Article

Parents' and Teachers' Expectations of School Social Workers

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Abstract: In parallel with research focusing on the effectiveness of students and teachers, the content and impact of school social work have come to the forefront of international research discourses. In the Hungarian public education system, teachers had previously carried out social assistance tasks, but in September 2018, an external model of kindergarten and school social assistance activities was introduced, giving structure to the already existing work. No empirical studies have been performed on the results of implementation so far. Regarding this topic, our research question is, in what areas do parents and teachers expect the most from school social workers? To get answers, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 school social workers. During the analyses, we focused on the relationships established between parents and teachers, and also analysed partners' expectations. One of the most important results of the research is that, with social workers in mind, we created systematised parent and pedagogical types. We compared the services required by parents and teachers with the social assistance reform concept. We point out that while the Social Assistance Regulation empowers these professionals primarily for preventive, group and community activities, parents and teachers alike expect individual-focused assistance.

Keywords: public education; school social work; external model

1. Introduction

As a result of the social and economic changes of recent decades, the way of life and the role of families in education have changed in several countries. It is an internationally observed phenomenon that the number of people living in the classical family model has decreased, the number of families with risk factors has increased, and traditional parenting activities have weakened (e.g., housework, leisure activities, conversations, storytelling) (Rice and Tan 2017; Bastaits et al. 2018). The functional crisis phenomena of the traditional-conservative family model (Magyar and Hegedűs 2006; Bastaits et al. 2018) also contribute to the increasing problems with children entering the community (e.g., non-compliance with the rules of social interactions, aggression, difficulties with social integration, hyperactivity and attention deficit). Based on the feedback from those working in public educational institutions, in several cases, the parents' educational skills and communication tools are not adequate, and there is a lack of effort to deal with conflicts constructively (Ayalon and Flasher 2004; Veinberg 2015; Emmi 2018). This dilemma faced by parents can be alleviated by school social workers, since they can mediate conflicts between parents and teachers (Mo and Chan 2022).

In Hungary, society also expects schools to perform socialisation tasks in order to fill in and correct the educational shortcomings within the family unit. However, the effective treatment of educational problems requires new pedagogical methods from teachers. In addition, they need to take preventive measures for which they have neither enough time nor adequate qualifications and skill sets. These challenges necessitated the introduction of programs supporting pedagogy, such as school social work, as social professionals can help children, parents, and teachers to prevent, reduce, and address serious problems (EFOP-3.2.9-16 2016). These problems, though not related to school, heavily affect the

effectiveness of pedagogical work, as well as the academic career of each student. In the present study, we focus on school support staff for families in primary and secondary education institutions.

2. Theoretical Framework

One of the primary conditions influencing the atmosphere and effectiveness of schools is that teachers and school support staff work together to contribute to student well-being and successful academic progress (Magyar and Hegedűs 2006; Kállai 2016). However, the data show significant differences in the number of school assistants employed in international practice. For example, more than two educational support personnel are employed per ten teachers in one province of Canada (Alberta), with that ratio also reflected in Sweden, Iceland, New Zealand and Chile. In contrast, Austria, Belgium, Italy and Colombia, employ less than one assistant for every twenty teachers. In England in 2018, there were fewer supporting professionals than in 2013 (OECD 2019). Though Hungary's rates are still below the OECD average (0.8) (Table 1), the number of professionals supporting pedagogical work has increased significantly in recent years (highlighting the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Slovakia).

Table 1. Number of employed professionals supporting pedagogical work per ten teachers (ISCED 2), 2018.

