

## Requirements and measures of the quality of educational services in Poland

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, education is analysed in terms of quality. Educational service has a specific character, and issues related to its quality are a subject of scientific considerations of researchers interested in this problem for many years. The quality of educational services is undoubtedly a factor influencing the civilization level of the society. Therefore, it seems essential to provide a desired quality of educational services, which is closely related to the quality of teachers' human capital and the school headmaster, i.e. people who create this quality and are responsible for it. This mainly applies to their competences, skills and relations between them. Literature studies in this area lean towards recognizing that one of the factors determining the quality of educational services, and at the same time one of the most important, is the professional training of teachers, viewed in terms of their qualifications and competences as well as their commitment to work. Both the literature on the subject and the legal provisions regulating the discussed issue indicate some imperfections of formal requirements for teachers, which may impact the quality of the educational services they provide. Thus, it was decided that the burden of consideration of this article will focus mainly on the quality requirements of teachers' work, various levels of professional promotion and the important role of the headmaster in this respect. Moreover, attention was focused on issues related to the evaluation of their work. The considerations were based on a literature review on the subject and legislative provisions determining the issues discussed in the article.

**Key words:** quality of educational services, human capital of teachers, evaluation of teacher's work

**JEL:** I28, I29

### Introduction

Education is one of the most common contemporary services and is defined as a form of social practice focused on shaping both personality and providing knowledge, skills and competences that enable people to live in the society. A critical analysis of the literature on the subject identifies numerous examples that higher quality of human skills in terms of qualifications and professional competences translates into the desired economic growth and social development. Modern theories of growth treat unambiguously the qualifications and competences identified with human capital as the most important determinant of economic development. These theories have been developed since the 1980s, starting with the publication of the works of P. M. Romer. P. M. Romer [Romer & Romer, 1986], R. E. Lucas [Lucas, 1988], and also L. E. Jones, R. Manuelli [Jones L.E. & Manuelli R., 1990, *A Convex Model of Equilibrium Growth*. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24108732\\_A\\_Convex\\_Model\\_of\\_Equilibrium\\_Growth\\_Theory\\_and\\_Policy\\_Implications/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24108732_A_Convex_Model_of_Equilibrium_Growth_Theory_and_Policy_Implications/download), access date: 02/03/2021].

Characteristically, people are aware that a good education and a willingness to continue deepening the acquired skills translate into their well-being, as acting rationally, while educating themselves, will build foundations for faster economic development of the country. In this sense, care for the quality of educational services is an issue of fundamental social importance. The study was divided into parts. The first one is an introduction to the issues related to the formal requirements for the teaching staff and the school headmaster with regard to the quality of their work based on applicable legal acts and critical analysis of the literature on the subject. In the second part, certain regulations were identified and the focus was put on formal requirements for teacher's work at various levels of professional promotion. Considerations in the last part of the study were supplemented with indicators for assessing the quality of teachers' work and there was made a verification.

The research problem discussed in the article was considered based on the theoretical context, aimed at indicating the theoretical approach to the issues addressed in it and their interpretation, indicating their social and scientific significance, as well as an attempt to establish a theoretical and methodological model of conduct, constituting the starting point for implementation of a research project aimed at enriching the previous discussions in this regard.

### **Requirements for teachers and the school headmaster in terms of quality of their work**

Improving the quality of educational services provided to society by all kinds of educational institutions is assumed to be their main goal. In Poland, evaluation of the quality of education is carried out in schools both on the initiative of the management of individual institutions, as well as the procedures specified by the ministry. The basic activities in this area include:

- lesson observations;
- assessment of the level of implementation of the core curriculum;
- school documentation control;
- evaluation of teachers' work;
- analysis of exam results, attendance and grades, diagnosis of students' needs and skills.

Evaluation can be defined as the process of collecting, analyzing and communicating information on the value of activities undertaken by the school or institution; results of the evaluations are used in the decision-making process aimed at ensuring high-quality organization of the processes of education, upbringing and care and their effects at school or institution [Olejniczak, 2008].

Overall, as reported by Horvathová-Szőkö, evaluation means identifying, comparing and assessing the values of a phenomenon of objective reality on the basis of its characteristics, according to predefined standards, indicators or criteria [Horvathová-Szőkö, 2013]. In addition to this, evaluation is an appraisal of a phenomenon on the basis of the profound knowledge that has been obtained from it, on the basis of any analysis of this phenomenon and understanding how this particular phenomenon in certain situations works [Kolar and Šikulová, 2009].

Evaluation is a dynamic process, which is subject to change in response to challenges:

- resulting from the implementation of strategies and programmes [Olejniczak, 2008]. The specificity of the notion of evaluation is defined by five characteristics referring to this term:
- evaluation is structured and analytical in nature;
- evaluation implies going beyond the canon of a single methodology and turns towards a perspective that combines different tools and data sources of „methodological eclecticism”;
- evaluation is a systematic activity, assuming holistic approach and cyclic and systematic analysis;
- evaluation assesses both the quality and the value of an intervention, going further than scientific research. Evaluation can concern both the initial assessment of the structure of an intervention, i.e. the idea for a programme, as well as estimating the real effects of an intervention [Olejniczak, 2008].

