Danijela Blanuša Trošelj
Faculty of Teacher Eduaction, Rijeka
danijela.blanusa.troselj@ufri.hr

Željka Ivković
Faculty of Teacher Eduacion, Rijeka
zivkovic@ufri.hr

BUILDING THE PROFESSION: PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND PRESCHOOL TEACHER'S EDUCATION [1]

Abstract: *Professional ethics is an area in which teachers do not feel confident. It is necessary to develop the status of the teacher profession in the society, which cannot be done without strengthening the ethics. Formal education on professional ethics does not exist, but its fragments can be interpreted in terms of the learning outcomes and competency courses at the Faculties of Teacher Education in Croatia. This research was conducted in the academic year 2012/2013 among 33 female preschool teachers enrolled in the first semester of the first year of graduate studies of Early and Preschool Education at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Rijeka. The main aims of the research were to investigate the attitudes of preschool teachers on professional ethics, as well as to determine whether the teaching course could raise awareness on professional ethics among preschool teachers. A questionnaire was prepared and two measuring cycles were conducted, one before and one after the teaching course, while the t-test for paired samples was used to compare the results of the measuring. Qualitative data were also gathered through open-ended questions.*

Key words: *ethics; initial teacher education;preschool teachers; profession*

1. Introduction

Professionalism can be interpreted as a phenomenon, discourse, philosophy, and complex layered concept around which there are many disputes (Lumsden, 2010). Professionalism refers to the development of competencies required to perform certain activities, while professionalism is associated with the social role and position of professionals considering the work they do (Marinet, Raymond & Gauthier, 2001). When talking about the professional (Feeney, 2012) in the context of the vernacular language of a society, this term is usually associated with a well performed job, a good employee, a reliable and competent service, being paid for what you do, or simply with something that is good.

In interpreting profession Šporer (1990) mentions the existence of an occupation which has a monopoly over some part of the complex knowledge and practical skills that require long-term education. Academic understanding of profession involves a call that promotes significant society values (Feeney, 2012).

These are just some of the definitions of professionalism and professions that have in recent decades experienced a boom in their theorizing (Davis, 1986; Barrett, Headkey, Stovall, & Witte, 2006; Murphy, Pinnegar i Pinn, 2011; Goreta, 2012). However, despite the fact that there are a number of different approaches to the definition of profession, and thereby of the elements that shape it, all approaches call for the professional ethics as its essential item (Kunczik, & Zipfel, 2006; Šporer, 1990; Feeney, 2012; Svetlik, 1999).

The more civilized a society is the more important and more complex the ethical question becomes. The society expects from its professions the level of ethics that cannot be reached by the majority of its citizens, which makes it clear that certain rights are accompanied by proportionately demanding obligations. Professionals providing services on a level whic hmost can only dream of. But the attitude of professionals in certain professions and of other members of the society (here we also include members of other professions) is a two-way, mutually give-and-take relationship. On the one hand, professionals provide the society with care, expertise, and innovations which enable the progress of a society, and, on the other hand, the society gives these same professionals awards, respect, and position. This relationship is somewhat changeable as a certain profession either receives or losses on importanc ein the society, and this is a result of the current needs of the society, scientific revelations, and in a negative context, the emergence of individuals whom is appropriate the elements of the previously mentioned give-and-take relationship. That misuse of the relationshipis the subject of the professional ethics of professions, especially

the "helping"humanities professions, such as medicine, social work (Urbanc, 2001), education...

Among professions, in terms of behavior, there are both similarities and differences. Similarities are those that separate them from occupation because an occupation, in essence, works for personal interests and professions for the public good (which does not necessarily exclude the personal interests of the individual), which inevitably implies the question of ethics. Professionals are expected to be competent (Feeney, 2012), i.e. that they already have specialized knowledge and skills necessary to perform a specific function of their profession in the society. Furthermore, according to Feeney (2012), professionals should be devoted to serving the society whereby they put their personal interests second (Carr, 1999). The third important determinant of the behavior of professionals is functioning according to the moral standards, which, as a rule, include honesty, integrity, loyalty, and discretion (Feeney, 2012). The professionals' activity directly affects a person's and mankind's well-being (Barnett & Hustedt, 2003; Magnuson, Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2007) whereby belonging to a profession implies a special obligation of conduct which contributes to those who serve (Feeney, 2012).

Ethical rules of some of these professions differ from one another (Hill, 2004), but what they all share is that they are based on very specific values (Urbanc, 2001). Professional ethics implies standards of professional conduct with whose help we determine what represents the standards of "badly" and "well" performed practices within the helping professions (Urbanc, 2001).