Less than 1.0 Employees	1.0 to 2.0 Employees	More than 2 Employees
Lithuania: 0.9	France: 1.7	New Zealand: 2.9
Mexico: 0.8	Norway: 1.7	Iceland: 2.5
Slovak Republic: 0.7	England (UK): 1.5	Alberta (Canada): 2.2
Slovenia: 0.7	Denmark: 1.5	Sweden: 2.2
Hungary: 0.6	Kazakhstan: 1.5	Chile: 2.1
Turkey: 0.5	Finland: 1.5	
Spain: 0.5	United States: 1.4	
Austria: 0.4	Latvia: 1.3	
Colombia: 0.4	Israel: 1.2	
Belgium (Fl.): 0.3	Czech Republic: 1.1	
Belgium: 0.3	Netherlands: 1.1	
Italy: 0.3	Korea: 1.1	
	Estonia: 1.0	
	Portugal: 1.0	
	Japan: 1.0	

Source: own edition based on OECD (2019). OECD (2019) systematised the data based on the following sources: OECD. 2019. *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*. Paris: OECD Publishing, Table I.3.74.; OECD. 2014. *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*. Paris: OECD Publishing, Table 2.18. Note: Pedagogical support staff includes teacher aides and non-teaching professionals who support the work of teachers (OECD 2019).

Furthermore, within pedagogical support staff, we see a growing trend of school social workers worldwide. With this increase of workers, several models of school social work have become widespread. In some countries, one model has social workers as an integral part of school staff, making them members of a multidisciplinary team within the institution (e.g., in Finland, Sweden and the United States). In another model, the involvement of external actors is typical. In Hong Kong, social services are provided through non-governmental organisations, and in places like Germany, cross-sectoral cooperation is established between the child welfare institutions and the school system (Huxtable 2013). As regards Hungary, starting in 2018, a model that provides external social assistance in kindergartens, schools and dormitories through the child welfare care system was implemented. The target groups of school support staff include children and their families, and teachers and other employees of public educational institutions. The regulation prescribes one kindergarten and school social worker per 1000 children registered in public

education institutions. Its aim is to implement primarily preventive measures by using individual, group and community social work (Regulation No. 15/1998 (IV. 30.)).

A review of the international literature shows that John J. Alderson (1972) distinguished four models of school social work: (1) the traditional-clinical model; (2) the school change model; (3) the community school model, and (4) the social interaction model. In recent decades, however, postmodern models of school social work have also emerged, such as evidence-based practice (Raines 2004, 2008), whose expectations are consistent with components of welfare system modernization (Kozma 2008). The National School Social Work Practice Model emphasizes an ecological orientation in school, family, and community settings and focuses on evidence-based practices (Frey et al. 2013). However, in many cases, the application of universal models is not implemented in school social work practice due to factors including time spent in the field, level of education, and the number of schools served (Kelly et al. 2015; Thompson et al. 2019).

Since we have addressed the overarching condition of school social work worldwide, we will now focus on the tasks to be performed in schools specifically in Hungary. As far as individual action is concerned, direct and educational counselling, provision of information, consultation, assistance in informal administration, mediation to access various services and crisis intervention are all steps to be taken in Hungarian schools. Professionals in Hungarian schools can also mediate conflicts between students, teachers and parents participating in the related discussions. Once a problem is identified, the school social worker can render individual assistance. This assistance can also be requested by the pupil, parent, teacher, other professionals working in the institution, and an external institution (e.g., family and child welfare centre, family and child welfare service) (Csillag and Palotás 2019).

The primary area of school social support activity is working with groups because the decision-makers assume that this is the most effective way to implement primary prevention (EFOP-3.2.9-16 2016; Roth 2019). Group activities included organising and leading parent groups, observing children in group situations, sociometric surveys in classrooms, supporting problem-solving in student communities, participating in career guidance group sessions, and group sessions for prevention, education, sensitisation, and skill and community development (Csillag and Palotás 2019). The activities listed support the fulfilment of the primary educational tasks of public educational institutions (Csillag and Palotás 2019; Roth 2019).

