



PROFESSIONAL MOBILITY OF TEACHERS, AND EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL MOBILITY OF STUDENTS IN POLAND¹

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Abstract. The article presents theoretical and practical aspects of the professional mobility of teachers and the educational and professional mobility of students in Poland. Describing the theoretical aspects, attention was drawn to two types of social mobility: horizontal mobility and vertical mobility. Some psychological consequences of professional mobility are captured, including the feeling of relative depravity and relative satisfaction. Attention was also paid to the economic, political and technological factors that determine professional mobility. The practical aspects of mobility are presented on three levels. At the level of transnational teacher mobility, the trends in a given phenomenon are described. In terms of the mobility of Polish teachers, attention was paid to mobility in the context of professional promotion. In the area of educational and professional mobility of the Polish youth, some EU and government programs were presented, which supported both the mobility of students and the mobility of the teaching staff.

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MOBILNOŚĆ ZAWODOWA NAUCZYCIELI ORAZ EDUKACYJNO-ZAWODOWA UCZNIÓW W POLSCE

Słowa kluczowe: mobilność zawodowa nauczycieli, mobilność edukacyjno-zawodowa uczniów, psychologiczne aspekty mobilności, determinanty mobilności zawodowej, programy wspierające mobilność zawodową

Streszczenie. W artykule przedstawiono teoretyczne i praktyczne aspekty mobilności zawodowej nauczycieli oraz mobilności edukacyjno-zawodowej uczniów w Polsce. Opisuując teoretyczne aspekty zwrócono uwagę na dwa rodzaje ruchliwości społecznej: ruchliwość horyzontalną oraz ruchliwość wertykalną. Ujęto niektóre psychologiczne następstwa mobilności zawodowej, między innymi poczucie relatywnej deprawacji i względnej satysfakcji. Zwrócono także uwagę na czynniki ekonomiczne, polityczne oraz technologiczne, które determinują mobilność zawodową. Praktyczne aspekty mobilności przedstawiono w kilku płaszczyznach. W płaszczyźnie transnarodowej mobilności nauczycieli opisano zarysowujące się tendencje danego zjawiska. W płaszczyźnie mobilności polskich nauczycieli zwrócono uwagę na mobilność w kontekście awansu zawodowego. W płaszczyźnie mobilności edukacyjno-zawodowej polskiej młodzieży zaprezentowano niektóre programy unijne oraz rządowe, które wspierały zarówno mobilność uczniów, jak i mobilność kadry pedagogicznej.

Introduction

Mobility is a multidirectional, multifaceted and interdisciplinary concept. The social science literature (and beyond) discusses mobility issues such as: “intellectual mobility”; “mobility of objects”; “imaginative mobility” – generated by television, radio, and the Internet and giving individuals the ability to make imaginative journeys (Urry, 2009), “mobility of money” (Sassen, 2007), “mobility of technology”, “mobility of people” (Okólski, Fihel, 2012) and others.

I will limit myself to the mobility of people. At the outset, it is worth noting that in the literature, the word mobility is replaced by “movability”, and the term mobility means “social mobility” and/or “occupational mobility”. In addition, “social movability” is equated with “occupational mobility”. As Zbigniew Sawiński and Henryk Domański point out, occupation is an indicator of many features of the social position of individuals, thus identifying well their place in a given social system. Staying in line with tradition, social movability is identified with changes in occupational position (Sawiński, Domański, 1986).

The classic definition of mobility is considered to be the theorem, in which mobility is understood as any movement of an individual or social object from one position to another (Sorokin, 1959).

Study material and discussion

Purpose of the study

The aim of the study was to present selected aspects of professional mobility: to describe the trend of transnational professional mobility of teachers in the European area, to analyse the path of professional mobility of Polish teachers in the context of their professional advancement, and to describe the possibilities of educational and professional mobility of schoolchildren.

