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PhD in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, **OLESIA SADOVETS**
Khmelnytskyi National University
Address: 11 Instytutska St., Khmelnytskyi, 29016, Ukraine
E-mail: lesyasadovets@gmail.com

TEACHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND ITS CONSISTENCY WITH TEACHER COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

ABSTRACT

The paper considers prospects of teacher career development in European countries, such as Poland, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Germany, Belgium and others. Main stages of career development and the role of teacher competence framework in this process have been characterized. Two types of teacher career development schemes in European countries – single (flat) and multi-level (hierarchical) – have been defined. It has been determined that teacher career promotion is only possible to stages that presuppose teaching. Requirements to teacher promotion to higher career stages are based on 6 criteria: positive evaluation; length of professional experience; demonstration of specific competences; specific professional development; research activities; running or designing professional development courses. The role of school administration and higher educational authorities (local and national) in decision making concerning teacher promotion in different European countries has been outlined. To get career promotion teachers can take on pedagogical or methodological responsibilities and roles outside classroom that can be diverse and related to subjects and curricula; student support; school life; teacher professional development; evaluation of teachers from other schools. It has been defined that in some countries, teachers are provided with career assistance that is the provision of information, coaching and counseling. Opportunities for teachers to extend their professional development and to get promotion to higher career steps have been analyzed. The key factor in decision making concerning teacher career promotion is teacher competence framework. It defines the fields of teacher competences. Some of these fields are common for all the frameworks but can be described in a different manner. As a rule, here belong psychological and pedagogical competences, subject knowledge and teaching approaches, organization of learning and assessment, innovative teaching approaches, communication with students, cooperation with colleagues, relations with parents and other stakeholders. Information in TCF is classified according to 4 categories: 1) initial teacher education; 2) introduction to the profession; 3) continuous professional development; 4) other.

Keywords: teacher competence framework, teacher career development, promotion, professional development, European countries, teacher evaluation/appraisal.

АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті розглядаються можливості кар'єрного зростання вчителів у країнах Європи, таких як Угорщина, Латвія, Швеція, Литва, Бельгія, Німеччина, Італія, Іспанія, Словенія, Польща, Румунія та інших. Охарактеризовано основні етапи просування вчителів кар'єрними сходинками та роль рамки компетентностей вчителів у цьому процесі. Визначено два типи кар'єрного зростання вчителів у



європейських країнах – пряме (єдине) та багаторівневе (ієрархічне). З'ясовано, що кар'єрне зростання вчителів можливе лише до тих сходинок, які передбачають викладацьку діяльність. Вимоги, що висувуються до вчителів, які претендують на кар'єрне зростання, базуються на шести критеріях: позитивні результати оцінювання діяльності вчителя; професійний стаж; володіння специфічними компетентностями; професійний розвиток; дослідницька діяльність; розробка або проведення курсів професійного розвитку. З'ясовано роль адміністрації шкіл та вищих освітніх органів (місцевих та національних) у прийнятті рішення щодо кар'єрного зростання вчителів у різних країнах Європи. Визначено, що додаткові педагогічні та методичні обов'язки вчителів, які сприяють їх кар'єрному зростанню, зазвичай пов'язані з їх участю у розробці навчальних планів та змісту дисциплін; підтримкою учнів; участю у житті школи; у професійному розвитку інших учителів; в оцінюванні вчителів інших шкіл. Виявлено, що у деяких країнах Європи вчителям надається кар'єрна підтримка у формі забезпечення інформацією, наставництвом та консультуванням. Досліджено можливості для вчителів щодо розширення професійного досвіду та окреслено кроки, які можуть допомогти їм у просуванні кар'єрними сходинками. З'ясовано, що ключовим фактором при прийнятті рішення про кар'єрне зростання є рамка компетентностей вчителів, яка децю відрізняється у різних країнах Європи, але зазвичай включає психологічні, педагогічні, предметні компетентності, а також ті, які пов'язані з підходами до викладання, організацією навчання та оцінювання, комунікацією з учнями, співпрацею з колегами, батьками та іншими стейкхолдерами. Інформація у рамках компетентностей класифікуються за чотирма категоріями: початкова освіта вчителів; вступ у професію; безперервний професійний розвиток; інше.