By embracing and being involved in every aspect of children's entire lives, schools must also play an increasing role in organising students' leisure time (Mihály 2003; Borosán and Csepela 2017; Roth 2019). Thus, the third important pillar of school social support activity is community social work. Community activities include the organisation and coordination of leisure programs (e.g., excursions, camps), sports programs, cultural programs (e.g., cinema, theatre visits) and holiday-related events (Csillag and Palotás 2019; Roth 2019). All this must be done with the utmost professionalism, the worker being involved in the institution community strictly on the basis of school support. In addition to performing organisational tasks, the active presence of the school social worker at all school events is seen as essential. In a small settlement, however, where 8–9 institutions may belong to one professional, this may prove difficult to implement. Social workers also implement and promote social actions (e.g., fundraising, waste separation) (Roth 2019). Community activities, though scheduled according to the annual work plan of client institutions, can still be initiated by the school social worker (Csillag and Palotás 2019), provided the school's values, opportunities and capabilities are taken into account (Roth 2019). The concept, therefore, gives these professionals a significant and extensive role.

Overall, the main mission of the school social assistance service is for professionals to focus on preventive group and community activities that can reach more children and parents at the same time (Szabóné Szalay 2018; Csillag and Palotás 2019). Thus, the proportion of each activity can be defined as follows: 20% administration, 20% child protective measures, 60% social work (10% individual, 55% group, 35% community activity) (EFOP-3.2.9-16 2016). In contrast, practical experience shows that this is a considerable

challenge for professionals because the need for individual help from children, teachers and parents is significant (Szabóné Szalay 2018).

The school social worker is an integral part of the supporting network around children (Table 2) (Roth 2019), so effective work requires cooperation within the system that supports pedagogical work (Csillag and Palotás 2019). In the Hungarian system, school social workers cooperate with several professionals in various fields, summarised in the table below.

Table 2. Areas of tasks for school social workers in Hungary.

Individual Activities	Group Activities	Community Activities	Others
Giving information, counseling, consultation, crisis intervention, helping to manage official affairs, participation in parent-teacher meetings, supporting to access services	Community development group work, preventive and educational group work, skills development group work, organization of parent groups, career guidance group work	Participation in the events of schools, organization of cultural programs/health promotion programs/leisure programs/trips, camps, cooperation with parent communities, organization of student clubs on various topics	e.g., Delegation, supports the performance of child and youth protection tasks

Source: based on Csillag and Palotás (2019).

International research deals with the training of professional social workers (Weiss et al. 2004; Daniel 2007; Pusztai and Csók 2020) and the analysis of their labour market situation (Ng 2010; Barth 2003; Wermeling 2013; Lewis 2018). However, studies focusing on the work experience of school social workers are less common in special literature (Staudt 1997; Lee 2012; Richard and Sosa 2014). In the Hungarian model, operating since 2018, no one has yet examined how social workers perceive their place and reception in the institutional system, or what types of problems they are expected to aid in solving.

3. Methodology

The research focus of this study is on how school social workers in the external model in Hungary perceive expectations placed upon them by parents and teachers Our research is related to a nationwide study ("Value Added Parenting") in which we tried to explore the educational difficulties and needs of parents of children in primary school. In Hungary, a family model with two breadwinners is typical, and working family members often must commute to make a living, and assistance for multi-generational families is declining. Therefore, our Value Added Parenting research has focused on the problems that families struggle with. One of the pillars of the research was that we asked school social workers the question: In what areas do parents and teachers expect the most from social workers?

Between March and April 2020, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 school social workers. The interview plan included several blocks of questions, but in the analysis we focused on parents' and teachers' expectations specifically (Table 3). Interviewees were selected using a non-probabilistic sampling procedure, including the snowball method. According to the peculiarities of qualitative research, the number of items in the sample was small. At the same time, the study provides an opportunity to understand the deep structures of school social assistance activity. The average one and a half-hour-long interviews were recorded in person or via video-enhanced Skype after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Table 3. Structure of the interview plan.

Question Blocks	Sub-Questions
Introductory questions	Age, marital status, number of children, qualifications
Training	actual practical outcomes, strengths of the training, weaknesses of the training, the social function of the knowledge they acquired during their studies, career choice
Roles and expectations at school	main job tasks and responsibilities, parental expectations, teacher expectations
Plans for the future	further learning plans, job change or career change, career plans

Source: Pusztai and Csók (2020).