Although professional ethics in everyday speech is often associated with the Code of Ethics, it should be noted that it is a much broader concept. Apart from the formally prescribed behavior listed in the Code, professional ethics includes an entire range of behaviors that cannot be individually defined. However, knowledge, reflection, and expansion of the spectrum of identified behaviors and acceptable solutions to ethically questionable situations can help the professionals to strengthen their independent decision-making in some new dilemmas. The initial teacher training courses play an essential role in creating these foundations.

2. Initial teacher education and professional ethics

Today's initial teacher training is seen as an integral part of his professional development. It takes place in the concept of understanding the importance of higher education of all teaching professions at the level ofthe European Union. The European Union emphasizes the importance of professional development of teachers (Council of the European Union, 2009b) with a focus on the quality

of initial education, support for new teachers, and the possibilities of a quality continuing professional development.

Research shows that there is a relationship between those preschool teachers who attended "better" studies and the success of their children (Ballou &Podgursky, 1997; Ferguson, 1998, according to Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2000). Preschool teachers with a bachelor's degree and higher diploma are more efficient, and their children are more successful (Ibid,150). Conclusions of the Council of the European Union on the professional development of teachers (2009a) recognize that the knowledge, skills,and commitment of teachers are the most important factors in achieving high quality educational outcomes, which is why the emphasis is placed on high standards for initial teacher education. A professional should acquire a good foundation for scientific research as well as the first practical experiences during the course of initial education, but his further development does not stop there (at least it should not).

EU member states (Council of The European Union, 2009a) commit, among other, to the establishment of high quality in teacher education, in accordance with the needs of the society, and to the connectedness of all levels of professional development (support, reflection, feedback on work, etc.) of teachers. As one of the tasks, member states recognize the study on the recruitment of teachers and the course of their formal education. The extent to which the European Union puts its faith in early and preschool education, and how much it trusts the power and strength of its influence, is perhap sbest illustrated by a sentence which says that early and preschool educatio nhas the potential to giv eyoung people a good startin the world of tomorrow and to finally terminate the vicious cycle of transmission of an unfavorable position from one generation to another (Council of the European Union, 2011).

Through the introduction of the Bologna system of studying, there have been changes in education of preschool teachers in Croatia. Faculty of Teacher Education in Rijeka was one of the first to adapt its study program to the needs and requirements of the Bologna process, as well as to the postulates of European documents.

"*In line with the promotion of the concept of lifelong learning and the vision of the necessity to construct a new system of professional roles of experts in the context of modern and early and preschool education, considerations and requirements emerged to redefine the traditional educational point of view of professional roles in the field of early and preschool education in a way that different educational programs are conceptualized for different categories of professionals*" (Krstović, 2012:6). In the *Development Plan of the Education System from 2005 to 2010,* in which the necessity for the modernization of education for the preschool teacher profession was emphasized, the base

was found for making changes in the study program. In the academic year 2009/2010, the first generation of students of university undergraduate studies was enrolled at two faculties – the Faculty of Teacher Education in Rijeka and the Faculty of Teacher Education in Osijek. *"University study of Early and Preschool Education is a response to a changed role in terms of the modern definitions of the out-familial institutional context. This educational level will represent only a fundamental phase in which, by means of the processes of lifelong learning, the preschool teacher's autonomous, personal, and professional competencies as an intellectual, as well as a thinker and a reflective practitioner will be developed"* (Krstović, 2009:32).

In logical sequence, in the academic 2010/2011, the first generation of students of the university graduate studies was enrolled, and which has so far been carried out as a part-time study program. Upon the completion of the study of Early and Preschool Education, the student earns the title of Master of Early and Preschool Education (M.A.)[2].

Graduate study means that another prerequisite for the existence of the profession of preschool teachers has been met. During their Study, the students reflect on their professional identities andother components of the profession through a variety of content and different forms of teaching. However, is the education of teachers in Croatia conceived in a way that reflects and encourages ethical behavior?

Analysis of study programs has found that, apart from the graduate study at the Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka, preschool teacher study programs across Croatia do not cover the content of professional ethics for preschool teachers. Professional ethics of preschool teachers is talked about in three class periods of lectures and workshops in the mentioned study program.

The world has recognized the need to include moral and ethical standards into the theory and practice of teacher education(NCATE, 2001). Apart from the substantial inclusion of these areas into the curriculum at Faculties of Teacher Education (and Humanities and Social Sciences), it is necessary for the staff that educates future preschool and elementary school teachers to set an example, to be morally ethical role models. Thereby the question is raised (possibility for further research) whether the knowledge, experience and values of university lecturers are in accordance with the professional ethics of their profession, especially the ethics of the profession which they are educating?

