

About the Differences of Teachers' Self-perceptions to the Statements of Social Competence

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In this study, 600 school teachers completed a 116-item questionnaire consisting of questions regarding classroom communication as well as a general list of social skills. The aim of the study was to compare the self-perceptions, given by the teachers of art and the teachers of science and the male and female teachers to the statements of social competence. In comparing the mean values, given by teachers to the statements, it was revealed that the teachers of art ($N = 246$) think more about their communications and they are more "open" to communication with others, while at the same time, the teachers of science ($N = 135$) are more "straight-forward" in their communication. In the case of four statements of the dimension teachers' caring in the classroom and in the case of two statements of the dimension support to the students' autonomy, the art teachers assessed themselves higher than the science teachers. The science teachers assessed themselves higher than the art teachers in the case of the two statements which expressed objectivity in disputing and feedbacks; in the case of two statements of the dimension teacher's fairness and honesty, and in the case of statement consistent stressing of important elements in one's presentation. In comparing the self-perceptions of the mean values of female ($N = 502$) and male ($N = 51$) teachers, it became evident that the female teachers' self-perceptions are higher in the case of fourteen statements. Female teachers' assess more highly their emotional skills and the ways of behavior expressing caring for their students in the classroom. The male teachers assess themselves as more assertive, "stronger" and more objective in the feedback. The revealed differences deserve further research to clarify whether and how much such self-perceptions of teachers are expressed in their real behaviors.

Keywords: teachers' characteristics, self-perceptions, social competence, social skills, art and science teachers, male and female teachers

Theoretical Background

Social competence as a successful skill of coping with other individuals in social relations is necessary to all the people, and without doubt, it can be said that the skills to communicate with an objective and respect the others is especially important to the people who in their everyday work communicate much, like, for example, the teachers.

When treating social competence at a theoretical level, it has been found that most researchers have a common opinion that social competence is multidimensional and that it can be divided into the following categories: social

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intelligence dimensions; interpersonal personality trait dimensions; social skill dimension and social self-regulation dimensions (Schneider, Ackerman, & Kenfer, 1996). The concept of social competence has been widely discussed, and as a term, it has many definitions, out of which many coincide (Odom & McConnell, 1992; McFall, 1982), described social competence as “a general evaluative term referring to the quality or adequacy of a person’s overall performance in a particular task” and social skills as “specific abilities required to perform competently at a task” (p. 12). Social competence is an evaluative term based on judgments (given certain criteria) that a person has performed a task adequately. These judgments may be based on opinions of significant others comparisons to explicit criteria, or comparisons to some normative sample (Gresham, 1986, p. 146).

Components of interpersonal or social competence¹ include the acknowledgement of appropriateness and effectiveness (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989, p. 71), the ability or capacity to enact goal-directed behavior (Parks, 1994) and competent use of different communicational skills in different types of human relations (Lane, 2010). A model of interpersonal competence is presented consisting of three components: motivation, knowledge and skill in interaction for both participants in a conversation. The model assumed that the additive combination of these components for both interactants would predict competent outcomes, specifically, communication satisfaction, perceived confirmation and conversational appropriateness and effectiveness (Spitzberg, 1991).

Several treatments consider emotional competence, which has also been named “emotional intelligence”, as an essential part of social competence. Construct of emotional intelligence involves: perception of emotions, use of emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding of emotions and management of emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Brackett & Katulak, 2006). SEC (teachers’ social and emotional competence) involved emotional, cognitive and behavioral competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management and relationship management (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Jennings and Greenberg (2009, p. 493) described teacher’s SEC competencies as an important contributor to the development of supportive teacher-student relationships. A teacher who recognizes an individual student’s emotions, understands the cognitive appraisals that may be associated with these emotions, and how these cognitions and emotions motivate the student’s behavior can effectively respond to the student’s individual needs. Zwaans, Ten Dam, and Volman (2006, pp. 184-185) presented the treatment of social competence in which social competence was viewed as a multidimensional structure the component parts of which were intra-personal, inter-personal and societal dimension. Such components like attitude, knowledge, reflection (reflection as critical insight into one’s own wishes, abilities and motives) and skills belong to each of them. For example, the intra-personal dimension comprises the attitudinal aspects of self-confidence and self-respect and the inter-personal dimension comprises attitudinal aspects that regard social values, such as respecting other people and being willing to take responsibility for relations with others. The skills aspects can be summarized as social problem-solving skills, social-communicative skills and self-regulation skills.

