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Jana Hanuliaková–Dáša Porubčanová

Positive Education

The Axiom of Contemporary
Upbringing and Education



KÁROLI GÁSPÁR UNIVERSITY
OF THE REFORMED CHURCH
IN HUNGARY

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Positive Education. The axiom of contemporary upbringing and education

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Jana Hanuliaková – Dáša Porubčanová

POSITIVE EDUCATION



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The Axiom of Contemporary Upbringing and Education



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INTRODUCTION

The entry of positive psychology into the educational process brings about the initiation of a significant change in teachers' approach. Reorientation means shifting from traditional approaches to developing the best qualities of students, people and society. The direction of educational work is focused on supporting such teaching, which supports the mental health of students – youth and adults alike.

Positive psychology, which began to develop significantly in the third millennium, and in Slovakia especially in the last ten years, calls for emphasis to be placed on the positive areas, the positive aspects of human life. Experts who deal with education and its determinants focus on finding the context, connections and interdependence of the elements of positive psychology and education. The time a student spends in the school and the environment there affect his out-of-school life.

Phenomena such as well-being, contentment, happiness, enthusiasm, resilience, love, friendship, joy, optimism, humour, resilience, altruism, empathy, forgiveness, spirituality, and the meaning of life are part of everyone's daily activities. For this reason, we consider it important that teachers should begin to deal with this phenomenon within their didactic work in the educational environment. The movement of positive psychology does not negate, does not deny the existence of deficits, difficulties, disorders, or problems in the lives of individuals, but directs activity, activities to the optimal functioning of not only students but also all actors in school life to define the resources that surround it, and then these resources will develop. Martin Seligman, the founder of positive psychology, emphasized that positive psychology uses the same set of tools as traditional psychology, so there is no need to create a new construct for positive psychology. All that is needed is to “change the object of interest” – that is, to go primarily from the “correction” of what is bad and negative in life to the creation, and development of what is best in life. It is, therefore, a matter of salutogenesis in life, the support of individual sources of health, human strengths, and the development of what potentially leads to a good quality of life in families, schools, and workplaces. It is about supporting the optimal functioning of the human being, as well as his faith and hope that it will be successful. The direction of positive education means, above all, the search for, detection, identification and development of positive possibilities of the pupil, not only within the framework of his cognization, but also motivation, emotionalization, socialization, and self-regulation.

As a part of the new trend, Seligman identifies three basic pillars:

Pillar 1: the use of positive emotions,

Pillar 2: the use of positive personality traits – qualities, abilities, and talents,

Pillar 3: the use of positive social institutions (strong family, school education and institutions supporting positive personal development and true democracy).

In the context of the text, we focus primarily on school education. Positive education puts the positive climate at the forefront, a climate where the needs and interests of the students are taken into account: positive relationships and interactions at different levels, tolerance, support for heterogeneity of ideas, and solutions, doing things in a new and radical way, solving problems based on cooperation, finding solutions to problems. With this approach, the educational process supports competencies, such as altruism, philanthropy, solidarity, self-confidence, trust in others, coping, conflict and crisis resolution, responsibility, morality, and spirituality.

The book is a set of theoretical starting points, philosophical considerations and practical views on education in a positive context, accepting the starting points of the positive psychology movement. The authors' efforts are meant to extend from theoretical starting points and research investigations to practical didactic recommendations. The book explains how it is possible to integrate elements of positive psychology and positive education into the traditional educational process.

The school as an institution is required to meet the real needs of society. Schools are the most traditional, the most conservative, the most rigid, and the most bureaucratic institutions these days. The existence of new trends, whether alternative schools, creative lessons, opportunities for individual study, or activating methods, is gradually emerging in schools. The teacher is required – not like in the past – to teach so that the student is ready to engage in a world of work, a world of further study, a world of success and disappointment. There is a question about how students can make judgments in the future when they do not have the opportunity to do so at school.

This book aims to clarify the theoretical apparatus of a positive approach to education in terms of the didactic approach of teachers.

The first part, *Positive psychology. Theoretical–philosophical basis of positive education*, contains chapters in which the authors clarify the movement of positive psychology as a theory that represents the study of human thinking, emotion and behaviour, emphasizes strengths instead of focusing on the weak and supports building the good in life, the place of correction of the evil. Representatives of positive psychology emphasize emotions during human life,

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they emphasize that the human behaviour that affects relationships creates the environment and living climate.

The second part, *Positive education. Paradigm of contemporary education*, defines the elements and principles of positive education, which has a theoretical basis in positive psychology. The education accepting positive psychology aims to achieve student success in various directions and areas. This unit also contains a selection of intervention programs that have been applied in educational practice at home and abroad.

The third part, *School – a positive institution*, defines the school as a positive space, which is a necessary condition for successful and effective positive education. In addition to the positive evaluation of the school as a space, we also speak about it as an environment that must ensure safety. Security on a social and emotional level.

The fourth part, *Positive education in pedagogical reality. Research findings*, discusses the didactic possibilities of the teacher's work in the application of positive psychology. The elaborated didactic recommendations are conceived in the areas that Zelina regard as important for positive education: cognitive development of the pupil, positive motivation, positive socialization, positive emotions, student self-regulation, the potential of the pupil in life.

The Authors

1 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Theoretical–philosophical basis of positive education



- focuses on the positive aspects of personality and the development of human potential
- responds to the general preference for the negative phenomena of human life and problem areas of the psyche
- leads to a change in lives and at the same time notes the impact on the most important turnaround, which is the benefit of the emerging young generation
- strives for a positive view of life, it is a change in the setting of perception of the reality of life moments and events with a direct impact on human prosperity
- builds a person's resilience to crises, burdens, conflicts, provides advice and procedures on how to overcome negative news and stimuli from around the world
- within education, it focuses on revealing and cultivating the positive possibilities of the student, on improving his motivational potential, on revealing possibilities in the field of cognitive, social, emotional and self-regulatory

A person as specific individuality and uniqueness is part of many interactions at the level of the cognitive and emotional-will dimension.

At present, scientists in the field of positive psychology are scientifically studying the various emotional, intellectual and social areas of young human life and their impact on a happy experience following the desire for knowledge, love, wisdom, truth, happiness, and success, after determining and achieving personal life goals. According to the above intentions, it is possible to consider positive psychology as beneficial, especially for the young generation, which wants to achieve emotional satisfaction in a full life.

According to Košťálová (2016), the psyche is an active perception of the external world of an individual, based on the properties of purposefully arranged matter, i.e. the brain, creating an image and subsequently directing behaviour and activities associated with solving existential situations in his life.

Until the end of the 20th century, as it is stated by Křivohlavý (2010), the interest of psychologists focused on the negative of psychopathological reality. This is confirmed also by Seligman’s experience in his professional practice, which focused on achieving the main aim of psychology, which is to alleviate suffering and minimize the effects of patient anxiety by eliminating the cause of the problem (Seligman, 2014).

Psychology as a science deals with a wide range of problems and defects in human life, which adversely affect the human psyche, and destroy not only the mental, and physical but also the social side of a person.

Positive psychology takes a scientific approach to the study of human thinking, emotion and behaviour, emphasizing strengths instead of focusing on the weak and building the good in life, instead of correcting the bad.

1.1 FOUNDERS OF POSITIVE EDUCATION

Positive psychology aims to be able to elevate the lives of ordinary people to a higher quality, instead of bringing those who suffer only to a normal level (Peterson et al., 2008).



Figure 1. (From above and from left:) Martin Seligman, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ed Diener, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Down: Barbara Fredrickson. Live Happy magazine, October 2013, Bill Cahalan

Decades before the definition of positive psychology, the following researchers devoted themselves to this area in terms of theoretical reflections as well as practical approaches:

Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers: Theoretically and practically, in their work with clients and research, they focused their attention on human needs and healthy human development. Humanistic psychology brought new beliefs that a person has a desire to live his life in a way that gives him the feeling that he is developing and fulfilling his potential. One is happy when one learns, improves, uses and develops one's abilities. In the Person-Centered Approach (PCA), Carl Rogers states, among other things, that authenticity (being oneself) and self-acceptance make a significant contribution to self-satisfaction and life.

Martin Seligman, President of the American Psychological Association, and founder of Positive Psychology (1999): He emphasizes the meaningfulness of being and he is the author of the 2002 theory of true happiness, which measures life satisfaction and, in a larger study from 2014, measures well-being (Seligman, 2014).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: Even before founding Positive Psychology of the Decade, he researched the so-called optimal survival, a state of mind he called FLOW. We experience FLOW during demanding activities when we concentrate fully and are relaxed. People who experience such conditions are happier because of them.

Barbara Fredrickson: In her action theory, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, she explored the importance of positive emotions, which allow people to be creative, playful, and curious, giving them opportunities to gain new physical, social and intellectual resources.

Daniel Goleman: He dealt with emotional intelligence in the positive psychology movement. He intended to seek the penetration of rational cognition into emotional life. Expressing young people's emotions is part of the process of formal and non-formal education at school and beyond, and therefore he emphasizes the need to address socio-emotional literacy. Socio-emotional literacy should be part of the school curriculum or part of the teaching and learning subjects.

The scientific and professional work of the representatives of positive psychology documents the cooperation according to the focus of their subject of research. The most extensive collaboration of the positive psychology movement is a monograph about positive psychology, written by Snyder and Lopez, to which 107 contributors contributed. Authors who contributed their thoughts are Seligman, Maddux, Wright, Lopez, Keyes, Watson, Nakamura, Csikszentmihalyi, Diener, Lucas, Fredrickson, Knapp and others. At the individual

level, Snyder and Lopez explore topics such as the identification of strengths, desire for knowledge and wisdom, hope, well-being, creativity, life optimism, subjective emotional well-being and others. At the level of interpersonal relationships, they deal with topics such as empathy and altruism, responsibility, love, compassion, friendship, forgiveness and reconciliation, moral motivation, sense of family and society, gratitude, social closeness and relationships, spirituality and others (Snyder, Lopez 2002).

Positive psychology has supporters in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic, where it is an inspiration and motivation for many teachers. From Slovakia: Slezáčková included Kováč (1997, 2001, 2007), Halama (2001, 2002, 2007) and others. From the Czech Republic, Křivohlavý (2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010), Mareš (2008, 2009, 2012), Slezáčková (2009, 2010, 2011) and many others.

1.2 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY MOVEMENT

The scientific and professional movements of positive psychology arose as a reaction to the fact of general preference for the negative phenomena of life and problem areas of the psyche. Seligman characterizes the following primary and main aims of positive psychology like this:

- understand the mental satisfaction of a person in life,
- suppress the preference for examining the negative phenomena of life,
- balancing the subject of research on the positive aspects of life, so that life is not just an ordinary experience, but a quality life.

In his research, he called for the diagnosis and provision of supportive optimal living conditions for active meaningful mental well-being. The starting point is the application of positive elements to all spheres of life in human society, not just to the individual.

Positive feelings, such as joy, humour, optimism, support of personal strengths, interest in the activity, identifying success and developing human potential and diversity, self-realization, positive social relationships, a society characterized by love, sincerity, belonging, hope, gratitude, possibilities of content necessary for healthy human prosperity (Seligman, 2014).

Every human event is limited by positive and negative emotions. There are studies by psychologists that emphasize the importance and significance of negative emotions. There is an addiction between positive and negative emotions, which is defined by the works of Slezáčková (2012), Resnicka et al. (2001), Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003), and Helda (2004).

Positive psychology focuses on mental well-being while living, and not just on understanding mental hardship and eliminating the influences that cause the condition. Positive psychology makes people happier and it eliminates the negative effects on a person's mental health. It is a scientific study of developing the potential and superposition of a person's personality, along with building the best life traits for quality living (Seligman, 2012).

The content of the term positive psychology consists of these subcategories: happiness, love, gratitude, optimism, hope, character, vitality, meaningful moments of life, and enriching relationships between people, which is the basis for optimal human development in today's modern times.

1.3 THEORIES AND RESEARCH RELATED TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

The power of emotions for human life is perceived by philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, and educators. Several representatives of the positive psychology movement were inspired by the works of ancient philosophers such as Aristotle, Hippocrates, Socrates, and Heraclitus. In their work, we find reflections on happiness, the meaning of life, moral motivation, wisdom, and spirituality. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher in his work *Nicomachean Ethics*, characterizes happiness as a virtue. When can a person be virtuous and believe that happiness will come in the form of kindness, generosity, justice, wisdom, friendship, and morality? The correct answer is the simplest: when a person's all efforts are directed toward being happy.

In 1954, Abraham Maslow was the first person who used the adjective *positive* for psychology in his book *Motivation and Personality* (Šolcová, 2005, in Slezáčková, 2012).

Theoretical and empirical studies of positive psychologists present concepts, scientific backgrounds, findings and strategies. They can be applied in everyday life, in an individual form, such as the ability to love, to show courage, to help a person to be better, to be more courteous, more tolerant, more responsible to himself, but also in family, team, nation – everywhere where people work together and live as a society.

Theoretical starting points contain conceived theories and strategies that form the basis of pedagogical reality and practice in the educational process.

Flow concept

The importance of positive psychology for human life is an inspiration, help, leadership, and a demonstration of how to achieve mental well-being in an authentic full life. Psychologist Csikszentmihalyi conceived a timeless concept

of flow, which is used by positive psychologists as well as anthropologists and sociologists, in studies of well-being or motivation. Applying the concept of flow brings a remedy to everyday life at the level of the individual or society. In his concept of flow, he works in the spheres of optimal human behaviour and living. The sense of flow summarizes positive approaches to human life, such as creativity, joy, and overall interest in life. He examined the state of the human mind in activities that create absorption, such as sports, art, games and hobbies. FLOW plays an integral part in social relationships in an individual's life. It is used in curriculum education and companies during senior staff training. The nice branch is special pedagogy, clinical psychotherapy, reeducation centres or homes for the elderly (Csikszentmihalyi, 2015).

PERMA theory

Another is the theory with five elements of PERMA. According to Seligman, it should be applied in practice in the fields of education, economics, psychotherapy, medicine and state policy. He cites, as an example, students in schools who not only acquire competencies for job success but also achieve existential satisfaction (Seligman, 2014).

He reworked his theory, which he sophisticatedly supplemented with support for twenty-four strengths and virtues, establishing the second theory of mental well-being, using the acronym PERMA for the five elements in the program.:

- P positive emotions and positive emotionality** include factors of subjective pleasant living such as pleasure, warmth, hope, satisfaction, joy, gratitude and others. Fredrickson (2001) found in his theory that positive emotions, without suppressing negative emotions, but with an increased frequency of positive emotions have an impact on the effectiveness of teenagers' learning.
- E engagement, engagement in activities** give a subjective feeling of enthusiasm, absorption, flowing, engagement of characters and personality skills. Interest and curiosity lead adolescents during education to be determined in meeting goals, challenges, and a sense of strength, and vitality (Froh et al., 2010; Hunter, Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Supporting internal motivation, interest, identifying and supporting the strengths of high-school personalities (Bakker, 2005). High-school students in positive education intervention lessons identify and analyze their strong character traits (Park, Peterson, 2005).
- R relationship (positive relationships):** quality positive interpersonal relationships, positive experiences (joy, success, kindness and others)

objectively do not exist without the company of other people. The central domain is social–emotional health and the adolescent’s ability to form and support positive interpersonal relationships. Research shows that the positive impact of social support on the social and mental health and well-being of a high-school student is clear (Bronfenbrenner, 2004). Hassed (2008) draws attention to the risk factor of social isolation for the development of adolescents and the development of depression, substance abuse, suicide and general ill-health. In schools, pupils, teachers and school staff support humour, respect and social support through discussions, where they learn to show real kindness through communication during social interactions and to sincerely and authentically support the achievements of family, friends, peers, and colleagues (Gable & Reis, 2010). Social relations are a predictor of the subjective well-being and resilience of adolescents, says Myers (2000), and meaning and life satisfaction, say Hicks & King (2009). For positive survival interventions during the education of young people without stress – see Gilman, Huebner & Furlong (2009), Paus, Keshavan, Giedd (2008), Suldo, Thalji and Ferron (2011), Keyes (2006); for school honest relationships between peers and teachers support – see Chu, Saucier, & Hafner (2010), Hawker & Boulton (2000). The overall school climate and culture indicate the living conditions of adolescents and their quality of mental health – Way, Reddy, Rhodes (2008).