Considering that most students at universities arrive with their own personal concept of religious and value judgments, which largely determine their behavior, education in the field of professional ethics could be a kind of exploration of the existing moral values in terms of socially acceptable behavior

---

2. Graduate study program of Early and Preschool Education; more on www.ufri.hr

and the expected roles of preschool/elementary school teachers (Sockett, 2006).

According to Hargreaves(2000), teachers have an important impact on the lives and development of young people. Their actions cannot be technically described nor are they a pure assembly of techniques and applications of learned behavior (Ibid,2000). However, it is influenced by the implicit pedagogy of preschool teachers. Teachers must be able to make decisions every day based on social and even personal moral judgments. The personal value system may be in conflict with ethically acceptable behavior (Blanuša Trošelj, 2014). Therefore, a part of the necessary skills to assess and ethical decision-making can and must be strengthened during the initial education of preschool (and elementary school) teachers.

In order to have a starting point in creating content which the preschool teachers need the most, it is necessary to examine the preschool teachers themselves (Barrett, Headkey, Stovall, & Witte, 2006). After examining the literature, it was found that there are an insignificant number of papers (Blanuša Trošelj, 2015) in the area of professional ethics of preschool teachers, and which in turn do not bring into question the issue of its content. Therefore, it is important to know whether the education on professional ethics influences the changes in the preschool teachers'spotting of unethical situations in their environment, both quantitative and qualitative.

3. Aims, objectives and hypothesis

There were two main research aims:
1. to investigate the attitudes of preschool teacher on professional ethics

2. to determine whether the teaching course could raise awareness on professional ethics among preschool teachers

Objectives of research were (1) to create a questionnaire measuring attitudes of preschool teachers on professional ethics, (2) to measure the attitudes of preschool teachers on professional ethics before and after the teaching course and compare the results, and (3) to investigate the possible connections between preschool teachers' attitudes on professional ethics and some socio-demographic characteristics.

Therefore, the hypothesis is that *preschool teachers will show more awareness on professional ethics after the teaching course than before*.

4. Research method

Sample

The sample consisted of 33 female preschool teachers, who in the year 2012/2013 were also enrolled in the first semester of the first year of graduate studies of Early and Preschool Education at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Rijeka. Their average age was 29 and they had an average of 5 years of work experience.

Measuring instrument

A questionnaire on professional ethics of preschool teachers was used and which was created for research purposes. The questionnaire contained a five-degree Likert-type scale (value 1 indicating the answer is "false," 2 "mostly no," 3 "neither nor yes," 4 "mostly yes," and 5 "completely accurate"), which measured the attitudes of students about the aspect of professional ethics in their daily work. In addition to this scale, the questionnaire included open-ended questions that examined different experiences and forms of behavior regarding professional ethics, as well as socio-demographic questions.

Method of conducting research

The teaching unit on Professional ethics of preschool teachersis covered as a part of the compulsory course "Professional competencies of preschool teachers" in the first year of the graduate study of Early and Preschool Education. The research was conducted within the aforementioned course in two measurements, just before the targeted teaching unit and the second time after a three-week break.

Between the two measurements, the respondents (hereinafter referred to as preschool teachers) attended three class periods of lectures and workshops on professional ethics of preschool teachers. The contentof lectures was covered with a combination of lectures and workshops, in which the preschool teachers were active participants. First, students were asked to write on a blank piece paper an ethical dilemma from their practice o rquestion to which they would like to receive an answer. Afte rthe fundamenta ltheoretical concepts on professional ethics, preschool teachers participated in discussions on ethical issues and situations which they had previously written down. Workshops allowed the preschool teachers to reflect on ethical dilemmas and obligations based on real situations and to jointly, based on new knowledge, try

to find ethically acceptable solutions. In addition, preschool teachers reflected on ethical issues during role-play situations in which they played a variety of roles from practice – from children, parents to colleagues and associates. Thereby they both emotionally and cognitively experienced some of the situations that they encounter in their daily work as preschool teachers, but from a position of the "client."

Descriptions of unethical situations/problems/doubts about open questions were separated into three categories based on the theoretical frameworks of professional ethics. In doing so, the following variables were obtained: who is the main actor of the described situation, who is the "victim"" of an unethical situation, and the role of the preschool teacher (respondent) in the described situation.