Both the concepts of "rating", "evaluation" and „valuation” are concepts analysed and theoretically explained at the borderline of sociological, psychological, philosophical and pedagogical sciences. They have permanently entered the language, also including the language of strategy connected with the quality of the Polish and global education system [Denek, 2005].

It is worth to quote the definition of evaluation adopted in 1981 by the American Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation understood as: "[...] *a systematic examination of the value or merits of some object*" [Nevo, 2003]. Developing this term, it can be considered that "[...] the systematic study of the values and characteristics of a particular programme of activity or object, from the point of view of accepted criteria, in order to improve, develop or better understand it" [Norris, 1989]. This concept is identified with estimating, measuring or evaluating, while the core of the term "evaluation" is the category of value [Davis & Dupper, 2004]. In the context of education, this means that the value of educational programmes should be explored using various strategies related to social behaviour. In this sense, then, evaluation is a procedure, conversation, negotiation and planning [Pathon, 1990]. As mentioned above, evaluation in the Polish educational system is currently developed within The System of Evaluation of Education (SEO), which was introduced by the regulation of the Minister of National Education of 2009 [Regulation of the Minister of Education, 2009]. Evaluation is to be one of the forms of pedagogical supervision in addition to control and support. SEO is based on two pillars:

- internal evaluation (self-evaluation), whose main objective is to improve the quality of school work in order to support its development and increase the quality of education. School principals are responsible for conducting this evaluation;
- external evaluation, developed within the framework of the SEO. The role of external evaluation is to assess the extent to which schools meet the requirements set by the state.

The requirements, their criteria and the evaluation procedure itself are described in detail in the appendix to the above mentioned regulation [Regulation of the Minister of Education of August 6, 2015] and constitutes a set of principles for educational supervision, whereas the state requirements for schools and establishments, found in the earlier regulation on the exercise of pedagogical supervision, have found their place in a separate legal act, i.e. in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 6, 2015, on requirements for schools and institutions.

Pedagogical supervision carried out in the form of evaluation is understood as a tool for analysis and communication of information on values, quality of activities undertaken by the school as part of fulfilling the requirements described in the Regulation of the Minister of Education on National Education of August 6, 2015 on the requirements for schools and

institutions. This regulation sets uniform requirements for educational establishments, differentiated according to the specificity of the field of education, but are the same for schools/institutions of the same type. The assessment of whether schools meet these requirements is to be, in principle, uniform throughout the country, which makes it possible to obtain comparable results concerning the quality of Polish education.

Internal evaluation is intended to be a part of everyday school practice and provide information which enables the headmaster and teachers to make valid and justified decisions about their own work and the activities of the whole school.

According to the regulation of the Ministry of Education, the headmaster of a school or centre, in cooperation with other teachers holding managerial positions:

- conducts internal evaluation and uses its results to improve the quality of school work;
- controls the observance by teachers of legal provisions concerning teaching, upbringing and caring activities and other statutory activities of schools and institutions;
- supports teachers in carrying out their tasks by, inter alia, organising trainings and meetings, motivating for improvement and professional development, presenting to the teachers conclusions resulting from the principal's pedagogical supervision [Regulation of the Minister of Education of August 25, 2017].

In order to fulfill the above-mentioned tasks, the headmaster shall, in particular, observe teaching, upbringing and caring activities conducted by teachers, as well as other activities resulting from the statutory activity of the school. The observation may be used in any form and does not have to cover only one hour of class time, it may include a group of classes or a fragment of classes, or it may last, for example, for a whole day in one class. It may include observation of meetings between the teacher and parents, chairing a team meeting, etc.

One of the control activities carried out by the principal in order to assess the quality of work under pedagogical supervision is the inspection of school documentation, e.g.: logbooks of lessons and extracurricular activities, documentation of specialists: the educator, the psychologist, the speech therapist, the vocational counsellor, or the summary of teaching results and behaviour in the annual and final classification. It involves the analysis of documentation and noting any deficiencies to be corrected. Checking is done by the school

principal or an authorised person, e.g. the deputy head teacher or in some cases a regular teacher.

It is assumed that one of the most important conditions for the successful performance of teaching, educational and caring functions by the teacher and the effectiveness in the assessment of their work are competences, which they should be equipped with within the course of education and in-service training.

The pedagogical competence is expressed in the accurate diagnosis, skillful and effective programming, planning and organising of pedagogical activities in lessons and extracurricular activities, controlling and evaluating the effects of student's work in the process of upbringing. A teacher equipped with the above-mentioned competences is someone who:

- is able to develop a concept for work with the class, individual pupils and their parents;
- is able to recognise the initial state of a student's physical development, fitness, skills and knowledge, can interpret the results of tests and examinations appropriately;
- based on the results of the diagnosis (educational diagnosis), is able to program the work with pupils;
- is able to identify the organising factor for learning new skills, information, developing physical fitness and forming attitudes towards culture;
- can set objectives, plan and apply appropriate tasks and in order to achieve them, use the means, methods and organisational forms of pupils' work, selecting them in accordance with the set goals, tasks and conditions;
- is able to activate positive motivation in pupils to complete tasks;
- knows how to use various methods, forms and means of control, analysis and assessment of pupils' achievements, interpret and assess pupils' achievements in relation to their individual abilities;
- is able to determine the reasons for the student's school failures and propose effective ways of eliminating them;

- can recognize typical developmental disorders (neurosis, aggression, maladjustment, use of drugs) and direct the student for the appropriate form of help.