The composition of the interviewees shows a female predominance, as in addition to the 18 women, only two male interviewees were represented in our sample. The group of school social workers was heterogeneous in several respects. On the one hand, according to their qualifications concerning social pedagogue (11), social worker (6), social politician (1), social worker and social pedagogue (1), and catechist, child and youth protection consultant (1). We can see that in Hungary the position of school social worker can be filled with several qualifications. The sample was not uniform concerning the age of the respondents (the youngest respondent was 24 while the oldest was 49 years old) (Table 4).

Table 4. Summary data of the interviewees.

No. of the Interviewee	Gender	Age	Qualification
1.	female	25	Master's degree in Social Policy (MA)
2.	female	25	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
3.	female	41	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
4.	female	43	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (BA)
5.	female	39	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
6.	male	25	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (BA)
7.	female	24	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
8.	female	43	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (BA), and Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
9.	female	48	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (BA)
10.	female	42	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
11.	male	31	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
12.	female	33	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (BA)
13.	female	31	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (BA)
14.	female	20	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
15.	female	40	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
16.	female	45	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
17.	female	44	Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (BA)
18.	female	24	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
19.	female	40	Bachelor's Degree in Social Pedagogy (BA)
20.	female	49	Catechist, Child and Youth Protection Consultant (continuing education)

This research was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. The ethical committee of the University of Debrecen approved this study. The protocol code was 1/2022. The research was conducted ethically, the results are reported honestly, the submitted work is original, and authorship reflects the individuals' contributions. At the beginning of the interviews, we asked the interviewees for permission to use their anonymized data for research purposes, and they agreed.

We chose the combined logic method for processing the textual data. In content analysis using deductive logic, a code list was first created. In a priori coding, the main categories were created based on theoretical and empirical considerations prior to analysis,

and overlaps were eliminated (Sántha 2017; Sántha-Malomsoki 2020). The four main codes of the list were defined along with the relevant content units of the semi-structured interview draft: Parent Types, Teacher Types, Parental Expectations, Teacher Expectations. Subcodes were created inductively by examining the deep layers of the text segments. The coded texts were recoded after one week (using intracoding), where we tried to clarify the names (Sántha 2017). Data analysis was conducted by two researchers, which means that personal triangulation provided the opportunity to minimize researcher bias.

4. Results

We present the results of our research below. This research was done by interviewing school social workers, who work with parents and teachers. We also include descriptions of tasks performed in order to create types. Interview excerpts have been used to illustrate our results.

4.1. Parent Types as Defined by School Social Workers

(1) Collaborators (co-operators): parents who collaborate with the school social worker, individually or in groups, usually asking for information and advice. "By now, parents are also asking me concerning their problem" (33-year-old female, social worker). "Regular contact" (43-year-old female, social worker). "They expect guidance on what would be right, how they could best cooperate with their child" (42-year-old female, social pedagogue).

(2) Quick fixers (those seeking an immediate solution): parents who typically expect immediate problem solving from the school social worker through a therapeutic approach. "(...) Miracle immediately" (33-year-old female, social worker). "They misidentify you, and no matter how many times you say you are not a psychologist, you are still considered a psychologist. For them, I think the expectation is limited to sending the child to you, talking to him, and fixing him" (31-year-old man, social pedagogue). "I want it to be resolved right there" (41-year-old female, social pedagogue).

(3) Dismissers (those not concerned with the problem): parents who ignore and do not seek school social assistance in case of a problem, or act dismissively, or in extreme cases aggressively. "Parents visit us relatively rarely (...). Mostly they don't expect anything, maybe they ask us not to report (problem to the agencies—author's note)" (43-year-old female, social worker). "Not a single parent has visited me on their own so far, and I contacted them in case of a problem. (...) Someone threatened me not to dare touch her child" (39-year-old female, social pedagogue).

4.2. Teacher Types as Defined by School Social Workers

(1) Cooperative recipients: teachers who work with the school social worker, involve them in school life and in exploring and dealing with problems that arise. "Teachers are happy with what I can say. So, they tell them what their problem is and ask me what to do now. I say something about that, which they're mostly delighted with and happy with because they feel like they don't have to fight alone" (43-year-old female, social worker).