M meaningfulness: positive purpose and the meaningfulness of existence contain both a subjective and an objective component, they speak about the passion and inner motivation to lead a meaningful life as an individual in society. The inner feeling of belief in meaningfulness in the education of high-school students contributes to feelings of joy, happiness, and ecstasy. In addition to the teenager and his developmental stage, interventions focus on the positive meaning and purpose of his individual as well as social existence. On when he will achieve good physical and mental health in life, high life satisfaction and strong social relationships, eliminating depression misconduct and somatic difficulties – see Cotton Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch (2009) and Damon, Menon, & Bronk (2003).

They use elements of altruism and spirituality in interventions, in the form of interviews, reflections, and examples of stories from the lives of inspiring people when they stimulate the thinking and experience of young people and their rankings of values (Waterman, Schwartz, Conti, 2008), using the strengths of the adolescent’s character and personality to help (Seligman, 2005).

A accomplishment (job success), positive success, work/study success: achieving success is a goal in many human endeavours as a lifetime, the

non-coercive success of an individual has many forms through health, property, happy family, work, study, various victories and many others (Seligman, 2014, 28–33).

Adolescent mental health is a prerequisite for effective learning (Hendren, Weisen, Orley, 1994) and, along with positive emotions during teaching, promotes creativity and flexible learning – Fredrickson (2001) What helps high-school students achieve valuable goals and uplifting success or even well-being is striving to overcome obstacles and disappointments, acquiring skills and good academic results, which all lead young people to face the challenges and be competitive workforce (Sheldon et al., 2010).

In this context, pedagogical staff attended training on effective feedback in adolescent education through the use of specific praise, focused on effort and perseverance, as opposed to praise focused on skills (Dweck, 2006).

In today's online digital age, high schools not only have the status of an institution for the provision of information and the acquisition of skills but also shape the overall personality of the young individual, in all areas of PERMA. In every area of PERMA, positive psychologists seek to intervene in the development and promotion of human characteristics based on research results. It is the results of Seligman's research that have shown that the increased well-being of adolescents increases the quality of learning because a positive mood increases the attention and motivation of high-school students, which, according to Seligman, is the main aim of traditional education. In which analytical, mechanical learning without a creative area of reasoning still prevails. Seligman recommends practising elements of positive education in creating a school climate with his PERMA model.

It develops self-knowledge in five principles: positive emotions, self-interest, interpersonal relationships, and the importance of living and fulfilling successes. According to Seligman, programs and inventions with the PERMA model are applied all over the world, in Britain, the USA, Spain, Australia and all over Europe (Seligman, 2012).

Norrish, Williamson, O'Connor, and Robinson are the main characters in research from the positive psychologists' movement, the results of which were implemented into programs and interventions. In each PERMA area, there is a holistic positive approach to school that includes explicit and implicit classroom learning throughout the school year, providing PERMA with a flexible framework for a thriving community in a positive school climate.

According to Seligman's theory of mental well-being, the object of positive psychology is to measure and strengthen: the "degree of optimal flourishing" of man in the global perception of people around the Earth. (Seligman, 2014, 40)

In the implementation of positive education, the positive psychologist and author Moore extends the traditional principles of education to the study of happiness and prosperity, using the Seligman model PERMA and the classification of character strengths and virtues of VIA (Moore, 2021). In 2015, the authors Norrish and Seligman added the sixth element of Health: aspects of positive health education are sleep, exercise and diet (Norrish & Seligman, 2015 in Moore, 2021).

In 2004 positive education programs specify the positive character of an individual's personality by classifying 6 categories of virtues and the 24 strengths of VIA by Peterson and Seligman:

The virtue of wisdom and knowledge for the cognitive aspect: the more curious and creative, with the manifestation of critical thinking, a person becomes in the course of knowledge and learning, the more actively he will love the course of cognition, gain wisdom and open the door to a more promising and meaningful future.

The virtue of courage for the emotional aspect: the more a person shows bravery, perseverance, and diligence with an honest life credo, the more he retains his vitality and integrity for the next few days.

The virtue of humanity for a social point of view: the more love he devotes, the more love he feels, he approaches others carefully, those perhaps socially weaker, in need, he shows altruism, he pays attention to his acquaintances, friends and family, when he shows emotional and social intelligence.

The virtue of justice for the civic perspective: to be an active leader, loyal, socially responsible, fair citizen and team member in building a healthy and stable society.

The virtue of temperance for the protective aspect: to be moderate, forgiving, to forgive others, to live in humility, mercy, balance, to prudently control one's behaviour, control, instincts, and self-regulation.

The virtue of transcendence for the semantic aspect: to feel hope and to experience optimistic moments in life with a sense of humour and playfulness, to be enthusiastic about beauty and perfection in life, to show gratitude, inspiration, admiration, compassion, love to seek meaning and purpose of life, i.e. spiritual spirituality through when emotional and spiritual well-being are complemented and manifested by human prosocial behaviour (Peterson, Seligman, 2004, in Taher, 2016).

According to Linkins, an important finding in the interventions of VIA's strengths in secondary education practice is the need to develop and support these positive character traits in high-school students, because these traits are not innate. Positive education aims to reveal, concretize and develop their combination according to the abilities of the adolescent (Linkins et al., 2015, in Moore, 2021).

Happiness theory (the real happiness)

The main figure of the movement, Seligman created his first theory of true happiness (2002). He divided it into three dimensions:

positive emotions,
engagement,
sense of purpose.

It depends on the subjective feeling of the person and expresses authentic decisions in which he feels good and behaves in this way, even in the future, to gain as much happiness as possible. In creating the theory, Seligman also relied on the research of his fellow scientists, such as, in the first dimension, Fredrickson's (2009) scientific research into positive emotions. In the second dimension of the flow state, Seligman collaborated with psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (2015) (Seligman, 2014).

In keeping with the requirements, positive psychology interventions for youth had to make sense. For this reason, Seligman and Peterson identified strengths based on the classification of the subject from surveys of human personalities from diverse cultures. They summarized all available literature and defined a total of twenty-four strengths of human character (Peterson, Seligman, 2004, in Slezáčková, 2012, 87–91).

Taxonomy of strengths of human personality

Cognitive area – wisdom and knowledge

1. apply creativity;
2. encourage curiosity;
3. show critical thinking;
4. have active interest in learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills;
5. have a meaningful outlook on life.

Emotional area – courage

6. show bravery;
7. train endurance, and encourage hard work;
8. live honestly;
9. maintain vitality.

Interpersonal area – humanity

10. feel love;
11. manifest altruism;
12. promote social and emotional intelligence.

Civic area – justice

13. experience citizenship;
14. impartially respect justice;
15. show leadership.

Protection area – temperance

16. forgive others;
17. live in humility;
18. make prudent decisions;
19. manage your control and self-regulation.

Area of meaning – transcendence

20. see the beauty of life;
 21. be grateful in daily life;
 22. live in hope and optimism;
 23. show a sense of humour;
 24. know the spirituality, and the beliefs of the individual.
- (Peterson, Seligman, 2004; Slezáčková, 2012, 92–94)

The presented view of a healthy and prosperous human life leads scientists to examine and apply the findings to all areas of human life, including the education of young people, which is the most strategic area for us.

Positive Emotions Theory – Broaden-and-Build Theory

In natural life, negative emotions in human beings copy our perception of the aggravated situation that their law often requires, thus justifying their presence in life.

In her practice, positive psychologist Fredrickson applied a 3 to 1 ratio for positivity. It examined the limits of the situation when an individual or group no longer showed signs of a balanced, successful, fulfilled, and satisfying life.

The ratio ranged from 2 to 1 to 11 to 1. All the results of the study below and above showed a ratio with a great discrepancy in the emotional experience of the individual and the group. Under the ratio, she showed signs of stress, aggression, nervousness, reluctance, and discomfort. The disposition of self-reflection was lacking above the ratio. Based on the results, the author recommends practicing a 3 to 1 ratio for a successful and contented human life (Fredrickson, 2009).

She found that experiencing positive emotions such as compassion, hope, and gratitude can negate fear, anxiety, and anger and have a beneficial effect on the physical human body. The author concluded that positive people are healthier and know how to cure and manage life crises more easily. Fredrickson is also known for her Broaden-and-Build Theory of 2002, namely: the “expansion and building theory” (Fredrickson, 2001, 2009; in Slezáčková, 2012, 37).

Fredrickson (2009) affirms openness of mind and behaviour, based on a positive perception of reality, creative processing of information with the consolidation of internal resources and transformation into skills, and abilities, with the development of unique life competencies. This is reflected in the good impact of positive emotions on the physical, mental, spiritual and social areas of the individual and leads to longevity. The author of the concept presents causal connections between positive and negative feelings and the behaviour of an individual. Anger exhorts a person to attack, anger urges one to correct.

The problem only arises when negative emotions are associated with specific action tendencies such as survival mechanisms. The result of the author’s research is a model that combines positive emotions into one. She found that positive emotions broaden the supply of thoughts and actions, while negative emotions narrow them. Based on the results of the research, Fredrickson determined the most satisfactory ratio between positivity and negativity in a satisfied, successful human life.

Resilience as immunity, resistance to adversity

Resilience as a topic of research concerning positive psychology is focused on its understanding as immunity, and resistance to the adversity of life, and subsequently, the results are created in specific school programs.

The proof is provided by the psychologist Philip Zimbardo, who, from the study of bad personalities and anti-social behaviour of an individual or the whole group, went on to research the conditions for building a healthy individuality with the support of resilience. His Stanford Prison Experiment is popular, in which he identifies evil emanating from the human personality,

the situation that has arisen, and the current cultural and social system (Zimbardo, 2014; in Zelina, 2018).

In contrast, in the Heroic Imagination Project, the author focuses on building a healthy personality, supports the courage of the heroes of ordinary days and draws attention to the apathy of passers-by (bystanders). With the project, the authors cultivate positive patterns in youth (Franco, Allison, Kinsella et al., 2016; Zimbardo, 2014, in Janštová, Slezáčková, 2018).

According to Slezáčková, the research of psychologists from the positive psychology movement also focused on the following aspects of young people's lives.

Table 1. An overview of theoretical and empirical works related to positive psychology

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Diener, Suh, Lucas, Smith (1999) | personal satisfaction, subjective well-being, long-term happiness |
| Peterson (1991) Seligman (1999, 2004) Linley (2010) | examination of human optimism, hope, personality and overall happiness, moral aspect of the character |
| Ryan and Deci (1985, 2000) | motivation, health psychology |
| Frankla (1994) | highlighting human revelation to make sense |
| Rogers (1995) | understanding myself |
| Antonovského (1984) | concept of salutogenesis |
| Fromm (2001) | love and personality development |
| Pargament (2007) | "The father of psychology built on strengths and the grandfather of positive psychology" |
| Seligman (2008) | the positive impact of spirituality, |
| Gilman et al. (2009) | positive institutions and defining the characteristics of a safe school |
| Ryff (1995) | Extended Model of Self-Determination Theory, 6-Factor Model of Psychological Well-being |
| Keyes (2002, 2009) | flourishing, that is, flowering, or optimal prosperity |
| Gilman, Huebner, Furlong (2009) | implementation of positive psychology into the school process |
| Calhoun, Tedeschi (2006), Joseph (2011) | posttraumatic personality development through the lens of positive psychology |
| Davidson (2011) a Fredrickson (2011) | brain activity in meditation, evidence-based method |
| Bormans (2016) Slezáčková (2017) | personal well-being through the intervention of the Internet and electronic media |

Theoretical and empirical research of positive psychologists has created the basis for the creation of positive education programs that help students orient themselves toward their strengths of personality and their positive development. Gillham is convinced of the identification and subsequent support of adolescents' strengths, as it contributes to their well-being, increased assertiveness and resilience, as evidenced by the growing growth of adolescents' good human relationships, the search for meaning and the fulfilment of real dreams (Gillham et al., 2011; in Taher, 2016).

In general, the great efforts of the supporters of the movement for a positive perception of human life and its key impact on the prosperity of the young individual in society are evident.

2 POSITIVE EDUCATION

Paradigm of contemporary education



- A good school is not only aimed at achieving students' academic potential but also aims to develop students' personalities so that they become caring, responsible and ultimately productive and valid members of society and in life.
- Positive education focuses on issues of happiness, well-being, friendship, joy, positive thinking, cooperation, trust, optimism, humility, enthusiasm, interest, creativity, resilience, altruism, empathy, forgiveness, the meaning of life, etc.
- The educational process emphasizes the necessary education, learning, and mastery of basic knowledge and, at the same time, it is also necessary to refine the out-of-performance characteristics of students – emotions, feelings, socialization, values, independence, creativity, and motivation.
- As a part of education, it is necessary to realize that it is not just about mastering the subject topic, about school performance and adherence to standards, but also about the personality of the student.
- It promotes a non-directive teaching style and, at the same time, calls for flexibility in the applied styles.
- It supports students' independence, and their communication, which is related to the style of the teacher's work.

Positive education is based on the theories and research of experts in the positive psychology movement, which they gradually implemented into educational practice. Even though positive psychology is a young science, its scientific approach to analysis and its conclusions meet the requirements of current student education.

Within the teaching activity, teachers are often focused primarily on conveying the largest possible content of the curriculum, its verification and evaluation of mastery. They create less space to support and develop the emotions that will accompany students throughout their lives and with which they must learn to work. One of the reasons why teachers pay minimal or no attention to emotions in teaching is their unpreparedness, resp. the inability to design the teaching unit so that the teacher can work with students' emotions, the emotions of the classroom as a collective and also the social dimension of the classroom environment. The aim of education, based on the philosophical

knowledge of man, continued to focus mainly on the cognitive side and its knowledge performance, or will, characterized by human actions. According to the pedagogical anthropologist Malík (2013), it focused primarily on the intellectual side, i.e. permanent knowledge, and secondarily on the emotional area, i.e. temporary knowledge.

According to Malík, the opinion rehabilitation of the area of emotional experience in the educational process took place quite late, he points out the verdict of the current sciences about man, in which man is no longer primarily a thinking being, but an emotional being who is capable of thinking precisely because he has feelings. Emotions and emotional states stimulate thinking and acting in the real world. According to the author, emotions are awakened from apathy, they stimulate activity and subsequently encourage a feeling to the world that opens up to the student, who, in turn, makes himself available to knowledge itself (Malík, 2013).