5. Results

Table 1 shows the results of the connectedness of the students with the (non)existence of the Ethical Code in their kindergarten.

Table 1. Does the kindergarten in which you work have an Ethical Code?

Before the lecture	f	%	Cumulative %	After the lecture	f	%	Cumulative %
Yes	16	48,5	48,5	Yes	14	42,4	42,4
No	8	24,2	72,7	No	16	48,5	90,9
I don't know/ No reply	9	27,3	100,0	I don't know/ No reply	3	9,1	100,0
Total	33	100,0		Total	33	100,0	

Even though in the first measurement 48.5% of preschool teachers responded affirmatively to this question, in the subsequent measurement it turned out that in fact some of them were wrong. The lecture resulted in a change in the understanding of information about the existence of the Code at the level of the institution in which the preschool teacherswork. This is also evident from the smaller number of responses "I do not know/no reply" (before the lecture 27.3% and after the lecture 9.1%).

Table 2. Comparison of the students' attitudes about professional ethics in the workplace before and afte rthe lecture: t-test for paired samples

		N	$\overline{x}\,\overline{x}$	SD	RANGE	t	p
I am familiar with the behavior protocols in ethical dilemmas.	Before the lecture	29	3,03	1.180	4	-3,285	,003*
	After the lecture	29	3,79	.726	2		
I react(report, call to responsibility,talk...) to unethicalactionsof the employees in my collective.	Before the lecture	30	3,07	.907	4	-,147	,884
	After the lecture	30	3,10	.923	3		
Preschool teachers are ethically responsible.	Before the lecture	33	3,76	1.062	4	-2,693	,011*
	After the lecture	33	4,24	.902	3		
I act professionally and ethically in my work.	Before the lecture	32	4,25	.568	2	-,373	,712
	After the lecture	32	4,28	.523	2		
My institution is an example of a professional and ethic institution.	Before the lecture	30	3,33	.758	3	,239	,813
	After the lecture	30	3,30	.750	3		
My colleagues act in accordance with professional ethics.	Before the lecture	30	3,43	.728	3	1,882	,070
	After the lecture	30	3,20	.714	3		
We need an ethical code for preschool teachers.	Before the lecture	33	4,82	.392	1	-2,101	,044*
	After the lecture	33	4,94	.242	1		
Ethical code for preschool teachers has helped me at work.	Before the lecture	33	4,79	.415	1	-,812	,423
	After the lecture	33	4,85	1.180	1		

*p<,05

The conducted t-test for paired samples showed that there is a difference in the students' responses before and afte rthe lecture in three particles. After the completion of lectures on professional ethics, the students thought they were better acquainted with the protocols of ethical dilemmas, were more aware of ethical responsibilities as an important aspect of the preschool teacher's profession, and virtually all of them were convinced that they needed an Ethical Code for preschool teachers. This is in agreement with dana from previous tables, wher ethe results showed that after completing the lecture most of the respondents went to check if there wasa Code of Ethicsin the institution where they work.

Students generally expressed greater agreement with those statements which indicate a general need for an ethical code or refer to the understanding of themselves as ethical persons in the broad sense ("I act professionally and ethically in my work"). They are somewhat critical of their colleagues and institutions in which they work, i.e. of the concrete forms of their behavior when it comes to their colleagues' unethical behavior. It is observable from the aforementioned that students consider themselves professionally somewhat more ethical than their colleagues with whom they work. However, they might expect a bit mor einitiative for the resolution of problematic situations from the top in the form of formal sanctions, rather than seeing room for it in informal actions within their own micro-context. A certain lack of self-criticism, self-initiative,or security in changing and improving an existing situation in the collective is generally present in various elements of professional development in educational institutions so not even the aspect of professional ethics differs from that pattern.

In continuation of the research we were interested to know which situations do the preschool teachers perceive as unethical or questionably ethical, and whether changes would occur in the described situations when the preschool teachers have gained new skills and been given a chance to be in the role of one of the other participants in the educational process.

Teachers were asked to point out an ethically questionable situation/ problem or dilemma which they had faced at work and how they solve it. Three variables were extracted from the responses which give an insight into who the actors of the unethical conduct are, and who the victims of such practices are, as well as the role of the respondents in the described situation.

Table 3. Who creates an ethical dilemma or an ethical problem?