Theoretical foundations and research methods

Mobility considered both in the context of spatial mobility – migration – and in the context of social mobility is presented in the works of Grażyna Firlit-Fesnak (2016); Justyna Godlewska-Szyrkowa (2016); Emilia Jaroszewska (2016); Łukasz Łotocki (2016); Dariusz Niedźwiedzki (2010); Saskia Sassen (2007); John Urra (2009); Piotr W. Zawadzki (2016); Cezary Żołędowski (2016), and others. A small amount of research has been devoted to the issue of occupational mobility (Domański, 2004; Sawinski, 1986; Suchar, 2010 et al.). However, there has been relatively little research describing the professional mobility of teachers and the educational and professional mobility of schoolchildren (Duda, 2018; Jaworska, 1995 et al.), which encouraged the author to write this article.

Finding the only right way – a research method for gaining knowledge about teacher and student mobility – proved to be a challenging task. I will point out that pedagogy has adopted and developed, according to its own criteria (as well as needs), research concepts and techniques from psychology and sociology. Taking into account the different pedagogical theoretical currents, it is difficult to derive research methods from specific scientific positions. In the science of education, upbringing and training in scientific concepts, there is a loose connection between theory and method (Krüger, 2007).

In analysing the theoretical and practical aspects of teachers' professional mobility and students' educational and vocational mobility, several research methods have been used.

One method of data collection is the monographic method. As Albert Wojciech Maszke points out: “a common feature of all interpretations concerning the concept of the monographic method is that they are concerned with a one-sided description of an institution, organisation or phenomenon: gr. *monos* = only, *grapho* = I write” (Maszke, 2008, p. 159). Taking into account the fact that knowledge was obtained about only one phenomenon, namely professional mobility, in addition to a strictly defined scope – professional mobility of teachers and educational and professional mobility of students, we can conclude that the method is useful for data collection.

Another research method is that of searching secondary sources. “Secondary sources are data sets found by the researcher that are material traces of human activity” (Rubacha, 2008, p. 157). To clarify what is a secondary source, it is worth providing a brief explanation of what is a primary source. Primary sources include the people surveyed. All data collection methods that rely on primary sources involve activating an interviewee and obtaining data from them (Rubacha, 2008).

Mieczysław Łobocki refers to an analogous way of obtaining knowledge as document analysis. He points out that the documents included in the analysis may take the form of written, digital or image-sound documents. According to Łobocki, document analysis has the character of a complementary rather than a primary method. This is because of the ambiguous interpretation of the materials under study (Łobocki, 2004).

German scholarly sources classify document analysis as a non-reactive method, pointing out that “non-reactive methods are those in which the researcher is not a participant in a given social situation when acquiring data, but works on material already at their disposal” (Krüger, 2007, p. 166).

Due to the fact that all data were obtained indirectly (from academic sources and official documents) and not directly through interviews or questionnaires, it is obvious that the method used in the study can be described as desk research, a non-reactive method or document analysis.

When analysing the career path of teachers in Polish and Ukrainian educational institutions, a comparative method was used. On the one hand, comparing and describing (even to a small extent) the constituent elements of the two different education systems is impossible without using this method. On the other hand, “comparative research is most often primarily about knowing more about education in other countries (especially our neighbours), directing attention to the most valuable achievements (learning from others), in order to properly

promote their own models of educational activities in other countries [...]” (Niemiec, 2011, p. 24).

The existing complexities regarding the selection of research methods are worth summarising with a statement emphasising that “in pedagogy, we encounter complete freedom in defining research methods, techniques and tools. Although the ambiguities in this regard do not determine the scientific effects of pedagogical research – within the discipline itself they deprive the conceptual apparatus of the value of universality and lead to misunderstandings” (Pilch, Bauman, 2001, p. 70).

In the issues presented, the most important premise is that the research methods used do not always determine the effects of pedagogical research. The empirical material collected is more valuable than the explicit identification of the method by which it was obtained.

Theoretical aspects of occupational mobility

According to Henryk Domański, we distinguish between two types of mobility: *horizontal mobility* and *vertical mobility*. Horizontal mobility means “the transition of an individual or social object from one group to another group situated at the same level” (Domański, 2004, pp. 13-14). An example of horizontal mobility could be a change of job within the same socio-professional category (e.g. within the intelligence category). The second type of mobility is vertical mobility. It consists of moving from one social stratum and/or occupational category to another (Domański, 2004). An example of vertical mobility could be the transition from the category of unskilled workers to the category of skilled workers or the transition from the category of office workers to the category of directors. Vertical mobility does not just mean upward movement. It also takes into account the downward movement to a lower social position or a lower job title.

