

## Analysis of the Teachers' Attitudes and Needs in Relation to Socially Disadvantaged Pupils in the Czech Republic<sup>1</sup>

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***Analysis of the Teachers' Attitudes and Needs in Relation to Socially Disadvantaged Pupils in the Czech Republic.*** The paper is focused on the theoretical basis and partial results of the research of the teachers' attitudes and needs in relation to socially disadvantaged pupils in the Pardubice and Moravian-Silesian Regions in the Czech Republic. The survey was based on the assumption that the teacher's attitude (consisting of cognitive, affective and behavioral components) may significantly affect teacher's educational activities in relation to socially disadvantaged pupils. Presented data are based on use of a Likert type rating method. The paper briefly introduces the concepts of selected conceptual and theoretical basis. The focus of the paper is the interpretation and analysis of the obtained data in cultural and social context.

PEDAGOGIKA.SK, 2013, Vol. 4. (No. 2: 144-159)

**Key words:** Attitude; Social Disadvantage; Socially Disadvantaged Pupil; Teacher; Education

***Anotácia: Analýza postojov učiteľov a potrieb vo vzťahu k sociálne znevýhodneným žiakom v Českej republike.*** Príspevok je zameraný na teoretické základy a čiastkové výsledky výskumu postojov jednotlivých učiteľov a potreby vo vzťahu k sociálne znevýhodneným žiakom v Pardubiciach a Moravskosliezskom kraji v Českej republike. Prieskum bol založený na predpoklade, že pozícia učiteľa (skladajúca sa z kognitívnych, afektívnych a behaviorálnych zložiek) môže významne ovplyvniť učiteľovu vzdelávaciu činnosť vo vzťahu k sociálne znevýhodneným žiakom. Uvedené údaje sú získané ratingovou metódou Likertovho typu. Príspevok stručne oboznamuje s pojmami koncepčného a teoretického základu. Ťažisko práce je interpretácia a analýza získaných dát v kultúrnom a spoločenskom kontexte.

PEDAGOGIKA.SK, 2013, roč. 4, č. 2: 144-159

**Kľúčové slová:** postoj; sociálne znevýhodnenie; sociálne znevýhodnený žiak; učiteľ; vzdelávanie

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<sup>1</sup> The outcomes of the survey were obtained when working on the research project IGA PdF\_2011\_035 called "Analysis of attitudes and needs of the primary school teachers in relation to education of socially disadvantaged pupils".

## Introduction

The following contribution presents the partial outcomes of the research survey implemented within an IGA project called “*Analysis of attitudes and needs of the primary school teachers in relation to education of socially disadvantaged pupils*” (PdF\_2011\_035). The project was conducted from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011 to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012. The aim of the project was to find out the teachers’ attitudes and needs in relation to education of the socially disadvantaged pupils at the ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 levels.

Besides others, the aim of the project was to find current attitudes and needs of the teachers towards pupils being socially disadvantaged in two regions of the Czech Republic (the Moravian-Silesian and Pardubice Regions). The project also focused on determination of the individual and psychological meanings of chosen terms in the area of social disadvantage on teachers’ side.

In particular, this paper focuses on the teachers’ attitudes towards socially disadvantaged pupils using the Likert type of scale.

## Theoretical context

To work with obtained data, it is necessary to briefly introduce terminology of the research survey, e.g. social disadvantage, a socially disadvantaged pupil and an attitude which are among the key terms.

### *Social disadvantage*

Social disadvantage can be understood in three views:

- as a state of failure of a social environment where an individual lives and where a process of his/her socializing is therefore endangered (e.g. a low socio-economic status of a family);
- as a state of a low social status of an individual in a society resulting from various causes;
- and in the most general view as a result of an insufficient or inadequate stimulating environment (socio-economic status of a family need not to be disrupted).

Robert J. Havighurst (1964, p. 41) also perceives social disadvantage in three ways – in terms of certain family characteristics relating directly to the child, in terms of their personal characteristics, and in terms of social group characteristics of their family. J. Clegg and J. Ginsborg (2006, p. 2) add that defining and delimiting of social disadvantage is not easy as we often characterize this phenomenon using socio-economic status of a family.