Before the lecture	f	%	Cumulative %	After the lecture	f	%	Cumulative %
Not stated	15	45,5	45,5	Not stated	6	18,2	18,2
Parents or someone from the family	7	21,2	66,7	Parents or someone from the family	6	18,2	36,4
Colleague preschool teacher	2	6,1	72,7	Colleague preschool teacher	17	51,5	87,9
Preschool teacher respondent	5	15,2	87,9	Preschool teacher respondent	2	6,1	93,9
Someone else	4	12,1	100,0	Someone else	2	6,1	100,0
Total	33	100,0		Total	33	100,0	

In the first measurement the majority of respondents did not reply to the question, which may indicate a lack of knowledge about the content of professional ethics, which is why the preschool teachers did not know what to reply. Those who did respond usually recognized situations in which they themselves or the parents act unethically. In the second measurement, for most responses, the preschool teachers described unethical situation of their colleagues. In the first measurement they generally described the "serious" violations of the child's rights, while in the second measurement the "softer" subtle forms of unethical behavior were described about which they might have never even thought about.

Precisely for this reason there happens a change even in the"victims"of unethical behavior.

From the frequency of the responses, the spread of a "network"of victims of unethical practices is notice able after the lecture, particularly in the profession of preschool teachers, in a way that it does not affect the child as the fundamental "victim" of unethical practices in both measurements.

Table 4. Who is the "victim" of another person's unethical behavior?

Before the lecture	f	%	Cumulative %	After the lecture	f	%	Cumulative %
Not stated	15	45,5	45,5	Not stated	6	18,2	18,2
Child	13	39,4	84,8	Child	15	45,5	63,7
Preschool teacher	5	15,2	100,0	Preschool teacher	3	9,1	72,8
				Profession	8	24,2	97,0
				Professional advisor or principal	1	3,0	100,0
Total	33	100,0		Total	33	100,0	

Furthermore, we were interested to find out how the students experienced the role of a preschool teacher in unethical situations.

Table 5. Role of the preschool teacher in a given situation

Before the lecture	f	%	Cumulative %	After the lecture	f	%	Cumulative %
Not stated	15	45,5	45,5	Not stated	6	18,2	18,2
Protects	12	36,4	81,8	Protects	20	60,6	78,8
Violates	2	6,1	87,9	Violates	3	9,1	87,9
Ignores	4	12,1	100,0	Ignores	4	12,1	100,0
Total	33	100,0		Total	33	100,0	

Although the incidence of specific role of preschool teachers in particular situations is listed in three categories in the following tables, "ignoring" a certain unethical situation can also be understood as a violation of ethics with the difference that in this case the teacher is a passive actor. Although in the second measurement, the percentage of those who protect the "victims" indescribed situations is 60.6%. It is worrisome that 21.2% do just the opposite.

6. Discussion

It is observable from the research results that a small amount of new knowledge among students who have some experience from practice leads to a change in thinking about professional ethics of their profession. Knowledge and thinking about it have as a result a change and implementation in practice, which is evident from a completely different vision of unethical situations in which the respondent shave found themselves in. Thus, except fo ra significant number of unreplied open-ended questions, the replies in the first measurement indicate a narrow reflection on this subject (unethical conduct only in respect to the child and themselves) and unawareness (ethical responsibility, code of ethical behavior, I act responsibly...) of unethical conduct.

Since ther eis no single Ethical Code for Preschool Teachers in Croatia, it was expected that different responses and different levels of thinking regarding the knowledge about the subject matter of research would be obtained. However, the fact that a large part of preschool teachers does not know whether their kindergarten has an Ethical Code goes in hand with the fact that preschool teachers were not included in the creation of the Code which exists. Already in 1966 UNESCO Recommendations for teacher status required that behavioral norms and standards, which are a foundation of the teaching profession, be defined in collaboration with teacher associations and that they be subsequently obeyed. For most preschool teachers the ethical code is a thrust measure of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, which is easier to understand when the teachers themselves are involved in its development.

The fact that preschool teachers commonly recognize the child as a "victim" of unethical conductis in line with research (Erčulj, 2008) that usually indicates that teachers feel best qualified to work with children, that the most common motive for choosing this profession is precisely their love for children (Boneta, Vujičić &Ivković,2013), and the fact that most of their work is devoted to the direct work with children. A preschool teacher should promote in his social environment the understanding of a child as an active and competent person, a subject to their own development, and a person who has their own rights (Bašić, 2007). Preschool teachers cited the violation of these rights as the most common unethical behaviors from their practice. However, it is worrying that, with situations that may indirectly endanger the child (issue of photographing in the kindergarten that the preschool teachers often cite), frequently mentioned descriptions refer to the preschool teacher's actions which endanger the child and their personality ina more direct and dangerous way:
-*"Forcing a child to an activity that he or she does not want";*
-*"Unethical attitude towards children - pulling their arm,shouting, punishing";*

-*"The preschool teacher told the child that he or she was rude"*;
-*"Preschool teacher has told everyone that a boy (5 years) after having performed bowel movements did not flush the toilet, which made the entire room smell - she repeated that in front of all children as well as mentioned it to other preschool teachers in other groups in a way as if it was something really bad"*;
-*"Forcing a child to eat"*;
-*"Shouting at the children and time-out as punishment"*(often quoted)...

