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Male Teachers' Well-Being in the Context of Professional Identity

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Abstract

The outgoing point of the study is the findings of previously carried out research on future teachers' reflection to understand their professional identity. One of master students evaluating his professional identity described uneasiness in finding identity in feminine teachers' community and mentioned it as one of the causes the men were looking for another professional affiliation. The phenomenological research was carried out to explore the male teachers' well-being in the context of teacher's professional identity. The data were collected by in-depth interviews and narratives. Stratified random sampling – homogenous group: males and teachers – had been used. The probability sample according to convenience included eight male teachers. All of them had obtained a master's degree in education and teacher's qualification, they all were teaching at school, two of them were studying in doctoral programmes of pedagogy. The data of 38 pages of narrative essays and 55 pages of in-depth interview transcripts had been categorized according to 6 positive psychological well-being factors: self-acceptance, positive relations, environmental mastery, personal growth, autonomy, purpose in life (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). It had been concluded that male teachers' positive psychological well-being correlated with positive attitude towards themselves and their past, the sense that life was purposeful and meaningful and the sense of personal growth and self-realization, but they struggled with organizing their everyday life. The data revealed a weak ability to follow their inner voice and form quality relationships with others. The following characteristic features of male teachers-respondents' well-being were outlined: directness, subjective challenges, discipline and order, authority, sense of belonging and sensitiveness towards the expectations of the society. The research helped to get a deeper understanding of the concept of well-being, collect unique data that would possibly encourage other individuals to realize their well-being potential, as well as future studies in this field.

Key words: male teachers' well-being, professional identity.

1. Introduction

Identity is personal and it answers the question „what am I?” It is the story of the relationships between the individual and the other person, in particular – the relationships between the individual and other people. Since identity is changing according to the situation, it refers to human vision and a point of view on it, it depends on the spectacles people look through at a changing world and themselves in it. Thus, identity can unite and separate. Being aware and looking at oneself from the point of view of the professional and personal growth, it is possible to speak of professional identity and its development, which, in its turn, provides an answer to the question “how have I become what I am” (Mikelsone, Odina 2014). The research on teacher's professional identity proves its close connection with the career development in the wider sense (Mikelsone, Odina 2014) and *well-being*. The correlation of professional identity and well-being is best reflected in the way people react to changes in their lives: what strategies are used to overcome crises and conflicts. Besides these strategies are not specially acquired, they develop and change with the accumulated experience and become evident as a human's unconscious response to the requirements of reality. Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004: 126) argue “that more attention should be paid to the role of context in professional identity formation and to what counts as professional in teachers' professional identity”.

In the findings of previously carried out research on future teachers' reflection to understand their professional identity, one of master students evaluating his professional identity confessed „... *I still cannot find my identity in this feminine teachers' community*” (Mikelsone, Odina 2016: 242). He also revealed his feelings entering the women community: „*I do not say that men's identity is so different, but there is some very important shift in the following aspects (justice, public attitude towards the profession, sense, initiative, responsibility, competitive salary, idealism, independence, courage, place for excellence, risk). By not finding these „own signs”, without being able to navigate the feminine emotionality, intuition, non-verbal relationships and other „esoteric signs”, men fail to belong to this feminine group. Not spending time on talks and thinking, they're looking for another*

professional identity” (Mikelsone, Odina 2016: 242). Surprisingly that the uneasiness in feminine teachers’ community, is also present in female teacher’s reflection: “*I’ve learned that direct language is not really appreciated at school. I think this is due to the fact that the team of teachers is large and mostly consists of the representatives of the fair sex, who likes to “talk through the flowers”. I must confess ... now I choose to keep quiet and not say what I think*” (Gerçe 2016: 121).

The male identity issues have been discussed by Krupnick (1985) as how the gender of the teacher affects the students’ participation in classroom discussions, Tucker (2015: 3) outlining the complexity of identity and suggesting that “preservice male teachers’ identities are more complex than gender alone, that being in multiple minority groups may compound challenges for preservice male teachers, and that teacher training alone may not sufficiently address issues of identity”. Based on the anthropic cultural paradigm, Iovine (2015: 1967) looks at the aspects of the ideological construction of gender identity and tries to explain the situation why “male students seem to be the minority in education-related professions”.