(2) Intolerant idealists: teachers who usually expect an immediate solution from the school social worker that is outside their professional field of expertise. "The point is for the child to perform better, to identify and correct the problem immediately, whatever it is" (33-year-old female, social worker).

(3) Self-initiators: teachers who do not prefer collective problem-solving and want to solve difficulties alone, without "external forces". "So far, there hasn't been a professional of this kind in the school. So, they need to get used to the fact that now there is someone they can turn to. On the other hand, it follows that they learn how to deal with the problem alone. For example, the teacher tries to deal with exclusion in a homeroom class" (24-year-old female, social pedagogue).

(4)   Distant sceptics: teachers who reject the service offered by the school social worker. The main reason for this is that they do not see the need for individual, group and community activities. "Another extreme who considers it all a humbug. This type also thinks that if the class has not improved after a couple of occasions, their hypothesis is proved and then the whole thing is worth nothing" (39-year-old female, social pedagogue).

4.3. The Expectations of Parents as Layed Out by School Social Workers

In addition to identifying the types of parents and teachers, we aimed to confront the everyday feasibility of the tasks with the expectations set out in the regulation. It was observed that when parents got to know and accept the school social worker, they typically preferred individual assistance, although this is not the primary task of professionals. The majority of parents expected guidance in solving problems regarding parenting, family life, learning and behavioural issues, and regarding integration difficulties. Based on the feedback from the interviewees, these are often related to psychosocial developmental disorders. In this case, the respondents helped find a suitable specialist to deal with the problem (e.g., a child psychologist, a child psychiatrist, a special need teacher, a tutoring teacher) and make an appointment. Several respondents also pointed out that lack of parental attention and care, and physical and mental neglect often contribute significantly to the child's learning and behavioural problems. It is unfortunate to note that parents typically did not take responsibility for the part in this, but rather place the blame on to the school. "To put it mildly, I motivate parents to take care of their child. It's also a significant thing that they're pretty much not interested in their child's progress, or rather they don't support it" (43-year-old female, social worker). In addition, people living in disadvantaged settlements typically initiated individual consultations on issues to improve their social situation, on contact options (e.g., in case of divorce, temporary placement of a child) and supporting their child who has been a victim of school violence.

In addition to individual counselling, disadvantaged families required the presence of a school social worker at parent-teacher discussions, and rely on them to get all their information. In addition, disadvantaged families expect the help of a social worker in accessing donations (e.g., clothing donations). Informing parents about training courses available within the tenders (that host financial benefits) and about their administration process was also highlighted as important. Regarding her role in the information exchange, one interviewee identified herself as an "information dealer" (33-year-old female, social worker).

Based on our results, it can be said that gaining the trust of parents is a long process, which is significantly aggravated by the school social worker's official title and the fact that they are not someone from within the school organisation—simply an outsider. We assumed a specific parent type could be distinguished by a given social situation. For example, both disadvantaged and more well-to-do families might be dismissive toward the social worker, though the reasons for keeping at a distance might differ. Parents of humbler means are often suspicious of child protection measures, while families who are more financially stable might not feel the need for the service offered by a social worker. With cooperative parents, individual counselling dominates, and in addition to consultations aimed at improving the social situation, the assistance concerning child-rearing issues is also received. Once again, in more financially stable families, problems with parent-child communication seem ever more frequent. As was previously mentioned, however, both the blame placed on the family by the teachers and the blame placed on the school by the parents hinders the social worker's job of offering help. The "blame game" is the result of a lack of professionals to deal with the enormous number of problems. "Anyway, everyone is working on one's own aims. The point is for the child to perform better, so I can identify and remedy the problem, whatever it is. The parents think that I can't find the problem in the family because they think the tension accumulated in the child comes from school" (33-year-old female, social worker).

4.4. The Expectations of Teachers as Laid Out by School Social Workers

The following is a summary of what expectations teachers have of professionals regarding problem-solving. The following three main categories were identified: (1) individual assistance, (2) group activities, and (3) child and youth protection tasks. Some activities were regrouped based on a researcher decision, so the categories used differ from those in the official statistical register.