Although there are many surveys of the research of the students’ social competence as a multidimensional construct, it cannot be said about teachers. However, we can speak about multiple research of one component of social competence—the social-communicative skills, the contents of which during several decades has been the aim to study the impact of the teachers separate ways of behavior on the students’ cognitive and affective learning. L. McCroskey, Richmond, and J. McCroskey (2002) said that most of the research regarding the relationships of teacher communication behaviors with learning outcomes has followed the “process/product”

¹ In this article, the terms interpersonal and social are used interchangeably.

research model, according to which the elements in the communication behavior of teachers are identified and measured and these are related to various outcomes of instruction. Authors named that the most studied teacher behaviors have been nonverbal immediacy, clarity, socio-communicative style, and use of power and influence in the classroom (p. 387). De Vito (1990) presented a model of "teaching as interpersonal competence" and articulated ten communication skills essential to effective teaching: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, equality, confidence, immediacy, expressiveness, other orientation and interaction management. Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, and James (2002, p. 117) mentioned that effective teachers, encouraging active student participation and making relevant assignments were skillful in using questions. They are fair in assessment and grading procedures. They are caring. They are flexible in their abilities to be dominant and cooperative, and empathetic yet in control. They have strong interpersonal skills, handle disciplines through prevention, and promote a classroom climate of respect and rapport that reflects their commitments to students and their learning.

Communication is treated as a socio-communicative style, which is typically measured by breaking down the construct into two separate dimensions recognized as assertiveness and responsiveness. Responsive communicators are recognized as empathetic, friendly, gentle and warm. An assertive individual is someone willing to take a stand and use effective and appropriate communication to advocate or defend his or her position (Wanzer & McCroskey, 1998, pp. 44-45). Emmer, Evertson, and Worsham (2003) said that teachers could communicate appropriate levels of dominance by exhibiting assertive behaviors. The authors describe the teacher's assertive behaviors in the classroom as assertive body language, speaking clearly, not ignoring an inappropriate behavior by the students.

Several authors (Noddings, 1992; Goldstein, 2002; Wentzel, 2003) have considered the teachers' caring as a complex of behaviors expressing positive attitude to the student. Noddings (1992) suggested that the caring teachers' model of caring behavior to their students, engaged students in dialogues that led to mutual understanding and perspective taking and expect as well as encourage students to do the best they can given their abilities. Goldstein (2002) spoke of teacher caring as an attitude to the student which was expressed by being nurturing, supportive, nice, inclusive, responsive and kind.

Clarity, as the teacher's understandable and clear presentation of the material has been considered as one of the most significant effective teacher communication behaviors by many authors (Rosenshine & Furst, 1971; Doyle, 1986; Sidelinger & McCroskey, 1997).

The teacher's support of the student's autonomy and allowing students to make choices are also important principles in teaching (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999; Wong, Wiest, & Cusick, 2002).

