-tests; grouped: Size_sch: 1=to 50; 2=over 50 (DATA_korig_trans) Group over 50 Group to 50						
	Average over 50	Average to 50	t	sv	p	Number of valid over 50	Number of valid to 50
Average evaluation of the level of prevention	2.25	2.25	0.049450	866	0.960572	529	339

No statistically significant difference was proved (signification $p = 0.960572$).

Conclusion

The presented contribution outlined possible factors influencing the level of primary prevention of risk behaviour while the personality of a teacher (woman teacher) was emphasized. It also dealt with teachers' evaluation of the current situation in the field of primary prevention at their own workplaces. The presented survey outcomes showed statistically significant differences in evaluation of primary prevention from the perspective of duration of the respondents' practice, the perspective of their functions in kindergartens and also the perspective of existence of a prevention programme at the schools; these are considered to be significant findings. The schools having elaborated an independent prevention programme evaluate prevention at the school better than the schools not having elaborated an independent prevention programme. It is possible to presume that it is caused by targeted and conscious activity in this area. Still, kindergartens have no duty to create an independent prevention programme. It is presumed that prevention of risk behaviour in kindergartens is carried out by means of quality elaboration and especially realization of school education programme based on the Framework Education Programme for preschool education.

Generally, it is possible to sum up that the issue of primary prevention of risk behaviour is still very topical, and its importance is rising. When taking account of the principles of primary prevention, namely its early beginning, it is necessary to pay attention to this issue within activities of preschool educations (specifically kindergartens), to support teachers' competencies in practice and to consciously work with all the factors that can influence the level of primary prevention at kindergartens. The issue is also topical not only from the viewpoint of practice but also from the viewpoint of theory and research (pedagogical research, or in combination with psychological research); the area of the factors influencing the level of prevention is only one of the partial options of research – the field of possible research is much wider from the general perspective and not sufficiently used from our perspective.

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