Rath, Harter and Harter (2010) outline five elements of well-being: career well-being; social well-being; financial well-being, physical well-being and community well-being. Social well-being includes a good and loving relationships, financial – the effective management of financial resources, physical – good health and enough energy, community – compatibility with others and the environment, career – meaningful daily occupation (Rath, Harter, Harter, 2010). “If we are struggling in any one of these domains, as most of us are, it damages our well-being and wears on our daily life” (Rath, Harter, Harter 2010: 6). Lack of well-being in any of aspects is also reflected in the human’s professional identity. In the case of professional instability, people feel insecure and are unable to complete also everyday duties that are not related to work (Svence, 2009). The work that man does reluctantly and under pressure can lead to the situation that man is neither able to perform at work nor manage other daily duties.

When defining the concept of *well-being* Holmes (2005) points out that when a person has a sense of well-being, it means the person has a sense of control over a work, life and even destiny; he/she does not feel stress and is not bored or under pressure. Thus, in order to define the scope of well-being both in the classroom and the wider context, Holmes (2005) offers four sub-categories: (1) physical well-being; (2) emotional well-being; (3) mental and intellectual well-being; (4) spiritual well-being. Furthermore, she explains that “while the intrinsic elements of well-being can be extracted from the concept, it is important to take a holistic approach to it” (Holmes 2005:

7).

Well-being can be described as positive emotions enhancing psychological feeling well in all human life. Well-being develops individually and depends on the attitude individuals evaluate their lives. It involves two theoretical concepts: hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being.

1. Hedonic well-being reveals the well-being of individual’s **life** (Kahneman, Diener, Schwarz, 2003) and it is connected with enjoyment. According to hedonic well-being, the main pre-condition of good life is that people must like themselves. Hedonic aspect includes pleasant experience of emotions, low rating of negative emotions and high life satisfaction. In other words, people are happy with their lives, positive sentiment dominates and they have got a tendency to avoid negative emotions. Hedonic well-being is also known as **subjective well-being** (Svence, 2009; Kahneman, Diener, Schwarz, 2003). The structure of subjective or life well-being consists of four groups of concepts that reflect the overall assessment of person’s life and well-being.

Table 1. The structure of subjective (life) well-being (based on Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2003)

Subjective well-being			
Positive emotions	Negative emotions	Satisfaction with life	Domain satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glad • Strong • Proud • Determined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried • Sad • Guilty • Insecure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction • Fulfillment • Sense • Achievements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • Career • Health • Financial situation

2. Eudaimonic well-being reveals **personal** well-being (Ryff, 1995) and it is linked to happiness. According to eudaimonic well-being people have high satisfaction with their autonomy, self-efficacy, high level of mastery and high degree of reaching life goals. Eudaimonic well-being is also known as **psychological well-being** (Svence, 2009; Ryff 1995) which can be described as a multidimensional model consisting of six indicators of well-being (Ryff, Keyes, 1995; Ryff 1995):
 - positive evaluation of oneself and one's past (**Self-acceptance**);
 - a sense of continuous growth and development as a person (**Personal growth**);
 - the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful (**Purpose in life**);
 - the ability to build quality relationships with others (**Positive relations with others**);
 - the ability to affect the world around – a sense of mastery and expertise to build one's own environment (**Environmental mastery**);
 - a sense of self-determination (**Autonomy**).

Therefore, it is essential for male teachers' well-being to find the meaning and fulfillment in everything they do. It becomes necessary for men to realize their inner meaning, as well as to reach the purpose or goal of their personal growth – they can get something important done in this world and receive appreciation, gratitude from others on their performance. The sense of internal and external autonomy when a person feels – *I can be myself, I manage, I myself take decisions* and they bring results accepted by a significant part of society is important for people who have realized their goal in life.

2. Research Design And Data Collection Methods

The phenomenological research method has been used to carry out research, the data have been collected by in-depth interviews and narratives from eight male teachers. The main focus is on deliberate experience or “lived experience” research. The phenomenological research contains four stages: bracketing, intuiting, analyzing the data and describing the data.

During **bracketing** stage, the existing phenomenon “male teachers' well-being” has been underlined. Manen (1990: 47) defines bracketing “as obliterating the assumptions that are associated with a certain experience and investigating it thoroughly so as to obtain a more transcendental and generalized aspect”. Consequently, this stage focuses on negating all the past experiences and reestablishing the phenomenon based on the examination of the same phenomenon as has been narrated by various respondents who have undergone the identical phase. The authors have attempted to bracket out personal experiences that are connected to this phenomenon and have speculated and reintegrated the data as interpreted through received responses. In **intuiting** stage, the researchers have learnt about the phenomenon as described by the participants. During this stage the target sample has been identified and the data have been collected. Stratified random sampling (homogenous group: males and teachers) has been used. The probability sample according to convenience (whoever happens to be available/ the easiest to reach) includes eight male teachers. All of them have obtained a master's degree in education and teacher's qualification, they all are teaching at school, two of them are studying in doctoral programme of pedagogy.