Job mobility is characterised by certain psychological aspects. The psychological consequences induced in the personality as a result of job mobility include *a sense of relative depravity and relative satisfaction* (Remer, 1980). Analysing these from the point of view of the individual employee, we can consider that a sense of relative depravity is a sense of reduction in one’s own professional position within one’s own or the new work environment – in a narrower context and/or one’s social position – in a broader context, then as a sense of relative satisfaction is a sense of promotion, an elevation of one’s professional position

and/or one's social position. Both of these psychological consequences affect an individual's sense of worth.

A change of job affects the individual's psyche and modifies his or her character traits. On the other hand, an individual's personality is also related to how often he or she changes employers. As Marek Suchar points out, "in 2007, psychologists from the University of Minnesota published the results of their study on the relationship between personality traits and frequency of job change. They found that those who change jobs more frequently than others are characterised by higher extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness than others" (Suchar, 2010, p. 39). Based on this research, we can surmise that open-minded, self-confident, extroverted individuals are more likely to experience relative satisfaction than relative depravity when changing jobs. The psychological consequences in such people are determined by internal rather than external motives.

Another aspect of job mobility is the factors that stimulate the mobility in question. Determinants of mobility (occupational mobility), both horizontal and vertical, include:

- 1) *economic factors*. They result from changes in the global economy, the reforming of a country's economy, as well as changes related to the restructuring of a company or institution (Duda, 2018). Professional mobility under the influence of a given factor is treated as a condition for increasing the efficiency of both the enterprise, the institution and the efficiency of the employee themselves;
- 2) *political factors*. Job mobility is heavily influenced by a number of legal acts adopted by the ruling political parties. From the individual's point of view, enacted laws and regulations create the possibility to move up the social hierarchy and open up opportunities for career advancement (Domański, 2004);
- 3) *technological factors*. Analysing the correlations between professional mobility and the vocational education system, Waldemar Furmanek points out that "the basic challenge for new educational solutions should result from such a principle of organisation of education in the information society, which will make it possible to successfully – every 5 to 10 years – change a job position, profession, occupation, professional competence" (Furmanek, 2010, pp. 184-185).

Accepting the above thesis, I will also draw attention to the fact that “the civilisational environment in which we live clearly defines our professional development” (Osmańska-Furmanek, 2003, p. 141).

At this point, it is worth pointing out that the social transformations taking place under the influence of political, economic factors and technological progress have become the reason not only for occupational mobility but also for the reorganisation of the education system in Poland (Furmanek, 2010; Gesicki, 2002; Hnatiuk, 2016), Ukraine (Hnatiuk, 2017; Hrynevych, 2015; Nyczkało, Szlosek, 2008), and many other countries.

Practical aspects of professional and educational-vocational mobility

Practical aspects of mobility are presented in several planes: in the plane of international mobility, in the plane of Polish teachers’ mobility in the context of their professional advancement and in the plane of educational-professional mobility of students.

At the first level, the main findings and general trends of teacher mobility within the European Union will be presented. I will limit the second tier to the mobility of Polish general school teachers. I will present opportunities for the *horizontal mobility* of teaching staff in the social space by analysing their career progression path. The third plane I will define around the educational and professional mobility of students of vocational schools.²

Teacher mobility within the European Union

When analysing teacher mobility in an international context, it is worth presenting both the Conclusions of the Council of the European Union and the results of a report published in 2015 in English, titled *The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies*. In Polish, the report in question was published a year later, under the title *Zawód nauczyciela w Europie: polityka, praktyka i obiór społeczny*. The main findings of the Council of the European Union highlighted the need to gradually extend the professional mobility of teachers so that periods of study abroad become the rule rather than the exception (Council of the European Union, 2009). The report describes the main objectives of teacher mobility and the scale of the phenomenon of transnational teacher