Ключові слова: рамка компетентностей вчителів, кар'єрне зростання вчителів, професійний розвиток, європейські країни, оцінювання вчителів.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher career development is the process of promotion through different stages of career hierarchy and advancement in terms of experience that is attained by means of acquiring additional responsibilities and roles (European Commission, 2017). Having good career prospects can be an important factor that helps teachers stay motivated throughout entire career. It encourages teachers to develop skills they need to keep up with ever changing educational environment and continue to ensure high quality teaching to students.

Teaching quality is a key factor in ensuring positive learning achievements of students. Thus, teachers should be encouraged to continue their development and improve skills throughout teaching career and what is more important stay motivated to teaching. In this respect, the following elements are of utmost importance: continuous professional development; reasonable evaluation/appraisal and feedback system; cooperation among teachers; good career prospects. Besides, teacher development must correspond to competences presented in teacher competence framework (TCF).

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The paper is aimed at studying and summarizing current researches of teacher career development and its consistency with teacher competence framework in different European countries to determine positive aspects that should be taken into account and experience that should be borrowed into educational environment of other developing countries.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

The issue of teacher career development has been considerably studied by S. Bamford, M. Chrappan (2020), E. Kopp (2020), S. Lynch, J. Worth (2016). Teacher evaluation and appraisal is the issue of concern to D. Nusche (2014), P. Santiago (2012), C. Shewbridge (2011). Studies of teacher competence framework and its role in teacher career development are presented in scientific works of N. Bilbao (2021), F. Caena (2014), U. Garay, A. Romero (2021). Substantial research in different aspects of teacher career development and its relation to teacher competence framework has been conducted by European Commission Euridyce (2014–2021).

In our research a range of general scientific methods (including study, analysis and synthesis of reference, scientific educational print and on-line sources), as well as systematization and generalization has been used. Our research is qualitative (descriptive) and includes observation and narrative inquiry.

RESULTS

Career development is defined as a recognized promotion within some definite profession. In terms of teaching career there are two types of career development schemes in European countries:

1. Multi-stage or hierarchical development scheme. According to it, each stage of career development is defined as a set of competences and responsibilities. Different career stages are characterized by increase of complexity and extent of responsibilities. Salary can depend on career development but it is not the defining factor.

2. Single-stage or flat development scheme. Here the salary, as a rule, is related to the duration of teaching experience and kinds of activities performed. Such development scheme allows teachers to expand their experience and take on additional responsibilities and roles (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015).

A number of European countries have promotion system that is based on multi-stage development scheme and some countries have flat development scheme where teachers have no opportunities to be promoted to higher stages of career path. Germany is the only country where two types of teacher career development exist but multi-stage career development is limited to teachers who are qualified to teach at upper secondary level. In European countries with multi-stage career development there is a specific promotion scale. For instance, in Latvia career development is based on five quality levels. Teachers can choose the quality level they want to be evaluated at. What is more, they can apply to higher quality level even if before that they were not evaluated for lower levels (Shewbridge et al., 2011).

Romania has 4 stages of teacher career development depending on the length of teaching experience:

1. Beginner teacher who has completed initial education and passed one of the two exams necessary to be fully qualified.

2. Teacher.

3. Teacher of the second teaching level.

4. Teacher of the first teaching level.

Teacher competence framework outlines competences for two higher teaching levels (European Commission, 2017).

In Montenegro career stages reflect the evolution of teachers' roles:

1. Trainee teacher that has no full qualification.

2. Teacher.



3. Mentor teacher.
4. Advisor teacher.
5. Senior advisor teacher (European Commission, 2013).

The highest stage is researcher teacher but one can acquire this stage without gradual promotion – it can be obtained if a teacher corresponds to all the required criteria for this stage.

Promotion to higher stage of career development is related to increase in salary in the majority of countries with multi-stage career development scheme. In Latvia, Ireland and France promoted teachers don't receive increase in salary but they get a special allowance in addition to salary depending on the level of promotion (but it concerns only higher career stages). For instance, in Latvia the salary is higher in case of promotion to quality stages 3 and higher. In Sweden, promotion usually presupposes considerable increase in salary. Requirements to promotion to higher career stages are based on 6 criteria: a) positive evaluation; b) length of professional experience; c) specific professional development; d) demonstration of specific competences; e) running or designing professional development courses; f) research activities (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018).

