

“I DIDN’T HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS SO I WASN’T... REALLY DISAPPOINTED”: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND ACTIVATION OF TEACHERS’ CAPITAL AND RESOURCES IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

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To understand changes in education caused by the transition to distance education, we utilize sociological concepts such as Turner’s concept of social dynamics to theoretically place changed relationships between individuals, institutions, and the social system, and we use various concepts of capital in understanding activation of teachers’ capital and resources. Primary research objectives were to analyze (a) institutional support to teachers from their perspective and (b) the capital and resources teachers had to activate during distance education. Interviews with 32 teachers from Croatia were conducted in 2020 and deductive thematic analysis was applied. Results indicate that the adjustment from teachers’ perspective relied mostly on their direct work with students and activation of personal and professional capital and resources, while institutional support was of secondary importance. Themes related to the institutional support indicate a mix of positive and negative experiences with negative experiences more pronounced regarding the national level support. Social capital and the exchange of experiences with colleagues are highlighted in comparison to the national-level institutional support which aligns with Turner’s analysis of social dynamics.

Keywords: social dynamics; institutional support; teachers; teacher capital

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Introduction

The 2019/2020 school year in Croatia started with the implementation of the curricular reform *School for Life*, continued with the teachers' strike, and ended with distance teaching and learning (DTL) caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was very challenging. In education, the use of digital technology refers to different types of digitally mediated learning which implies that the use of digital technology in education is not a novelty (Schmidt and Tang, 2020), but the sudden and complete digitalization of education was a turning point. This transition required an immediate response from the (unprepared) *education community* (Selwyn, 2012), actors on *the macro* (education system, policy bodies), *meso* (schools), and *micro* level (teachers, students, parents). From agents on the *micro-level*, this required adequate digital equipment and developed digital skills.

Based on TALIS 2018, the average teachers' age in Croatia was 42 (ISCED 2) and 45 (ISCED 3) (Markočić Dekanić *et al.*, 2019), which implies that part of them had to use ICT during formal education and all of them fall in a group of individuals who have basic or above basic digital skills³. However, regarding the use of ICT in teaching, less than 50% of Croatian teachers reported that their formal initial teacher education included that element, and around 30% of them reported that they feel well or very well prepared for the use of ICT in teaching and more than 20% indicated a need for professional training (Markočić Dekanić *et al.*, 2019). TALIS 2018 was conducted around the same time when professional development activities took place for curricular reform, and some were aimed at increasing the use of ICT and teacher training. Despite the proposed use of ICT in teaching, unequally equipped schools posed unfavourable conditions (Karajić *et al.*, 2019). Other relevant factors were differences between students. PISA 2018 data for Croatia shows that the percentage of 15-year-old students who have both access to the Internet and a computer at home that can be used for schoolwork is 91% (OECD, 2021), which is high but also sheds light on the remaining 9%. Overcoming unequal positions was intended with the provision of tablets with Internet access.

³ Eurostat (2019), *Individuals' level of digital skills* [isoc_sk_dskl_i]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ISOC_SK_DSCL_I/default/table [31 May 2023]

Stated differences partially reflect the unsatisfactory level of digitalization of society in Croatia (EC, 2021). Eurostat data (2020) for Croatia indicate a digital divide, urban-rural inequalities, socio-economic inequalities regarding household equipment with digital infrastructure and devices, and a generation gap in digital competencies.

We conducted exploratory research with a focus on teachers' experiences during the transition to DTL, and in this paper we analyze:

RO1. Institutional support to teachers for the implementation of distance teaching from their perspective

RO2. Capital and resources teachers had to activate for teaching in the digital environment.

The focus on the complex dynamic between individuals and institutions in education came from the interplay of different levels of reality which we identified in teachers' experiences.

Social dynamics and forms of capital in the education field

Integrating and Disintegrating Dynamics

Broad social and educational changes in 2020 when the teaching and learning process shifted to a digital environment suddenly and completely for the first time, require a sound theoretical frame. This paper relies on contemporary sociological literature (Bauman, 2007; Beck, 1992; Castells, 2005; Turner, 2016a, 2016b) in explaining changes and issues that emerged in the field of education and in placing them in the contemporary context of changed relationships between institutions and individuals. Turner's (2016a, 2016b) concept of integrating and disintegrating dynamics provides a useful basis for understanding connections between individuals, institutions, and the social system in the changed societal and educational context.