The Objective of the Present Study

The authors of the present study have the opinion that to develop teacher training curricula, it is necessary to study, among other aspects of the teacher's social competence, also the influencing factors which in the traditional studies of the teacher have been given less attention but which can influence the teacher's behavior and are resulting from the habits and the cultural context of society as a whole and the circles of teacher. Such influencing factors are, for example, the teacher's gender or the traditions of teaching a subject which are carried further on also influencing the teacher's communication. Certainly, there are several emerging questions. For example, when it is revealed in the study that the certain aspects of the behavior of the teachers of science in the classroom are different from the ways of behavior of the teachers of art, such difference may be caused

by several reasons. Beside the “transfer” of the above mentioned traditions (which may also be present in teacher training taking place at university faculties) the differences in the teachers' groups may also be caused by the fact that the students who select either arts or sciences during teacher pre-service training, proceeding from the peculiarities of their personality (attitudes, values, beliefs, etc.).

Proceeding from the above-said, the aim of the present research was to study the differences of self-perceptions, given by the teachers of art and the teachers of science and the male and female teachers to the statements of social competence. The appearance of differences, on the one hand, would raise a question of the sources of their reasons which would direct to the further study of the present theme. On the other hand, the appeared differences would raise a question—how to consider them both in pre-service and in-service teaching.

Design and Method

Sample

The questionnaire was mailed to 1,708 teachers from different Estonian schools. The full database of the teacher training centre at the University of Tartu in Estonia was used to find the respondents. The ruling principle in selecting the sample was to canvas as wide and representative a sampling of all the schools in Estonia as possible. The respondents were asked to return the questionnaire electronically in the e-form within one week. The total number of respondents was 600. Eight subjects with missing values were deleted; thus, 592 subjects remained for further analysis. There were 92 respondents of primary school teachers, 195 were elementary school teachers, 44 were primary and elementary school teachers, 88 were high school teachers, 122 were elementary and high school teachers and 51 teachers were in all the three educational levels. Among the respondents, 502 were female and 51 were male; 39 subjects were unclassified. There were 246 art teachers and 135 science teachers.

The Instrument

A questionnaire was composed by considering the list of social skills that describe classroom behaviors among teachers (R. Marzano & J. Marzano, 2003; Krips, 2008), as well as the list of social skills that describe potential communication that teachers might have with parents, colleagues and school administrations. In selecting the statements of the questionnaire, the authors of the article relied on the structure of social competence presented by Zwaans, Ten Dam, and Volman (2006) using their idea about intra-personal and inter-personal dimensions of social competence which contain such components as attitude, reflection and skills. In both given dimensions, the component knowledge was neglected. Also, the full societal dimension of social competence was neglected. One of the reasons for such a selection was the authors' aim to study the differences on self-perceptions of the teachers with different characteristic features, giving the main stress to the teacher's social skills as the ways of activity in interaction. The second reason why the societal dimension and the component knowledge of intrapersonal and interpersonal dimension of social competence were left out of the questionnaire was the attempt to avoid making the number of the questionnaire's statements to big.

Then, the examples of the questionnaire's statements are presented.

The example of the statements described the attitudes as a part of the intra-personal dimension of social competence, the statement characterizing self-confidence: Consistency of behavior in achieving one's goals and the statement characterizing self-respect: “Positive self-image: I am efficient and valuable. The example of the statements describing reflection as a part of the intra-personal dimension of social competence: Analyzing communication situations ‘afterwards’”. The example of the statements describing the social-communicative

skills as part of the intra-personal dimension of social competence: "Putting the emotions into words for oneself".

The example of the statements describing the attitudes as a part of the inter-personal dimension of social competence: "Trying to proceed from the other person's interests and needs in communication". The example of the statements describing the reflection as a part of the inter-personal dimension of social competence: "Paying attention to details (the other person's facial expression, movements) in communication".

In the questionnaire, the statements describing social-communicative skills as a part of the inter-personal dimension of social competence were divided into two groups: the teacher's social-communicative skills in the communications with parents, colleagues and school administration and the teacher's social-communicative skills in the classroom. The example of the statements belongs to the first group: "Demonstrating the communication partner that he/she is listened to with producing verbal sounds: Yes, I see, etc.". Also, the statements which can be called emotional skills are added: "Speaking of the other person's emotions which can be seen".