Positive education focuses on issues of happiness, well-being, friendship, joy, positive thinking, cooperation, trust, optimism, humility, enthusiasm, interest, creativity, resilience, altruism, empathy, forgiveness, the meaning of life, etc.

These concepts are only very marginally included in the current educational process in the daily educational activities of the teacher and the student's learning activities. Positive education has its potential, the main idea of which is the well-being of pupils and students, which supports their education and develops them to be good people and citizens. A good school is not only aimed at achieving students' academic potential but also aims to develop students' personalities so that they become caring, responsible and ultimately productive and valid members of society and in life.

In the context of positive psychology, positive education can be defined as education for traditional life skills and education for a happy person. Positive education is based on the best teaching strategies to help students achieve the best educational outcomes, paired with aspects of positive psychology that promote student safety and well-being.

Positive psychological interventions include decision-making, problem-solving skills, relaxation, and creative brainstorming. Using this knowledge in positive education improves mental health and well-being, reduces depression and anxiety, and improves academic success and creative thinking, eliminating student stress. The contribution of positive psychology to pedagogical activities is mainly in approaches and strategies that appreciate humanistic teaching.

Application of positive psychology in educational practice

Zelina (2018) looks at the application of positive psychology in pedagogical practice by meeting the needs of students. He states that the application of the elements and effects of positive psychology in pedagogical practice shows that:

- self-discipline, and intrinsic motivation, which is emphasized in particular by positive psychology, is twice as good a predictor of performance, application and success in life as IQ and EQ,
- happy young people in adolescence, as shown by longitudinal research, have higher incomes in adulthood,
- the commitment and meaningfulness of the activities accepted by positive psychology are the best prevention against depression,
- positive experience and meaningfulness of support life satisfaction and have a positive effect on the learning process, especially on creative learning.

According to positive psychology, the educational process must respect the principles that have a positive effect on the educational reality and transform them into everyday life. The basic didactic principle is the connection of theory with practice, and therefore we draw attention to the principles of positive education, which can be transformed into the daily life of the pupil, student and person.

2.1 PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE EDUCATION

From the didactic point of view, the principles of education are defined as certain requirements, principles that the teacher must respect and accept in his work on students. Zelina (2016) defines the principles of positive education, which reflect the theoretical basis of positive psychology:

- ensuring a positive school climate and school culture (positive family climate, living climate),
- respecting positive values,
- positive application of knowledge in life with an emphasis on quality education,
- application of strategies supporting critical, evaluative thinking and self-evaluation,
- creation of productive interactions, teacher–student relationships based on empathy, acceptance of each individual,
- motivate learning in addition to classical methods also through interesting tasks, the method of relational frameworks and causal attributes,

- emphasize self-reflection, self-evaluation, self-control, pupil self-equipment with the use of self-regulatory learning programs, self-knowledge programs, socio-psychological programs, character cultivation programs
- emotionally experience the climate in the classroom, at school, find out and change it positively, evaluate students' learning and educational activities, teach students to express emotions, feelings and control them, especially in stressful situations, communicate openly, creatively and focus on rational communication, but also to communicate feelings, emotions and experiences.

The science and research in positive psychology on which positive education is based clearly show that identifying human strengths and focusing on developing the ability to cultivate and exploit these strengths (rather than “correcting” mistakes) lead to greater well-being and better academicism and social outcomes. A positive approach to education helps students to build confidence in education, in developing students' intellectual abilities and character, and in developing the affective side of their personalities. Investing in positive education at the level of the whole school community in both school and out-of-school environments results in helping the student to become a better version of himself or herself as an individual and as part of a community. The analysis of the scientific literature suggests that positive psychological interventions support pupils and students in an intense relationship with the school or school facility. In order that the application of elements of positive psychology in educational practice may be accessible and practically feasible, the school management must at a broader level, resp. to adopt and develop the theory of positive education in the wider school context. When applying the given elements to the educational process, the school principal may first start – in cooperation with pedagogical and professional staff – with the introduction of positive psychology into school (Gajdošová and Bisaki, 2015). The building of the so-called positive model of the school supporting the strengths and potentials of individuals also initiates a significant change in school psychology and the work of the school psychologist, especially the reorientation from addressing negative phenomena in schools to developing the best qualities of the school as an institution and people there.

The application of positive psychology at school is a new view of education, of oneself, of the world and of oneself in it. In line with the aim of education for the future, it is necessary for the person of the future to be not only efficient but also happy.

Positive education must focus on preparing a person who is flexible, able to reflect on new stimuli and challenges, ready to resolve conflicts, fluent in foreign languages and ready to live outside his local area.

Positive education has a positive effect on many determinants and factors of the educational process.

2.2 POSITIVE EDUCATION AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

Positive education increases students' school success and increases the quality of life of students in the school environment and beyond. Based on findings from research in Slovakia in 2005/2006, 2009/2010 and 2013/2014, the authors Čerešník and Čerešníková (2018, 197–199) state that fifteen-year-old students stop liking school.

Despite the positive subjective feeling with good results, they do not perceive their study performance positively. They suffer from congestion, but feel much more social support and empathy with their classmates. The authors found above-average, even dangerous use of technological equipment by students who do not like school. They recommend strengthening the social dimension of education at school.

Zimbardo and Coulombová also share this opinion, pointing out the interdependence between unfulfilled real relationships, which include the relationship to school, and the refuge in technological substitutes of relationships (Zimbardo, Coulombová, 2017).

The findings show that students lose their social skills and their socio-emotional health is also affected by depression, chaos and boredom. To confirm the findings, Seligman gives a comparison with the situation 50 years earlier. That time, depression began to manifest around the age of 30, and according to extensive research, it now affects those around the age of fifteen (Seligman, 2014).

In the school year 2015/2016, Radnóti conducted research in Slovakia to find out the current state of the social and emotional health of students in secondary schools in connection with depression. In it, the counsellors stated that the more depressed the students are, the lower their mental health, self-confidence, trust in the family, school, peers, commitment, optimism, and gratitude are. Surprisingly, the author states that depression does not affect empathy and self-control in high-school students (Radnóti, 2018).

And these types of findings lead psychologists to recommend the use of the principles of positive psychology as a science in students' lives. After all, it meets all the requirements to become known to people worldwide, and it has become a paradigm of current education.

According to Vavříková (2017), a paradigm is a certain pattern or model of thinking. Positive education represents an attitude towards education that combines school learning, i.e. acquired intellectual knowledge and skills, with

education for a strong character and life satisfaction. In education, the educational aim is equally strategic.

Through their mutual harmonization, they will create the basis for the most favourable development of man and the whole community (Seligman, 2017; in Janštová, Slezáčková, 2018).

2.3 POSITIVE EDUCATION AND UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIOURS

The positive approach to education reflects the growing trend of bullying, aggression, various addictions, depression and mental problems among students and adolescents. The results of the findings of the State School Inspectorate in the report on the state and level of education in schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic in the school year 2019/2020 showed that

[m]any of them did not feel safe in the school and classroom community. Bullied students and those who witnessed bullying did not seek protection and help from an educational counsellor or prevention coordinator. The schools did not sufficiently create an environment for the pupils in which they would feel confident and supported by the teachers and the class team, they did not have a fully created space for expression and discussion. Many were hampered by teachers' lack of interest in their hobbies and leisure activities, as well as the behaviour of some teachers. They did not always perceive them as fair. (Štofková, Dianovská et al., 2020, 8)

The findings of the State School Inspectorate prove that bullying is widespread in Slovak schools, which affects the quality of teaching, pupils "learning", and pupils' activities. Through a distributed questionnaire completed by 383 grammar school students and 372 high-school students. The results show that every 13th high-school student was bullied, 21% of grammar school students and 27% of high-school students experienced bullying several times. 35% of grammar school students and 30% of high-school students would not have the courage to help bullied classmates against the aggressor (Štofková, Dianovská et al., 2020).

There are cases of anxiety, stress, and general discomfort in the students, which subsequently manifest themselves in the learning process through inattention, reduced motivation and worsened educational results. In addition to the worsened educational results, there are also educational difficulties – truancy, psychosomatic disorders, depression, etc. Depressed adolescents are less socially skilled, have no friends, feel repulsed and have many problems compared to healthy individuals of their age. Depression impairs memory and concentration in learning, entailing a deterioration in school performance. They are disgusted, and without energy and nothing brings them joy and enthusiasm,

they do not experience a state of flow when they are learning, which signals that depression persists and will lag in school. They will start looking for substitutes in the form of alcohol and drug use, which is just a step towards violence and exclusion from schools.

Goleman (2017, 301–326) sees the only solution to the problem in prevention in schools during the education of teenagers, i.e. in building social–emotional competencies. Emotional skills include self-awareness, expression and control of emotions, impulses, satisfaction for later and the ability to cope with stress and anxiety. Social skills include distinguishing social signals, the art of listening and resisting negative influences, understanding the other person’s position, and distinguishing what behaviour certain life situations require.

Eliminating inappropriate, unacceptable and even pathological behaviour at school requires a differentiated and comprehensive approach with the active cooperation of school management, teachers, students, parents, school teachers, psychologists, and trained school professionals in the form of group work and prevention programs. (Rosová, 2018).

Due to the unfavourable socio-mental development of young people around the world, Seligman (2012) incorporated positive psychology into educational projects as a way to prevent and reduce the depressive states of the young generation.

2.4 INTERVENTION PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Applying the elements of positive psychology to the pedagogical reality requires knowledge of the theoretical basis, and the philosophy of the elements processed in the following programs.

According to Seligman, the first intervention programs in the school environment were:

Pennsylvania program (Penn Resiliency Program) promotes psychological resilience with the main aim: to make adolescents to be able to solve everyday problems during their adolescence. The program involved more than three thousand students and adults under the age of twenty-two. The subject of positive education is the promotion of optimism, assertiveness, creativity, determination, and it is more realistic and flexible problem-solving than depression prevention. The program leaders were trained educators, psychologists, counsellors, sociologists, military officers, and college students. During the interventions, the incidence of depression, anxiety and problematic behaviour

of adolescents decreased, and the positive school climate was supported (Seligman, 2012, 81–83).

It was a more complex Program of teaching the subject of positive psychology at the Strath Haven school (**Strath Haven Positive Psychology Curriculum**), in which they identified and built and supported strengths of character, relationships, meaningfulness and the promotion of positive emotions. They used a classification from Peterson and Seligman (2004). They had lessons in positive psychology in their style and literature lessons. Right at the beginning and end, students filled out a standardized questionnaire. Adolescents took part in group activities and were given practical homework assignments: for example, they had to write down good things that happened to them during the day and their feelings about them. In another exercise, they discussed the strengths of the main characters and their characteristics. Subsequently, friends, classmates and yourself. The program improved empathy, cooperation, assertiveness, self-control, and resilience, which transformed into a friendlier and safer school climate (Seligman, 2012, 83–85).

Geelong Grammar School in Australia is often mentioned as a model of positive education because they have applied positive education throughout the school. Positive education was taught based on 5 elements of Seligman's PERMA program. They always filled in the VIA questionnaire, and then compiled a family tree of the family's strengths according to their strengths. They then wrote a letter to their parents. They wrote a diary of good things. During the marathon in the mountains, they trained in psychological resilience. They incorporated positive psychology as a separate subject in the school curriculum. These interventions focused on the teacher–student relationship, in which the teachers improved themselves in giving feedback and specifically praising the students' efforts and contributed to a comfortable and safe climate in the classroom and school. And, of course, nobody in positive education has forgotten to use the learned experience in everyday life (Seligman, 2012, 2014, 85–93).

In 2014 was established a research and educational institute of positive education called The Institute of Positive Education. The most important task of this institute is to spread positive well-being to all schools in the world. Subsequently, Noble & McGrath (2015) developed the **PROSPER program** copying Seligman's PERMA model and tested it at the Australian Catholic University (Janštová, Slezáčková, 2018, 14–15). According to Slezáčková (2012), what became very important was the **British Celebrating Strengths Program** by Fox Eades (2008) and the Spanish program from Zaragoza, Aulas Felices by Rey et al. (2010).

According to Slezáčková, the results of research and theories of positive psychology are taught at many universities. The first course was opened in 1999 by

Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and others at universities in the United States, Canada, Asia, Latin America, Australia and of course in Europe: Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Italy (Slezáčková, 2012). Several graduates of Seligman's programs are members of associations of scientists who are actively interested in the implementation of positive education programs, such as:

IPEN (International Positive Education Network), is an international association of positive education that brings together teachers, students, parents, schools, the society and governments to support the application of positive education and modify educational practices and reshape government policy (Seligman, 2017).

PESA (Positive Education Schools Association), aims to facilitate cooperation between students–teachers–professionals to support the personal satisfaction of the young generation (Janštová, Slezáčková, 2018).

Furlong transformed the theoretical starting points of psychologists, which emphasize the positive effects on the development of the psychological field of adolescents, into direct pedagogical practice (2014, 2015). He designed and implemented them in the SEHS (Social Emotional Health Survey) psychometric tool, which is used for research in more than 20 countries. The Social–Emotional Health Survey for Secondary Schools is a multidimensional construct consisting of the following domains:

- self-belief – the indicator is self-confidence, self-efficacy and tenacity,
- faith in others – the indicator is the support of the school, the integrity of the family and the support of peers,
- emotional intelligence – the adaptation of emotions, empathy, resilience and self-control,
- commitment during life – optimism, enthusiasm, gratefulness.

It offers opportunities for creating the most favourite personality of students and teachers and provides a diagnostic view of their mental health and socio-emotional competencies. Through screening methods, the sources of positive survival are determined and more optimal interventions for the pupil and the school are determined, when the school is monitored in the form of comparison over several years and, based on the results, support conditions for the positive development of the students' and teachers' health in a good and healthy institution (Furlong, et al., 2014, 248–252, in Gajdošová, 2018).

In the conditions of the Slovak Republic, several studies on the social and emotional health of pupils in schools were carried out in the years 2017 and 2018. Radnóti organized one of the research projects in Slovakia, in which the

best results were achieved by high-school students in life commitment and the worst in self-confidence. According to Radnóti, this fact is caused by the search for his own identity and distrust in his ability, but the author also mentions the possibility of poor communication in schools, when there is no discussion with the opportunity to express themselves openly on possible problems. Following orders, the students lost the opportunity to make their own decisions. Radnóti expects to find the weak use of positive evaluation when students stopped experiencing success in school and beyond (Radnóti, 2017, in Gajdošová, 2018). Research conducted by Bittner showed that high-school students who achieved higher social and emotional health outcomes showed low levels of depression, bad mood, interpersonal suffering, and inefficiency, but more joy and self-confidence (Bittner, 2018; in Gajdošová, 2018).

The positive impact of the programs was characterized by Seligman (2014) as a reduction of anxiety, depression, helplessness, problem behaviour, improvement of physical health, relaxation, love of learning, creativity, curiosity, empathy, cooperation, assertiveness, self-esteem, self-control, and resilience.

The main elements of the studies are the strengths of the positive development of the adolescent and its impact on his socio-emotional health and empathy, and the young person shows positive emotions multiplied by prosocial behaviour and positive self-esteem, which brings a comfortable climate in joint activities for adolescents, thus improving social relations and learning outcomes. Over the years, the screening method will determine the development of quality indicators of school health of students and teachers in a good school (Furlong, et al., 2014, Furlong, 2015; in Petrulyté, Rimiené, Guogiené, 2019).