Relevant to portraying disruptions and uncertainties, Bauman (2007) states how the transition to liquid modernity is characterized by the decomposition and melting of social forms, for which more time is needed to reestablish them. Social forms are described as "structures that limit individual choices, institutions that guard repetitions and routines, patterns of acceptable behavior" (Bauman, 2007, 1). When society is no longer perceived as a solid totality, but as a liquid

or network society (Bauman, 2007; Castells, 2005), responsibilities in providing solutions to the uncertainty are shifted to individuals who become responsible for their actions (Bauman, 2007). At the end of the last century, Beck (1992) wrote that risks in modern society were going to become pronounced, and that was experienced in the societal changes that occurred. The school year 2019/2020 was characterized by multiple disruptions affecting severely the usual school day-to-day life while shifting the responsibilities to teachers who were required to provide an illusion of a normal school day or reestablish it in changed circumstances.

In understanding the relationship between teachers and educational institutions we found useful Turner's approach (2003, 2016a, 2016b), which distinguishes between three levels of social reality and the social dynamics between these levels. Distinctions applied to the education field refer to (a) the macro-level including, among others (education policy bodies), institutional domains such as education in which there is a "commitment to acquiring and passing on knowledge" (Turner, 2016b, 131), (b) the meso-level of corporate (e.g. schools) and categorical units (e.g. distinctions between teachers) and (c) the micro-level of encounters among individuals (e.g. teachers) (Turner, 2003, 2016a, 2016b). Integration of forces at the micro-meso-macro level relies on connections and commitments between individuals, institutions, and the social system, and a vital role have positive emotions which are the integration factor (Turner, 2007, 2016a, 2016b). Integration is not possible if there is a *proximal bias* (positive emotions flow only at the level of encounters between individuals) and a *distal bias* (negative emotions move from individual to meso and macro levels) (Turner, 2007, 2016a). What is crucial to sustaining society are positive experiences (e.g. stimulated by the provision of institutional support) across different levels of reality and securing "the capacities of persons to meet expectations from all sources consistently across a wide variety of corporate units in diverse institutional domains" (Turner, 2016b, 146). Since the educational system is a slow-changing system, like other social forms for which more time is needed for adjustment in times of uncertainty, responsibilities are shifted to individuals (Bauman, 2007). When responsibilities are shifted to individuals, individuals have to activate their capital and other resources to cope with the changes that have occurred.

Capital and resources

Bourdieu's (1986; 1990) work on forms of capital set grounds for distinctions between social, cultural, and economic capital and their use in a wide range of research. His concepts have been of persisting interest and use in research concerning teachers (Addi-Raccah and Grinshtain, 2018; Engström and Carlhed, 2014; Grinshtain and Addi-Raccah, 2020; Spillane *et al.*, 2015), among others (see Coleman, 1988).

To define capital, we refer to three definitions that share similarities. Bourdieu (1986, 241) explains capital as "accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated', embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor". Hargreaves and Fullan (2012, 1) state that capital is "related to one's own or a group's worth, particularly concerning assets that can be leveraged to accomplish desired goals". In the third definition, capital is broadly defined as "resources that are acquired, accumulate, and are of value in certain situations or (...) are of worth in particular market" (Spillane *et al.*, 2003, 3). Authors use phrases as *accumulated* (Bourdieu, 1986), link them to *worth* or *assets* (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Spillane *et al.*, 2003) or *resources* (Spillane *et al.*, 2003), attribute them to *actors* or *groups of actors* (Bourdieu, 1986; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012), and explain that capital can be used for achieving specific output, which in this paper refers to capital and resources teachers acquired and used in adjusting teaching and in creating digital learning environment.

In previous studies, different forms of capital were addressed. Three forms often used follow Bourdieu's (1986; 1990) work, and these are *social capital* referring to social obligations/connections and networks (Addi-Raccah and Grinshtain, 2018; Fox and Wilson, 2015; Grinshtain and Addi-Raccah, 2020; Penuel *et al.*, 2009; Spillane *et al.*, 2003, 2015), *cultural capital* referring to a specific symbolic way of thinking and acting (Addi-Raccah and Grinshtain, 2018; Bartee and Brown II, 2007; Engström and Carlhed, 2014; Grinshtain and Addi-Raccah, 2020; Lareau and Weininger, 2003; Spillane *et al.*, 2003), and *economic capital* denoting financial and material resources (Addi-Raccah and Grinshtain, 2018; Bartee and Brown II, 2007; Spillane *et al.*, 2003). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012, 2020) introduced in teacher-