In selecting the statements belonging to the sphere of teacher's social-communicative skills in the classroom, the authors of the present article relied to a great extent on the following dimensions of the teacher's communication in the classroom as caring, support to the student's autonomy, clarity and assertiveness, studied by Krips (2008). Further, the examples of the questionnaire's statements from the given dimension will be presented.

(1) Caring: Speaking calmly, kindly with a pleasant tone of voice;

(2) Support to the student's autonomy (offering a choice and the expression of tolerance): Asking the students whether there are things they would like to change in the course of study;

(3) Clarity: Consistent stressing of important elements in one's presentation when teaching;

(4) Assertiveness: Telling the students clearly and firmly what should be and should not be done.

In addition to the above-said, some statements, belonging to such a dimension like fairness and honesty of the teacher's communication in the classroom were included in the questionnaire: "Exact explanation of one's assessment requirements to students; fulfilling the promises given to students".

Also, the statements describing the teacher's emotional skills in the classroom were added: "Speaking about one's mood (emotions) to the students; Noticing the students' emotions".

Finally, the statements describing the teacher's "strong" and aggressive behavior were added: "Speaking to the student, who purposefully violates order, in a superior manner, to stress the teacher's power and demonstrating one's contempt to the student purposefully violating order, non-verbally to influence him/her".

As a result, the questionnaire consisting of 116 items was composed, each estimated on a 6-stage Likert-type scale ranging from "never" to "always".

The Analysis

In analyzing the results, the data processing package SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 13 was used. The reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of the questionnaire (116 items) was 0.97. For finding the differences between the self-perceptions depending on the subject taught and teachers' gender, the mean values of statements were compared using *t*-test.

Results and Discussion

Comparison of Self-perceptions of the Art and Science Teachers Given to the Statements of Social Competence

In comparing the mean values of self-perceptions of art ($N = 246$) and science teachers ($N = 135$), there were 14 statistically significant differences (see Table 1). In the case of eight statements arts teachers assessed

themselves higher than science teachers and in the case of six statements science teachers assess themselves higher than arts teachers. First, we present the statements in the case of which art teachers assess themselves higher than science teachers. Concerning the intra-personal dimension of social competence, there was only one statistically significant difference and it was in the case of the statement expressing reflection: "Analyzing communication situations 'afterwards'" (4.65 and 4.41, $p \leq 0.05$). In the case of the inter-personal dimension of social competence, the art teachers assessed themselves higher in the seven statements, one of them: "Ready for communication" (4.95 and 4.69, $p \leq 0.05$) expresses the attitude to the communication partner and six statements belong to the sphere of teachers' communicative skills in the classroom in the case of which the arts teachers assess themselves higher than science teachers in the four statements which belong to the dimension caring: "Being delighted together with the student if the student's result is good" (5.56 and 5.39, $p = 0.05$); "Constant use of the students' names" (5.39 and 5.04, $p = 0.00$); "Creating eye-contact with students" (5.60 and 5.32, $p = 0.00$); "Encouraging the student who is answering the questions with a nod" (5.67 and 5.47, $p = 0.00$) and the two statements which belong to the dimension support to the student's autonomy: "The attempt to give the students an opportunity to make choices in their learning process" (4.61 and 4.38, $p \leq 0.05$) and "Asking from the students whether there are things they would like to change in the learning process" (4.68 and 4.43, $p \leq 0.05$).