Research findings have revealed that the model of socio-emotional health and strengths coincides with a high level of mental health, resilience and well-being. In Slovakia, they use the SEHS-S model in the research at Radnóti and Holbling secondary schools. In 2019-2020, they found a lower average overall level of social-emotional health, a high level of confidence and a medium level of engagement and self-confidence, but a strong relationship between the individual dimensions of the SEHS-S model and the well-being of high-school students – grammar school in Modra (Radnóti, Holbling, 2022) was confirmed.

According to Larson, the dominant aim of youth development during education is to arouse the interest of adolescents in developing the complex abilities and skills needed to take responsibility for their lives (Larson, 2000; in Moore, 2021).

In the conditions of the Slovak Republic, we find the application of elements of positive psychology in several programs such as:

Healthy school or programs to promote tolerance and reduce violence in and out of schools, develop emotional literacy, prosocial behaviour, the creativity of students and teachers and, of course, prevention programs like *The way to emotional maturity*, *Say it clearly*, *Do not destroy your wise body*, *How do I know myself?* and others (Ďuríková, 2016).

Happiness lesson (<http://hodinastastia.sk/happy-school-qualification/>),

Eco-school (<https://ekoskola.cz/cz>),

Green School (<http://www.zelenaskola.sk/>) and others.

In the Czech Republic, according to Janštová and Slezáčková, the mental state of pupils in jobs is respected (e.g. Man, Mareš, 2005; Novotný, Křeménková, 2016; and others). They use the application of elements of positive education in the field of alternative forms of education, without programs and without changing the curriculum (Janštová, Slezáčková, 2018).

The application of positive education in real pedagogical practice requires an optimistic climate, and an optimistic view of the world and the life of the next generation, which requires the development of their competencies from the point of view of lifelong learning. Implementing a positive approach in the educational process requires ensuring an optimal, positive school environment. Schools as a space, as institutions with their internal processes, not only materially but also socio-emotionally.

3 SCHOOL – A POSITIVE INSTITUTION

- The school must be an institution that supports a healthy lifestyle and the development of the physical and mental health of students.
- A positive school climate is a condition of education that is motivating for students, activates students and staff, eliminates barriers to learning, creates optimal conditions for the learning process, supporting class cohesion and the functioning of the whole school.
- The school must be a place of satisfaction, well-being, security, freedom, support, authenticity, empathy, and meaningfulness, where students can express emotions, interests, arguments, values, creativity, and responsibility.
- Emotional and social security at school includes relationships – the courage to communicate openly, the interest in cooperating in a group, publicly evaluating, accepting criticism, being able to argue, etc., without the risk of social or emotional threat.
- The school as a space for compliance requires the establishment of order in any situation and any environment requires clear and comprehensible standards, regulations and rules, not excluding the school and classroom environment.

A positive perception of the school as an institution is a necessary prerequisite for the effective work of teachers concerning students, parents, and school management staff and the creation of the school's image towards society and the public. The processes within the institution are made up of many factors, which by their nature determine their character. The school is an environment created by the members of a living community, which is used for education and for sharing values, skills, beliefs, and attitudes. An environment in which education to values takes place, i.e. which creates space for free expression, presentation of personal ideas and opinions, respect for standards, and internalization of values, but not without firm rules. A school with the above characteristics allows the school management, teachers, students, school staff, and parents to feel the fulfilment, the meaning of activities, achieving results, which will affect their experience and life with all its quality, vitality, and the joy of activities that they will transfer to their world. The school environment, which is a specific environment by its nature, affects all teacher and student activities. It includes material and technical support, relations at several levels, didactic-methodical work of the teacher, activity and participation of students, etc.

According to Seligman (2014), it follows that *personal satisfaction and good mood suppress the anxious states of adolescents at school and support better learning, which is the aim of the educational process.*

According to Barrett (2010), by applying positive principles in an educational institution such as a school, we are sure to elevate the school community from the lower levels of consciousness. The first three are levels of needs and interests, the fourth level is where personal needs and interests move towards the needs and interests of other people, while the next three levels symbolize the recognized values of the consciousness of the people based on which they live, make decisions and act at the higher levels of consciousness.

Barrett identified with the seven levels of organizational consciousness of a viable human community, whereby limiting any form of consciousness of a given group of people leads to the inevitable disintegration. The author was inspired by Maslow's humanistic hierarchy of needs:

1. to identify and ensure their living needs;
2. to form satisfactory and orderly relations;
3. to be able to keep what they have created – to be productive;
4. to exceed their horizons through innovative research;
5. to create a common culture, i.e. free value engagement in a collective space;
6. they benefit others because they are not alone, striving to create fair and mutually beneficial partnerships to achieve aims that go beyond their circumstances;
7. they fundamentally benefit the whole, i.e. they perceive the global good.

(Barrett, 2010; in Baranyai, 2016)

By applying the levels of organizational consciousness of a viable school, all actors in the school world will gain a higher quality of life, leading to the characteristics of a quality school with a culture that supports the well-being of individuals and not only knowledge performance at the expense of independence, without a human perspective. If we want to implement and apply elements of positive psychology in everyday educational practice within the school, it is necessary to focus on *a positive school and classroom climate, a positive school culture as an institution, a safe school environment at the social but also emotional level, strategies and didactic practices that support education as a positive influence on the pupils' teacher.*

Ensuring the given conditions affects:

- pupils' attendance at school,
- pupils' attention,

- creative and critical thinking,
- motivation to learn,
- active participation in teaching,
- the holistic aspect of thinking, etc.

Based on intervention programs for effective education in the United States, Peterson (2006) specified a positive good school:

- students understand the importance of subjects,
- schoolchildren are convinced that they are co-authors of school life,
- students perceive the atmosphere as principled but clear, objective,
- teachers focus on identifying, developing and strengthening students' abilities and skills, without constant criticism and reprimand,
- beneficial, decent, positive behaviours are highly valued and supported,
- the school has effective management and leadership of people,
- interactions between teachers and students are natural, sincere and governed by solidarity.

(Peterson, 2006; in Slezáčková, 2012).

3.1 POSITIVE SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM CLIMATE

School and classroom climate affects all parts of the educational process. Pupils' behaviour, cognitive performance, the level of relationships at several levels, the ability to experience and verbalize their feelings, etc. Classroom and school relationships make up a significant part of the climate. School interactions are the result of teacher–student interaction, student–student interaction, and vice versa. Creating a socio-emotional climate requires the active participation of all actors in school and class life. If the social and emotional climate is to support the development of relationships, it is essential to ensure equal treatment of emotions for each student and to exclude evaluation approaches, based on which the student could receive a negative evaluation from classmates and teachers.

The school climate is part of the overall view of the school, whether we look in terms of quality or culture. The climate is characteristic of the secondary school, it is unique and authentic and we meet it immediately after entering the school premises, or in every single class, or practical vocational training of the secondary school and, last but not least, in the school canteen. Ensuring conditions for the student and teacher is based on ensuring a positive school and classroom climate.

School and classroom climate research confirm the existence of a positive correlation between a better positive school climate and improving learning outcomes and student achievement (Jones et al. 2004).

Factors of positive climate are the subject of research:

- system,
- security,
- disciplines,
- relationships between teachers and students,
- fairness and clarity of rules at school

(Fan, Williams, Corkin 2011, Syvertsen, Flanagan, Stout (2009).

It is necessary to look at the classroom climate from two perspectives: The climate should motivate and involve pupils and staff in the teaching, as well as seek to remove barriers to learning, thus creating the right conditions for pupils' learning, class cohesion and the functioning of the whole school.

Kantorová (2015) states that learning support is an important strategy that enables all students to achieve physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development in school. A positive school climate helps to meet students' developmental learning needs. In a supportive, safe, caring, participatory positive climate, students felt safe, they felt that they were taken care of and that they were appropriately supported in the learning process, This developed links: the sense of belonging at school negatively correlated with loneliness, fears, social isolation, and anti-social behaviour, while there was a positive correlation in terms of happiness, social support, conflict resolution skills and social competencies, learning performance, and school and classroom safety. Belonging together is more about happiness, higher social skills, internal motivation, self-esteem, interest in educational activities, and respect for democratic norms and values. The school climate and classroom climate are negatively affected by stress, fear, conflicts, exaggerated demands of teachers, parents, students, spatial and material, technical shortcomings of the school, mistrust, and overcrowded curriculum. According to Petlák (2020), it is necessary to include the creation of a favourable climate for classroom learning during the education of the strategy.

Good conditions in the classroom have an impact and also affect the student's self-evaluation. With the right guidance from teachers, the student perceives *his position* in the classroom, which leads him to take responsibility for himself, and for his actions. The teacher must pay close attention to the climate, because otherwise there may be undesirable behaviours, and a reduction in the quality of the relationship between students, between students and teachers.

For every student to be respected, it is necessary to pay attention to the positive support of the team. Student evaluation of school environment, activities, and relationships has a cognitive and emotional aspect. The same environment or situations that individual experiences may be interpreted differently. An anxious individual may react sensitively and perceive environmental reactions as a failure. The intensity of the experience in a calm and resilient individual does not have to be strong. Each adolescent thus chooses a subjective psychological environment from the objective environment and this psychological environment subsequently shapes the development of his personality. Perception of one's behaviour and experience and social comparison leads to self-esteem. The basis of overall positive self-esteem is the recognition of self-worth, which depends in part on the extent to which the adolescent considers himself or herself to be true or authentic (Macek, 2003, 51–52).

Kantorová in her study deals with the evaluation and assessment of the school climate and states that the perception and evaluation of a particular school environment in adolescents are influenced by radicalism and uncompromisingness, which can simplify and generalize the facts but are associated with a relatively strong emotional burden.

The school and classroom climate with an emphasis on its positive character includes teacher competencies, school management, school order, organization and clarity of rules, satisfaction with the education department, class cohesion, material aspects and the school's offer. Individual didactic determinants influence the psychosocial condition of education, which is the climate.

We can arouse the interest of the actors of school life by applying the topics of positive education, and thus build a ubiquitous positive climate in school and the classroom. It is this key aspect of searching and explaining, connected with evoked emotions in education, that Špajdel and Jurášová perceive as the doctrine of cognitive evaluation.

Continuity to education is observed in the evaluation of the subject about the pragmatic situation, its proximity in the psychological field, unexpectedness and the degree of arousal before the real situation. Cognitive evaluation in the educational process has an impact on the strength, dynamics and quality of emotions (Špajdel, Jurášová, 2012; in Petlák, 2018).

Pupils as well as teachers and parents have demands for a positive classroom climate. Each of them contributes their share to the positive classroom climate, but the teacher and students directly create it.

Petlák proposes a procedure that leads to the consolidation of a positive classroom climate:

- Say and determine reasonable demands on students' behaviour, the most important limits of behaviour for the education of students, get acquainted with students, e.g. in the form of cards on the notice board.
- The whole pedagogical team respects the demands, uniformly. Inconsistency causes outrage and lability in students.
- Claims are submitted pleasantly, but clearly and concisely.
- Get to know students' opinions. Focus on areas of motivation, classroom work, teaching, activities and more.
- The teacher should be a good example for students. Teachers follow the behaviour they require from students.

During the creation of a positive climate, it is impossible to forget about the demands of parents, because they rightly expect the school to create a climate in which their child will feel safe and which will encourage him to learn (Petlák, 2006, 69–70).

The main indicator of a positive school climate is the subjective mental well-being of the actors of secondary education in a supportive and constructive environment of secondary schools. Well-being, according to Seligman (2012), is when all actors in high-school education feel good and, according to Felcmanová, they also work comfortably at school. The author also added a definition according to the Partnership for Education 2030+ program, in which they defined a state of well-being for the Czech educational environment, i.e. teachers, students and the general public: "Wellbeing is when I am excited that morning is here..." (Felcmanová, 2021, 1).

In schools, Felcmanová (2021) recommends targeted measures for the prosperity of a positive climate in both the teaching staff and high-school classes. Feelings of fear, anxiety associated with education and non-acceptance in the school group of adolescents will only have a negative effect on learning, the results of students and their overall individual satisfaction with life.

According to Felcmanová, school teaching is at risk because one in five educators suffers from burnout and consequently the quality of education decreases, which does not meet the needs of students and, of course, the needs of teachers. In line with the Partnership for Education 2030+ program, the author recommends supporting well-being in education nationwide and determined five areas for the development of quality and satisfied living:

1. Physical – promotes safe healthy vitality, strength and energy, overall physical health in the form of a healthy lifestyle, quality sleeping, physical activity and favours a prosperous lifestyle in a healthy environment.
2. Cognitive – supports cognition, analysis of information, formation of opinions in the form of critical thinking, problem-solving system or creativity. It reflects its potential in motivation and aspirations.

3. Emotional – supports the ability of self-knowledge, self-regulation in identifying and classifying emotions, feelings of confidence in themselves and others, and the resilience of coping with stressful life situations.
4. Social – supports communication and development, maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, with empathy in social cooperation.
5. Spiritual – supports ethical values and meaning, the mission of being an individual. (Felcmanová, 2021)

In Slovakia, as we understand the concept of well-being in secondary education is similar to that in the Czech Republic. According to the State School Inspectorate and Štofková Dianovská, the well-being and educational results of high-school students are connected “vessels”, because how students feel at school, is how they will learn.

After all, they note the state of safety of the school climate and relations between the actors of education as one of the main indicators of well-being. Safety from the point of view of bullying was considered in all schools and in the whole school community. The most dangerous place was the classroom during the break, under the constant supervision of the faculty, or in the corridors of high schools with audio-visual equipment installed, where the most significant number of high-school students move. According to the findings of the State School Commission, the well-being of adolescents was weakened mainly by the attitude of certain teachers: dishonest interaction, mutual listening, or in the form of ridicule, humiliation, swearing, mental coercion or inadequate demands on teenagers. High-school students feel distrust in pedagogical and professional staff in helping to solve educational or especially personality problems. Distrust stems from injustice in identifying violators of the discipline or certain inappropriate behaviour of an individual. As many as 30% of grammar school students and 21% of high-school students think that teachers did not show tolerance at the time of their education and did not understand, which resulted in a small elimination of fairly resolved inappropriate behaviour. Almost a fifth of school board members are not convinced that teachers provide protection and support when pupils are harassed due to their race, religion, social background or opinion. High-school students are interested in their schools, they want to communicate about the problems. They feel very little informed about school life, they try to participate in decision-making, together with their high-school teachers. Many high-school students see a great lack of interest on the part of teachers in their hobbies and extra-curricular activities during their free time.

According to Štofková Dianovská, the findings in the report have shown that it is necessary to pay due attention to the well-being of teachers and subsequently apply the experience to the educational process of secondary school youth in Slovakia. They recommend applying elements such as empathy,

identification of strengths of personality and character of a high-school student, encouraging self-regulatory learning of students, using methods and forms of activating teaching with creative potential, applying pedagogical-didactic interventions to support a favourable learning climate with a sense of security and safety, use of innovative methods in education, to provide students with participation in school decision-making processes in the form of a student school board (Štofková Dianovská, 2020, 101–131, 242–243).