Not without significance is also the teacher's ability to objectively assess the effectiveness of their own work, introducing corrections and planning the concept of their own professional development (self-evaluation).

It is worth emphasising that the educational process should aim at shaping not only well-mannered people, but also people capable of living on their own, to take responsibility for their own mental and physical development, for their fitness and health, people who are competent in these areas.

The person making the decision about choosing a teaching profession should be aware of the need for permanent professional development and training and evaluation, both by the school management as well as students and their parents and the whole society. Raising qualifications should result from the teacher's own willingness and be supported by a well-functioning system [Lisicki, 1995].

The amendment to the *Teacher's Charter*, as well as the amendment to the Act on the Education System, significantly expanded the tasks of the headmaster, whose most important task is to properly organise work in the school, assign duties to teachers, organise work of other school employees, and then constantly supervise the proper functioning of the school. In addition, as a part of his position and supervision, the principal must pay attention to the school's curriculum, teachers' working methods and systems of testing and assessment. The reform of the education system in 1999 led to a broadening of the autonomy of schools, including the possibility of freely developing their own concepts of school work.

In the Polish educational system, in accordance with the provisions of [Educational Law Act 2016], the position of school headmaster should be appointed to a person with formal education in teaching, who completed postgraduate studies in management conducted by a college or a course in educational management, which may be conducted by a teacher training establishment, an in-service training centre or another institution, a legal or natural person - if it confers qualifications in a manner required by the provisions of the Polish educational law.

A candidate for school director must also be qualified for the position of teacher in the institution to be managed, the required length of service and a good performance evaluation.

This Act allows for a situation in which a school may also be managed by a person who is not a teacher and who was appointed to the position of headmaster by the leading authority after obtaining the opinion of the body supervising pedagogical supervision. Clearly exposed is the concept of school management by a principal who has been entrusted with the position, and not appointed to the post.

According to the Act on the Education System [Act of September 7, 1991, on the education system], the principal is the head of the workplace for teachers and non-teaching staff employed in a school or institution, who decides on matters related to:

- the employment and dismissal of teachers and other employees of the school or establishment;
- awarding prizes and imposition of regulatory sanctions to teachers and other employees of a school or educational institution;
- making proposals, after a consultation with the pedagogical and school council, concerning decorations, awards and other distinctions for teachers and other employees of a school or educational institution

In addition, Article 7 of the Act on the Charter of Teachers states that the school is managed by a principal who is its external representative, the official superior of all school employees and the Chairman of the Pedagogical Council. In that regard, the terms „directing the school and representing it and representing the school in public" and "head of all the staff" are equivalent to the term "employer". The provisions of the aforementioned act clearly define the tasks to be performed by the headmaster by imposing on him duties to be performed as an employer, as a headmaster exercising pedagogical supervision and a teacher. The headmaster makes decisions, implements resolutions, exercises authority, in other words, he is a leader and a manager.

In the literature, the term "manager in education" refers to a principal who is able to inspire and create conditions for the creative search for new methods and forms of pedagogical and organisational activities of the school. This means that the principal is able to independently and creatively make decisions about the activities of the people they manage, as well as the use of the school's capital and physical resources. For these decisions, the director (manager) bears full responsibility. The aforementioned act defines both who can act as a school director, as well as gives a catalogue of their duties, which include:



- directing the activities of the school or establishment and representing it externally;
- carrying out pedagogical supervision;
- taking care of pupils and creating conditions for harmonious psycho-physical development through active pro-health measures;
- carrying out the resolutions of the school or educational board and the pedagogical board adopted within the scope of their competences;
- disposing of funds specified in the school's or establishment's financial plan and taking responsibility for its proper use, as well as organising the administrative, financial and economic management of the school or establishment;
- performing tasks related to ensuring safety of pupils and teachers during classes organised by the school or establishment, performing other tasks resulting from specific provisions;
- cooperation with colleges and teacher training establishments in the organisation of teaching practice;
- responsibility for the proper organisation and conduct of tests and examinations conducted at the school or establishment;
- creating conditions for the activities of e.g. volunteers at the school or establishment, associations and other organisations, in particular scouting organisations, whose statutory objective is educational activity or extending and enriching the forms of teaching, upbringing and caring activities of the school or establishment.

The list above only indicates selected tasks of the school director, but is not exhaustive. The task of a principal who aims to be a leader in his institution is to provide leadership and take corrective action to make the most of the potential of the team. Therefore, it seems justified to reflect on the school's mission and vision and to review the defined values of the goals. The headmaster as a manager can and should be seen as a leader who creates conditions for the team to work and develop, and who shapes their beliefs, visions, values and attitudes. Furthermore, planning, measuring, budgeting, controlling, organisation, i.e. the management of an educational institution are also important tasks for the headmaster.