Table 1

The Mean Values of Self-perceptions of Art and Science Teachers

Statements	Arts $N = 246$		Science $N = 135$		p
	M	SD	M	SD	
Telling the things you think about	4.47	0.94	4.79	0.88	0.00
Relying only on facts when criticizing	4.54	0.99	4.76	1.02	0.04
Relying only on facts when disputing	4.39	0.95	4.63	0.89	0.01
Analyzing communication situations "afterwards"	4.65	1.12	4.41	1.16	0.04
Ready for communication	4.95	0.99	4.69	1.11	0.02
Being delighted together with the student if the student's result is good	5.56	0.75	5.39	0.82	0.05
Constant use of the students' names	5.39	0.99	5.04	1.32	0.00
Creating eye-contact with students	5.60	0.74	5.32	0.93	0.00
Encouraging the student who is answering the questions with a nod	5.67	0.66	5.47	0.74	0.00
Consistent stressing of important elements in one's presentation	5.19	0.76	5.40	0.73	0.00
Exact explanation of one's assessment requirements to students	5.22	0.80	5.41	0.77	0.02
The attempt to give the students an opportunity to make choices in their learning process	4.61	0.97	4.38	1.04	0.03
Keeping the students' secrets from other teachers	5.39	0.92	5.59	0.68	0.03
Asking from the students whether there are things they would like to change in their learning process	4.68	0.98	4.43	1.13	0.03

These six statements in the case of which science teachers assessed themselves higher than art teachers all belong to the inter-personal dimension of social competence. One of them expresses attitude, "Telling the things you think about" (4.79 and 4.47, $p = 0.00$) which refers to the possibility that science teachers are more "straightforward" in social interactions. Five statements belonged to the sphere of social-communicative skills. The higher mean value of the self-perceptions of science teachers in the case of the statements, "Relying only on facts when criticizing" (4.76 and 4.54, $p \leq 0.05$) and "Relying only on facts when disputing" (4.63 and 4.39, $p \leq 0.05$) may mean that they are more "oriented" to objectivity in social interactions. In the case of the

statements dealing with the teachers' behaviors in the classroom, the mean values of the self-perceptions of science teachers were higher in the dimension fairness and honesty statements, "Exact explanation of one's assessment requirements to students" (5.41 and 5.22, $p \leq 0.05$); "Keeping the students' secrets from other teachers" (5.59 and 5.39, $p \leq 0.05$), but also in the case of the statement which belongs to the dimension clarity, "Consistent stressing of important elements in one's presentation" (5.40 and 5.19, $p = 0.00$).

The results of the present study obtained in the comparison of the self-perceptions of art and science teachers are primarily interesting, because the differences between art and science teachers in their social skills in the classroom have not been studied much. One of the examples can be the study by Erdle and Murray (1986, pp. 115-127) where the trained observers assess the frequency of 95 classroom teaching behaviors shown by 124 teachers in art and humanities, the social science and the natural science faculties. The obtained results show that humanity instructors scored significantly higher than their natural science colleagues on the factor groups defining: rapport, interest, interaction and expression, which meant that humanity teachers' exhibit interpersonally oriented actions more frequently than natural science teachers.

To sum up, on the basis of the obtained results, it is possible to say that the art teachers think more about their communication and they are more "open" to communicate with others and the science teachers are more "straightforward" in their communication and try to achieve objectivity both in the feedback and discussions. When concerns the communication with students in the classroom, it may be thought that art teachers express more caring of their students, but the science teachers are more fair and honest and more stressing important aspects in teaching.

It is important to mention that in the present research, the teachers' self-perceptions were studied but not their real behaviors. This is the reason why only the suppositions can be made about the real behaviors of those groups of teachers and these problems definitely deserve further study using other methods.

Comparison of Self-perceptions of the Statements Concerning Social Competence Given by Male and Female Teachers