The qualifications obtained are: history and social science teacher, biology teacher, math teacher, physics teacher, 2 religion and ethics teachers, informatics and programming teacher and English and history teacher. The qualitative data of narrative essays and in-depth interviews have enabled the authors to obtain an opinion about the phenomenon. By narratives “My story of professional identity” has been explored the respondents' point of view, feelings and perspectives. Mostly the narratives have been told chronologically, written with sensory details and vivid descriptions. Considering the fact that every individual's personal experience is co-related to the context in which one interacts, in-depth interviews have been carried out in order to get detailed and reasoned respondents' opinion on specific issues, to review the personal interpretation of an existing phenomenon. The interviews have been semi-structured, the participants have been asked to answer the below listed questions with possible additional questions, if necessary. The data have been collected in the respondents' mother tongue: Latvian, English or Russian.

1. Please tell me how you have become what you are (a teacher).
 2. What are your moments of happiness and satisfaction in teaching profession?
 3. Can you recall any moments or situations of regret in teaching profession? What is the context in which they appear?
 4. Is there a moment in your professional career which you could define as a moment of changes/transformation? When and what changes took place? What caused them?
 5. What have been the challenges in your professional activities, career? What traces have they left in you, have they changed you in any way?
 6. Would you say you have the professional experience that is successful and the experience that is not successful? Tell me about them.
 7. What moments in your professional experience and action, would you specify as the moments of wisdom? And why?
 8. Do you think male teachers have any advantages at school? Have you experienced them in any way yourself?
- Concerning the third stage – **analyzing** Langdrige (2007: 21) recognizes it as “an important step in giving certain characteristic meaning to the experience in order to deduce few conclusions”. During the analyzing stage the data have been categorized according to 6 positive psychological well-being factors: self-acceptance, positive relations, environmental mastery, personal growth, autonomy, purpose in life. In total 55 pages of interview transcripts and 38 pages of narratives have been approached „with an open mind, seeking what meaning and structures emerge” (Rossman and Rallis 1998:184). All eight respondents have been assigned the code from R 1 to R 8 to refer to them in the findings.

During the analysis several things have been taken into account:

1. Horizontalization – the equality of each response and every data are essential for the conceptualization of the underlying phenomenon. During a specific period of time, immediate experience holds true and should not be biased. As Spinelli (2005: 21) has clearly stated “no hierarchical assumptions should be contrived and the researcher must acknowledge each participant equally”.
 2. Delineating to review the collected data thoroughly – the data have been first transcribed meticulously and explored comprehensively.
 3. Clustering of the isolated data to extract the essence of the lived experiences within the holistic context. In the beginning, each respondent is analyzed separately on the basis of textural and structural responses, then translated for the purpose of the article. However, due to translation there might have been possible cases of misinterpretation.
- Describing** stage of the research design has involved the interpretation of the consolidated data. Initially, at this stage, all the structural descriptions that are associated with every individual are synthesized in order to determine the psychological meaning and furthermore to describe invariable characteristics across the description. “Each structural description is then combined and is analyzed to produce a gross structural description. In innumerable cases, it is largely feasible to arrive at one generalized structural description” (Langdrige 2007: 90).
- Nevertheless, the main focus of the study has been on seeing these aspects holistically – in the centre there is a male teacher with his unique experience that is based on hedonic and eudaimonic aspects, thus the lived experiences of well-being are seen through the view of both hedonic and eudaimonic theories. Therefore, well-being is examined to reveal a deeper understanding of this concept, collect unique data, and the result of the phenomenological research will possibly encourage other individuals to realize their well-being potential, as well as future studies in this field.

3. Findings And Discussion

As it already has been stated above, the data have been analysed based on **multidimensional model of psychological well-being** (Ryff, 1995). Analyzing the well-being factor „**self-acceptance**” which means perceiving oneself and one’s personality aspects, as well as one’s good and bad virtues, in a positive way, it can be concluded that respondents show positive attitude towards themselves and their past; a sense of personal growth and the need for self-realization is evident. They are satisfied with their own character and do not want to be different. „*The characteristic feature in the situation of changes is optimism, which allowed me to become the person I am, making others feel that everything in my life is coming so easily and harmoniously, as if by itself*” (R 5). „*Everything that has happened so far, it contributes to some internal affordability to go beyond the frames*”

(R 2).