### ***Socially disadvantaged pupil***

In the Czech Republic, socially disadvantaged pupils are specified by central educational document called *The Framework Education Programme for Basic Education* (J. Jeřábek, 2007, p. 113) according to which socially disadvantaged pupils are categorized into a group of pupils with special education needs. According to this document, the pupils from families with low socio-cultural and economic standing, frequently at risk of socio-pathological influences, who have been placed into institutional education or who have been ordered protective education, pupils who are asylum seekers or in a process of granting a status of an asylum seeker, are considered to be socially disadvantaged pupils. Pupils who come from the environment socially or culturally and linguistically different from an environment which majority population of pupils grow up in. These are also included in this group (similarly Art. 16 section 4 of Law No. 561/2004 Coll., the Education Act). On complexity of this issue and hence arising difficulties see more in a contribution by B. Štěpánková (2010).

A socially disadvantaged pupil for purposes of our survey is defined as a pupil whose family environment is analyzed in detail and who is assessed for following criterion (and at least three of the following are true):

- Pupil who is a member of a national minority in the territory of the Czech Republic;
- Pupil who is a member of an ethnic minority;
- Pupil coming to our territory when migrating (above all asylum seekers in all phases of the process);
- Pupil coming from a family having its maximum income on the subsistence level;
- Pupil who has at least one parent who is a disadvantaged job seeker;
- Pupil coming from a family where primary education is the highest reached education or where one or both parent have not finished primary education;
- Pupil who has been ordered institutional care or imposed restrictive care.

### ***Attitude***

According to J. Čáp and J. Mareš (2007) we can define an attitude as acquired motifs expressing the relation of an individual to an object, thing, people, activity, group, event, idea and so on. Similarly, attitude is defined by R. L. Atkinson et al. (1995). P. Hartl (1993) defines attitude in his lexicon of psychology as “a tendency to react to objects, persons, situations and ourselves in a stable way”. M. Nakonečný (1997) sums up this term when he explains that this term was introduced into sociology and psychology by W. J. Thomas and F. Znaniecki (1918) who understood it as a conscious relation of an individual to a value. G. W. Allport (1935) presented a classic definition when

he stated that an attitude is a mental and neural relation of emergency, organized by experience and developing a directive or dynamic influence on individual's responses towards all objects and situations which he/she is related to. Based on and complied to the above stated, an attitude of a teacher to the pupil can be defined as a motif expressing teacher's relation to the pupil, to the group of pupils, to school environment, and speaking generally, to school education and to his/her own profession. One of the specific features of attitudes is their evaluating character which *inter alia* has, consequently, an impact on the behavior of an individual (D. Albourracin, B. T. Johnson, M. P. Zanna, 2005).

Teacher's attitude is composed of cognitive, affective and behavioral components (D. Katz, E. Scotland, 1959), and it can significantly influence, both in the positive and the negative ways, the educational process and educational activity of a teacher in relation to socially disadvantaged pupils. As J. Beran, J. Mareš and S. Ježek (2007) do, we assume as well that without thorough knowledge of teachers' attitude it is neither possible to understand complex and multi-dimensional issues of education nor manage and affect it. Teachers confront new requests with their emotions, levels of their own knowledge, education and particular pedagogical behavior which are affected by their own experience. Researching the teachers' attitudes is worth of having adequate attention, as they give rise to motivation which mobilizes the powers and brings energy to the organism. However, as B. Lazarová (2005) states, the teachers are often resistant to changes.

The importance of attitudes in educational process was appreciated by J. Pelikán and Z. Helus (1984) who researched preferential attitudes of teachers. As a preferential attitude they perceived an overwhelming focus of the teacher on certain pupils in the class who consequently became more than others objects of increased interest of a teacher (both in positive and negative senses) which also affects the pupils' performance. Their research also showed that preferential attitudes of the teachers to pupils have an indirect influence on the overall atmosphere in the class, and additionally they influence both the individual pupils and the interaction of the teachers with the class. In the consciousness (or subconsciousness) of a teacher, a particular pupil is on one hand always confronted with a subjective teacher's conception of the ideal pupil, and on the other hand with the other schoolmates regarding their acting and behavior. Those schoolmates with higher adaptability index, rather silent and calm, even-tempered and those not conspicuous because of their activity or liveliness were better assessed. Based on these findings we can assume that those pupils who are in a certain way out of "average" tend to be undervalued. And the socially disadvantaged ones may be among such pupils.