By comparing the mean values of self-perceptions of female teachers ($N = 502$) and male teachers ($N = 51$), we found 14 statistically significant differences (see Table 2) where the self-perceptions of female teachers were higher than the male teachers'. It becomes evident that female teachers assess their emotional skills more highly than male teachers, "Putting the emotions into words for oneself" (4.30 and 3.96, $p \leq 0.05$); "Speaking about one's mood (emotions) to the students" (3.99 and 3.27, $p = 0.00$) and "Noticing the students' emotions" (5.06 and 4.67, $p = 0.00$). According to their assessment, the female teachers try much more to keep good relations and be friendly, "Keeping good relations in any case" (4.36 and 3.98, $p \leq 0.05$); "Trying to be friendly in communication" (5.17 and 4.88, $p \leq 0.05$). Also, they try to help others to communicate with themselves: "Encouraging the communication partner with nodding and facial expressions" (5.29 and 4.96, $p = 0.00$); "Always creating eye-contact with the communication partner" (5.22 and 4.87, $p = 0.00$), "Demonstrating the communication partner that he/she is listened to with producing verbal sounds: yes, I see, etc." (4.93 and 4.25, $p = 0.00$).

In the case of the statements dealing with the teachers' behaviors in the classroom, the mean values of the self-perceptions of female teachers were higher in the dimension caring: "Speaking calmly, kindly, with pleasant tone of voice" (4.90 and 4.60, $p \leq 0.05$); "Smiling often to students" (4.85 and 4.49, $p \leq 0.05$); "Being delighted together with the student if the student result is good" (5.56 and 5.33, $p \leq 0.05$); "Encouraging the

student who is answering the questions with the nod" (5.37 and 5.00, $p = 0.00$) and "Recognition and praise of the student" (5.52 and 5.27, $p = 0.00$).

Table 2

The Mean Values of Self-perceptions of Female Teachers and Male Teachers

Statements	Female $N = 502$		Male $N = 51$		p
	M	SD	M	SD	
Keeping good relations in any case	4.36	1.15	3.98	1.27	0.02
Trying to be friendly in communication	5.17	0.87	4.88	0.98	0.02
Always creating eye-contact with the communication partner	5.22	0.90	4.87	1.06	0.00
Encouraging the communication partner with nodding and facial expressions	5.29	0.83	4.96	0.89	0.00
Relying only on facts when criticizing	4.54	1.04	4.84	0.97	0.04
Firm and clear behavior in protecting one's rights	4.56	1.00	4.94	0.87	0.00
Putting the emotions into words for oneself	4.30	1.16	3.96	1.25	0.05
Demonstrating the communication partner that he/she is listened to with producing verbal sounds: yes, I see, etc.	4.93	1.12	4.25	1.06	0.00
Speaking calmly, kindly, with pleasant tone of voice	4.90	0.84	4.60	0.78	0.02
Smiling often to students	4.85	0.99	4.49	1.08	0.02
Being delighted together with the student if the student's result is good	5.56	0.75	5.33	0.74	0.04
Recognition and praise of the student	5.52	0.68	5.27	0.64	0.00
Encouraging the student who is answering the questions with the nod	5.37	0.81	5.00	0.85	0.00
The attempt to give the students an opportunity to make choices in their learning process	4.56	0.96	4.26	1.35	0.04
Speaking about one's mood (emotions) to the students	3.99	1.20	3.27	1.27	0.00
Noticing the students' emotions	5.06	0.79	4.67	0.86	0.00
Speaking to the student, who purposefully violates order, in a superior manner, to stress the teacher's power	3.16	1.25	3.80	1.28	0.00
Demonstrating one's contempt to the student purposefully violating order, non-verbally to influence him/her	2.69	1.35	3.18	1.32	0.02

Also, the self-perceptions of female teachers are higher than the self-perceptions of male teachers in the case of the statement, "The attempt to give the students an opportunity to make choices in their learning process" (4.56 and 4.26, $p \leq 0.05$).

The male teachers assess themselves more highly in comparison with the female teachers in their self-perceptions to four statements, "Relying only on facts when criticizing" (4.84 and 4.54, $p \leq 0.05$) and "Firm and clear behavior in protecting one's rights" (4.94 and 4.56, $p = 0.00$); "Speaking to the student, who purposefully violates order, in a superior manner, to stress the teachers, power" (3.80 and 3.16, $p = 0.00$) and "Demonstrating one's contempt to the student purposefully violating order, non-verbally to influence him/her" (3.18 and 2.69, $p \leq 0.05$).