The first three criteria are applied in the majority of European countries with multi-stage career development scheme. Evaluation/appraisal can be performed as a planned evaluation procedure or organized specially for promotion. It should be stressed that the decision is seldom made by the evaluator, except European countries where heads of schools are entitled to make decisions concerning both promotion and evaluation. The majority of countries in Europe take into account the length of teaching experience to promote teachers to higher stages but it is not the key factor. Sweden is the only country where the required length of teaching experience is necessary for candidates to be promoted by the higher education authority. Teachers are supposed to have at least 4 years of experience in the profession. Nevertheless, school heads have right to set additional criteria for promotion and can promote only a limited number of teachers. Specific competences can be required such as experience of an expert teacher or teacher trainer. They can be demonstrated differently – via certification, test evaluation etc. (Santiago et al., 2012).

The fourth criterion is specific professional development and it is required in more than a half of European countries with multi-stage career development scheme. This requirement can be limited to annual participation in professional development events.

In 10 European countries with multi-stage career development scheme all these four criteria are necessary for promotion (namely in Poland, Romania, Croatia, France, Slovenia, Hungary, Serbia, Lithuania, Montenegro, and Latvia). Montenegro and Serbia also require participation in research projects or/and publishing of scientific papers to be promoted to higher career stages. Besides, in Serbia running or designing professional development courses is also a requirement for promotion to higher career stages (European Commission, 2013).

School administration plays an important role in promotion of teachers to higher career stages in 16 European countries with multi-stage career development scheme. In Lithuania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, England, Wales, the Netherlands, and Sweden, school administration is the only decision maker in teachers' promotion to higher career stages. The highest educational authorities take part in teachers' promotion to higher career stages directly or by means of other central bodies in 12 European countries with multi-stage career development scheme. In 6 European countries the highest educational authorities



make this decision by themselves – Estonia, Romania, Hungary, Cyprus, Malta, Germany (for teachers qualified to teach at upper secondary level). In 4 countries the decision is made by the highest educational authority in cooperation with school administration. Thus, in Ireland, the Department of Education and Skills appoints posts for promotion in schools and School Management Board holds the competition and appoints teachers to the posts. In Croatia, as a part of promotion procedure, the candidate to the post of a mentor teacher or advisor teacher is evaluated by the school head and a pedagogical expert from Teacher Training and Education Agency – the central body that ensures quality of general school system (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015).

In Slovenia, the head of the school nominates the candidate for the promotion to the Ministry of Education after the candidate's evaluation at the school level. Teachers can also apply directly to the Ministry. In this case they are evaluated by the head of the school and assembly of school teachers. In Montenegro, the head of the school usually recommends candidates for promotion to the commission created by the Ministry of Education. Teachers can also apply directly to the commission.

In three European countries local educational authorities and school administration are involved. Thus, in Poland the level of educational authority involved in the promotion depends on the stage of teacher's promotion. School teachers are promoted to "contract teachers" by the head of the school. They are promoted to "appointed teacher" by school management body. Regional bodies responsible for pedagogical supervision can approve promotion to "chartered teacher" (Nusche et al., 2014).

In Scotland, the decision concerning promotion is made by the interview panel that is made up of the school head and representatives of local educational authorities. If the decision is made about higher posts, parents are also involved.

In Albania, the school head can promote a teacher to higher career stage after approval of the local educational authority. The higher teacher promotion is in Poland, Serbia or Latvia, the more decision makers from more centralized bodies are involved.

Besides teaching, teachers can take on additional roles and responsibilities to expand their experience and increase motivation. It concerns all European countries except Turkey. Possibilities for extending teachers' roles are available both in multi-stage career development scheme and in single-stage development scheme. In the majority of European countries, teachers can become mentors for beginner teachers. It can be done within induction programs that are regulated by the highest educational bodies or within those designed at the school level. In most European countries, teachers can take on pedagogical or methodological responsibilities and roles outside classroom. These roles are diverse and can be related to:

- subjects and curricula (subject/curriculum coordinator; teacher researcher, ICT coordinator, school advisor, program coordinator, pedagogical coordinator, coordinator of working groups/committees);
- student support (special education coordinator, learning coach, remedial education coordinator etc.);
- school life: class teacher/tutor, project coordinator etc.;
- teacher professional development: coordinator, teacher trainer;
- evaluation: examination coordinator, advisor/inspector for other schools (European Commission, 2017).