Today's schools undoubtedly need a group of responsible leaders, who could lead and guide the process of change. This is particularly important in the context of specific establishments and in specific situations.

Therefore, the quality of educational services appears to be particularly dependent on the work and professional attitude of the headmaster, including how he is perceived by subordinate teachers. Managing a school, achieving high quality of provided educational services requires from the principal competences and skills in many areas. A principal should be a good manager, strategist and tactician, politician, mediator and psychologist.

A very important skill of a good headmaster is the ability to kindly point out mistakes and help in their elimination, and therefore the appropriate psychological predispositions. The essence of the director's actions is also the ability to create such conditions of work, learning and comprehensive intellectual, emotional and socio-educational development of pupils so that by the statutory deadline, they will graduate from school, equipped with appropriate level of knowledge, skills and competences. It should enable them to continue their education at the next higher level chosen according to their interests, talents and skills, or to enter the labour market and become a full member of the community.

Another important factor inseparably connected with the quality of educational services, which influences the achievement of appropriate results, is the level of pedagogical supervision exercised by the school principal. The purpose of pedagogical supervision itself is improving the quality of education, upbringing and care in schools. However, a different approach to the performance of pedagogical supervision by the headmaster includes the development and organisation of the measurement of the quality of school work, the use of the results of these studies in planning the development of the school, activities aimed at increasing the quality of work of the school, inspiring, collecting materials for evaluating the work of teachers, substantive and organisational support for young teachers. Quality teaching, qualitative development of teaching and schools are the aims of pedagogical supervision.

The director of a modern educational institution is an educational manager who, on behalf of the school's owner, independently and creatively makes decisions on school matters. It is a professional manager of an educational institution, whose duty is to manage the school in a democratic way in cooperation with the local community.

The ongoing changes in the educational system increase the demand for creative educators, characterised by initiative, ability to think and act on a school-wide scale. Both the teacher and the headmaster, in order to meet the expectations of the society, should keep improving their didactic and pedagogical skills throughout the whole period of professional activity. It is also the basis for promotion to the next ranks in the service hierarchy. The requirements to be met by every teacher to obtain the next level of professional promotion are given in the previously quoted Regulation of the Ministry of Education. Achieving the skills set out in this document requires time and a lot of work. However, it brings the expected results. On one hand - the satisfaction of pupils and parents, on the other - personal satisfaction and appreciation of the surroundings. It seems, therefore, that the process of teacher training improves the quality of school work, helps to introduce changes and modify the work with pupils.

### **Formal requirements for teachers' work at different levels of professional advancement**

The quality of educational services is created mainly by the teacher, his personality, qualifications and competences as well as, what is particularly important, an innovative approach to their work. The teachers employed by a school are assumed to play a key role in the lives of its pupils, showing them goals and shaping their perceptions of the world. According to the provisions of the Act on the Educational System, a teacher should be guided in his didactic, educational and caring activities by the good of pupils and care for their health, moral and civic attitude, with respect for the personal dignity of the pupil. Moreover, a teacher in his work should realize the basic forms of of didactic and educational activity of the school, which are defined in the Act:

- compulsory and additional educational activities and optional extracurricular activities;
- teaching-equalizing and specialist classes organized for students with learning difficulties and other classes supporting the development of children and youth with developmental disorders;
- providing vocational education in schools - practical vocational training [Act of September 7, 1991, on the education system].

In terms of rights and obligations, the Act refers to the Teachers' Charter [Act of January 26, 1982, Teacher's Charter], which obliges education employees to:

- carry out tasks connected with teaching, educational and caring functions of the school in a reliable manner, including ensuring the safety of pupils;
- support each pupil in his or her development;
- strive for the fullness of their own personal development;
- educate and bring up young people in respect for the Homeland and the Constitution of the Republic of Poland;
- shape moral and civic attitudes in young people, taking into account democracy and tolerance;
- improve general and professional knowledge.

The reform of the educational system in Poland introduced professional promotion levels to encourage and oblige teachers to continuous development, including the improvement of their qualifications. The competences necessary for obtaining the particular degrees of professional development were defined as precisely as possible [Pielachowski, 2001]. Thus, Table 1 is a reference to the different levels of teachers' professional promotion in terms of qualifications and competences required for particular positions, the duration of the internship and the form of application for a higher level of teacher promotion.