According to the obtained results, the female teachers assess themselves more highly concerning emotional skills and the ways of behavior in the classroom expressing care of students and they attempt more to give the students an opportunity to make choices in their learning process. The male teachers assess themselves more assertive, more "stronger" and more objective in the feedback.

There were very few studies which dealt with the differences caused by the gender of teachers (King, 2000; Skelton, 2001). Consequently, Einarsson and Granström (2002, p. 118) mentioned that most research

concerning classroom interaction had focused on pupil gender but neglected the gender of teachers. Surprisingly, teachers are treated as if they were gender-less. Also, Martino and Frank (2006, p. 17) said that relatively little research in the field of teacher education had addressed the specific impact of gendered subjectivities on male teachers' pedagogical practices, particularly at the secondary school level. However, there were several studies (Roulston & Mills, 2000; Foster & Newman, 2005), in which it was found that male teachers felt pressured to perform within the parameters of a hegemonic masculinity and thereby they tended to behave according to the traditional stereotypes.

Speaking of stereotypes and proceeding from the fact that stereotypes were beliefs about the characteristics, attributes and behaviors of members of certain groups (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996, p. 240), it should be mentioned that there were widely-spread beliefs about the man's stereotype according to which the man's masculinity was a certain collection of features which could not change and should not be changed and it meant that the muscular man must continue to be aggressive, free of emotions, dominating, making achievements and career according to the opinion accepted in society (Connell, 1995; Petersen, 1998). Also, Martino and Frank (2006) found that many of the teachers in their study viewed gender differences as fixed and unchangeable, and their interactions with their students reflected these stereotypes.

It is possible to think that the differences in the self-perceptions of male and female teachers in the present study mentioned above may be caused by the influence of the stereotypes spread in society which express the image of the role of the "strong man". Without doubt, also these suppositions need further study with the purpose of revealing the possible impact of gender stereotypes, present in society, on the teachers' behaviors.

Conclusions

In comparing the self-perceptions of art and science teachers, very interesting results were obtained. These results need further study whether the teachers' self-perceptions (as it is said afterwards) coincide with their real behavior. Relying on the results of the present study, it would be important in the future to study whether it is more characteristic of art teachers to reflect their ways of behavior more and be caring and giving opportunities of choice to their students. It is also essential to learn whether the science teachers are more "straightforward" in social interactions, more objective in disputes and giving feedback, being more exact in clarifying their assessment requirements and more consistent in stressing important aspects in teaching. If these tendencies are evident in the teachers' behaviors, they could be considered in pre-service teaching.

It may be assumed that the differences of the self-perceptions, given by female and male teachers to the statements of social competence, refer to the impact of widely spread gender stereotypes on the teachers' behaviors which should be checked in the following studies. Becoming aware of the presence of differences in the skills, attitudes and values of male and female teachers would help avoid the attitudes, sometimes present in the teacher training, that the teacher is a genderless being which would also mean a certain differentiated approach in training teachers.

Speaking of the limitations of the present study, it should be said that certain subjectivity may exist in the responses given by teachers to the statements because of the reasons which were also mentioned by Good and Brophy (1991). They remarked that the teachers might have interactions with many different students during a single day and teachers might usually be not aware or not able to describe or remember what happened in these interactions with their students.

In conclusion, it can be said that the objective of the article is to reveal whether and what differences in the

self-perceptions to the statements of social competence were present when the art and science teachers and female and male teachers responded to the questionnaire. The obtained results will definitely need further study with several different research methods. The obtained differences between the self-perceptions of the given groups of teachers, concerning the statements in different spheres of social competence, refer to the possibility that teachers' social competence is influenced by certain factors of society and groups, such as the cultural-specific understanding of the man's masculine behaviors or the beliefs common to certain subject teachers as how to teach this very subject.

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