The teacher's attitude is formed upon various aspects. M. Nakonečný (1997) sums them up as: specific experiences, social models, institutional factors and social communication, influence of primary and secondary groups. In our view, public opinion mentioned by P. Hartl (1993) is also crucial as it may affect attitude towards certain groups of pupils. Unfortunately, we still experience situations when often untrue information is transmitted in form of "supposedly experienced". The transmitters often rely on passivity of the target group accepting the information and at the same time unwilling to verify the transmitted statements – strengthening of prejudices (V. Kocourková, A. Šafránková, 2011). According to J. V. Musil (1999) it is a referential group which generally has the greatest influence on a potential change of attitudes. Consequently, within the frame of socio-cultural transmission in the socializing process we can possibly think of transmission of the teacher's attitudes towards his pupils, sometimes on an unconscious functional level (V. Kocourková, A. Šafránková, 2011). A. Bandura (In A. Kühn, 1998) also pointed out the influence of copying when attitudes were built.

### **Methodology of the research**

When undertaking our research survey, the research of attitudes was investigated by pack of methods (a Semantic differential, questionnaire, scales of the Likert type) used to gain a lot of information on teacher's attitude towards socially disadvantaged pupils in cognitive, affective as well behavioral levels. In this contribution, as it was already alleged, we would like to present the outcomes of one of the method used, i.e. use of scales of the Likert type (R. Likert, 1932). We assume that attitude scales may help to reveal one of the levels in the research of attitudes towards social disadvantage. Based on them we can determine the intensity of positive or negative affect. The scales are composed of certain amount of statements the respondent can more or less agree or disagree with. Attitude scales also imply a neutral attitude which is placed in between the antipoles of agreement and disagreement (V. Černoušková, 1988). Thanks to comprehensible formulation of the statements focused on social disadvantage issues we can find out the respondent's degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement. When using scales we face the problem of dilemma whether to use odd or even number of choices. As well, the researcher has to carefully formulate the statements assessed by the respondent.

The Likert scale expresses the degree of agreement or disagreement with the given statement. In our questionnaire, our scale had following five degrees: 1 – strongly agree, 2 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – disagree, 5 – strongly disagree.

Parameters of a research instrument were verified and optimized by means of a pre-research. In order to guarantee validity and reliability, there were consultations on the individual methods during the pre-research with experts from centers for pedagogical-psychological counseling in given regions, teachers of the researched set, and with school headmasters and experts from the area of pedagogy and methodology. When some misunderstandings occurred, changes in wording were made.

There is a variety of options of how to process data obtained by the Likert scales. In the presented survey we decided to evaluate obtained data using relative frequency (e.g. P. Gavora, 2000, p. 96; L. Cohen et. al., 2011, p. 387). Then the data will be processed using other statistical methods and finally the gained outcome will be compared to data gained from a Semantic differential and a questionnaire.

### ***Research sample***

Research sample was composed of primary schools teachers from the Moravian-Silesian Region and Pardubice Regions. So as to work with the ordinary primary school environment, we have not included special schools, alternative schools and international schools. All schools at the ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 levels of selected regions (according to the register of primary schools valid to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011) were approached. The research instrument was at the disposal in electronic form on created web pages. A request to fill out the questionnaire was addressed to the primary schools teachers of the relevant regions. At the same time, the request to fill out the inquiries was sent to headmasters of these schools. E-mail addresses of the sampled school teachers and headmasters were gained from complete lists of schools on the internet portals within the individual regions or they were gained from the web pages of the individual schools.

On the whole, 399 primary schools were approached, 251 from the Moravian-Silesian Region and 148 from the Pardubice Region. However, only 197 questionnaires came back. The following table shows the number of respondents according to the regions.