In more than a half of all European countries, teachers can take on some administrative functions while still teaching, such as the head of the school or the deputy.



In European countries with multi-stage career development scheme some additional responsibilities are related to specific career stages. For example, in Bulgaria and Romania only teachers on the highest stage – chief teacher or teacher at teaching stage 1 – can become mentors. To become a mentor in Slovenia one has to be either advisor or counsellor (highest teaching stages) or to occupy career stage “Mentor” for at least 5 years. In Serbia, the teacher has to be promoted to one of the highest career stages – Higher Pedagogical Advisor or Senior Pedagogical Advisor – to conduct educational research at local, regional or national levels. In Hungary, a teacher with PhD can apply to five-year status of a researcher teacher. During this period, the minimum salary will be higher than the salary of Master Teacher, which is the highest stage of career development that does not require PhD (Lynch et al., 2016).

In a number of European countries with single-stage career development scheme some additional responsibilities can presuppose financial incentive, namely in Norway, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Czech Republic, Austria, Northern Ireland and German speaking community of Belgium.

Besides, in some European countries, teachers are ensured with career assistance, which is the provision of information, coaching and counseling for career promotion, for supporting teachers in planning and performing their advancement in teaching profession. In countries with a single-stage career development scheme, career assistance can be offered when teachers are involved in acquiring wider roles and responsibilities, in obtaining higher qualification level or advancing their official teacher status. Nevertheless, career assistance is rarely provided in European countries officially. Only three countries made it a legal requirement specially for teachers in service. They are France, Hungary and Austria. Thus, in France there are career mobility counsellors that provide assistance to teachers by means of individual meetings or online consulting and leaflets; teacher unions also provide information about teacher career – legal aspects, latest news, recommendations etc. In Hungary, there are Pedagogical Educational Centers that are regional branches of the highest education authority responsible for career assistance. Every January they survey teachers about the support they require and allocate counsellors who provide them with help in filling in their portfolios for promotion. Counsellors are Master Teachers specializing in teacher support and they spend a part of their working day providing teacher professional development and career assistance. In Austria, career assistance is provided by counselling services organized by local educational authorities. It is also a mission of teacher training colleges to organize career assistance programs (Lynch et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, the key element of teachers’ career promotion is teacher competence framework (TCF). In 2014, the European Council encouraged European countries to develop and implement comprehensive TCFs, which are to be designed by the highest education authorities. The framework provides cooperation, helps to advance the quality of teaching profession increasing its transparency and helping teachers to apply for promotion and develop their professional competences.

TCF is a set of statements about what a teacher as a professional must know, understand and be able to do. The framework can be used for different purposes such as defining individual needs in development, improving teaching skills etc. The majority of European countries have frameworks developed by the highest education authorities. Only 9 countries don’t have and express no intention to introduce TCF. They are Bulgaria, Lichtenstein, Malta, Iceland, German speaking community of Belgium, Finland, Cyprus, Croatia, and Greece (Bilbao et al., 2021).



All the existing TCFs define the fields of competences. Some of these fields are common for all the TCFs but can be described in a different manner. As a rule here belong psychological and pedagogical competences, subject knowledge and teaching approaches, organization of learning and assessment, innovative teaching approaches, communication with students, cooperation with colleagues, relationships with parents and other stakeholders.

In different countries, the description of competences can be more or less detailed. In 7 countries TCFs contain fields of competences but without detailed description of what they suggest, namely in Switzerland, Slovakia, Austria, Italy, Spain, Hungary and French speaking community of Belgium. In the latter, TCF contains 13 fields of competences without detailed description. Among them are efficient partnerships with educational establishments, colleagues, parents; mastering subject related teaching approaches; teamwork within the school; critical and independent evaluation of the past and future scientific knowledge; reflective approach to one's own professional activity and organization of one's own professional development (Caena, 2014).