The respondents often mentioned situations that could also undermine the personality of the child, but through reflection on the dignity of the family and data confidentiality:

-*"Commenting on the children and parents"*;
-*"Taking part in gossip initiated by preschool teachers (about) children and parents"*;
-*"Spreading false information and gossip about the children's parents"*...

It is interesting to note that in the second measurement, the respondents more often reflect about the kind of conduct that is not appropriate to any profession, which they did not think about before the lecture:
-*"Talking on the cell phone while directly working with children"*;
-*"Drinking morning coffee (as a group) after8:30"*;
-*"Taking away food from the kindergarten"*;
-*"Being late for work"*;
- *"Engaging with the parent in commenting the actions of a member of the professional team"*...

Changes that occurred in the second measurement regarding all questions provide a clear image of the need to educate in the field of professional ethics. Although in this study students who are already working in practice and possess some experience were involved, it is evident that they are not familiarized with the behavior protocols in certain situations (Velu &Meng, 2010). It should be emphasized that they are often not aware that some situations are nothing else but professional obligations and that as such they do not require any specific treatment protocols, but rather the obligation to comply with the laws, statutes, ordinances, etc. There are many models that can help in making ethical decisions. For example, in his article, Jones (1991) proposed an issue-contingent model, which contains a set of variables called moral intensity, which has the following components: magnitude of consequences, social consensus, probability of effect, temporal immediacy, proximity, and concentration of effect. Čepić

(2012) stresses the importance of critical reflection in understanding the value and interpretation of the environment in which preschool work. Also, Čepić (2012) mentions *a personalized model* for analyzing the experience and ethical decision-making as crucial in professional ethics. Mason (1995) talks about four additional considerations to should be taken into account before making desitions: who should decide, who should benefit, how should the decision be made, and how can the issue be prevented from arising in the future?

Despite the different models, decision making will vary depending on the level of teachers' moral development. Therefore, King and Kitchener (1993, 2004) discuss the Reflective Judgment model with seven stages that reflect the individuals' development from pre-reflective to reflective thinking. Regardless of the model, all authors (Jones, 1991; Čepić, 2012; King and Kitchener, 1993; King and Kitchener, 2004) agree on the importance of critical reflective thinking with the intention of developing the teacher's ethical thinking.

7. Limitations

This research presents the first attempt in our country in exploring professional ethics in the profession of preschool teachers and thus suffers from several bigger limitations. First of all, the operationalization of the construct of professional ethics was not thoroughly conducted. The paper discusses attitudes on professional ethics, but clearly it is a mixture of attitudes, knowledge, and experience (behavior). Further research should insist on clarifying these elements of professional ethics and embed them more strongly within the theoretical framework. Secondly, due to the limitation in the operationalization, metric properties of measuring instruments such as validity and reliability have not been taken into account, which is another aspect that should be improved in further research. Thirdly and lastly, this research was conducted on a very small and homogenous sample and the results should be observed with caution.

8. Conclusions

Johnson and Ridley (2008) emphasize that, when professionals do not adhere to the basic ethical principles and fundamental moral values, there is a decline in the quality of performance and an appreciable growth of negligent performance of duty.However, adherence to them implies their recognition and the knowledge of what is acceptable in a particular profession.

For many people being an preschool teacheris a"calling" in which a special place is occupied by personality traits that improve the quality of the teaching job and refer to the preschool teacher's values, ethics, attitudes, commitment, passion, enjoyment at work, enthusiasm and playfulness(Brock,

2006). Fortunately, most preschool teachers see themselves as active participants in the change in educational situations and who usually intuitively and based on common sense react even in situations where they are not familiar with the principles of the ethics of their profession. However, action and reaction in the field of ethics, in the profession that so intensely affects the life of a child, cannot and must not be given over exclusively to personality traits. The responsibility that the preschool teacher has mus tbe focused and supported by initial education and further professional development that will always re-build the professional ethics of a preschool teacher. When everyone has responsibilities in the moral sense, then a reciprocity in relations is reached because the obligation of one person means the right of another (Sockett, 2006).