Table No. 1: **Number of respondents according to selected regions**

<b>Region</b>	<b><math>n_i</math></b>	<b><math>f_i</math></b>
Moravian-Silesian	123	0,624
Pardubice	74	0,376
Total	197	1

In total 197 respondents were represented by 25 men (12.7%) and 172 women (87.3%). This might be a sign of a long-term feminization of the Czech primary schooling (Průcha, 2002). Research complex was composed of

respondents with a different length of their practice, as it is shown in the following table.

Table No. 2: **Length of practice of respondents**

Length of practice	Moravian-Silesian Region	Pardubice Region
0-5 years	0,0894	0,1892
6-10 years	0,0976	0,1487
11 and more	0,813	0,6621

Out of total number of respondents there were 49.75% (18.92% in the Pardubice Region and 68.29% in the Moravian-Silesian Region) teaching in the primary and middle schools and 50.25% (81.08% in the Pardubice Region and 31.71%) teaching in upper schools.

Considering the low number of returned inquiries, we are aware that research survey cannot affect the whole issue of teacher's attitudes to the phenomenon of social disadvantage in the surveyed regions. However, we believe that this partial survey summing up the teacher's attitudes including prejudices, experiences, opinions and persuasions etc. can at least help to intercept this very subtle determinant in inclusive education of socially disadvantaged pupils and in the pedagogical process generally. The data gained in this survey may become a theme and a source for widely approached research surveys, and followingly for surveys focused directly on verification of the influence of ascertained attitudes on educational process.

## Results

The respondents were to assess 32 statements in total, sorted into 3 basic categories:

- Socio-cultural and economic aspects of life;
- Socio-cultural characteristics in educational process;
- Socially disadvantaged pupils' characteristics. (Šafránková, A. 2012)

The statements are made by the authors of the project themselves. They are, however, inspired by the researches which took place in close areas (e.g. M. Potměšil In J. Havel, H. Filová, 2010; D. Bittnerová, 2009; I. Gabal 2007; E. S. Bogardus 1925 etc.).

Table No. 3 presents items of socio-cultural and economic aspects of life which may predict social disadvantage.

Table No. 3: **Socio-cultural and economic aspects of life – relative frequency in %**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Σ
Everyone can solve his/her situation, if they want it hard enough.	14,72	49,24	12,18	20,3	3,55	100
People who cannot maintain a family should not have children.	14,21	27,41	25,89	25,38	7,11	100
Everyone should only have as many children as many he/she can maintain.	35,33	45,69	10,15	6,6	2,03	100
Only people who can adapt to our (Czech) culture are entitled to live in the Czech Republic.	12,69	30,96	8,63	33,5	14,21	100
The Romanies should adapt to major population.	36,04	47,21	11,68	5,08	0	100
Employing foreigners increases the unemployment rate of the Czech population.	14,72	24,37	26,4	26,4	8,12	100
I wouldn't mind to live in a neighborhood where people of other than majority population live.	3,05	11,68	38,58	31,98	14,72	100
The choice of place of living would be at my case positively influenced by the fact whether overwhelming majority of socially disadvantaged people lives here.	16,75	26,9	18,27	19,8	18,27	100

The values in the table are given in %: 1-strongly agree, 2- agree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4-disagree, 5-strongly disagree.

It has already been obvious from preliminary results (Šafránková, A., 2012) that researched area is very debatable and therefore given percentages are not striking in some cases.

In the area where positive choices prevail (i.e. agree, strongly agree), there are the following statements.

Statement *“Everyone can solve his/her situation, if they want it hard enough”* with 63.96 % of the respondents who opted for a positive choice, statement *“Everyone should only have as many children as many he/she can maintain”* (81.02 % for a positive choice) and statement *“Romanies should adapt to major population”* (83.25 %). Based on this experience we can only think of a higher rate of social distance or negatively oriented/xenophobic attitude towards both people in difficulties generally and people of the Romany ethnic group where a request to assimilate is also presented. We can also anticipate certain intolerance to the Romany culture, or rather, intolerance to its preconception connected with e.g. negative presentation of the Romany ethnic group in the society (on social networks, for instance), due to prejudices.