**Table 1.** Requirements for the positions of trainee teacher, contract teacher, appointed teacher and certified teacher

Position (duration of internship)	Qualifications and competences required for the position
<b>Trainee teacher</b> (9 months)	has formal, i.e. education-based, professional qualifications to work as a teacher of a given subject
<b>Exam before an examination board appointed by the headmaster</b>	
<b>A teacher may begin internship as a contract teacher at the beginning of the following school year</b>	
<b>Contract teacher</b> (2 years and 9 months)	- has the qualifications required for the post of teacher trainee; - has qualifications and competences which enable them to teach in a way ensuring the proper implementation of the statutory tasks of the school in which the teacher served his traineeship, in particular, the implementation of the core curriculum;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knows the pupils' environment, its problems and is able to cooperate with the local community;</li> <li>- is able to recognise the needs of pupils and individualise the process of learning;</li> <li>- is able to discuss their own or observed activities;</li> <li>- knows the organisation and functioning of the school;</li> <li>- applies knowledge of psychology, pedagogy and didactics at work; uses multimedia and IT tools during classes</li> </ul>
<b>Exam before an examination board appointed by the school leading body</b>	
<b>A teacher may begin in-service training after having worked at a school for at least two years from having obtained the grade of contract teacher</b>	
<b>Appointed teacher</b> (2 years and 9 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has the qualifications and competences required for the post of contract teacher;</li> <li>- achieves positive results in teaching, educational and caring work as a result of implementing actions aimed at the improvement of own work and the improvement of the quality of the school work;</li> <li>- is able to organise and improve its workshop, use work methods that activate students, evaluate their own actions, increase their effectiveness and make changes in these activities;</li> <li>- is able to use modern technologies at work and is able to apply knowledge of psychology, pedagogy, didactics and general issues in the field of education, social assistance or proceedings in juvenile matters in solving problems related to the scope of its tasks;</li> <li>- knows how to apply the regulations concerning the educational system and social welfare in the scope of functioning of the school, in which he was a trainee for promotion</li> </ul>
<b>Interview before a selection committee appointed by the school supervisor</b>	
<b>A teacher may begin internship as a qualified teacher after having worked for at least one year from having been conferred the previous grade of professional promotion</b>	
<b>Certified teacher</b> (2 years and 9 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- development and implementation of a programme, innovation or other teaching, educational, caring or other activities related to education, connected with the specificity of a school, in particular for pupils with special educational needs;</li> <li>- performing the tasks of internship supervisor, supervisor of pedagogical practice, teacher - methodical advisor, chairman of the team of teachers, coordinator of voluntary service, project coordinator, social curator, examiner of the District Examination Commission, textbook expert;</li> <li>- development of authored work in the field of education or child development published in a professional journal or other compact publication;</li> <li>- have competence in a foreign language at an advanced level, and, in the case of language teachers, have basic skills in a second foreign language</li> </ul>

*Source: own work on the basis of art. 9a-9i of the Act of January 26, 1982 - Teacher's Charter (Journal of Laws 2018, item 967) and the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of July 26, 2018. on obtaining professional promotion degrees by teachers (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1574).*

A teacher in a school can become a person who meets certain qualification requirements. In a public school, the basic legal act regulating the employment of teachers is the Act Teacher's Card (TC) [Act of January 26, 1982, Teacher's Charter], while in a non-public school with the privileges of a public school, only some of its provisions apply. Selected

issues are also regulated by the Labour Code. According to the provisions of the LC, a teacher employed in a public school must:

- hold a university degree with an appropriate pedagogical preparation, or
- complete a teacher training establishment and take up a post for which they are sufficiently qualified;
- respect basic moral principles;
- meet the health conditions necessary for the exercise of their profession.

The principles of professional promotion of teachers are defined in the TC and in the Regulation on obtaining professional promotion by teachers [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of July 26, 2018, obtaining professional promotion grades for teachers]. Four levels of professional promotion are distinguished: trainee teacher, contract teacher, appointed teacher and certified teacher.

Trainee teacher - is a person who has the appropriate professional qualifications for the position of a teacher, but does not have another level of professional advancement. One becomes a teacher trainee from the first day of employment at school, except for university teachers with at least three years' seniority in higher education and other persons with at least five years' seniority and significant academic achievements who, on the date of their appointment at the school, are promoted to higher grades of promotion. A trainee teacher seeking promotion to the rank of a contract teacher during the in-service training period should, in particular, fulfill the conditions set out in it, i.e: become familiar with the organisation, tasks and functioning of the school, participate as an observer in classes conducted by the internship supervisor or other teachers, conduct classes with students in the presence of the internship supervisor or another teacher and discuss them with the supervisor and the school principal. The teacher should also participate in in-service training, especially in the field of improving working methods and forms.

A contract teacher seeking promotion to the rank of appointed teacher during his in-service training shall in particular:

- participate in the work of school bodies related to the implementation of school tasks and the needs of the local environment;
- improve competences, in particular regarding the education of pupils with special educational needs, including gifted pupils;

- conduct classes in the presence of the internship supervisor and the headmaster and discuss them with the person in whose presence the lesson was conducted;
- conduct at least 2 hours of open lessons for teachers in the school and evaluate them in the presence, if possible, of a teacher-methodological advisor in the field of these activities.

Both in-service teachers and contract teachers undergoing an internship the headmaster shall be assigned a mentor among the nominated or certified teachers.