Baranyai is following the development of an unfavourable school climate. As part of research investigations carried out with a research sample of 1,000 teachers and 10,000 pupils with parents, he diagnosed the school environment. The author states that the vast majority of Slovak schools work in “administrative” mental settings. He sees a big shortcoming in the lack of enthusiastic school staff, with creative visions or surplus values that they would achieve together. High-school students observe the day-to-day frustrations of high-school teaching staff. He finds it negative that school staff are not interested in making a change and that adolescents want to leave high school. They do not see the meaning of education in such a high-school culture and do not feel good in the set secondary school climate, because it lacks the joy of meaningful efforts and interest in the participation of the local community. The author sees the frustration of teachers in fulfilling their pedagogical-didactic duties: how and what to teach when in class, what to try or not to try, what to do when someone causes problems, how to reach adherence to discipline, what to do with incompetent parents, how to manage them. The result was overloaded high-school students with bored expressions on their faces.

Baranyai talks about the lack of respected male role models in the teaching staff. The school, without its world and optimistic climate in it, virtually kills young adolescents (Baranyai, 2016).

There is an opportunity to improve the secondary school climate with indicators of a positive school climate. Positive education offers many practices that can help change the structure of schools and their high-school students for the better.

According to Škamrlík (2017), a school is a place of intensive social learning and the school climate characterizes the overall quality of interpersonal relationships and social events in the school. He points out that a positive school climate has an impact on the social behaviour of high-school students and their motivation, learning and, of course, results.

Based on the analysis, the researchers developed a positive school climate. Blašítková processed five areas and their dimensions for a positive school climate according to the National School Climate Center (2017):

Safety – standards and rules, protection against physical, mental, and verbal violence, and social–emotional security.

Teaching and learning – supportive teaching methods for learning, social and civic, and ethical learning.

Interpersonal relationships – respect and esteem for individual peculiarities, gender, race, and culture, showing social support and help or commitment to high-school students from teachers and classmates.

Institutional environment – good identification with the school, cleanliness, order, and necessary material security.

Staff – strong, professional, democratic management of the school with the vision and direction of the secondary school. Positive, helpful relationships, belonging and social support in the workplace in the teaching staff, student class, school management, the process of motivation and improvement of their work, and the competence of teachers.

(Blašíková, 2018).

Grecmanová observes the positive and supportive, i.e. welcoming climate of the school, as a certain ideal of the secondary school of the future, when society expects students to be ready to enter employment, or they have their own and responsible approach in public life, social commitment, personal and professional mobility, and work virtues (Grecmanová, 2003; in Čapek, 2010).

Applying the topics of positive education has an optimistic impact on life in the world of high school. According to the above findings of scientists and experts, a quality personality of the teacher, his professional style, professional skills, individual competence or mastery plays a huge role, and meaningfully, actively creates a positive high-school and classroom climate.

The classroom climate, with its specifics as a subset of the school climate, represents from a theoretical and research point of view a whole complex of problems that need to be pointed out in connection with the emotional climate:

The number and diversity of events and tasks within the school classroom (the classroom is characterized as a place where a large number of actors with different goals and abilities meet).

In fact, *more and more things happen in the classroom*, regardless of the methods used. The teacher must monitor the behaviour of specific students and the whole class, respond to them and prepare the next step.

It is practically impossible to assume what is going on in the classroom. Various interruptions, interruptions of the planned strategy, are very common, and it is often very difficult to predict how a particular individual or group of students will react.

The class, which meets five days a week for several years, develops its own set of “social” experiences, practices and standards of behaviour (not just in relation to school reality).

In the context of a positive environment and atmosphere in high school, Zelina thinks about what atmosphere is better for the student: when he feels good and looks forward to school, he can express himself, express his opinion and classmates, teachers like him, they care about his prosperity, they solve problems together, he does not have to be afraid of mistakes, he can judge himself and the world around him, he can create and he does not forget humour, because everything he learns makes sense for his life.

Or: when he is sick, uncomfortable, in danger, bullied, tired, unrecognized, frustrated, unable to express his opinion, nobody likes him, and the teacher ignores him, unjustly qualifies and underestimates him, he stops looking forward to school, he is not interested in the curriculum, he does not enjoy it, he does not see in it a sense for his progress in life (Zelina, 2016).

The role of the school in creating an educational space sounds unambiguous, the secondary school must be a world of satisfaction, well-being, safety, freedom, support, authenticity, empathy, and meaningfulness, where emotions, interests, arguments, values, creativity, responsibility and self-knowledge metacognitions can be triggered, along with self-evaluation, self-discipline and self-regulation in terms of the holistic development of the high-school student's personality in the safety of the positive educational climate of the school and classroom (Hanuliaková, 2016).

Pupils' satisfaction with their school is a sign of a quality school (Lynch, 2012; in Liška, 2021). Bilčík and Balážová list the main areas of quality of secondary school: coherence in strategic planning, school educational program and school vision, motivated employees and their prosperity, financial and material resources of secondary school, school management style, level of didactic education, the climate of quality secondary school, cooperation with external partners, knowledge results of graduates and their application in the labour market, external evaluation of secondary school (Bilčík, Balážová, 2021, 111–112).

Čapek defined the concept of secondary school culture as a technical–organizational area of the secondary school world and the school climate as a social area of the secondary school world (Čapek, 2010). The essentialization of the school world should be its humanization. Zelina presents three main sources of high-school humanization:

1. *Motivation* – the basis of constant self-development and self-creation of individuality.
2. *Creativity* – divergent tasks, development of independence and independence.
3. *Emotion* – well-elevated values of the relationship to oneself, others, work and the world. (Zelina, 2021)

If we want to implement elements of positive education in the school, it is important to create and maintain a positive and safe climate in the school. The school's positive approach to safety provides opportunities, according to Kardos, to develop pupils' resilience. The school can give the student success and self-confidence, the feeling that he belongs somewhere, encourages determination, perseverance, a responsible approach to himself, to his authenticity, and a responsible approach builds a healthy resilience – a firm belief in a happy and meaningful life (Kardos, 2007; in Hanuliaková et al., 2016).

3.2 SCHOOL AS A SAFE SPACE

The results of the educational activity of the teacher and the pupil in the school environment are perceived primarily in the form of student marks, achievements, achieved goals, methods of evaluation, behavioural manifestations, manifestations of socio-pathological phenomena, etc. Pupils' educational levels can be easily measured by various evaluation tests, exams, or projects. Pupils' educational expressions come to the fore especially when there is an inappropriate expression.

Many people who excel in their intelligence in their personal lives fail, feel lonely, abandoned, and unable to make contacts. They fail in feelings, in understanding, manifestation, verbalization and experience. In a given situation, the school has an irreplaceable place as an educational institution that builds on the educational activities of the family. Emotional education must be an important part of every subject. Space for its anchoring in the educational process can be created in several areas: breaks between lessons, school events, hobby activities of the school, prevention programs, discussions, circles, overall life at school, etc.

The school must be a place where the teacher and the student will live well together. The quality of life of the school's actors is reflected in the quality of communication, in the effort to solve problems together, and in the authentic interest of teachers in the lives of students.

The school aims to convey new information to students, but also to develop the inner world of students and full preparation for life in society. The role of the school is to prepare students for real-life to be full members of society. Effective saturation of school functions requires conditions that will be an incentive for their fulfilment. The primary conditions of the educational process are the school and classroom environment.

The experiences of all students are reflected in the immediate environment of the school and classroom. They improve and develop interactions in the educational environment. Pupil–pupil and pupil–teacher interactions play an important role in the process of creating and improving educational conditions.

It surrounds students and teachers from the outside and connects with their subjective experience, perception and evaluation. In terms of respecting the basic function of the school, namely, to provide the student with education, we believe that the condition for a quality learning and teaching process is a feeling of security, safety and trust.

This feeling is the basis for satisfying a person's needs. The environment in which the student spends most of the day affects his thinking, feelings, his attitudes, values and, ultimately, naturally, his behaviour. The classroom climate is saturated with emotional, interpersonal and communication phenomena. The importance of ensuring the emotional security of students is part of the intentions of creative–humanistic education and is also a necessary component of the theory of emotional intelligence.

According to Dargová (2002, 192), children are stronger, more talented, and in many areas more versatile and adaptable than any generation before them, but all the more vulnerable, sensitive and emotionally hungry. They see less, feel less, understand less, cannot manage their emotional fluctuations, or control their impulses and desires, or concentrate when learning, feel less responsible for their work, or less interested in learning. From the first moment the student finds himself in the school and classroom, his personality begins to take shape.

The conditions of education are often perceived only at the level of material aspects of education. Innovative concepts intensively emphasize the appreciation of the social and emotional determinants of education.

The job of a teacher is far more extensive than just teaching. According to Nováčková (2010), the core of the teaching profession is to create the best conditions for students to be able and willing to learn.

The art of creating a safe classroom climate is not just about being good to students. It is a systematic and purposeful work with relationships in the classroom, with children's emotions, with deriving and creating rules of coexistence with the participation of children, creating an atmosphere of trust, and opening up space for communication. Safety at school means adhering to standards and respecting the rules.

An empathic, high-quality teacher–student relationship

The teacher–student relationship is an issue that is dealt with by experts from several scientific disciplines (pedagogy, psychology, paediatrics, psycho-didactics, etc.). We identify with Kačáni's (1997) view that the teacher's empathic relationship with the student is an important factor in shaping his personality. By exercising empathy, the teacher does not subordinate his work only to the demands of pupils' education or to formal rules and conventions. Such a teacher can

emotionally engage students and understand their efforts for independence. Mellibruda (1990) was dealing with climate issues for many years, he thinks that when diagnosing the state of interpersonal relationships, it must be taken into account that people differ from each other by personal preference, i.e. the internal need for a certain style of coexistence with other people. Knowing that the basic interpersonal orientation helps to determine whether a person prefers being in society or alone, whether he wants to lead someone or be led, and whether he wants to experience intense or rather calmer experiences. The author also argues that the proper functioning of relationships should start with ourselves.

Following the above facts, we emphasize the need to create an environment that will be a place for students in which they feel safe, can be fully realized, can express their opinions and feelings without fear of ridicule, and will intensively fulfil their social life role. It only depends on the teacher's approach to what extent he can create and prepare such a breeding ground for his students. When the climate in the classroom and at school at least partially meets the stated attributes, teachers may be able to eliminate the occurrence of aggressive behaviour, or at least partially eliminate it. It is the aggression and aggressive behaviour of students that contribute to reducing the sense of security of students in the classroom, from which subsequently develops other indicators that affect several components of students' quality of life. The occurrence of aggressive behaviour of students has consequences especially in the field of social relations, communication between students, mutual interaction, cooperation, trust, participation in solving problems, and belonging (Hanuliaková-Hollá, 2008, 7).

The environment of certainty and safety helps to create a learning community in classes in which pupils respect and help each other achieve their learning objectives.

The emotional component of a classroom climate is often perceived and linked to the social climate. By emphasizing the emotional elements of the classroom climate, it ensures the realization and results of children's activities, and their motivation, helping to shape interests, self-esteem, conscientiousness, perseverance, social skills, and cooperation. Promoting positive emotional relationships in the classroom and creating an emotional climate make it easier for students to do more challenging tasks, tasks that also require overcoming obstacles.

The empathic teacher, by acting on the pupil as a role model, supports the pupils' empathy and empathic behaviour. All the skills that a person has need to be practised. Empathy as a person's social skill is needed in everyday life. Every emergency to act needs to be learned and practised, and therefore it is essential to pay attention to the issue of empathy in the teaching process.

Empathy as alertness to empathize with the other person is a skill that can be developed in communication with the other person.

According to Kačáni (1997), the main tool for understanding and empathy is that through empathy the experiences and various tensions of the other person come to mind in one's own personality.

Empathy as an acquired human ability is manifested primarily in interactions with the environment. Interactions in the school and classroom environment are specific interactions. Pupils enter a social group formally, so the nature of relationships requires long-term positive action from students, whether by teachers or peers. Doktorová (2015) defined empathy into three groups:

- a) *empathy as a cognitive ability* – in this sense, empathy is understood as the ability to take the perspective of another person, to look at the world through his eyes, but he can distinguish between himself and others. A cognitive process takes place that allows one to understand another person's perception, emotions, motives and behaviour (Ford, 1979; Flavell, Bothing, Wright and Jarvis, 1968);
- b) *empathy as the ability to decode signals* – perception, understanding of facial expressions, posture, frequency of breathing when speaking, and tone of voice allows them to find out its emotional state. A man who can do this has a high degree of empathy (Ekman 1982; Nowicki, Duke, 1992);
- c) *empathy as an affective reaction* – a person responds to the emotional state of another individual by moving to the same mood, he responds as he does. The definition of empathy is closely related to mirror neurons, which are considered the centre of empathy (Ferrari and Gallese, 2007; Hoffman, 2000).

As it is stated by the quoted author, empathy affects all aspects of the student's personality. In his work, he states that empathy is the intersection of three variables:

- 1. *cognitive component* – the ability to look at the situation from the perspective of the other person;
- 2. *emotional reaction* – the emotions of the other person in us evoke changes (sometimes even partially) in the experience, we tend to participate in the state of the other person;
- 3. *realizing* that the emotions that have arisen in us are related to the other person.

It requires acting on all components of the student's personality in a systematic and responsible direction of the educational process. Creating space for practical empathy exercises is possible in two ways:

1. *direct educational activity* through activating methods, interviews with students, real-life stories, active involvement in extracurricular activities;
2. *indirect educational activity* represents primarily the empathic behaviour of the teacher, ensuring the conditions.

Based on the above definitions, we have chosen factors that support the development of empathy as part of the student's social competencies. If we want to support empathy in students, they must respect the requirement of creating an emotional environment. It presents an environment in which students do not have to worry about ridicule from classmates, they can freely express their emotions, and they have created a space for simulation, staging situations in which students practice empathy. In connection with the emotional environment – it is necessary to state the requirement to ensure social and emotional security. Security in this context includes relationships – the courage to communicate openly, the interest in cooperating in a group, publicly evaluating, accepting criticism, being able to argue, etc., without the risk of social or emotional threat. As part of the process of developing empathy, students must have the opportunity to actively participate in the survival of other students, to actively participate in the analysis and take a stand in the situations experienced, and get into the role of the second student. An equally important component that is needed in practising student empathy is accepting the emotional expressions of all participants in the educational process, accepting the perceptions of others, suggestions of students that aim to improve relationships, and helping to identify the emotional state of others. The attractiveness of the group depends on the personal composition of students, characters and temperament of student personalities, representation of roles and student positions in the class, but also includes the overall mood in the group, quality of interactions, group rituals, acceptance of authorities, values recognized by the group, etc. These determinants are part of the classroom climate and play a significant role in supporting and developing the empathy of every single student.

In the text, we focus on empathy as a result of the positive effects of the socio-emotional climate of the classroom and school. The teacher, his way of communication, motivation, stimulation and emphasis on students' emotional intelligence have a significant representation in the process of supporting and improving students' empathy. Emotional intelligence is a term which was first used by Salovey and John Myer.

It includes several emotional qualities: empathy, expression and understanding of emotions, mood control, adaptability, managing one's own emotions, building interpersonal relationships, creativity, independence, perseverance, friendliness, kindness, and respect. The listed characteristics are currently

disappearing from relationships, and therefore we consider it a priority to focus on their support and development in the educational environment.