The remaining assessment of statements in this group is largely indeterminate, often a choice of neither agree nor disagree is opted for which can demonstrate both uncertainty of choices and conscious or subconscious perception of a choice which is expected and complying to profession of a teacher and the reality. The most obvious is this situation in case of statement *“I wouldn't mind to live in a neighborhood where people of other than*



*majority population live*". However, indeterminacy in this area may also be connected with a real experience of the individual respondents and with the idea of a particular national or ethnic group.

Category of items in the area of socio-cultural characteristics in educational process is represented by greatest amount of assessed statements. The results in the form of relative frequency are presented in the Table No. 4. This category was focused on:

- The approach of the teacher to socially disadvantaged pupils and assessing its significance for education;
- The significance of socioeconomic influence on the pupil and school education;
- The assessing teacher's competences and workloads;
- The cooperation and communication with families of socially disadvantaged pupils;
- The communication with external partner of a school in this area (institutions, centers for pedagogical-psychological counselling).

**Table No. 4: Socio-cultural characteristics in educational process – relative frequency in %**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Σ
Having an equal approach to all pupils is all right.	9,64	22,34	6,6	<b>41,12</b>	<b>20,3</b>	100
Low socio-economic status of the pupil's family affects the pupil in a negative way.	<b>20,3</b>	<b>48,22</b>	8,63	21,32	1,52	100
Cultural distinctions strikingly affect the education of pupils.	<b>18,27</b>	<b>54,31</b>	8,12	17,77	1,52	100
Socio-economic situation of the pupil's family has no influence on communication with the pupil's family.	5,58	24,37	9,14	<b>44,16</b>	<b>16,75</b>	100
It was unpleasant for me to communicate with pupil's families who live on the street.	5,08	23,86	25,38	32,99	12,69	100
Social attitudes of the teacher influence the pupils (education, development, socialization).	<b>38,07</b>	<b>49,24</b>	8,63	4,06	0	100
The teacher is always fair in his/her assessment.	<b>10,66</b>	<b>44,67</b>	25,89	17,26	1,52	100
Social attitudes of the teachers affect the assessment of the pupils.	6,6	29,44	15,74	36,55	11,68	100
The assessment of the pupil is affected not only by the results itself but also by individual characteristics and situation of the pupil.	<b>11,17</b>	<b>51,27</b>	4,06	28,93	4,57	100
Teachers have no means (time, finance) to offer a helping hand to families of socially disadvantaged pupils.	<b>27,41</b>	<b>42,64</b>	8,12	19,8	2,03	100
It is all right to offer help not only to socially disadvantaged pupils but also to their families.	<b>19,29</b>	<b>44,67</b>	17,26	16,24	2,54	100
There should be established a separate classes for the Romanies, because they cannot cope with education in mainstream schools/classes.	7,11	22,34	18,27	<b>42,64</b>	<b>9,64</b>	100

I am convinced that presence of a socially disadvantaged pupil substantially increases my workload.	<b>39,59</b>	<b>38,58</b>	6,6	13,2	2,03	100
I am convinced that my preparation for work with socially disadvantaged pupils is sufficient for reaching the needed results.	8,12	41,62	28,43	18,78	3,05	100
I am convinced that my preparation for communication with socially disadvantaged pupils is sufficient for reaching the needed results.	8,63	35,03	33,5	19,8	3,05	100
I am afraid to meet the families of socially disadvantaged pupils face to face.	4,57	19,29	12,18	<b>47,21</b>	<b>16,75</b>	100
I can diagnose a social disadvantaged pupil or pupil endangered by social disadvantage without any problems.	<b>9,14</b>	<b>49,75</b>	15,74	21,32	4,06	100
Communication with competent institutions supporting the socially disadvantaged pupils is very creative and effective.	1,02	18,27	27,41	<b>42,13</b>	<b>11,17</b>	100
Communication with a pedagogical-psychological counselling centres is (regarding the situation of the socially disadvantaged pupils) very active and rewarding.	4,57	23,86	23,35	40,61	7,61	100

The values in the table are given in %: 1-strongly agree, 2- agree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4-disagree, 5-strongly disagree.