related research the concept of *professional capital* which is made of human (knowledge and skills), social, and decisional capital and is tied to teachers' professionalism. Psychologists emphasize the *psychological capital* of teachers described as a positive psychological state which is comprised of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Kun and Gadanecz, 2019; Luthans *et al.*, 2006). Additionally, since the teaching profession is female-dominated, researchers also utilized the concept of *feminine capital* related to emotional states and behavior connected to care (Grinshtain and Addi-Raccah, 2020). Listed forms of capital indicate a variety of possible deductive approaches; however, we did not assign a prior deductive list.

Methodology

Instruments and procedures

Qualitative research using methods of semi-structured and structured interviews was conducted to gain a deeper insight into the adjustment of teachers' work activities in Croatia to distance working conditions during the 2019/2020 school year. The protocol for the semi-structured interview covered six thematic areas related to distance learning in a digital environment and a general comment.⁴ The structured interview covered topics related to technological equipment, adjustment of daily life, and recommendations.

The interviews were conducted from June to December 2020 mostly by the first author, with the focus on the second semester of the 2019/2020 school year. Of a total of 32 interviews, 8 of them were conducted face to face and 24 were mediated by ICT. Firstly, semi-structured interviews were conducted, and afterward, teachers received an invitation for the structured interview (via LimeSurvey). Interviews lasted on average about 50 minutes (ranging from 25 to 90 minutes). Following participants' verbal informed consent, all interviews were recorded (sound only) and were transcribed *verbatim*. The conducted research received approval from the Department's Ethical Committee.

⁴ For more information on the thematic areas within the interview protocol, sampling strategy, participants and ethical considerations see Degač and Vukić (2023).

Participants

With the snowball sampling technique (Atkinson and Flint, 2004), we obtained a non-probabilistic geographically heterogeneous sample of 32 secondary (ISCED 2) and upper secondary (ISCED 3) school subject teachers (general education subjects), specifically 15 secondary and 17 upper secondary school teachers and by gender 25 female and 7 male teachers. Out of 17 upper secondary school teachers, 11 of them worked solely in grammar programs, one in vocational programs and 5 of them worked in both types of programs. Variability was also ensured regarding work (teaching) experience, which varies from less than one (novice teacher) to more than 40 years of service (pre-retirement teacher). 26 respondents were employed in one school, 5 in two, and one in three, counting in total 34 different schools. Upper secondary school teachers mainly taught in general programs, although teachers who taught in vocational programs were also represented. Participants mainly taught Croatian language, English language, German language, Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Informatics, Technical Culture, Geography, History, Sociology, Philosophy, Logic, Ethics, and Politics and Economics. Due to the sampling strategy, the sample is to some extent homogeneous in terms of sufficiently developed digital skills.

Analysis

Thematic analysis was used. One of the advantages of thematic analysis is flexibility but with clear implementation guidelines, enabling theoretically and methodologically reliable analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As one of the most commonly used qualitative analysis methods, it involves numerous decisions, which in the case of this research refer to the analysis of particular parts of data, theoretically oriented approach, and approach by which we identify latent topics (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Certain areas of interest were foreseen in the protocol (institutional support), but the themes presented were constructed based on the data (Morey Hawkins, 2017), which means that complete transcripts were included in the analysis. We followed a deductive approach in analysis (Hayes, 1997; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Morey Hawkins, 2017). Thematic analysis was conducted in six steps according to Braun and Clarke (2006). Between the first two steps, we decided on the ini-

tial areas of interest, meaning institutional support and teachers' capital and resources, and coded only parts related to these areas. MAXQDA program was used in all steps.

Results

Themes are presented in sections *Institutional Support* and *Teachers' Capital and Resources*. For each theme, at least one teacher's quote is included as an illustration. All teachers were assigned an individual number which is indicated after quotes, as well as their gender and level of education in which they teach.