Educational environment from a social and emotional point of view

The skill of creating a safe environment for education requires the interconnection of many of its actors. From the point of view of the actors of education, it is mainly the personality of the teacher and the student, the school management, and the school staff. In terms of didactic procedures, the educational environment influences the methodological procedure, student activity, level of communication, degree of cooperation, etc. Modern didactic concepts suggest that a safe, caring, participatory school environment provides the optimal basis for learning. The current state of educational reality requires a focus on the experienced sense of security in schools and classrooms. This term refers to security in the areas of emotions, social relationships and physical health. The feeling of social, emotional, and physical security is one of the basic human needs. The perception of safety in the school and its components are considered in the research mainly through the testimonies of students, as they are active participants in its creation.

An experienced sense of security strongly supports student learning and healthy development (Devine, Cohen, 2007; in Thapa, Cohen, 2013). The authors state that many students do not feel physically and mentally safe at school, especially due to the disorders in interpersonal relationships that make up the character of the school climate. A negative perception of safety in schools was demonstrated in the context of school size – a reduced sense of security is declared by students in larger schools (Lleras, 2008).

Another important factor that reduces the feeling of security in school conditions is the presence of aggressive behaviour of students and subsequent bullying, which has an increasing tendency. The occurrence of this negative phenomenon causes a reduced interest of students to participate in school life. Rivers, Noret, and Ashurt (2009) found in a sample of 2,000 students aged 12–16 that witnesses of bullying felt depressed, anxious, and hostile.

The diversity of the student population (race, gender, sexual identity, disability, socio-economic differences, cultural differences, etc.) is in many cases a reason for bullying. In their study, Thapa and Cohen (2013) present research findings that confirm the importance of school psychosocial climate in aggression and bullying. Reducing aggression and violence in schools is linked to a positive school climate (Brookmeyer, Fanti, Henrich, 2006; Goldstein, Young, Boyd, 2008; Eliot et al., 2010; Karcher, 2002). The reduced incidence of bullying due to the positive school climate is research-based. (Birkett et al.,

2009; Kosciw, Elizabeth, 2006; Meraviglia et al., 2003; Meyer-Adams, Conner, 2008; Yoneyama, Rigby, 2006).

In recent years, we have seen an increase in bullying, which has transformed into a virtual plane. Cyberbullying is currently a serious problem that reduces the emotional, and social well-being of students at school. According to Campbell (2005), school bullying and harassment have moved to a virtual school made up of social media groups, which groups or individuals harass their peers. In Slovakia, Hollá (2013) conducts research in this area.

The connection and interdependence of the positive school climate with the risky behaviour of students are documented by research by Klein, Cornell, Konold (2012; in Thapa, and Cohen 2013). Elimination of aggressive manifestations at school and the occurrence of bullying can be realized by consistent enforcement and adherence to school discipline. Consistent promotion of school discipline is associated with school safety. Discipline at school requires respect for the rules. The rules and their respect are part of the teaching as well as the educational process. The nature of the environment in which educational activities take place necessarily requires the definition and subsequent internalisation of rules by students. Regulations and standards in the school will ensure optimal conditions of education.

3.3 SCHOOL AS A SPACE FOR COMPLIANCE

The school environment is defined by many rules, regulations, and standards that must be observed in everyday educational reality. The teacher-led educational process requires a clear definition of the rules that must be followed in terms of planning and presenting educational activities. Respecting and adhering to school rules affects the overall atmosphere, the school climate and the school environment. The school environment must be friendly to all actors in school life and support pupils' activities. The current school must provide conditions that will be characterized by openness, recognition of values, respect for the individuality of students, rigour, but also humanity.

For this reason, it is necessary to answer the question of which school is suitable for today's students?

A school with well-being, conscientious work, entertainment, real and true values, good persons, a decent, socially valuable ranking of values, and respect for all people. In the current situation, it is necessary to respond flexibly to social needs and the needs of everyday life. By shifting the importance and significance of the school in perception, the school is not a serious, valuable and recognized place:

- because education as a value is not necessary for many fields,
- because teachers are losing interest in teaching today's students,
- because the position of the school is deteriorating,
- because the school itself tries to train as many graduates as possible,
- because students learn not for life,
- because students are restricted (e.g. in activities or communication),
- because students do not respect their parents or teachers or themselves,
- because they have no motivation to learn.

These aspects contribute to the creation of the overall culture of the school. School culture can be given not only by the image and reputation it has with the public, what its objectives and values are, but also by its history, size, legal form, structure, form of management and many other factors (Eger, Čermák, 1999).

Walter (2001, 89) states that school culture includes school climate, leadership style, coherence in the application of common strategies, pedagogical concept, defining the roles of people in school, interpersonal relationships, motivating factors, the physical environment and its image.

Important elements of the class climate are declared in the following areas.

Support means that the participants feel positive, are emotionally attuned to school work. This support from teachers and classmates reinforces the interest in finding and discovering new things, not being afraid to make a mistake and gaining from failure as well as from success in educational work.

Order: meaningfully defined rules of how students should behave, and visible and consistent effort to maintain them.

Participation means an opportunity for pupils and students to communicate, and implement activities that enable involvement, participation of pupils in decision-making, etc.

Standards: clearly defined sets of standards, what objectives everyone should achieve, but not rigorous performance, but rather attitude.

Purposefulness emphasizes the usefulness of education, and the clear meaning of individual activities or curriculum. Each lesson should have a clear purpose and a reason that can be explained to the students, which is not the statement that *it's in the curriculum or it's a graduation question*.

Responsibility: this feature expresses a personal sense of responsibility for our education, i.e. fulfilling a task, participating in schoolwork, achieving success and making visible what we strive for.

Interest in education and its support is one of the basic objectives of a teacher's work. It is possible to deepen it in various ways, including popularizing one's own subject (e.g. emphasizing its practical use). The component has

two layers because the student must also feel interested in himself and his work and feel the interest on the part of the teacher, too.

The expectation of success is actually a publicly and strongly declared expectation that the student (or class) will achieve success, be able to perform the assigned tasks well and cross their boundaries in the future. *Impartiality* declares the absence of favouritism, retention and injustice and is a clear link between well-done class work and remuneration.

Security indicates the absence of mental or physical violence and its stressors, as well as knowledge of ways to deal with similar situations. An environment that means a clean, pleasant, interesting, (in the user sense) comfortable classroom (or school) environment.

These elements of the classroom climate can be effectively used and appreciated in the context of school climate. We consider it essential to be aware of the fact that every actor in the school must consciously participate in creating the conditions for education. The role of school heads and teachers is to justify the importance of climate and not to leave it to creation and direction. If a teacher wants to actively involve students in the development of rules, he or she must ensure that students feel safe and comfortable at school. The basic element is to ensure a positive school climate.

The school's positive climate supports the development of young people and the education necessary for a productive life, for a life that contributes to a happy life in a democratic society. Such a climate involves:

- norms, values, expectations that encourage students to live socially, emotionally, physically securely,
- interest in and respect for students,
- cooperation of students, family, and teachers on a common vision of the school,
- each member of the school contributes to the operation of the school and cares for the environment,
- teachers' interest in the attitudes of pupils acquired in the teaching process.

The given characteristics of the positive school climate were developed by the National School Climate Council. In terms of ensuring optimal educational conditions, Thapa, Cohen (2013), Astor, Guerra, and Van Acker (2010) draw attention to: *safety* – the feeling of safety at school enhances the learning process of students and healthy development. Several studies suggest that many students do not feel physically and mentally safe at school, mainly due to interpersonal disorders, which are an essential part of the climate. Negative interpersonal relationships at all levels cause non-compliance with the rules.

In a school that does not appreciate the norms, structure of relationships, organization and participation of students in its organization, students are more prone to violence, and mutual victimization, accompanied by a high level of absenteeism and a lower level of achievement.

According to Payne, Gottfredson (2005), there is evidence that schools that adhere strictly to the rules and apply them effectively in practice have a lower incidence of problematic student behaviour. The relationship between compliance and a sense of security is documented in research (Eliot et al., 2010). Studies have shown that a sense of security helps students in seeking help, e.g. while bullying (Eliot et al., 2010; Gregory et al., 2011). Primary school students and secondary school students are able to actively participate in the development of rules and guidelines.

Teachers must create opportunities to actively participate in the development of prosocial behaviour and standards of behaviour in their own classroom, in the group and in the team.

Positive psychology affects satisfaction in everyone's daily life. It is essential to find out who is and what is healthy, strong, supportive, and irreplaceable in a person's life, which brings him a quality life, and it is in this area that he should focus his energy.

4 POSITIVE EDUCATION IN PEDAGOGICAL REALITY

Research findings



- Positive teaching management strengthens the student's responsibility for school work, leads to duty, which brings students joy from work, supports the teacher's motivation in students, perceives student failure as one of the steps to achieving the goal.
- Pupil interest in activities is possible through attractive assignment of tasks to pupils, provision of a sufficient offer of extracurricular activities in the school environment, differentiated approach to pupils based on their abilities.
- Positive relationships at school must include the teacher's sincere interest in the student's personality, humor in the teacher's work, addressing the students by the teachers, willingness to help the students.
- The teacher is influenced by the climate of the teaching staff, relations with colleagues, the level of communication in the teaching staff, the democratic management of the school, the creation of optimal conditions, the opportunity of further education and self-education of the teacher.
- A positive school requires a school management whose priority is active participation of all participants in school life, mutual appreciation of work at all levels, which leads to joint creative activity.

4.1 POSITIVE EDUCATION FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Ensuring the conditions of education for students is one of the basic requirements for the implementation of education and training. What pupils experience in schools has a fundamental influence on the quality of mutual relations at school and class level, on the nature of communication, and the achievement of pupils' results in a positive or negative sense. Didactic strategies and approaches that the teacher applies in his work affect the character of the pupils' experience of emotions and feelings at school. The investigation of positive education from the perspective of high-school students was carried out by Valjentová in 2020. She used a questionnaire of her design, which was inspired by Seligman's program elaborated in the book *Thrive: New knowledge about the essence of happiness and the suffocation of well-being*. She divided the questionnaire into five basic areas of the well-being model according to the program acronym "PERMA":

P – *positive emotion*,
E – *engagement*,
R – *positive relationship*,
M – *meaning*,
A – *accomplishment*.
 (Seligman, 2014, 28)

Pupils evaluated selected components and determinants of positive education, which they perceive in school. Each researched area is broken down into items that further specify and complement the given area.

P – Positive emotions at school

Positive image of the school

The interviewed students said that they pay attention to the positive perception of the school from the outside environment. They are proud of the recognition and appreciation of the school's success by society. Pupils experience positive emotions and sincere pride, they enjoy the successes of their classmates, the class and the school collective, but also the individual, so they are aware of belonging to an institution such as the school. Slezáčková (2012) perceives pride as a source of self-confidence and motivation. Motivation is extremely important in the teaching process, which is given importance permanently.

Student's responsibility for preparing for classes

During the research, the students expressed that they have a responsible approach to school work based on positive leadership of the students. During the fulfilment of school duties and the acquisition of knowledge, students are guided by the moral code of the individual. Competences for life must also include a sense of duty to bear responsibility for the consequences of everyone's actions. The students appreciated that they are driven to work hard, which is a necessary prerequisite for the success of any student activity. Consistent fulfilment of duties at school brings students a sense of joy and satisfaction from solving a task or problem and, subsequently, from a well-fulfilled and well-done job. According to Křivohlavý (2010), meaningfulness is a guarantee of greater joy.

The teacher motivates the students to improve their activities

Motivating students to actively participate in the lesson is a difficult task for the teacher, which requires the knowledge and application of many activating, stimulating teaching strategies. Pupils positively evaluated the teacher's support in the development of the cognitive side. A high level of support for pupils

in case of failure, experienced failure and motivation for further performance was demonstrated. The addressed students rated hope highly, which is a strategic emotion in which lies faith, trust, conviction, and persistence that everything will turn out well, which sets goals, but also learns from mistakes. This is also confirmed by the way to hope, according to Křivohlavý (2010), that is, a positively and concretely formulated aim of current mood leading to the strengthening of motivation.

Appreciation of pupils' efforts

Motivation is influenced by praise and appreciation of effort. Expression of sincere joy, according to Zelina (2018), comes from praise, appreciation, gratitude for the interest and a positive, personal approach of the teacher. Joy, and gratitude during the teaching process in the survey are felt by slightly more than half of the high-school students. According to the quoted author, the deficit manifests itself in disinterest, boredom and even resignation, which leads to a reluctance to attend school, which leads to demotivation and indifference to aggression. Half of the students' negative opinions on this statement in the survey hide a mixture of stated feelings. Zelina compares them to hostility against the institution, pupils and teachers. Half of the respondents state that they lose effort, interest, joy, happiness, creativity, and authenticity in the learning process and only the formal side of learning prevails.

A high-school student can accurately identify the source of his positive and negative emotions. In the survey, the source of emotions is teacher–pupil and pupil–society interaction. Adolescents in the survey are proud of the school they have chosen, they feel hope and support from teachers in supplementing their knowledge, competencies, and vice versa, but not all of them feel the responsibility to complete assignments on time, which reduces the joy and satisfaction of completing tasks. A serious finding is the fact that the pupils do not feel appreciation of their efforts by the teachers and are little motivated through praise and positive evaluation.

E – Pupils' interest in the activity

Method and level of assigning tasks to students

Seligman (2014) uses the identification of characteristic features of adolescent personality at school as an element of positive psychology through an entrance questionnaire to the program of positive education of pupils. Only then does he work in youth courses. In the environment of the investigated schools, students do not feel the identification or support of their personality traits, because according to the survey of their opinions, up to half of the students do not agree with the given statement. The assigned tasks cause problems for

them, which means that the teachers have high academic demands on the pupils, or there is an absence of interest in the activity as such, which could be remedied by finding the pupils' personality characteristics and subsequently adapting the demands of the teachers to the individualities of the pupils' personalities and their educational process. As Zelina (2018) states, there is a small boundary between experiential and performance pedagogy. And it is the teachers who must know these boundaries, because the negative aspects of such a process will manifest themselves precisely on the part of the students, in the form of a lack of interest in learning, boredom, unclear direction in life, and even aggression.

Enough interest groups for students

Developing students' interest after class, supporting their strengths, activities in the school environment based on thoughtful planning, organizational possibilities and school management skills, support the student's meaningful use of his free time. The research showed that 50% of students do not participate in any club after class. The stated reasons are primary, or pupils are not interested in the activities and clubs offered by the school. According to Zelina (2018), the opposite of self-management is in the random behaviour of students, when they succumb to the pressure of other people, situations, and dependence, for example, on computers, games or useless activities.

Popularity of objects and their positive experience

Interest in teaching subjects and the internal motivation of the student are the main reasons for choosing a given secondary school. High-school students know how to identify their areas of interest, and their strengths when they are not bored at school. Respondents positively evaluate the area of focus of the school they have chosen. Positive experiences during learning subjects with which students have a positive relationship will create Csikszentmihalyi's state of flow in students.

Differentiating the roles of pupils in the classroom according to their abilities

The effective work of a teacher or class teacher, who must know the strengths of the students' personalities in the class group, also includes a fair distribution of tasks and motivating them to work together and to co-create school life. Almost half of the questioned pupils agreed with the fact that the class teacher knows them well and accordingly works with them in the framework of creating a common school life.