In the group of statements focused on the teacher's approach to socially disadvantaged pupils and assessment of its significance there were positive choices (strongly agree, agree) opted in the following statements:

*"Social attitudes of the teacher influence the pupils (education, development, socialization)"* where we can see hugely prevailing frequency of positive choices in utterances of 87.31 % of the respondents. Less obvious is prevalence of positive assessment at statements *"The assessment of the pupil is affected not only by the result itself but also by individual characteristics and situation of the pupil"* with 62.44 % and *"The teacher is always fair in his/her assessment"* with 55.33% of the respondents.

In the group of statements focused on the significance of socio-economic influence on the pupil and school education there were prevalence of positive choices in both cases. The statement *"Low socio-economic status of the pupil's family affects the pupil in a negative way"* was assessed positively by 68.52 % of the respondents, and 72.58 % of the respondents assume that *"Cultural distinctions strikingly affect the education of pupils."*

The group of statements focused on teacher's own competences and workload were represented by four statements; in one of them *"I am convinced that presence of a socially disadvantaged pupil substantially increases my workload"* a positive choice prevailed (78.17 %). In other statement, 58.89 % of the teachers assume that they can diagnose a socially disadvantaged pupil.

Unfortunately, in the practice it usually happens that if teachers are to diagnose a really socially disadvantaged pupil within a class, it is often difficult for them as they lack the knowledge of methodology and criteria. Unfortunately, this issue is scarcely communicated with supportive institutions (e.g. pedagogical-psychological counselling centres). The remaining two cases showed indeterminacy in persuasion of teacher's own competences in work with the socially disadvantaged pupils and communication with their families. Approximately one half of the respondents (49.74 %) think they have sufficient competences to work with this group of pupils and 43.66 % of them think that they have sufficient competences to communicate with the families of pupils with social disadvantage.

Fourth group of statements focused on cooperation and communication with the family. No striking indeterminacy occurred here, but in one case (*"I am afraid to meet the families of socially disadvantaged pupils face to face"*) negative choice prevailed. 63.96 % of teachers are not afraid of direct contact from which we may assume that negative experience is missing. On the whole 60.91 % of teacher disagrees with a statement that *"Socio-economic situation of the pupil's family has no influence on communication with the pupil's family"*.

Table No. 5: **Characteristics of socially disadvantaged pupils – relative frequency in %**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Σ
Children without social disadvantage have better taking off, they have better school results, are more forceful and successful.	<b>20,81</b>	<b>55,33</b>	10,66	11,17	2,03	100
It is necessary to apply the same approach to all socially disadvantaged pupils.	10,15	15,23	8,12	<b>41,12</b>	<b>25,38</b>	100
The major group of socially disadvantaged pupils consists of pupils of the Romany ethnic group.	<b>16,24</b>	<b>35,03</b>	16,75	26,9	5,08	100
Socially disadvantaged pupils have more educational problems.	<b>16,75</b>	<b>51,78</b>	10,15	19,8	1,52	100
I am afraid that socially disadvantaged pupils are not well accepted by their peers.	<b>18,27</b>	<b>60,41</b>	6,09	14,72	0,51	100

The values in the table are given in %: 1-strongly agree, 2- agree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4-disagree, 5-strongly disagree.

The statements focused on communication with external partners of a school do not show particular indeterminacy of choices. About one half of the respondents chose a negative option in both cases: *"Communication with competent institutions supporting the socially disadvantaged pupils is very creative and effective"* (53.3 %) and *"Communication with a centers of pedagogical and psychological support is (regarding the situation of the*

*socially disadvantaged pupils) very active and rewarding*” (48.22%), which according to us shows the need to intensify communication and cooperation.

Category of items focused on characteristics of socially disadvantaged pupils (see Table No. 5) was presented by five statements altogether which were assessed by the respondents. In four of them certain prevalence has occurred.