Positively assessed well-being factor „self-acceptance” indicates optimal maturity of personality and sense of self-acceptance. It can be said that respondents are proud of their life, and despite the various external circumstances they have been able to arrange their life so as to be satisfied with it. *„I had to work a lot and hard during my childhood, therefore I know that the success doesn't fall into your lap from the heaven – I have to work. It all constitutes my identity, attitude with which I go to work every day”* (R 5).

Whereas well-being factor „personal growth” is characterized by the continuous sense of development, openness to new experience, the realization of one's potential and behavioral improvement in a lifetime. This factor particularly dominates in respondents' answers and reveals their challenges, growth, ability to respond to and accept changes. *„Challenge – it is a test for yourself, either you can do it or you cannot”* (R 4).
„The challenges arise from the fact that a man is self-sufficient in some area and he wants to test himself somewhere else” (R 4).

Respondents have got a sense for continuous development, a willingness to take more and more challenges, expanding their horizon and the need to discover their ability limits. *„To try something new, check myself ... I look at some people and it seems to me: well, if he can, why cannot I?”* (R 4).

The analysis of personal growth factor shows a dominant feature of all respondents – necessity/ need to test oneself in a number of areas (not only in pedagogy). They are open to new experience and need to try one's potential in the broader perspective. Challenges become important evidence of the growth and one's abilities. *„Having decided to be a teacher or be an entrepreneur, a scientist, a national guard, you have accepted the challenge and it certainly changes your character”* (R 4).

Male teachers are willing to accept competition and test themselves in a competitive environment. It means that they do not exclude competition as mode of action, where they may develop themselves and improve their performance. *„Who wins”? I can be one of winners, and not worse.... the urge to check oneself whether you are suitable for the labor market or not”* (R 4).

Male teachers accept situations where they can improvise, for example, to do spontaneous things during lessons. By the time and experience this improvisation gets stronger and more successful. *„I have noticed that I act outside that lesson plan and I can freely invent task in a particular lesson”* (R 2). It can be said that personal growth is a significant factor present in the male teachers' well-being.

The factor of „purpose in life” confirms determination, a clear understanding of one's goal in life, a sense of direction and confidence in life. Respondents reveal their purpose of growth or goal – that they can still do something important in this world. Their position clearly reveals they do not want to be only teachers all their lives and work at school only. They have a desire to participate in some parallel activities. *„I stand by the idea that I would love to work at school, but not the whole week, I would say for 2 days. The rest of the week I would devote to the occupation where I could earn more, where I could do even more [to provide for one's living]”* (R 2).

„Therefore we have a business, I am in business. I have got my own enterprise, I work. I am in science. I would not want to spend all my life in one workplace. It is a question of competitiveness. I have always asked this question to myself: what would happen if a teacher lost job now? What happens to him? Well, he is a good mathematician, physicist, historian. What will happen to him? Will he be able to survive in the labor market or not? He will not be able to survive ...” (R 4).

„I have this feeling all the time for something new to do. I want to work in pedagogy, but I also feel that I need something else and more to do, something to look for, something connected with engineering [the respondent is a teacher of physics], it is all interesting ...” (R 2).

The respondents possess faith, hope and confidence in life that everything will be fine. They demonstrate the sense of their life guidance. It becomes evident in question „what keeps you at school?”. *„I am still at school and probably also will be at school at least for a minimum load. I am held at school by two things: one is the professional activity because it is foolish to have invested so much money and time in it and to give it up. And the second that holds me*

... I feel that children need me. I really feel that I am necessary ... you look at them and realize that you can offer children what they need" (R 4).

„I am not saying that it is good or bad, but it is clear that the teacher at all times has look to for the opportunities how not to be only a teacher, one has to look for some sort of options, professions to contribute to oneself in order to have a greater added value" (R 2).

But at the same time, respondents also show the presence of routine what they consider as a disturbing factor. Teacher's work also brings boredom and inability to create a new behavior. „I can withstand Mondays and Tuesdays, but on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays I already feel burnout. To tell the truth, I do not want anything. For about 3 months in a row, then it is ok, then you have something new to learn, and then you get in the routine, and you start getting bored by all the work that you have done" (R 2). The respondents see external causes and reasons in the routine and boredom, not the consequences of their actions and the lack of the use of one's creative potential. To reduce routine respondents are more expecting assistance from outside, they do not see themselves as a routine reduction source.