By fairly redistributing activities based on personality strengths, students' civic competencies are also supported. Unfair redistribution of activities leads to mistrust and problematic behaviour of pupils. Social relations in the

classrooms suffer from bias and favouring classmates by the teacher. The concept of Seligman's happiness, which is realized from human activities and life involvement, supported by strong areas of the individual's personality, is disappearing, and the result of the application of personality strengths and motivation in the survey, according to the opinions of the students, completely dishonours Csikszentmihalyi's state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2015).

High-school students evaluated that the school they attend does not provide them with enough interest groups that would interest them. Teachers diagnose their characteristic features only to a minimal extent, they only work with dominant areas of the pupils' personality in half of the respondents. It is then difficult for all students to achieve a state of flow within the education process and when obtaining results.

R – Positive relationships

The teacher's sincere interest in the student's personality

The individual approach of the teacher, which is characterized by a humane, sincere, natural, non-directive approach, develops a positive feeling in the school in students as subjects. The teacher's approach is also reflected in common mutual interactions, in which mutual respect, acceptance, trust and satisfaction prevail, which leads to the creation of a positive climate in the teaching process already at the beginning of the lesson. A good feeling in school for students' learning is the objective of education. Zelina (2018) also supports such an approach to teachers and sees them as a kind teacher, able to create a pleasant educational climate that supports motivation and maintains the active interest of students in the objective of the lesson. Goleman (2011) observes a more flexible and complex intellectual thinking behind a good mood and presents the fact that students who are depressed or in a negative mood do not learn, so they cannot process the new information presented, they cannot concentrate. Only half of the surveyed respondents feel the creation of a pleasant, encouraging atmosphere at the beginning of classes, which is not optimal for the emotional, intellectual and social development of adolescents and a positive climate in the classroom.

Humor in the teachers' work

The use of humour in the teacher's work promotes a good mood and pleasant feelings during teaching. Fredrickson (2009) attributes an important role in the development and strengthening of interpersonal relationships to kind humour, she observes its great influence on better work and study performance and also its significant positive effect on health, and last but not least, she says

that it can lighten a complex gloomy atmosphere. Peterson and Seligman included a sense of humour in the classification of personality strengths. They see the meaning of humour in the support of positive and bright moments of human life, when an individual knows how to please and amuse other people, or make a joke (Seligman, Peterson, 2004; in Slezáčková, 2012). According to Goleman (2011), inducing a good mood during learning reduces feelings of anxiety and stress in students, thereby opening the mind to learning. Adolescents like positive teachers with an authentic sense of humour, who create a thriving, relaxed learning atmosphere. This fact was confirmed by 90% of the respondents, who said that they like funny stories from easygoing teachers. Pupils have positive experiences with the inclusion of humour in the work of their teachers, which benefits their good mood during classes and a positive relationship with teachers, and at the same time, they learn from mediated experiences and observations from life.

Calling pupils by their first name

Positive mutual interactions must include respect, naturalness, and openness, but also authenticity, which is based on ethical, moral and value-based behaviour. Calling pupils by their first names creates space for a personal, individual relationship between teacher and pupil, and also between an adolescent and his peers when the individual becomes aware of his human essence, uniqueness, and individuality. Young people should be guided to use their first name in social communication with peers during secondary school education. In the survey, up to 70% of the interviewed high-school students feel a measured approach to interpersonal relations.

Willingness of the teacher to help students

The teacher's willingness is one of the key pillars of the mission of the teaching profession. A motivated teacher looks for possibilities and ways of conveying the learning material to students in several ways. He applies didactic methods that affect multiple senses of students in the learning process. He can devote time to youth in his spare time, e.g., in the form of tutoring or communication via the school website and will give honest professional advice. 89% of the students questioned confirmed that they are interested in education, new knowledge and, last but not least, the fact that they trust their educators and care about their own future.

Two-thirds of the interviewed high-school students perceive positive interpersonal relationships and optimistically evaluate their teachers, they trust them because they are willing to cooperate with students beyond the scope of pedagogical duties in acquiring knowledge in the educational process. Respondents prefer positive feelings with kind humour during their education, although according to the disagree-

ing opinions on the statements, teachers tend to maintain an emotional distance during pedagogical practice and make little use of a personal approach to students or addressing the student by name and creating a positive working climate at the beginning of classes.

M – The meaning of education for pupils

Fair evaluation of students

Pupils' perception of a fair evaluation is related to personal self-regulation, awareness of the truth, insight into critical thinking and sincere trust. With evaluation, teachers can harm, but also motivate. It depends on the teacher's ability to evaluate not only performance but also behaviour and attitudes objectively, without bias and prejudice. As part of the education process, the teacher must keep in mind the student's well-being and prosperity. From the results of the opinions of high-school students in the survey, a very positive finding emerges. Respondents agreed with the statement that their critical thinking and self-reflection are at a high level, which has a strong implied meaning: the application of elements of positive psychology by educators represents a high level. The respondents positively characterized the trust, objectivity, and honesty of their teachers for their further individual development.

Visual and real practice at school motivates me and I understand professional theory better

Connecting theory with practice is a basic didactic principle that should be respected by the teacher. If so, students have the opportunity to really understand the curriculum, and thus learn to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. Seligman (2014) does not characterize meaning as a subjective state, but as something more important, something that a person remembers over time and still has meaning for his life. Respondents involved in the research state that real practice is of great importance. 83% of high-school students see the point in acquiring knowledge by linking it to real practice. According to Zelina (2018), experiential learning is a recommended form for supporting the creative learning of students in schools.

Confidential relationships between students

As part of the examination of the experience of positive emotions by students at school, it is necessary to look at the given feelings of a higher level, at the emotional perception of interpersonal relationships. Seligman (2014) draws attention to the fact that interpersonal relationships give meaning to people's lives. In the educational process, these can be relationships formed by many actors: teacher, classmate, director, coach, cook, janitor, etc. In a survey of

secondary schools, 87% of students feel a relationship with a related person in their life.

Willingness to help

Help is an activity in which egoism, hostility should be eliminated, while belonging, prosocial behaviour, empathy, congruence, authenticity should be included. Help in mutual relations reaches a higher level when it is implemented without expected recompense, returned help. In the survey, over 90% of high-school students said that high-school teachers apply elements of trust, empathy, and gratitude in their teaching practice. Koníčková (2019) foreshadowed some of the applications and draws attention to their importance by changing the pupils' approach to life.

According to the results of the survey, almost 85% of high-school students understand the meaning of their education when teachers apply elements of positive psychology in the given area. They have developed metacognitive qualities: self-reflection, self-knowledge, and self-evaluation with critical thinking. They feel the meaning in the objective evaluation of knowledge by teachers and in the curiosity arising from real, illustrative practice, which positively helps them to use in-depth learning, which develops both the cognitive and conative domains of the student's personality. Much more respondents from rural areas experience significant interpersonal relationships, but the importance of helping classmates, a certain sense of belonging, and prosocial behaviour prevail at a high level in both schools. They are looking at themselves, how they learn, what they do, how they live in society, and what kind of relationships they have with other people and what communication gives them meaning.

A – Pupils' success

Satisfaction with own life

We can say that success can be formulated into a satisfying life, within which the knowledge, qualities, skills, attitudes and opinions of an individual are accumulated. Based on their ideas, aspirations and experiences, students learn to create their life goals, when they experience a full-fledged peaceful life. The feeling of satisfaction from various achievements fills them vitally. According to Seligman (2014), successful performance consists of mastery, recognition, and winning just for the sake of achieving an objective, which is usually successful in itself. Addressed respondents know how to identify their success, which is manifested in their satisfaction with life, they know how to feel happiness and satisfaction when their small and large objectives are met with success and life flows according to their expectations. Up to two-thirds of the respondents confirmed their resourcefulness, independence, breakthrough,

creativity, adaptability and healthy self-confidence, internal motivation, and ability to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Success based on belief in one's abilities and knowledge supports the student's healthy self-confidence.

I experience positive emotions (joy, satisfaction) when my parents appreciate my success

During using elements of positive psychology in pedagogical practice, teachers must take into account the "teenage period" of adolescents, in which, according to Gáborová and Porubčanová (2017), young people present their opinions and mistrust of the adult population is manifested. Nowadays, it is important to lead adolescents to gratitude during their education. According to Koničková (2019), gratitude fills students' lives with joy. In the survey, up to 93% of respondents feel joy and satisfaction when they feel their parents' recognition. According to the respondents, family emotional ties are strong and they feel gratitude. Tamášová and Kušnieriková (2018) highlight the importance of emotional family bonds for the healthy emotional development of an individual.

More than 90% of high-school students understand success as living a happy, satisfying life in the family circle, when they do what they are interested in, their life flows according to their expectations, and they come closer to achieving the set objectives. Based on the knowledge, skills, opinions and attitudes that they acquired in education, they have more self-confidence, and we can state that teachers lead adolescents to understand, experience and accept success in life.

Interesting results are documented by the respondents' statements, in which they had to complete the sentence "When I'm at school I feel...". The respondents supplemented the given statement with the presented emotions according to their feelings toward the researcher. The statements were ranked from the highest to the lowest point score. The results of the survey of respondents' subjective feelings show the following.

Table 2. Subjective feelings when being in school

| Number | Feeling | % |
|---------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1. | happiness | 66% |
| 2. | boredom, fatigue | 64% |
| 3. | curiosity | 60% |
| 4. | satisfaction | 49% |
| 5. | inspiration, enthusiasm | 45% |
| 6. | pretense, sadness, stage fright | 30% |

The above-mentioned most frequently reported feelings are influenced, created and supported by the school and classroom climate, the emotional and social atmosphere of the school, the quality of interactions in the institutions, the use of information and communication technologies, the selection for performance-oriented education, the dominance of transmissive teaching, non-activating didactic methods, minimal respect for the individuality of students, etc.

By processing all the students' statements, the adolescents confirmed that in their developmental stage of adolescence they are able to perceive, experience and give out positive emotions, but they are able to report negative feelings when they are fighting for their happiness.

4.2 POSITIVE EDUCATION FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Applying elements of positive psychology to the education process requires the didactic competence of a teacher who can respond flexibly to current educational situations. Secondary school teachers influence the nature of the process with each didactic determinant through their approach. Elements of positive education can be applied to every didactic, methodical component of a teacher's work.

I) Positive feelings experienced at school

A positive experience of life at school cannot be directed only at pupils. The teacher's personality is an equally essential component of school and classroom life. A positive experience of school life affects:

a) Open, human and professional communication among the teaching staff

High-quality communication between teachers is conditioned by mutual trust, willingness to help each other, and understanding. The motivation of a teacher's work is increased by work well-being, a sense of security, respect, perspective, humanity, and inspiration. As part of the research findings, up to 91.67% of teachers expressed satisfaction with the teaching staff of which they are a part. Favourable and helpful relationships, according to Blašítková (2018), will build the required competencies of teachers. With the finding of 71.67%, it can be concluded that positive communication in the investigated teaching corps is at a beneficial level. Communication between teachers affects the creation of a favourable school climate, which affects all actors in school life. Several authors, such as Maslowski (2001), Fullan (2007), and Franková (2004) recommend cooperation and communication in the teachers–teacher, teacher–teachers relationship as a strategic factor of school culture.

b) The open, democratic style of school management supports the teacher's personal and professional development

The teacher's trust in the school management, their support in professional growth, a supportive climate is manifested in effective, optimal and successful work with students, but also with parents. The finding that 2/3 of the survey respondents trust high-school management is debatable. Blašítková (2018), Seligman (2012), Baranyai (2016), Štuřáková and Ferencová (2019) see the principles of democracy and civic belonging in the management of a secondary school. In the same way, Urbanek (2021) considers school management – the principal from the point of view of the pedagogical climate, as a decisive element for the quality of the teaching staff. The majority of respondents rely on the management of their school, even though the perception of positive aspects dropped to 66.67%, which may reflect unfavourably on the application of the element in creating a positive school climate.

c) Humane, authentic and patient approach to students based on individual characteristics

Internal unity, morality, a positive attitude, encouraging the adolescent during education, an empathic approach, practising an optimistic pedagogical approach, building trust, and creating hope constitute the integrity of the educator. His actions support the student's internal motivation to learn and the desired control of their behaviour during secondary education, thereby positively influencing the classroom and the school climate. The study by Seligman and Peterson (2004) draws attention to the teacher's honesty, kindness, and sincerity, which is supported by honest self-declaration and helps to develop the integrity of a high-school student, because, as the authors claim, various psychosocial stressors during education might make it impossible (Seligman, Peterson, 2004; in Kahancová, Nábělková, 2013, 81–85).

In the survey, up to 91.67% of respondents identify with the statement. An interesting finding is that 80% of the answers are related to positive emotions, which means that 12% of teachers do not share the positive feelings we provided for the statement. The teacher's positive, open approach to students also includes elements such as hope, trust, motivation, conviction, and persistence in believing in good. Křivohlavý just formulates a path to hope as a positively and realistically stylized goal of the current mood supported by motivation (Křivohlavý, 2015). Kremnická (2021) identifies the transformed pedagogical-didactic activity of a reflective teacher in a differentiated approach to the student when assigning duties and eliminating errors during learning.

d) Warm encouragement of students as a self-evident part of the teacher's didactic work

The high level of the teacher's evaluation competencies is manifested in the

evaluation of the student in such a way that he has a responsible, personal approach. He motivates with hope and inspiration, which are signs of sincere and warm praise. The sense of valuing pupils' performances, the processes and procedures through which they reached their performances, and the forms of behaviour in the class group result in a safe climate in the educational environment. Safe in terms of social and emotional well-being.

According to Zelina (2018), a self-creative teacher encourages his students, thereby awakening their motivation. Happiness, satisfaction, joy of inspiration are also accompanied by feelings of gratitude of teenagers for every sincere recognition of their efforts. As many as 55 survey respondents can express heartfelt praise sincerely, casually and authentically. According to the theory of Fredrickson (2011), the findings of 81.67% represent the positive emotions perceived by teachers in secondary education. By not receiving recognition, according to Banyai (2016), teenagers lose effort, joy, happiness, interest, creativity and authenticity, the sincerity of the learning process, they only meet the signs of a formal aspect of learning and feel hostility towards the institution, classmates and teachers, which is manifested in an unfavourable classroom climate and schools.

Positive emotions and experiences of teachers in the educational process are associated with:

- support from other colleagues,
- a humane and professional atmosphere in the teaching staff,
- the democratic style of school management,
- motivation for more intensive involvement in pedagogical work.

In relation to pupils:

- they use positive evaluation – praise,
- they create space for students to correct mistakes, failures,
- they use the experiences and emotional experiences of pupils when creating a working climate.