(1) Individual assistance

- Provision of information concerning the official measures of child protection care, the tasks of social workers, and the operation of the social, child welfare and child protection care system. "Teachers visit me more and more often when they see exclusion or a problem within the family and are interested in what kind of child protection steps can be taken. They are much more open-minded concerning social work, what a case manager does, what services and child protection care does" (24-year-old female, social pedagogue).

- Dealing with behavioural problems, and taking disciplinary action regarding the discipline of unruly students with behavioural problems. It is typical that the school social worker is seen as someone who can supervise those who misbehave so that classes can be held uninterrupted. "My colleagues also say that in a lot of disadvantaged institutions, they are expected to function as babysitters. Quasi to do something with the bad kid. So, the teacher takes the 15-year-old teenage boy out in the middle of the class while he is speaking with his mates, being insolent, doing bad things, and then asks me to do something about it. This is the typical attitude" (25-year-old female, social politician).

- Addressing social integration difficulties in line with the literature, respondents highlighted two sources of integration difficulties (school climate and personality) (Kósáné Ormai 1994). According to the interviewees, the majority of teachers are characterised by an individual-centred (von Balluseck 1977; Kósáné Ormai 1994) approach and do not take the development of school organisation into account. "To make their students able to integrate into the community, and improve their deviant behaviour" (31-year-old male, social pedagogue).

- Consultation with pupils/students. Teachers prefer to be assisted by the school social worker through individual consultation about each pupil's private life (e.g., parental divorce, family tragedy) or learning difficulties. Teachers often perceive only the behavioural problems and difficulties of integration mentioned earlier, but they have little information about the child's family background. Although, the exploration of background factors can help the teachers' work. "In 100% of cases, there is a problem with the child due to problems at home. Every day, teachers see a child who misbehaves during their lessons, not paying attention. (. . .) I believe it is difficult because if you have a problematic child who is always bad and speaks crudely, it is clear that you will go over the edge after a while. I think it's good that I can look at it a little differently; I can even shape the teacher's thinking about the child a little bit" (25-year-old female, social pedagogue).

- Consultation with teachers concerning how to deal with problems affecting children and families, and how to solve difficulties encountered in teaching and educational work. All this points to the lack of supervision needed by teachers. "They still have a huge need for ventilation, so obviously, they have to be listened to many times" (41-year-old female, social pedagogue).

- Consultation with parents. According to the interviewees, teachers often report difficulties in contacting and communicating with parents, thus requiring the intervention of the school social worker. Especially in the case of disadvantaged families, it is typical that the social worker has a better working relationship with the parents, and this keeps the teachers informed. "They are also very happy to be able to meet the parents even more than once (. . .), to be able to for a family visit" (43-year-old female, social worker).

- Mediation in conflicts, with assistance rendered mainly in parent-teacher relationships, but also applied in resolving conflicts between children. Respondents emphasised the importance of restorative procedures, the functions of which are developing relationship management skills, managing stress and reparation, and restoring the relationship (Thorsborne 2009; Kecskeméti et al. 2012). "We can mediate in the parent-teacher conflicts. For example, they really like it; they also use us for that. There we have to pay attention to the fact that we always have to represent the child's interests, and this is often a difficulty (...). So, there are times when we have to confront the institution" (48-year-old female, social worker).

(2) Group activities

- Group sessions. Cooperative work done on behalf of teachers varies based on the composition of each institution. Based on the feedback from the interviewees, team-building games, community development practices, social sensitisation, and social development are prominent in schools with disadvantaged students. There is a particular emphasis of these group sessions to strengthen class cohesion. Subject failures and repetitions are common in these schools, and high dropout rates weaken the unity of the ever-changing class community. "In fourth, fifth and sixth grades, they report having a click within the class, and bullying, by the seventh and eighth grades there are already addictions." (39-year-old female, social pedagogue). In contrast, in schools with medium and high student composition, group work for developing self-knowledge and communication skills is at the forefront.