Both trainee and contract teacher, as well as appointed teachers, applying for a higher level of professional promotion attach a draft of their professional development plan to the application for the commencement of internship, which is submitted to the headmaster. The headmaster approves the draft of the teacher's professional development plan or returns it to the teacher for improvement, specifying the scope of changes. The teacher is obliged to immediately improve the draft of professional development plan in accordance with the recommendations of the headmaster and resubmit it.

The final step in the professional promotion of teachers is a certified teacher. An appointed teacher seeking promotion to the rank of certified teacher during the in-service training should, in particular:

- take actions aimed at improving their workshop and working methods, including perfecting the skills of applying information and communication technology;
- carry out tasks aimed at improving the quality of school work;
- expand knowledge and skills serving their own development and improving the quality of school work, independently or by participating in various forms of professional development;
- conduct at least 3 hours of open lessons for teachers and evaluate them in the presence, if possible, of a teacher-consultant within the scope of these activities, a teacher-consultant or a representative of the body responsible for pedagogical supervision.

A certificated teacher who has at least 20 years of work experience in the teaching profession, including at least 10 years as a certified teacher, as well as significant and recognised professional achievements may, upon the proposal of the Chapter for Professors

of Education [Act of January 26, 1982, Teacher's Charter], be conferred by the minister responsible for education and upbringing the honorary title of professor of education.

Table 2 presents the changing structure of teaching positions based on the example of the school years 2009/2010 and 2019/2020.

**Table 2.** Quantity and percentage structure of teachers by the career advancement degree in Poland - comparison of the school years 2009/2010 and 2019/2020

Degree of professional promotion	Percentage structure	Number of teachers	Percentage structure	Number of teachers
	2009/2010		2019/2020	
Trainee teacher	4.60%	22 766	3.94%	20 241
Contract teacher	19.40%	96 012	15.90%	81 704
Appointed teacher	31%	153 421	19.13%	98 304
Certified teacher (Chartered)	43.40%	214 790	56.06%	28 8080
Teacher without a degree of professional promotion	1.60%	7 918	4.97%	25 538
<b>Total</b>	100%	494 907	100%	513 868

Source: own work on the basis of *stat.gov.pl*.

The level of the basic salary depends on the teacher's professional promotion grade, qualifications and the compulsory teaching load. The level of allowances is determined by the length of service, the quality of teaching, additional tasks or activities, the position held and difficult or hazardous working conditions.

The Teachers' Charter Act regulates the minimum average salary of teachers with different levels of professional promotion, which is equal to the following percentages of the reference amount established annually for teachers in the Budget Act. According to this, the average salary for individual positions should be <sup>21</sup>:

- a) for a trainee teacher: 100%;
- b) for a contract teacher: 111%;
- c) for appointed teacher: 144%;

<sup>21</sup> Art. 30 of the Act of 26 January 1982. - Teacher's Charter (Dz. U. 1982 nr 3, poz. 19 z późn. zm.).



d) for a chartered teacher: 184%.

The data shows a growing share of the highest-paid chartered teacher positions in the full time structure. Moreover, it means that they gain successive degrees of professional promotion, which results in allocating more and more funds to the salaries of teachers allocated to education in Poland.

The structure of public expenditure on education in PLN billion and in relation to GDP in 2005-2018 is presented in Table 3.

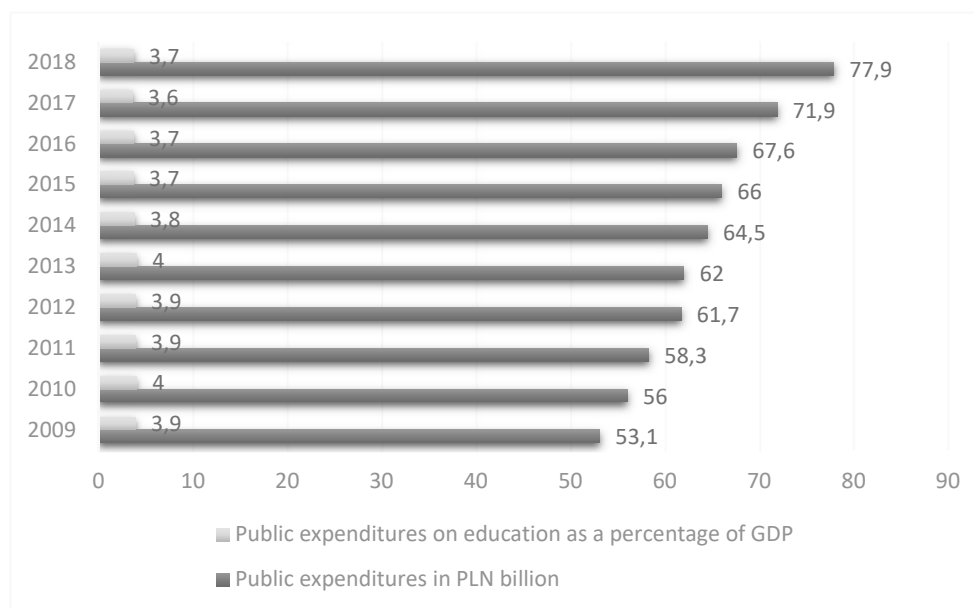
**Table 3.** Public expenditures on education in Poland, 2009-2018 (%of GDP)

	Public expenditures in PLN billion	Public expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP
<b>2009</b>	53.1	3.9
<b>2010</b>	56.0	4.0
<b>2011</b>	58.3	3.9
<b>2012</b>	61.7	3.9
<b>2013</b>	62	4.0
<b>2014</b>	64.5	3.8
<b>2015</b>	66.0	3.7
<b>2016</b>	67.6	3.7
<b>2017</b>	71.9	3.6
<b>2018</b>	77.9	3.7

Source: own work on the basis of [stat.gov.pl](http://stat.gov.pl).