The prevalence of positive choice was most noticeable at statement *“I am afraid that socially disadvantaged pupils are not well accepted by their peers”* which was confirmed by 78.68 % of the respondents. Altogether 76.14 % of the respondents assume that *“Children without social disadvantage have better taking off, they have better school results, are more forceful and successful”* and 68.53 % of the teachers think that *“Socially disadvantaged pupils have more educational problems”*. We appreciate the outcome of 66.5 % of the respondents who disagree with a statement that *“it is necessary to apply the same approach to all socially disadvantaged”*, showing at the same time that the teachers consider a principle having respect for every individual. The statement *“the major group of socially disadvantaged consists of the Romany ethnic group pupils”* was positively assessed by 51.27 % of the respondents.

## Discussion

In some areas the results of this investigation are not very cheering in some regards. The investigated teachers themselves (87.31%) realize that their attitude towards socially disadvantaged pupils (as a part of their social attitude) *affect the pupils – their education, development and socialization*. Significant percentage of the investigated teachers also assumes that *cultural distinctions have striking impact on education of pupils* (72.58 %) and that *a pupil is negatively influenced by low economic status of the family* (68.52 %). According to 60.91 % of the respondents this *negative influence can also be seen in communication with the family*. As much as 63.96 % of the teachers are not afraid to communicate. Altogether 78.68 % of the teachers are aware that *socially disadvantaged pupils are not well accepted by their peers* and 76.14 % of the teachers think that *children without social disadvantage have better both life and educational chances*. There is a considerable percentage being aware of how topical this issue is and how important is *a need to approach socially disadvantaged pupils individually* (66.5 %). The investigated teachers (78.17%) are also aware that *presence of a socially disadvantaged pupil or pupils significantly increases their workload* which is according to 68.53 %, e.g. caused by the fact that these pupils have *more educational problems* than the group of pupils without social disadvantage.

The significance of attitude to the pupils with social disadvantage is proved also by the fact that 62.44 % of the respondents states that according to their

view *the assessment of the pupil is affected not only by the results itself but also by individual characteristics and situation of the pupil.*

Approximately one half of all respondents (49.74 %) think that their *preparation for the work with the socially disadvantaged pupils is sufficient* to meet the needed results, 58.89 % of them states that they *diagnose social disadvantage without problems*. Only less than half of the respondents think they are *competent enough to work with this group of pupils* (49.74 %) and 43.66 % of the respondents think that they are *sufficiently competent to communicate with the families having pupils with social disadvantage*.

There can be seen a certain rate of xenophobia from the attitude of the respondents having chosen a positive option in case of a statement *the Romanies should adapt to major population* (positive choice of 83.25%). It was rather surprising to learn that 63.96 % of the respondents think that *everyone can solve his/her situation, if they want it hard enough* which can be considered to be a myth these days.

The research results might be misrepresented by various factors, in particular by one called *the guinea-pig effect* when a respondent tends to play a role which he/she considers to be the right one. Within the given scale, the respondents used the middle values (neither agree, nor disagree), the reason for this might be their hesitation and presentation of their real opinion because of sensitivity of answers.

## **Conclusion**

The education of socially disadvantaged pupils is a complicated issue, which is being discussed by both professional and lay public. It is necessary to see that this research (due to its scope) cannot reflect the whole issue of educating of this assorted group of pupils. The core of the research was to analyze the current state in the area of teachers' attitudes and needs regarding the socially disadvantaged pupils. Our starting point was the assumption that if we want a teacher to impact positively on education of this group of pupils, he/she should have an adequate, respectful and tolerant attitude towards this group. The data obtained in this analysis can be a subject and a source for researches of wider scope and consequently also for a research focused on verifying the influence of obtained attitudes on educational process, as we assume that without a proper knowledge of given issue we cannot expect a positive change in the area of education socially disadvantaged pupils.

## **Acknowledgement**

This work was financially supported by the internal IGA grant of the Palacký University Olomouc PdF\_2011\_035 called "*Analysis of attitudes and needs of*

*the primary school teachers in relation to education of socially disadvantaged pupils”.*

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