II) Teachers' interest

a) I like to participate in innovative educational courses offered by the school

The innovative didactic approach of teachers requires permanent and continuous education through various forms and methods that reflect pedagogical and didactic trends. Activity, engagement and self-realization motivation supported by feelings of happiness and satisfaction on the part of the teacher can be a motivating element for the students themselves. By the results of the research of Seligman (2012), Goleman (2017) and the research conducted by

Valjentová (2022), 50% of teachers do not participate in innovative educational courses, seminars, methodological days, professional lectures organized by the school where they work. In the implementation of innovative elements in education, several barriers are identified, the most serious of which is the lack of interest of educators. In the survey, 45% of respondents have a change, an innovation in the educational approach associated with a set of positive emotions. So the results create a negative image of the professionalism of the pedagogue, while international and national documents draw attention to the need for increased professionalism and continuous professional development of pedagogues – European Commission, 2014 (Orosová, 2020).

b) Optimal working conditions and environment

The optimal school environment of the school in the educational reality supports the interest, inspiration, engagement of teachers for various creative activities that multiply the feelings of happiness, motivation and respect. Up to 60% of respondents agree with the statement and are convinced that they are doing well in their schools. An important determinant of the educational environment is the secondary school environment. Zelina (2018) and Baranyai (2016) agree with the opinion that an administrative type of school rules in Slovakia, which does not support creative working conditions for teachers and does not support positivity in the working community and the working process. The reflection of working conditions in current, modern times and the needs of society contribute to the timelessness of education, the relevance of the need to develop students' life skills, and the needs of society.

c) I prefer the face-to-face form of education and teaching

An educational reality in which there is a positive social, emotional, and communication climate is accompanied by satisfaction, happiness, joy, inspiration, and interest. "Face-to-face" teaching in an authentic school and classroom environment creates conditions for teachers to motivate students more easily, support engagement in activities, creatively approach the support of students' creativity and of course, create and develop a positive classroom and school climate. 2/3 of teachers prefer face-to-face teaching.

d) I assign students tasks and activities according to their characteristic personality strengths and individual capabilities

Diagnosing and getting to know students' personalities is a key skill of every teacher. With an individual and empathetic approach, the teacher obtains information about the student's knowledge, skills and abilities. Based on the mentioned fact, the teacher knows how to project didactic strategies, and prepare teaching material corresponding to the personalities of the students in the class, thus respecting the principle of individual approach and

appropriateness. An individual approach to the student and respect for his learning style will ensure success for the educator, which will result from his learning, education and upbringing process. Up to 90% of the interviewed teachers respect an important element of positive education, which is the acceptance of the strengths of the student's personality, thereby supporting the development of his individuality. Representatives of positive psychology conceive a basic element in their theories such as Seligman (2012) – on happiness and well-being, Csikszentmihalyi (2015) – on flow, and Goleman (2017) – on socio-emotional literacy. Unfair and biased redistribution of activities in the classroom can lead to manifestations of animosity and hatred in the student body, which reduces the quality of mutual interactions as well as the optimal educational classroom climate.

Teachers do not show interest in participating in innovative education within the school. The options offered are not inspiring for teachers to be interested in modern, innovative didactic-pedagogical approaches to education. It is necessary to pay attention to the creation and support of optimal working conditions and an environment for teaching. They are aware that assignments, tasks, and activities have to be assigned to students based on their personality strengths.

III) Good relationships

a) I experience emotional harmony and a sense of belonging in the teaching team

The teaching staff is a specific type of work group – feminization of the staff, age diversity, and university graduates. The satisfaction of pedagogues in the teaching staff is based on the recognition and appreciation of their work by colleagues, understanding, acceptance of innovations, feelings of social security, respect, and pride. An interesting finding is that only 61.67% of teachers share the joy of work, which includes the certainty of freedom, and acceptance of independence. Based on the theory of Fredrickson (2011), 61.67% of perceived positive emotions are insufficient for an optimistic creative working climate of teachers in the pedagogical corps. Based on the mentioned fact, it is necessary to prepare trainee teachers for effective teamwork, and cooperation with psychologists, special educators and other experts in pedagogical practice as part of undergraduate training.

b) Within the framework of education, I respect and follow the rules of the school

Respect and compliance with rules, requirements and principles is an essential parts of quality school life. The teacher must emphasize the preventive

presentation of the requirements and principles of the school. Part of the teacher's work is the work with the student's parents, to whom it is also necessary to present the given rules and argue for their compliance. Acceptance of the rules by all actors of school life leads to healthy relationships, mutual trust, acceptance, and a fair educational process. Respect for school regulations was confirmed by all respondents, while 6.7% of respondents are not convinced of the positive emotional impact of following the rules on the student. Order, principles, rules, directives, and regulations contribute to the creation of the climate in the school and the classroom. Many parents see the term *positive school climate* as easing the demands on students in their secondary school education. But more demanding curricula or standard requirements placed on students during education do not have to negatively affect the climate of the school or the classroom, because they create a happy environment, which is what every parent wants for their child (Orosová, 2020).

Strict compliance with the rules can be supported by applying activities at the beginning of the school year, when students and teachers create and discuss rules that will be respected by all. The rules will be properly discussed, including a compliance plan and specified penalties for breaking them. Mutual discussion and subsequent agreement will support mutual educational trust, calmness and energy leading to a safe high-school climate.

c) I dedicate the beginning of the lesson to creating a relaxed atmosphere

With a short conversation and sincere interest in the student, it is possible to create a relaxed atmosphere, eliminate stress and negative feelings in the students. Seligman (2012) recommends an optimistic, authentic, warm, kind approach of the teacher from the beginning of the teaching unit, which motivates and encourages creative work, thereby creating a positive climate in the classroom. Goleman (2017) considers the first sincere eye contact to be crucial. The relaxed conversation at the beginning of the class will also be reflected in the social interactions of the participants, where motivation, joy, happiness, enthusiasm, and satisfaction will be present, which support the meaning of education and lead to feelings of hope, trust and gratitude. The pedagogical mastery of the teacher is manifested in the ability to create a relaxed atmosphere and to use humour in communication, which strengthens interpersonal relationships. The deliberate attention paid by teachers to the beginning of the lesson was confirmed by 50% of the respondents, which means that they do not attach importance to a relaxed introduction.

d) Within the framework of education, I appeal to students on the issue of values, morals, character of people, ethics

A teacher who, through open dialogue, accepts the students' freedom, motivates them to higher plans, leads them to the meaning of life, honestly tells them the

truth is appreciated by the students. The stated approach to pupils was confirmed by 86.67% of the respondents, and 70% of them share the assigned positive emotions. Initiating deliberate and appropriate discussion with high-school students creates space for different points of view on the meaning of life. Questions of altruism, optimism, and positive strengths of people's character can be applied to various types of subjects, whether general or professional.

The educational process is dependent, or conditioned by interpersonal relationships, which are characteristic from the point of view of positive psychology:

- togetherness,
- a safe psychosocial and emotional climate,
- respecting school and institutional rules,
- open and two-way communication,
- applying and respecting the elements of ethics, morals, values.

IV) The meaning of pedagogical action

a) School is a workplace where I like to work and cooperate with students, parents and colleagues

The school as workplace should represent a space of satisfaction, joy, inspiration, justice, freedom, mutual acceptance and recognition, respect and trust, which lead to the fulfillment of the meaning of the teacher's work. For 2/3 of the respondents, school is the mentioned workplace, and teachers associate this statement with experiencing positive emotions. According to Štuřáková and Ferencová (2019), positive communication, teacher cooperation with students, parents, teachers, and the wider school community is a strategic means on the way to achieving visions and plans.

b) Evaluation of students' work and activities is always objective and fair

Diagnostic and evaluation competencies of the teacher are crucial not only for the student but also for the teacher. The evaluation confronts the pupil's point of view and the teacher's point of view. The student must perceive the result of the evaluation as an appreciation of effort, critical thinking and motivation. The motivational evaluation builds trust, a sense of security, hope and truth, which affects the atmosphere and climate in the classroom and school. Biased evaluation can harm the student, demotivate and reduce his interest in working at school and in progressing and achieving his desired performances and results. According to Štofková Dianovská (2020) and Zelina (2018), the teacher should create a space for students in which he will support self-regulated teaching: the student has the opportunity to monitor and comment on learning and thinking, evaluate the effort expended, eliminate distracting

influences and mobilize learning and objective-setting through a positive experience of learning. 95% of respondents agree with the statement that they evaluate objectively and fairly.

The meaningfulness of the teacher's pedagogic-didactic work is reflected in the student's relationship with the school and teaching. A positive perception of the meaning of a teacher's work also includes sharing one's hobbies and extracurricular activities with students. However, the fact confirmed that teachers do not feel positive emotions when they should share their extracurricular interests with students. This finding contributes to the fact that students do not have the opportunity to get to know their teacher during free time activities and vice versa. Student evaluation is objective and fair, in some cases and situations teachers also use formative evaluation.

V) Success

a) The school management actively involves students and teachers in school life

Active participation of students and teachers is a key element from the point of view of school management. The school management considers motivating students and teachers to participate in school activities as a friendly and fair play step that leads to success during education and work. The welcoming attitude of the school management offers feelings of security, justice, respect and acceptance leading to freedom, recognition and respect in a favourable school climate. The participation of actors in the life of the school can be included among the innovative factors of school culture. In the survey, up to 86.7% of teachers agree with the statement that the school management actively involves them in school life. However, 31.67% of respondents do not feel positive about the applied element of positive education.

b) Recognition, praise and fair evaluation from pupils, parents and colleagues or the school management is a matter of course in the school

Positive evaluation in school does not only apply to pupils. It is also an important factor for the teacher. Valuing honest and meaningful work leads to pride, and affects the working environment, its climate, and mutual relations, thereby contributing to a positive image of the school. The success of the teacher's self-realization activities supports his confidence in himself, his abilities and his knowledge, thereby expanding the interest and enthusiasm for work to general happiness and good, and prevention against burnout syndrome. Positive feedback on the teacher's work-effort brings joy along with it, and motivation for further professional days, and also satisfaction with the given state of affairs, thereby creating and supporting their integrity. Seligman, Peterson

(2004), Kahancová, and Nábělková (2013) include integrity among virtues and the strengths of character. It can be considered a negative finding that only 48% of respondents have direct experience with positive feedback, with a positive evaluation of their work by students and parents.

c) We present the students' achievements on the school's website

Publication of pupils' achievements, awards and recognition motivate and encourages other pupils and parents to participate in activities, contributing to the creation of a good name for the school towards the general public. Joint creative activity motivates teachers and students, supports enthusiasm, inspires hope, strengthens trust and gratitude, and participates in the creation of a safe social and emotional climate. In the conducted research, 53% of respondents actively work on publishing the achievements of students, and up to 76.67% of respondents are aware of the importance of the applied element for a creative and safe school and classroom climate.

d) Physical and mental condition is an important pillar of my mission – teacher

Self-perception and self-evaluation belong to the teacher's self-evaluation processes. Respect for oneself and one's identity, contribute to positive interpersonal relationships. Relationships are created in a calm and balanced climate of the school and classroom. By processing the statements of secondary school teachers, we can evaluate the fact that up to 96.67% of respondents take care of their mental and physical health. Health was assigned by Norrish, and Seligman (2015) as the sixth element of Health in PERMA (in Moore, 2021).

Since teaching practice is a demanding profession in which a teacher can quickly lose motivation and enthusiasm, Felcmanová (2021) recommends supporting the well-being of teachers across the board, especially maintaining their psychological, physical and social health. In connection with the principles of a positive approach to education, Seligman (2012) and Goleman (2017) support the creation of resilience in educators in their courses. Resilience and its support represent prevention against stress and exhaustion from completing demanding tasks, and helps health with a proactive approach.

Success for teachers means:

- participation of students, teachers, and parents in school life,
- a free and creative climate,
- recognition of pedagogical work,
- teacher support from the school management.

4.3 DIDACTIC WORK OF THE TEACHER AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Prioritizing a sensitive, empathetic approach to students:

- creating a positive atmosphere at the beginning of the lesson,
- application of experiential learning strategies with an individual approach, objective evaluation and sincere praise for the effort expended, supporting internal motivation, creating a space in which the student experiences success,
- emphasizing positive emotions, expressing personal feelings, their authenticity and naturalness,
- using humour in the teacher's work.

Attractive and meaningful organization of free time:

provision of a wide range of clubs and activities of interest to pupils, according to previously identified interests.

Applying elements of positive psychology to education:

the use of elements of positive psychology in every subject, in every stage of the teaching unit, in the activities of the teacher, but also of the pupil.

Emphasis on student responsibility:

- support for responsible behaviour in the fulfilment of school duties,
- reasonable and responsible use of computing technology in cyberspace,
- support for healthy interactions,
- support for the optimal positive prosperity of the personality in the educational process.

Identifying and supporting the strengths of students' character:

- the use of questionnaires, through which it is possible to identify the character of pupils,
- support for pupils' well-being and resilience through coping strategies.

Observing and respecting the requirements and principles of the school rules:

- appropriate and disciplined behaviour,
- polite and correct approach to students, teachers, school staff, peers,
- showing respect and sincere appreciation towards students, but also colleagues and superiors,
- application of life principles.

Use of various forms and methods of evaluating student performance:

- application of evaluation that is motivating for students,
- applying formative evaluation,

- creating space for every student to experience success,
 - applying mainly partial evaluation with a motivational character.
- (Čeretková et al., 2019).

4.4 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Provide educators with effective accredited educational programs:

- creating optimal working conditions and an environment for teaching their approval,
- motivating them into free time club activities, with subsequent fair evaluation.

Work with parents as important co-actors of school life:

- the educational action of parents and teachers in the field of developing the strengths of pupils' personalities,
- active involvement of parents in the participation of the student's life at school,
- developing a sincere interest in solving their children's problems,
- promoting knowledge and respect for the teacher's work, thereby influencing the application of elements of positive education in school.

Finding out the current climate:

- through questionnaires in which the class teacher diagnoses the social climate of the class from the beginning of the school year,
- finding out the climate of the teaching staff,
- involving parents in the evaluation of the school climate,
- creating a school climate based on the pillars of openness, responsibility, honesty, and mutual respect.

CONCLUSION

Students associate starting secondary education with a positive institution, with an inspiring curriculum and a teacher who is a model of humanity and truth. Expectations can be realized in every secondary school because education and training in general contain elements of progressive changes in the personality of pupils – during their studies at secondary school, they just need to be positively activated.

The objective of positive psychology is to highlight the possibilities and importance of an active positive view of human behaviour and optimal development and growth in the educational process of adolescents.

The optimum application of elements of positive education is a demanding and conscious process of changing the perspective of all actors. Although we theoretically discussed the influence of the main actors on the positive development of an adolescent's personality in the work, we believe that research findings on applied elements from the perspective of other members of education would be interesting for society.

It depends on the management of the school, i.e. principals, teachers, masters, and school employees, what rules and directions for the development of the climate of the secondary school will be determined. Effective high-school education is characterized by elements of progressive changes in the personality of adolescents, and the favourable climate of the school and classroom can start them up, accompany and build them, precisely by the application of the elements of positive education in its creation.

Based on the empirical findings of positive psychology scientists, a space is opened in education to achieve the educational objectives in secondary school. Through the form of positive thinking, experiencing, living and thus optimally developing the cognitive, non-cognitive, and conative potential of pupils and subsequently mastering metacognitive activities, which are a guarantee of breeding the superimposition of pupils. Then the result of the entire educational process is not only an educated but a wise, healthy, kind, good, well-rounded, aesthetic, ethical, honest person who understands the meaning of his existence and has a beneficial, irreplaceable attitude towards the surrounding society.

When creating the climate of the school and classroom, according to the findings of the survey, the elements of positive education are to be adequately applied, such as an active atmosphere and communication in the working

pedagogical team, belonging supported by the school management, the participation of pupils and teachers in the life of the school, respect for and reminder of the school rules, individual and humanistic approach by teachers, finding out and using the strengths of the student's personality, a friendly approach to supplementing knowledge, objective and fair evaluation with subsequent praise and warm encouragement of the students, discussion leading to the sharpening of the sense of morality, ethics and the strengths of personalities during classes, as well as the use of a healthy lifestyle.

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