In accordance with the aforementioned, this paper gives an insight into the teacher's ideas on the professional ethics, their need for a clearer knowledge of professional ethics, and specific procedures in questionable situations that occur in their daily work. Results indicate that education on professional ethics influences changes in the preschool teachers'spotting of unethical situations in their environment, therefore the academic community should not deny the necessity of implementation of ethical content in the initial education of preschool teachers and should also be an ethical role model by making daily ethically acceptable decisions.

References

1. Ballou, D. & Podgursky, M. (1997). Teacher Pay and Teacher Quality. Kalamazoo, Michigan: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.
2. Barrett, D. E., Headkey, K.N., Stovall, B. & Witte, J.C. (2006). Teachers' Perceptions of the Frequency and Seriousness of Violations of Ethical Standards. *The Journal of Psychology*, 140 (05): 421-433. DOI: 10.3200/JRLP.140.5.421-433 (25.08.2014.)
3. Barnett W.S. & Hustedt J.T. (2003).Preschool: The most important grade. *Education Leadership* 60(7): 54-57.
4. Bašić, S. (2007). Nova slika djetinjstva u pedagogiji djetinjstva; U: Maleš, D.: *Nove paradigme ranog djetinjstva*; Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu. 19-37.
5. Blanuša Trošelj, D. (2015). Profesionalna etika odgajatelja djece rane i predškolske dobi. Znanstvena monografija: *Kompetencije suvremenog učitelja I odgajatelja-izazov za promjene*. Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište u Splitu.
6. Blanuša Trošelj, D. (2014). Na putu ka profesionalnoj etici odgajatelja. *Dijete vrtić obitelj*, no.75, spring. 6-8-
7. Boneta, Ž., Vujičić, L.& Ivković, Ž. (in the press). Feminizacija učiteljske profesije - motivi studentskog odabira učiteljske profesije. Stoljeća zadarskoga školstva; Zadar.
8. Bowman, B.T., S. Donovan, & M.S. Burns. (2000). *Eager to learn: Educating our preschoolers*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

9.   Brock, A. (2006). Dimensions of early years professionalism - attitudes versus competences?. Leeds Metropolitan University. Retrived 01.12.2012. from http://www.tactyc.org.uk/pdfs/Reflection-brock.pdf

10. Carr, D. (1999).Professional education and professional ethics. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 16 (1), 33-46.

11. Council of the European Union (2009a). Council conclusions of 26 November 2009 on the professional development of teacher and school leaders, (2009/C 302/04), Brussels.

12. Council of the European Union (2009b). Council Conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020"), Brussels.

13. Council of the European Union (2011). Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow. Official Journal of the European Union

14. Čepić, R. (2012). Cjeloživotno učenje i etičke dimenzije profesionalne prakse : izazovi i dileme ; U Posavec, K. i Sablić, M. (Edt): Pedagogija i kultura, Hrvatsko pedagogijsko društvo, Zagreb. 56-63.

15. Davis, M. (edt.). (1986). *Ethics & the legal profession*. New York: Prometheus Books.

16. Erčulj, J. (2008). Razvoj metodoloških inštrumentov za ugotavljanje in spremljanje profesionalnega razvoja vzgojiteljev, učiteljev in ravnateljev. Preliminarna studija. Projekt: Evalvacija vzgoje in izobraževanja v RS. Projektno poročilo. Ljubljana: Pedagoški inštitut.

17. Feeney, S. (2012). *Professionalism in Early Childhood Education: Doing Our Best for Young Children.* Boston, MA: Pearson.

18. Goreta, M. (2012). Profesionalna odgovornost psihijatra. *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu*. Vol.62, No.5-6, 1943-1970.

19. Hargreaves, A. (2000). Four Ages of Professionalism and Professional Learning. *Teachers and Teaching: History and Practice*, Vol. 6, No. 2. 151-182.

20. Hill, A.L. (2004). Ethical analysis in counseling: A case for the narrative ethics, moral, and virtue ethics. *Counseling and Values*, 48, 131-148.

21. Johnson, W.B. & Ridley, C.R. (2008). *The Elements of Ethics*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

22. Jones, T.M. (1991). Ethical Decision Making by Individuals in Organizations: An Issue-Contingent Model.The Academy of Management Review, Vol. 16, (2). 366-395.

23. King, P.M. & Kitchener, K.S. (1993). *The development of reflective thinking in the college years: The mixed results*. New Directions for Higher Education. 25-42. Retrieved 29 August 2016 from Karen Strohm Kitchener (ResearchGate).