- Lectures for prevention, intervention and correction. In schools with a medium and high student composition, the emphasis is typically on prevention classes (e.g., education for media awareness) and, less frequently, the school social worker is asked to give career orientation lectures. "In better secondary grammar schools, they want to take prevention class, even though they don't have time to prepare for it, they still ask for it" (24-year-old female, social pedagogue). However, in institutions with low student composition, the importance of educating students about sexuality also take priority, the focus being on abuse and addiction. As mentioned by some respondents, the treatment of physical and verbal aggression, cyberbullying, drug addiction and behavioural addictions (e.g., smartphone addiction) have all become an everyday challenge in these institutions.

(3) Child and youth protection tasks

- Dealing with student absences. Previous research results were supported by the fact that, according to the interviewees, teachers in schools with unfavourable social backgrounds and the worst academic achievement face an increased challenge in dealing with unjustified absences closely related to dropout (Fehérvári 2015; Berényi 2015). It would take a lot of time and energy from teachers to keep in touch with truants and their families. Another problem is that teachers feel unprepared to deal with these cases. Teachers need help in dealing with unjustified absences and with fulfilling their legal obligations in that regard. This would then require more cooperation among teachers and other school staff. With the exception of schools not run by the state, this conscious cooperation with school support staff was less common prior to the mandatory introduction of school social assistance (Berényi 2015) "Dealing with absences and what to do with absenting children. There are a lot of unjustified absences, and they don't know what to do, how to avoid firing the child and when and where to report" (25-year-old female, social politician). At the same time, contact with parents and individual conversation with the student are also essential. Exploring family background factors, as well as traditions and habits can help in effective problem management. "Rather, they expect the child not to absent. Going to school is the very first. However, we can also observe the case of children of Roma families. After a while, the older one takes care of the little ones, and the older one drops out of

school" (25-year-old male, social worker). It should be mentioned that having a young child is also a determining factor in leaving school early.

- Preparation of pedagogical expertise. In educational institutions, when lacking a pedagogical assistant they require the cooperation of the school social worker in the preparation of pedagogical expertise and pedagogical description (e.g., in case of behavioural problem, integration difficulty, child protection procedure). However, some teachers, referring to the lack of information or time, expect the social worker to write these descriptions himself. "It is very often that they are asked to write a pedagogical description. They often don't understand why they have to do this because they haven't experienced any problems with this child. They can work with the parent. (...) It's obviously a huge help that they don't have to work with that, so they love it that way" (41-year-old female, social pedagogue).

- Collaboration with other disciplines and school support staff. Interviewees highlighted building and maintaining relationships with social welfare, child welfare and child protective services, with health or other institutions and creating a network of support professionals as some of the expectations placed on them. "They are very happy that I am able to reach out to organisations, whether it's a family case worker, parenting counsellor, a committee of experts, or children's homes or whatever" (43-year-old female, social worker).

- Participation in case conferences. The purpose of the discussion organised by the family and child welfare service is to contribute to defining the problem and managing the family's case effectively whilst involving the relevant professionals (§14 of the Regulation; Csillag and Palotás 2019). However, the invited teachers are often unable to attend case conferences due to their classes or are reluctant to attend case conferences alone, so they are expected to play a substitute or supportive role for the school social worker. "If they can't go to a case conference because let's say, the substitution isn't resolved, I'll be there and tell them how it was. Otherwise, they come to a case conference more likely if I am there too, they know me, they expect such support" (41-year-old female, social pedagogue).

- Reporting: based on the interviewees' experiences, it is greatly expected of those working in educational institutions to assign social workers the task of child protection, signalling when problems arise. It is important to note, however, that the social worker does not bear sole responsibility for this task; the school still needs to be on guard for the appearance of problems. However, the social worker can support the staff to formulate a signal system professionally and legally if they perceive a student to be at risk (Csillag and Palotás 2019; Roth 2019). "They see that if a child welfare professional enters the institution, they do not have to signal then. The sign of always confrontation, let's say, between the teacher and the parent, (...) is very difficult for them to confront. It is difficult to signal if there is a problem" (48-year-old female, social worker).