For better visualisation, the graph below allows to notice the overall trend in data and understand the comparison results between two groups.

**Figure 1.** Public expenditures on education in Poland, 2009-2018 (%of GDP)



Source: own study

The presented data indicate a systematic increase in public expenditure on education with a relatively stable share of this expenditure in GDP in Poland.

The greater financial resources devoted to education are mainly related to the increase in teachers' salaries due to their professional promotion.

### **Measures of the quality of teacher's work**

The quality of a service is measured by its effectiveness, which is defined as the highest possible volume of knowledge transferred in the shortest possible time, with the least possible effort and financial outlay [Mihaela, 2012]. The literature underlines the close relationship between the quality of the educational service and the satisfaction of its recipients. Authors M. Purgailis and K. Zaksa [Purgailis & Zaksa, 2012] divide the elements of the quality of educational process into quality of the result, quality of the process, quality of teachers and quality of the school environment.

The literature also emphasises the important role of systematic assessment of the school environment and managing the quality of that environment by focusing on the needs and requirements of students in order to improve educational practices. Changes brought about by the results of the school environment assessment generate greater motivation and

willingness to cooperate among its members, which translates into an improvement in the quality of the whole educational process [Staukalina, 2008].

Under the rules in force, a teacher's work, with the exception of that of a trainee teacher, is a subject to evaluation. Evaluation of a teacher's work may be done at any time, but not earlier than one year after the previous evaluation or the evaluation of professional achievements [Act of January 26, 1982, Teacher's Charter]. The evaluation of work is valid until the teacher is re-evaluated.

In light of the current regulations regulating the evaluation of a teacher's work, a teacher is obliged, primarily:

- to diligently perform the tasks connected with their entrusted post and the basic functions of the school: didactic, educational and caring, including tasks connected with ensuring the safety of students during classes organised by the school;
- to support each student in their development;
- to strive for full personal development, improve themselves professionally in accordance with the needs of the school;
- to educate and raise young people in love of their homeland, in respect for the Constitution of Republic of Poland, in an atmosphere of freedom of conscience and respect for every human being;
- to take care of shaping moral and civil attitudes in pupils, in accordance with the idea of democracy, peace and friendship between people of different nations, races and beliefs [Act of January 26, 1982, Teacher's Charter].

The subject of the evaluation is the overall professional performance and the fulfillment of teacher's duties as a degree of realisation of statutory tasks. In addition, it is assessed whether a teacher in his didactic, educational and caring activities is guided by the good of pupils, cares for their health, moral and civil attitude, respecting the personal dignity of the pupil. The cited regulations do not indicate strict criteria for the assessment of a teacher's work, but only a general catalogue of the teacher's basic duties. More specific criteria are indicated in the Ministry of Education Regulation [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of May 29, 2018, on the detailed criteria and procedure for evaluating teachers' work, the scope of information contained in the work evaluation sheet, the composition and method of appointing the evaluation team and the appeal] in accordance with the provisions of which, among others:

- evaluation criteria are detailed according to the stage of professional development of the teacher being evaluated;
- an additional criterion was introduced for all teachers who have completed internship / professional development plan;
- written opinions on a teacher's performance must include a justification, which will be attached to the performance appraisal form;
- the evaluation sheet should contain a justification, including reference to whether the teacher meets the individual criteria;
- the degree to which the criteria are met is set as a percentage, i.e. in the case of setting the level of meeting the criteria for evaluation of the teacher's work at the level:
  - a) not less than 95% - the teacher receives a distinction grade;
  - b) not less than 80% - the teacher receives a very good mark;
  - c) not less than 55% - the teacher receives a good mark;
  - d) less than 55% - the teacher receives a negative mark;
- the procedure for appeals against evaluation introduced the obligation for the evaluation team to hear the teacher who lodged the appeal. Failure by the teacher to appear will not prevent the evaluation team from considering the appeal and reaching a decision consisting in:
  - a) upholding a performance appraisal;
  - b) cancellation of the performance appraisal and the establishment of a new one,  
or
  - c) repealing the performance appraisal and referring the case back for a new determination.

Performance appraisal is carried out every 5 years from the date of obtaining the rank of contract, appointed as well as certified teacher. This means that in the case of contract and appointed teachers (unless in the meantime the teacher starts a training for a higher level of professional promotion), performance appraisal is carried out only after the end of the internship.