² The Act of 14 December 2016 – *Education Law* – changed the structure of the school system and introduced new solutions to vocational education. Basic vocational schools were abolished (as of 31 August 2019), and industry schools of the first and second degree were created in their place (Dz.U. 2017, item 59).

mobility is presented through numerical values. It points out, among other things, that:

- 1) in 2013, on an EU scale, the percentage of secondary school teachers who went abroad for professional purposes during their training phase was 5.9%, during their professional work it was 12.4%, and 3.6% at both stages (both as teachers and students);
- 2) teachers of modern foreign languages travelled abroad for professional mobility more often than teachers of other subjects. At the EU level, their share of the professional group was over 50%. In comparison, the percentage of social science teachers was 25%, and 20% for science and mathematics teachers;
- 3) The main reasons for teachers' professional mobility abroad were:
 - accompanying travelling students (44.2%),
 - learning languages (39.6%),
 - studying for teacher training (37.8%),
 - establishing contacts with another school (32.2%)
 - and others (European Commission, 2015).

The results of the teacher professional mobility survey will be clearer if we refer to the 2022 Conclusions of the Council of the European Union and the results of a similar report published in 2021.

One of the main findings of the Council of the European Union is the recognition that peer exchanges of views and experiences among teachers contribute to their professional development at all levels of education and in-service training (Council of the European Union, 2022). In contrast, the 2021 Eurydice report *Teachers in Europe: Careers, Development and Well-being* revealed that:

- 40.9 per cent of teachers in the EU in 2018 had the experience of educational and professional mobility (as a student), professional mobility (as a teacher) or both;
- Teacher mobility largely depends on the nature of the subjects taught. Within the teaching community, language teachers account for the largest percentage of participation in programmes. Nevertheless, almost 30% of teachers of modern foreign languages have never been abroad to improve their language competencies;
- The reasons for international teacher mobility vary. If it is for an educational purpose, most teachers attend courses, while observation of the teaching process is less common (Council of the European Union, 2022).

An analysis of EU documents setting the direction and trend of international teacher mobility gives grounds to argue that:

1. Teacher mobility is one of the priority tasks of the European Union.
2. The proportion of secondary school teachers participating in EU programmes (promoting and supporting international mobility) is gradually increasing. Between 2013 and 2018, teacher mobility increased by 16% (European Commission, 2021).
3. The largest subject group going abroad for professional purposes are the teachers of modern foreign languages. Their numbers are sometimes twice as high as that of science or social studies teachers.
4. The most common reason for teacher mobility in 2013 was to accompany travelling students. In these situations, only 8.1% of mobile teachers declared going abroad to teach other subjects (European Commission, 2015).

Teacher mobility in the context of professional advancement

Teacher mobility is the phenomenon of changing professional positions within the structure of the education system. The topic of teacher mobility is widely discussed in the literature. However, the basic question remains: what opportunities for teachers' professional mobility are provided by the current education system? Therefore, it is worth not only tracing the path of professional mobility of teachers in the Polish education system but also comparing it with the path of mobility in another education system. The Ukrainian education system was chosen for comparison. The opportunities for the professional advancement (professional mobility) of teachers in the Polish and Ukrainian education systems are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The career progression path for teachers in Poland and Ukraine

The career progression path for teachers in the Polish education system Qualification category	The career progression path for teachers in the Ukrainian education system Qualification category
trainee teacher	specialist
contractual teacher	second-degree specialist
nominated teacher	first-degree specialist (senior teacher)
certified teacher	(higher-level specialist) senior specialist (senior teacher, methodologist teacher)

Source: own compilation based on Baranski et al. (2014); Ministerstwo Oswity i Nauky Ukrainy (2010).

A comparative analysis of the professional mobility of general school teachers gives grounds to claim that in both Poland and Ukraine, the mobility in question

coincides with their career advancement path. However, with deeper analysis, we see differences.

In Poland, the traineeship for the degree of contract teacher lasts 9 months, and for the degrees of appointed teacher and certified teacher 2 years and 9 months. A contract teacher can start the seniority for the rank of appointed teacher after having worked at the school for at least 2 years from the date of the previous professional promotion. In the case of an appointed teacher seeking to commence seniority for the degree of a certified teacher, the period of the enforced break in professional promotion is reduced to one year (Baranski, Szymanska, Rozwadowska-Skrzeczynska, 2014).