Well-being factor „**positive relations**" is seen as an empathy, attracting relationship and giving support. It is an interest in and concern for the welfare of others. The analysis of this factor in respondents' answers is detected as low and little expressed. Only two respondents (doctoral students) reveal a more tolerant vision on relations with other colleagues. They feel these relationships as self-enriching. „Others could have described me as a contributing member of a team who will be happy to spend time with them" (R 5). „I have found that I have got a constant need to communicate with someone. After longer weekend I already lack school's continual hustle with dozens of people around, all of whom have something new to tell or ask" (R 5).

It is admitted that due to interpersonal relationships, the respondent has learnt a new behavior that ensures the increase of his well-being. „The moment of wisdom – when you have learnt not to speak out what is on the tip of the tongue ... I'm not doing it anymore because I understand that I am to some extent, directly or indirectly representing my working place" (R 4).

„Often it is that I say everything is fine, but others get to suffer. This is the wisdom that has come to me ..." (R 4). The evidence of some personal and professional maturity is also the fact that people can maintain positive relationships with others, even if opinions remain different, or they have to give up their positions. „...you realize that other people are even true. Although they are not comfortable and pleasant" (R 4).

However, on the whole respondents describe relationships in the workplace (at school) as competitive where each one is more concerned about own welfare, not others. „In reality, there is no cooperation, not only among men, but simply among teachers" (R 4).

„Cooperation, which we understand in a modern context, as some kind of think tanks, ... – there is no. There is no, absolutely not" (R 2).

At the same time all 8 respondents show close cooperation and positive mutual relationships with students. It is admitted that students are easier to come to an agreement with and they easier take on new challenges, new activities that are outside the standard and programmes. This proves male teachers' need to experience the challenge, the desire to change the borders and rules. Unable to realize these needs in cooperation with teachers they are looking for allies among students which are more open than colleagues. „There is no feeling that approaching them (the administration) with your problem, they will help you. Well, it is twice [at the end of April]

I have spoken to head mistress during the year" (R 2).

„I have worked there for a year, but most of the teachers I do not know. Maybe I would recognize them passing by, but as to what their names are... mostly no" (R 3).

„And if you do not bother the administration yourself, no cooperation will happen" (R 4).

„Do your job, if there are any problems, you receive remark, then you make some amendments. It is all the cooperation" (R 2).

Probably due to the lack of formal negotiation and communication among teachers, male teachers show pronounced need for a clearly defined and certain regulations, external rules. In case of no daily cooperation and communication, there is a need for clear rules of the game.

Well-being factor „**autonomy**” is revealed in human judgments and independence, in the ability to resist public pressure and the ability to regulate their own behavior, as well as the ability to think and act in the selected direction. „*My experience and my point of view have toughened me so far that - yes, I have got my own opinion. I have got it, but it has not formed just because I like or dislike someone. This is my opinion ... if anyone thinks differently, please provide your arguments. But so far I have not heard any arguments against it*” (R 4).

„*Teacher’s profession fully reflects me because I can express myself there, I am free...*” (R 4).

„*To tell the truth teacher is already independent in his performance, he has got ... guidelines, he observes them, but a way of performing ..., it’s interesting ...*” (R 4).

Male teachers show greater rigor in their conviction, individual autonomy, not expecting and without requiring support for friendly collegial relationships. For people who are aware of the meaning of life, autonomy is an important issue, in particular being aware that *I can do myself, I can manage it, I am good at it, I myself take decisions that give results.*

„... *and it is not always for better. Not always. I cannot say that everything that has happened to me, happened to better but the best thing about this all is that our wealth is our experience*” (R 4).

It is also recognized that directness characteristic to respondents has not always given positive results.

„*I am used to criticize tougher than maybe in the given situation it is required. Usually, immediately realize it, regret and apologize, but I have not yet developed the mechanism to hold tongue first*” (R 5).

„*Of course, maybe I am not enjoyable, I am not comfortable, and then at the end I hurt myself, as being consistent in one’s conviction you do not have buddy relationships. You just do what you are doing and you might have got more enemies than friends. I guess this is hard to avoid*” (R 4).

Well-being factor „**environmental mastery**” reveals how a man and his activities may affect the processes happening around, it is mastery and competence to effectively manage and use the environment, to control the complex flow of information. It particularly applies to those activities a person can manage and master. The respondents demonstrate it through relationships with others and the need for clear rules of the game. „*The discipline is at the highest level during my lessons. I keep my order and I have a strict order, especially in basic school ... then you see and feel that the students need order*” (R 4).