Some countries have TCFs with detailed analysis of specific skills. Thus, in the Netherlands competences are classified into 7 different fields. For each there is a formulated aim, necessary skills and knowledge. For instance, the aim of subject-related competences and teaching approaches competences is to enable the teacher to create powerful educational environment using modern professional and organizational means so that every child could acquire cultural knowledge expected in the society. One of the specific skills mentioned for these competences is that teachers should have definite understanding of the extent to which children must master subject content and the ways they will cope with their work. One of the 9 elements of knowledge and understanding for this field is to know how the control of the language and mastering a language influence studying and how to take it into account in practice (Worth, 2017).

In 4 countries the TCFs have competences described for different stages of teacher career. In Estonia, TCF outlines necessary competences for "teacher", and additional competences for higher stages of career development. Thus, "senior teacher" has to support the development of other teachers and contribute to the development of teaching methodologies in his/her own school. "Master teacher" has to take part in the development of creative activities in his/her own school and beyond and work in fruitful cooperation with higher educational institutions (Caena, 2014).

In Latvia, TCF is directly related to the Procedure for Assessing the Quality of Teachers' Professional Activity, and defines competences necessary for each of the 5 quality levels. For instance, teachers in level 4, in addition to competences of the first three levels, also have to be actively involved in implementation of municipal plan of school development and in sharing their methodological experience. In level 5, teachers also have to be actively involved in national strategy of education development and share their experience.

TCF can be developed specifically for some purpose, e.g. accreditation of educational programs for beginner teachers; they can also have wider application as a reference tool for all stakeholders – education decision-makers, initial teacher training institutions, professional development providers, mentors and evaluators as well as future teachers and teachers in service. TCFs can also be used as reference tool for different stages of teacher career development (Chrappán et al., 2020).

Information in TCFs is classified according to 4 categories:



1. Initial teacher education – defining learning outcomes that have to be achieved at the end of the initial teacher education.
2. Introduction to the profession: defining criteria for accreditation/licensing of teachers, selection of teachers for some post; evaluation of teacher competences at the end of induction program.
3. Continuous professional development: designing professional development programs, preparation of individual teacher professional development plans.
4. Other: criteria of teacher evaluation and appraisal; teacher promotion; disciplinary procedures; cases of serious misconduct (Bilbao et al., 2021).

More than a third of all European countries have TCFs and use them throughout the entire teacher career either in the process of initial teacher education or professional development (Belgium (Flemish community), Germany, Estonia, France, Italy, Lithuania, Austria, Romania, the United Kingdom, and Turkey).

Approximately a half of the European countries that have TCFs use them throughout teacher career for initial education rather than for their professional development (Belgium (French community), The Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, and Norway) (Chrappán et al., 2020).

In 3 countries TCFs are used throughout teacher career only for their professional development (Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia).

TCFs can also be used for advancement of teachers' careers, for appraisal and disciplinary measures. Thus, in Estonia TCF, which is called Professional Standards for Teachers, is used to promote teachers to higher career stages. In France, appraisal of teachers is conducted in conformity with TCF. In Scotland, if a teacher is involved in a disciplinary procedure or is suspected of serious disciplinary misconduct, he/she is evaluated on standards outlined in General Teaching Council for Scotland Code of Professionalism and Conduct.

CONCLUSIONS

Teacher career development is the promotion to higher stages of career path that is carried out strictly in accordance with a definite career development scheme that presupposes a set of responsibilities and roles for each stage of teacher development. The conducted research testifies about advantages of multi-level career development that offers much more opportunities for teacher promotion than a single-level career development.

In most European countries, the promotion is only possible if the TCF is taken into account in terms of teachers' consistency with competences, aims, skills and knowledge outlined for each competence. In the result of the thorough study we have made a conclusion that TCF should have a detailed description of competences which makes the promotion transparent and fair. Besides, as information in TCFs concerns not only career promotion but also initial teacher education, introduction to the profession, continuous professional development, criteria of teacher evaluation and appraisal, they can have multi-faceted application.

It has been defined that decision concerning teacher promotion should be made in cooperation of school administration and higher educational authority. Of utmost importance is the experience of some European countries related to ensuring career assistance to teachers in terms of information provision, coaching and counseling.

In our further research, we consider it necessary to study in detail the TCFs of European countries that have detailed description of competences, such as the Netherlands, Estonia, and Latvia.



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