According to many stakeholders, the current criteria for teacher's performance appraisal raise a number of doubts. There are no precise regulations on this subject, they are

vague and ambiguous. Teacher's performance appraisal processes are subjective and lack a clear criteria. The internal documents detail these criteria, which means that assessment based on clear principles will not be controversial among teachers. The various types of school rules and regulations are far more useful than, and certainly complement, the general wording of the assessment acts and regulations. Thus, the development of indicators for each aspect of assessment is essential to the quality of the school.

It is also questionable, on one hand, that it is not possible to adapt all the general criteria to the individual levels of professional promotion, disregarding the specificity of work in the position held, and on the other hand, too much discretion and freedom in evaluation additionally raises objections and causes anxiety.

An aspect of evaluation that is also controversial is the complete elimination of parents and pupils from the teacher's evaluation system, all the more so because it is them who is the direct recipient of the teacher's work and it is them who feel its effects the most. The parents' council has a right to request an evaluation of a teacher's work but in practice this provision does not function.

It should be noted that both the literature on the subject and the school environment express concerns that the evaluation formula, set out in the Teacher's Charter, does not improve the quality of school work, but causes bureaucratic burden, which becomes a tool for antagonising the educational environment.

Without negating the point of teacher's performance appraisal in any way, it is important to point out the need to set a new direction for changes in the procedure of the present system of evaluation of teacher's performance in Poland. In an attempt to indicate such direction, attention should be drawn to the works of H. Martins, S. Loureiro and M. Amorim [Martins, Loureiro & Amorim, 2013], who are of the opinion that a full evaluation of the quality of the educational process should include opinions and evaluations of internal and external stakeholders of the school and its graduates.

## Methodology

The concept of methodology is inextricably linked with the issue of scientific research. When defining the presented scientific problem, one should define the method proceedings in order to achieve the intended goal [Sławińska, 2008]. Usually when solving a specific research problem, one method is assumed as the leading one and the others are auxiliary methods [Pieter, 1975]. J. Pieter to the essential working research methods includes:

- observational;
- experimental;
- statistical;
- constructive;
- source criticism;
- comparative;
- logical analysis [Apanowicz, 2002].

This study is assumed to be the result of a critical analysis of the literature on the subject and the legislative framework in force in this respect, which is only a basis for a specific research procedure in the field of requirements and measures identification of educational institutions in Poland.

The selection of sources for the analysis was made in relation to the purpose presented in the study. It should be noted, however, that this is not an exhaustive analysis due to the issue under consideration, which has been recognized as complex, interdisciplinary concept, multi-threaded. Therefore, the subject of the literature review was mainly:

- scientific works from various disciplines;
- popular science, journalistic and methodical publications;
- scientific articles;
- applicable legal regulations.

Properly conducted research should, in principle, be a source of information which can be properly used. Information is an economic good possessing the characteristics of the product, so it can be sold and bought. Information is for many organizations, especially in a competitive market, a serious tool of competition. Information is also an essential component of decision-making processes. In that sense it has two basic spheres of application, it is the starting point for making decisions and a tool for controlling the implementation

of these decisions [Hayek F., *The use of knowledge in the economy*. Available at: <http://coin.wne.uw.edu.pl>, access date: 02/28/2021]. They should be distinguished in terms of both the subjective and objective sense of the information obtained. In the objective sense, information means a mutual relationship between at least two objects, composed of the meaning (content) and the physical medium (form) which serves to transmit the signals of one object to another. In the subjective view, information is understood as a set of specific activities for manufacturing, processing, storing, exploring, sharing and receiving messages concerning a specific subject [Ratajewski, 1973].

In the literature on the subject, one of the main divisions of research methods is distinguishing the quantitative and qualitative methods. The qualitative approach involves a research of a given phenomenon by recreating the internal perspective of people shaping this phenomenon. The quantitative approach comes down to scaling the studied phenomenon and their numerical value (percentage) of parameterization.

It is admitted that the problem may be the adoption of certain methodological assumptions with regard to the examined problem, which should take into account all the imperfections and the difficulties of applying a given research method.

## Summary

To sum up these considerations, it should be stressed that particularly important, in the context of the quality of educational services, is to perceive the teaching staff as a group of cooperating teachers whose coherent, pro-quality activity determines the perception of the school in the environment, which translates into interest in taking up education in a given school by students and consequently translates into educational success of a student.

Thus, the development of education, especially the universality of education at all levels, requires constant care and control over the quality of education and creation of systemic solutions supporting the improvement of this quality.

The theoretical background concerning both the requirements for teachers in terms of quality of their work and at different levels of professional promotion, as well as the role of the school principal in this respect, referencing literature and recalling the most important legal regulations by no means exhausts the presented issue and is only one of many

approaches, thus constituting an incentive to expand reflections and research on the quality of educational services in Poland.

Achieving this objective has provided a lot of interesting and useful information, allowing a better understanding of the presented issues.

The reflections undertaken in the article may provide a platform for further discussion on the quality of educational services in Poland, considered in this study only through the prism of the requirements imposed on the teaching staff and headmasters, as well as quality measures of their work.

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