Institutional Support

Table 1. Key themes identified for institutional support

| Institutional support | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Levels | Actors* | Themes |
| <i>National level</i> | | |
| | Ministry of Science and Education | Digital equipment and training within the experimental program |
| | Education and Teacher Training Agency | Inadequate support for evaluation and lack of applicable recommendations (In)applicability of available video lessons and digital content |
| | Publishers | (Non)functionality of Loomen Lack of human support, understanding, and praise (In)adequate support of the Education and Teacher Training Agency Publisher support |

School level

| | |
|---|--|
| Principals | The role and importance of principals in the adjustment process |
| Professional counselors | (Unclear) role, work obligations, and support of professional counselors |
| Colleagues | Exchange of experience with colleagues |
| General | Different approaches in the work of the school/collective |
| Not expecting any support from institutions | |

**Note: actors were identified during the construction of themes, and afterward themes were organized by actors and levels of support.*

National Level

Digital equipping and training within the experimental program. Experimental schools and certain classes in all schools were digitally equipped which helped teachers. Teachers who participated in the reform received laptops and some improved their digital skills by participating in trainings organized within the experimental program.

“But here we were lucky to be able to use the platform and computers that we got in *School for life*, as participants in the experiment, so it was already a lot easier.” (Teacher 26, F, ISCED 3)

One teacher emphasized that their school was digitally fully equipped even before the experimental program and others received equipment for implementing the program, but difficulties nevertheless existed. Difficulties referred to students not having necessary (or adequately working) devices, enough Internet data, or administrative rights. Some teachers mentioned that they received a laptop, but that it was not powerful enough or that it did not have all the necessary programs or licenses.

“And as for the equipment (...) I got a laptop from school that isn't worth much, I think, it has a bad camera and so on, but it works, so in case mine broke down or something like that, I would also have the equipment to work

from home. The laptop we received from the ministers was sitting in a bag.” (Teacher 24, F, ISCED 2)

Inadequate support for evaluation and lack of applicable recommendations. Teachers' attitudes were uniform regarding the recommendations for evaluation during DTL. Recommendations were assessed as insufficiently clear and inapplicable for all subjects. The expected formative evaluation if a teacher had many classes was described as “physically demanding” and “exhausting”. Recommendation related to positive grading when students have a higher number of insufficient grades was identified as particularly problematic. According to some, it affected the quality of DTL in a way that students and parents viewed it as a process without “serious repercussions”.

“I think that a lot of bad decisions were made to please parents and students. So, if you have 4 negative grades, you can enroll further, that non-assessment in lower grades in primary school, non-assessment if you have lessons two hours a week, so these are all some arbitrary measures for which I think they were very harmful.” (Teacher 26, F, ISCED 3)

(In)applicability of available video lessons and digital content. The attitudes about video lectures (*ad hoc* provided) were divided, some teachers thought that they were inapplicable, and others that they were an adequate supplement to their work and to the conditions in which they were created. Some relied on video lessons during the initial adjustment period and others have actively used them and *School for Life* materials to reduce the increased workload and were satisfied with materials.

“[T]he video lessons were great as such, as a product of that moment in time.” (Teacher 23, F, ISCED 2)

In addition to teachers who showed strong disdain for video lessons and did not even seek to examine their applicability, the following reasons were identified for not using them: not aligned with curriculum, not interesting or of sufficient quality, transition in content between lessons is too fast, and the pace is too slow within a lesson. It was expressed that video lessons were suitable for repetition, but not for learning. Finally, some recommended that more digital content and video lessons should be available for specific subjects.

"It is very slow, the pace is... To me personally, it is not interesting... I tried to watch video lessons for different subjects... They are made by experts, they are made by subject pedagogy teachers, and they are made by top experts in all fields, but the final product is to die of boredom. If I am bored to death as an adult, imagine what it's like for an average twelve-year-old." (Teacher 29, F, ISCED 2)

(Non)functionality of Loomen. Teachers' opinions are divided regarding the Loomen platform during DTL. Negative aspects were lack of capacity at the beginning (e.g. impossibility of posting materials due to server overload), certain limitations (e.g. impossibility of video calls), and dissatisfaction with Loomen based on training within the experimental program. The positive aspects mentioned were the structure of the platform and its functionality (e.g. division in classes, and exam options). Several teachers mentioned their schools used Loomen in the beginning, but then switched to more user-friendly platforms, and some avoided using it altogether.

"As a program recommended by the Ministry, it is very dysfunctional, and inefficient, it can happen that it can't upload materials, student assignments, whatever, and none of the students ever contacted me through Loomen, nor did I contact them. So, we wrote off that official option right at the beginning." (Teacher 02, F, ISCED 3)

Lack of human support, understanding, and praise. This theme refers to the perceived lack of public recognition of teacher work and effort as it was done for some other professions. Lack of recognition refers to lack of praise, and implies a lack of understanding from the education ministry, mainly because they "do not have direct insight into the teaching work".