Male teachers have a chance to speak from their positions. „*I can easily talk about things, trying at the moment in particular to explain the male perspective ... and it is my advantage*” (R 4).

„*I feel some kind of order and rules at school, it is a real system. People in this system need to be able to read these rules, understand them*” (R 2).

Respondents demonstrate low sense of belonging to a team of teachers and school. „... *finally there was an argument. They (the school) have their own policy ... Thus, it came that I had to go every week and explain why I assess students like that*” (R 3).

„*You are the small landlord of the class and that is it. And you do not feel you belong to the team, the whole school team*” (R 3). It is recognized that there are situations which teacher is unable to change, and that causes some regret, sorrow and the sense of powerlessness. „*Sad, if you have to take the role of the missing family member for the child. Especially when a child grows up without a father and seeks to see the model of male’s behavior in male teachers*” (R 6).

4. Conclusions

When analyzing the data on male teachers’ well-being, it can be said that it is essential for them to realize their potential and abilities, accept challenges and propose changes. Viewing this issue from the aspect of professional identity, they prefer career challenges, not routine and predictable work. As a result, the school may not become the only job to feel belonging to. The need for challenges, being in movement encourages male teachers to act more in other areas, not related to pedagogy. They prefer functioning in a number of areas that provide satisfaction for both spiritual growth and versatility and financial security. There is an urge to test oneself and provide for one’s living, but it also does not mean that it would be a chaotic functioning. Respondents admit they know themselves, therefore they choose to realize themselves in the areas that they are good at and interested in. The financial aspect is not always decisive. Male teachers link it with their “personal growth” and the meaning of life. One more aspect that characterizes male teachers is directness and concreteness. „*A man is more pragmatic. Males will not cuddle children. They are not*

familiar with cuddling” (R 4). However, as male respondents say being direct and straightforward, they sometimes get into trouble and that does not necessarily lead to a positive result.

“Not knowing the situation and being direct, you can hurt another person ...” (R 5). Concreteness is characteristic to clear school rules for them as teachers, and male teachers implement the same in their lessons: set the rules and require students to obey these rules. As acknowledged by the respondents, it creates the feeling of dignity and authority towards teachers. The importance of authority is acknowledged by respondents stating that it contributes

“to transferring their own identity and learning about the unknown and invisible for themselves and recording new or forgotten knowledge to their experience” (R 5).

Little expressed is male teachers’ need for positive relationships with others (school colleagues). In positive peer relations, the information exchange contributes to the sense of belonging to a group, but without such relationships, there is no chance to get to know each other, no loyalty to the workplace develops. That could be the reason male teachers point to the need for clear external regulations, standards, allowing them to operate in an environment where they do not need to read the informal signals: “speaking in a roundabout way”, “through the flowers”, “speaking indirectly, without calling a spade a spade”.

However, there can be seen a contradiction – there is the need for clearly set and external rules, at the same time the need for challenges and changes, as routine makes them bored. Thus, the question arises what strategies male teachers use to get out of this situation or find challenge at school. Referring to the nature of professional identity, which expects to explore and know oneself, it can be said the better the man knows himself, the easier it is to find solutions to his challenges. The more one knows oneself and listens to one’s inner voice, the better he is able to change his attitude to the surrounding world. This ability to accept and deal with challenges, to implement the changes, evolves and changes with the accumulated life experience. It is the unconscious “I” answer to the demands of reality.

What is more, irrelevant to the factors influencing male teachers’ well-being, to the question whether and how they have experienced the privilege of being a teacher at school, all respondents clearly state they have felt this advantage. „Yes, of course, of course. It's easy to be a man ... at school. You are treated a little bit differently ... well, in any case, the attitude differs: ... “we do not touch you, you are in our “red book” (R 4).

“I assume that, yes ... I'm a man and I am employed at school without questioning. I understand that it is a kind of advantage ...” (R 2).

“When I called for an interview, the first question – oh, since you are a man, then you have a preference...” (R 3). “In education a man has got a preference, the majority of the heads of educational institutions, are still sticking to the idea that male teacher raises the attractiveness of educational institution and indicates its competitiveness. I have personally experienced the advantage, male teachers are brought out and shown as an achievement of the educational institution” (R 7).

Thus, the well-being of male teachers in the professional identity context can be characterized by the following key words: directness, subjective challenges, discipline and order, authority, sense of belonging and sensitiveness towards the expectations of the society.

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