Attestation of teachers in Ukraine is carried out in ordinary mode (once every 5 years) or at the employee's request in extraordinary mode (in a shorter period, but not earlier than 2 years after the previous attestation). For attestation of pedagogical employees, Level I attestation commissions are established. The attestation committee has the right to attest (examine) an employee in order to:

- check the correctness of the performance of the duties of the assigned position;
- attest an employee to the appropriate level of professional advancement (qualification category);
- grant teachers of all faculties (specialities) the title:
 - senior teacher,
 - teacher-methodist (Ministry of Education of Ukraine, 2010).

On the basis of the material collected, it was found that in Ukraine, the professional mobility pathway for education workers is more extended. A Ukrainian teacher, in addition to obtaining a higher qualification category, also has the opportunity to acquire a professional title. A pedagogical employee can apply for the title of “senior teacher” on the condition that he or she has obtained the qualification category “1st – degree specialist”. Correspondingly, the title of “teacher-methodist” can be applied under the qualification category “higher-level specialist”. Another peculiarity of the professional mobility of Ukrainian pedagogical employees is that attestation is carried out for two reasons: because of the expressed will (by the teacher) to obtain a higher qualification category and because of the verification (by the supervisory authorities) of the (substantive) legitimacy of the job entrusted to the teacher. The solutions introduced, namely, the creation of new mechanisms for the professional mobility of teachers aimed at increasing the effectiveness of both teaching staff and educational institutions.

Other aspects of teacher mobility

According to other definitions, professional mobility is “professional flexibility, allowing one to adapt to functioning in the area of new job requirements” (Duda, 2018, p. 45). Teachers are stimulated to professional flexibility not so much by new job requirements, but by new requirements related to the changing reality. A good example of professional (mobility) flexibility is the participation of teaching staff in the Erasmus+ programme. In Poland, projects in the Erasmus+ programme under *Action 1 Mobility of School Education Personnel*, among others, were implemented between 2014 and 2018. The average grant per project was EUR 24 934. Average co-financing per participant – EUR 2172. The total number of funded mobilities was 8550 (Morawicz, Przemieniecka, Wojciechowska, 2018). As part of the project, participants undertook *eTwinning*³ cooperation, as well as online courses.

It is worth noting that in addition to the eTwinning platform, the school community also uses the *School Education Gateway* (SEG) online platform. The main difference between the platforms is that “the eTwinning platform is only available to teaching staff, while the SEG can be used by anyone interested in school education” (Morawicz, Przemieniecka, Wojciechowska, 2018, p. 43).

Educational and professional mobility of students and secondary school graduates

Another plane of mobility (movability) is the educational-occupational mobility of young people. Analysing this type of mobility, it is difficult not to agree with the views of Wioletta Duda, who believes that “young people must not content themselves with education in one direction, but must combine many skills, be aware of constant improvement, and be ready to change their place of work and profession. If a school is to prepare an employee for work [...], it must prepare them for mobility. At the same time, it must itself be mobile – its employees, its staff, its director and its education programme” (Duda, 2018, p. 8). It turns out that the educational and professional mobility of students is to some extent coupled with the mobility of the school, in particular the mobility of its

³ *eTwinning* is a European Union programme that enables young people and teachers from schools and kindergartens across Europe (and beyond) to carry out international and national inter-school projects via the Internet. In addition to the 27 Member States of the European Union, countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey also participate in the programme. In 2013, the programme was expanded to include 8 countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon (*Czym jest eTwinning*).

teaching staff. The saying that teachers should be good role models is becoming more relevant.