"I think that it should have been expressed to the general public (...) how hard teachers work and how much this transition from physical education to distance teaching required effort, work, and energy from teachers, not only in the schedule but in all additional tasks they had." (Teacher 16, F, ISCED 2)

(In)adequate support from the Education and Teacher Training Agency. Although some teachers positively assessed the support of advisers from the Agency (e.g. engaged advisors, responded fast, participated, and provided specific advice), some assessed the work of advisers and the work of the Agency as inadequate. This refers to the lack of support and lack of timely provided materials and information, with

some teachers pointing out that certain support activities were organized too late.

"That's the only thing I got from the Agency as some sort of help, even though those Webinars were late. What will I do with a Webinar on evaluation on June 15 if I practically already gave final grades?" (Teacher 30, F, ISCED 2)

Publisher support. Publisher support was reflected in the mentioned availability of digital platforms, digital materials, and textbook content free of charge but with the perceived intention of attracting customers. Several teachers mentioned that some publishers allowed the use of screenshots from textbooks and workbooks. Teachers who mentioned this type of support expressed their satisfaction with it.

"The support that was immediately felt was that of the publishing houses, CARNET's support. The agency, and the Ministry, I think as large systems were not very up-to-date in that either." (Teacher 22, F, ISCED 2)

Not expecting any support from institutions. This theme encompasses teachers' negative attitudes toward education policy bodies, not directly caused by DTL. These attitudes reflect the resignation and general opposition based on their previous experience.

"(...) I did not expect anything from the Ministry because we never got anything from the Ministry, just to understand each other." (Teacher 07, F, ISCED 2)

School Level

The role and importance of principals in the adjustment process. During the interviews, the school management, i.e. the principal proved to be an important factor in the adaptation to DTL, but it should be noted that the experiences are not uniform regarding the assessed help and satisfaction with the provided help. Positive experiences were based on specific and "concrete" help and support (e.g. the principal organized training before DTL and emphasized digitalization, transported computers to students, invested time in educating teachers about digital tools, and provided technical and emotional support).

"Our principal invested a lot, a lot to show everyone (...) so, most of [our] lower grade primary teachers and a few of the subject teachers are older. Well, the rest of the subject [teachers] are relatively young, up to 40. (...) So,

he recorded videos in Loom, he recorded them step by step, what we need to click, how, what are the possibilities, applications... (...) Everything, everything, everything slowly." (Teacher 15, F, ISCED 2)

On the other hand, negative experiences were mentioned by teachers not satisfied with principals' adjustment (e.g. principal leaves teachers to set the rules by themselves without harmonization, does not provide specific guidelines or provides too many guidelines, does not communicate enough with teachers, cannot help directly with students – "support was only in words"). The experiences varied depending on the expectations teachers had regarding the role and assistance of principals during DTL.

(Unclear) role, work obligations, and support of professional counselors. The expectations and experiences of teachers differ regarding professional counselors from praising their support to dissatisfaction with their work and assessing their unclear role. Those who praised counselors' work mentioned that they analyzed the quality of teaching in school, and provided recommendations and support, e.g. psychologists intervened when students were having problems, and provided health recommendations to teachers.

"So, we had great, great support from our professional counselors and every praise for my school regarding that. By the way, we have a very prompt pedagogue who is a true workaholic, and she is very inclined to help." (Teacher 07, F, ISCED 2)

Teachers who were dissatisfied were wondering about their role during DTL and had the attitude that "professional counselors more or less did nothing". Potential dissatisfaction could arise from their presence in virtual classrooms and insufficiently assessed support in work with students and parents. Even though some teachers stated that counselors asked about their health, called students' parents, etc., they expressed skepticism about the benefit of those actions and felt that counselors should provide more support.

"I think that professional counselors should have taken on this part of the communication with parents and irregular involvement of children in virtual classrooms because in practice professional counselors, more or less, did nothing." (Teacher 16, F, ISCED 2)

Exchange of experience with colleagues. Some teachers described the relationship between colleagues in school as collegial, that they

were helping each other, sharing experiences and information, communicating about common homeroom teacher problems, and that younger colleagues helped older ones. The exchange of experience, mutual assistance of colleagues who teach similar or identical subjects, their close cooperation and sharing of materials were mentioned as especially useful.