24. King, P.M. & Kitchener, K.S. (2004). Reflective Judgment:Theory   and Research on the Development of Epistemic Assumptions Through Adulthood. Educational psychologist. Vol. 39(1), 5–18. Retrieved 29 August 2016 from Patricia M.King (ResearchGate).

25. Krstović J. (2009). Odrazi sveučilišnog obrazovanja odgajatelja na koncept novog profesionalizma: izazovi i dileme. *3. Međunarodna konferencija o naprednim i sustavnim istraživanjima*. Simpozij: Kurikulumi ranog odgoja i obveznog obrazovanja, Zadar, Hrvatska.173-184.

26. Krstović, J. (2012). Per aspera ad astra. U *1.generacija sveučilišnog diplomskog studija ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja.* Rijeka: Centar za istraživanje djetinjstva. 2-11.

27. Kunczik, M. & Zipfel, A. (2006). *Uvod u znanost o medijima i komunikologiju*. Zagreb: Zaklada Friedrich Ebert.

28. Lumsden, E. (2010). The New Early Years Professional in England. International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education (IJCDSE), Volume 1, Issue 3. Retrived 20.8.2014 from http://www.infonomics-society.org/IJCDSE/The%20New%20Early%20Years%20Professional%20in%20England.pdf

29. Mason, R.O. (1995). Applying Ethics to Information Technology Issues. Communications of the Acm. Vol. 38 (12). Retrived 29.8.2016 from https://www.research-gate.net/profile/Richard_Mason3/publication/220424257_Applying_Ethics_to_Information_Technology_Issues/links/0fcfd51224c2fd8178000000.pdf

30. Martinet, A.M., Raymond, D. i Gauthier, C. (2001). *Teacher training-Orientations, teachers competencies.* Quebec: Gouvernement du Quebec.

31. Magnuson, K. A., Ruhm, C. & Waldfogel, J. (2007). Does prekindergarten improve school preparation and performance? *Economics of Education Review*. Elsevier, vol. 26(1). 33-51.

32. Murphy, M. S., Pinnegar, E. i Pinnegar, S. (2011). Exploring Ethical Tensions on the Path to Becoming a Teacher. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Fall 2011.97-114.

33. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2001). Standards for Professional Development schools. Spring. Retrieved 17.02.2014. from http://www.ncate.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FcHbf2B%2b670%3d&tabid=125

34. Sockett, H. (Edt.) (2006). *Teacher Dispositions: Building a Teacher Education Framework of Moral Standards.* Washington: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

35. Svetlik, I. (1999). *Sodobni izzivi profesionalizmu*. Ljubljana: Knjižnica, 43, 2/3.

36. Šporer, Ž. (1990). *Sociologija profesija*. Zagreb: Sociološko društvo Hrvatske.

37. UNESCO (1966). Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. Retrieved 01. 4.2014. from http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=13084&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

38. Urbanc, K. (2001). Etika I vrijednosti u socijalnom radu. *Ljetopis socijalnog rada*, 8 (2). http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=6161

39. Velu, G., & Meng, L. H. (2010). *Code of ethics handbook: An essential companion for daily practice*. Singapore: Association for early childhood educators.

GRADITI PROFESIJU: PROFESIONALNA ETIKA I OBRAZOVANJE ODGAJATELJA

Sažetak: *Profesionalna etika je područje u kojoj se odgajatelji ne osjećaju sigurno. Da bi nužno ojačala svoj društveni status, odgajateljska profesija mora jačati i područje profesionalne etike. Iako formalno obrazovanje ne postoji, dijelovi profesionalne etike mogu se pronaći u ishodima učenja i kompetencijama pojedinih kolegija na Učiteljskim fakultetima u Hrvatskoj.Istraživanje je provedeno u akademskoj godini 2012/2013 među 33 odagajteljica upisanih u prvi semestar prve godine diplomskog studija Ranog i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja pri Učiteljskom fakultetu u Rijeci. Glavni ciljevi istraživanja bili su ispitati stavove odgajatelja o profesionalnoj etici, kao i da utvrditi da li edukacija o profesionalnoj etici može utjecati na razvoj svijesti o istoj. Pripremljeni upitnik korišten je u u dva mjerna ciklusa, prije i poslije edukacije, dok je t-test za zavisne uzorke korišten za usporedbu rezultata mjerenja. Kvalitativni podaci prikupljeni su otvorenim pitanjima.*

Ključne riječi: *etika; inicijalno obrazovanje; odgajatelji; profesija.*