The educational and professional mobility of young people is implemented, among others, through:

- Erasmus+ programme. Under *Action 1 Learning Mobility*, vocational learners and graduates can gain practical work experience through placements in enterprises or vocational training institutions in another European Union country (FRSE, 2021).
- Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE), which manages the largest European educational programmes in Poland and facilitates the development of competencies at all ages. Between 2021 and 2027, the foundation will allocate almost €2 billion to achieve its goals (FRSE, 2021). I will highlight one of the foundation's projects, *Transnational Student Mobility*, which implements the idea of learning mobility for schoolchildren. Among other things, its description notes that participation in the project enables students to improve their key competencies through joint content-related activities with peers from another EU country. The project application form is posted at the institution's website.
- VCC Foundation, which issues the *Vocational Competence Certificate* (VCC) through VCC Examination Partners. The VCC certificate is a document that confirms that a person has acquired a given professional qualification or increased an early qualification. Such a certificate enables the employer to obtain reliable information about the employee's competencies and the employee to be more professionally mobile (ISOFT, 2021).

Mention should also be made of programmes that were implemented earlier – in the first decade of this century. They supported the professional mobility of both the teaching staff and young people and adults. Here is a list of some of them:

- SOCRATES, including its programmes:
 - Comenius (cooperation between schools and teacher training establishments),
 - Lingua (cooperation on foreign language skills),
 - Erasmus (cooperation between universities),
 - Grundtvig (cooperation in adult education),
 - Minerwa (cooperation in information technology),
 - Arion (study visits for educational executives),
 - Naric (cooperation on recognition and comparability of education),

- Eurydice (information network on education systems);
- LEONARDO da VINCI;
- YOUTH;
- TEMPUS III (Sielatycki, 2000).

The above-mentioned programmes have brought tangible benefits both to educational institutions, because they have enriched the experience of the school community and to teachers, as they have provided direct contact with other education systems, and stimulated exchanges of views and reflection on their own teaching (European Commission, 2015). However, they have benefited schoolchildren the most. Studies describing the impact of overseas placements on the competencies of students and secondary school graduates point out that:

- transnational mobility significantly increases young people’s language competencies. More than 97% of respondents confirmed that participation in a placement abroad has a positive impact on their language competencies;
- going on internships and placements abroad allows for the development of many soft competencies, such as problem-solving skills, and the ability to work in teams or to cope with difficult situations. More than 51% of respondents said that participation in an internship abroad helped them to better manage their independent learning process;
- The nature of professional mobility also contributes to the participants’ knowledge and professional competencies. However, in relation to the industries in which the placements are carried out, this transfer of knowledge is uneven. In the mechanical industry, individual professional competencies were developed by more than 75 per cent of the respondents, while in the administrative and office industry it was around 30 per cent (Dąbrowska-Resiak, Jeżowski, Pachocki, 2018).

It should be emphasised that numerous programmes and projects stimulating the international mobility of Polish youth are to a large extent financed by the European Union. To give one example: for the implementation of the Transnational Student Mobility project, PLN 6,012,043.18 was allocated from the state budget (under targeted grants) and PLN 99,227,679.82 from the European Social Fund. Project implementation period from 1 September 2018 to 31 December 2023 [FRSE].

Conclusions

Mobility is an interdisciplinary concept. On a theoretical level, we can approach occupational mobility (movability) through the prism of *sociology* to evaluate new research methods and the impact of social factors on occupational mobility; *psychology*, to describe feelings of anxiety, fear, and satisfaction, which are associated with a change of education, profession and job; *pedagogy*, to analyse the path of occupational mobility of a teacher or the possibilities of his/her further education, and similar disciplines. On another level, we can analyse the educational and professional mobility of pupils and secondary school graduates: comparing governmental and EU programmes supporting the mobility of Polish young people and reflecting on educational programmes that enable rapid retraining, and a change of profession. These levels overlap, and in some cases, the expansion of one is conditioned by the dynamics of the other, and vice versa.

In practice, occupational mobility is defined in terms of new skills, occupational flexibility, and work efficiency. National authorities and local governments are realising that in a changing labour market, professional mobility is one of the conditions for labour efficiency, and government and EU programmes are creating opportunities to increase this efficiency and enhance the competencies of schoolchildren.

I would add that the professional mobility of teachers and the educational and vocational mobility of pupils are part of the concept of measures aimed at obtaining a well-qualified worker. A well-qualified worker not only meets the needs of the labour market but also contributes to the country's economic growth.

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