“Colleagues shared their materials, and each of us, at least (...) Mathematics teachers, I think we were more united than ever and we helped each other.” (Teacher 24, F, ISCED 2)

Different approaches in the work of the school/collective. Different approaches refer to the identified inconsistency related to different methods of working with students, which were not agreed upon at the school level. Some stated their school management did not condition the use of a specific platform resulting in DTL during which students had lessons via different platforms. Inconsistencies refer also to a variety of assignments and deadlines for their completion, assigned time for communication and using synchronous and/or asynchronous approach. In some schools, collectives that encountered organizational difficulties resolved it with shift teaching, agreement on the availability of students to subject teachers according to the schedule and not uploading assignments and materials during the weekend.

“The other school was quite (...) freely permissive towards teachers in terms of what and how they would handle online teaching. And then in fact, even though it seemed like a positive thing at first, it seems to me that it turned out to be a much worse approach because everyone was using a different platform. (...) And that was an additional burden for the students because their lessons were everywhere.” (Teacher 01, M, ISCED 3)

Teachers’ Capital and Resources

Table 2. Key themes identified for teachers’ capital and resources

| Teachers’ Capital and Resources |
|---|
| Themes |
| Knowledge acquired during professional development and project work |
| Developed digital competencies |
| Teacher motivation, emotional engagement, and willingness to learn |

Social capital, teacher networks, and exchange of experience
Private financial, material, and digital resources
Time resources and (un)limited working hours

Knowledge acquired during professional development and project work. Some teachers emphasized previous professional development activities (PDAs) which contributed to their adaptation without major difficulties. These refer to PDAs on their initiative, participation in mobility programs (Erasmus+), and training organized by schools and within the experimental program. PDAs contributed because teachers got acquainted with applicable platforms and tools.

“Both me and my colleague used Google Classroom. We are both participating in Erasmus. She had studied Google Classroom a couple of months earlier, but it wasn't that interesting to her. When I came back [from teacher mobility] and there was a discussion on online teaching, she said: 'Well, I was learning that too'. The two of us immediately decided on Google Classroom (...)" (Teacher 16, F, ISCED 2)

Developed digital competencies. Although there are variations between respondents, which is partially manifested in the knowledge of the number of platforms and tools, all of them had sufficiently developed digital competencies and were sufficiently familiar with digital platforms and tools for independent work. Teachers' age might be a relevant factor, whereby younger teachers indicated that they may have found it easier than pre-retirement teachers.

“Of course, they [pre-retirement teachers] will use email for communication, I will on the other hand use WhatsApp and this and that, some other modern tools, but they all managed to cope in some way... in a sense, there is not a single person who does not teach, at least among the colleagues I know, except for one colleague who is about to retire. So, she gave up and that's... yes... she can't, she just can't..." (Teacher 2, F, ISCED 3)

Teacher motivation, emotional engagement, and willingness to learn. Teachers' intrinsic motivation and their willingness to learn in connection to the ability to quickly adapt to new circumstances proved to be important. This is manifested in teachers' readiness to invest additional work to learn new programs and tools, to make lessons interesting and accessible, and to provide additional support to students. The last point is especially relevant for homeroom teachers and those who teach students with special education needs. Furthermore, emotional

engagement is identified as an important factor associated with motivation, willingness to learn, and investment of additional effort.

"I am ready to learn, I am interested in it and in fact, I am happy with everything I learn." (Teacher 25, F, ISCED 2)

Also, the emotional engagement of teachers is connected with their high self-expectations and stress.

"I was constantly expecting more from myself..." (Teacher 22, F, ISCED 2)

Social capital, teacher networks, and exchange of experience. This theme refers to sharing experiences and materials with colleagues, using international contacts and mutual support, especially by teachers who teach similar or identical subjects. This theme is connected with *the exchange of experience with colleagues* but is broader in scope. Some teachers explained that sharing ideas, materials, and information with colleagues helped in their adjustment period. Some used their digital network resources, cooperated, and provided each other support via social networks.