5. Discussion

Although parental counselling was not thought to be the most important task of social professionals, respondents still felt it necessary to perform this range of tasks. However, building trust with families was more difficult for the interviewees than integrating into the life and pedagogical staff of the given school. According to the guidelines of the Office of Education, informing parents can be done primarily through introductory materials, leaflets, personal introductions (e.g., at parent-teacher meetings, reception classes), while the school's website and a closed/private Facebook group can also play an important role (Csillag and Palotás 2019). The interviewees emphasised the importance of personal introduction, including the informative function of parent-teacher meetings. Despite the wide range of information, respondents spoke of the distance between themselves and the parents and, consequently, the difficulty of establishing relationships. One reason for the distance is that social professionals are not core members of schools, thus making them less likely to be trusted. This did not, however, apply to everyone, since this was not a

homogeneous group. Based on the answers given, we were able to separate them into three categories: (1) collaborators (or co-operators); (2) quick fixers, and (3) dismissers (those who are not concerned with intraschool issues).

When the service was first being introduced, the task of the family and child welfare centres was to provide teachers with clear and in-depth information about the goals of school social assistance activities and the tasks to be performed by professionals (Csillag and Palotás 2019). Despite the abundant information, gaining teacher trust is a painstakingly long process, and one that experts see as the irreplaceable basis for effective work. Based on our results, we distinguished four groups of teachers in light of their attitudes towards school social workers: (1) cooperative recipients; (2) intolerant idealists; (3) self-initiators, and (4) distant sceptics. There may be several reasons for the perceived distance from teachers. For example, they do not feel the need for the service provided by the school social worker, or they do not understand precisely what that job entails. Typically, they do not know the professionals' working methods and competence limits, so they assign them different roles and expect those problems to be solved, despite the fact that they are tasks not belonging to the social worker.

Overall, based on the interviewees' experiences with parents and teachers, we identified a strong need to correct socialisation problems, reduce school violence, avoid victimisation, address behavioural problems, reduce absences and the number of early school leavers, and the presence of chemical and behavioural addictions. Underlying factors for the problems listed include financial difficulties, a series of school failures, severe family crises, and conflicts. All this is increasingly characteristic of public educational institutions in disadvantaged regions (EFOP-3.2.9-16 2016), especially in schools where the social status of the parents is low (Bacskai 2015). Thus, the objectives include contributing to the reduction of territorial disparities and social inclusion. However, it is important that professionals should focus not only on compensation for disadvantages but also on developing talent and educating responsible citizens (EFOP-3.2.9-16 2016). Finally, it was confirmed that with the expansion of the role of the teacher, the presence of assistant help, the network of professionals supporting pedagogical work in public education institutions (Bacskai 2015) and the life of families is becoming more and more important.

6. Conclusions

Our research focused on how school social workers in the new external model in Hungary perceive the expectations of parents and teachers regarding their work. We explored what parent and teacher types can be distinguished by professional opinions and whether the function typology defined in the regulation works in practice. It can be concluded from our results that parents and teachers need professional support in several areas, and the school social service system can provide a variety of answers to these expectations. Therefore, there was a particular need to introduce this support system, as no network of professionals supporting teachers previously existed in Hungary.

The novelty of our study is that it sets up typologies among parents and teachers. In our analysis, we separated three groups of functions: functions meeting the expectations set out in the regulation, functions substituting the tasks of missing specialists, and functions not being performed due to lack of time or need. From all this, we conclude that the professional socialization of school social workers is adequate for the performance of these tasks.

Our results indicate the need for cooperation with other school support staff, as the key players in the school support network known as school social workers, child and youth protection officers, school psychologists, development teachers, special education teachers, school doctors, nurses, mental health professionals, school police officers and teaching assistants can all collectively contribute together to the value-creating processes of education. This, according to Pusztai et al. (2020), would result in returns at both individual and community levels. A limitation of our research is that we recorded the 20 interviews in

different parts of the country. A complete quantitative study would be needed to point out the correlations related to the regional social composition of schools.

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