"(...) I'm in a lot of teacher groups on Facebook, and all weekend colleagues shared ideas, materials, ideas about approaches how to organize teaching, how to enter the classroom on the first day, and which platforms to use. (...) We have institutional support and MSE, Education and Teacher Training Agency and all that, but people grouped, willing and eager to share something, to learn from each other, I think at that moment it surpassed all these institutions." (Teacher 16, F, ISCED 2)

Private financial, material, and digital resources. Most of the participants used their own resources to carry out the DTL process. Some spent their own financial resources to purchase equipment and tools (scanner, headphones, camera, tablet), repair the equipment, and cover some unexpected costs. Some teachers also used private mobile phones and communication applications to exchange information with students and/or parents. Most used their own digital equipment and access to the Internet, and worked from home.

"I had to have a strong computer. Which I didn't have in the beginning. I just bought myself a computer which was good for my needs. However, it couldn't support Zoom, and something opened in Chrome and then I had to use another computer in the house. This actually prevented my household members from using the computer while I worked." (Teacher 17, F, ISCED 3)

Time resources and (un)limited working hours. This theme is manifested in the all-day availability of teachers, increased time for preparing lessons, reviewing assignments, providing feedback, and frequent communication with students without limitations on working hours (in the beginning). However, the experiences are not uniform, meaning that they are shaped by the chosen approach, methods, and workload.

“So, it looked terrible. I have never in my life prepared so long, not in the sense that I have to learn something now and think about how I will present it, that part after 40 years of work experience is not in question. (...) This could take between 3 to 5 hours for each class, preparation.” (Teacher 04, F, ISCED 3)

Homeroom teachers mentioned a high workload and increased working time related to that role. Some stated that they did not have private time, they worked weekends and without days off, but having learned from that experience set a limit for their availability.

Discussion

If we apply Turner's (2003, 2007, 2016a, 2016b) concepts of social levels of reality and social dynamics to the analysis of institutional support and capital and resources used during DTL in Croatia, on the micro-level of teacher encounters we can identify positive experiences of teachers in themes referring to social capital, teacher networks and exchange of experience. That opens a possibility of *proximal bias* due to strong connections on the micro-level. Furthermore, themes formulated negatively such as inadequate support for evaluation and lack of applicable recommendations; lack of human support, understanding, and praise; and not expecting any support from institutions referring primarily to the national level show the possibility of *distal bias* (Turner, 2007, 2016a). When teachers in advance do not expect any support from institutions, that indicates distal bias, i.e. negative attitudes toward the education system as in previous research (Slišković *et al.*, 2017), but the other two themes refer to a lack of concrete guidelines and acknowledgment or statement that teachers have met the expectations in difficult circumstances. Other themes regarding institutional

support (national level) are not exempt from demonstrating distal bias, however, they can show that teachers' needs are in certain cases met.⁵

Responsibility for providing answers to uncertain situations was shifted to individuals (teachers) (Bauman, 2007) who had to provide teaching and organize learning environments for students, for which they had to use their capital and resources. In developed themes, we recognize types of capital related to concepts proposed by Bourdieu (1986) and Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), and other concepts such as psychological (Kun and Gadanez, 2019; Luthans *et al.*, 2006) and feminine capital (Grinshtain and Addi-Raccah, 2020). Knowledge developed during PDAs and project work, and developed digital competence relate to teachers' professional capital, especially human capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). Since professional capital and cultural capital share some similarities in the fact that they both partially refer to accumulated knowledge, teachers' specific developed knowledge also relates to cultural capital in some aspects. Teacher motivation, emotional engagement, and willingness to learn could be understood as both psychological (Kun and Gadanez, 2019; Luthans *et al.*, 2006) and feminine capital (Grinshtain and Addi-Raccah, 2020) because they refer to a positive psychological state (not in its entirety) and care for students. Time resources and (un)limited working hours are related to teacher motivation and emotional engagement and thus to feminine capital indicating high responsibility toward students in their "empathy, expression, emotions, and concern" (Grinshtain and Addi-Raccah, 2020, 1023). Social capital, teacher networks, and exchange of experience are important types of capital because they have helped teachers in concrete and direct ways in working with students. Private financial, material, and digital resources are found to be indicators of economic capital in the reviewed literature (Bourdieu, 1986). Even though the following are not formulated as capital and resources, different approaches in the work of the school/collective and (in)applicability of available video lessons both imply the importance of decisional capital because teachers had to decide on their modality of working with students and what resources they want to use and how, or in other words teachers had some autonomy in making "wise judgments in circumstances where

⁵ This analysis is aligned with other papers produced within this research which focuses on routines and emotional experiences of teachers during DTL (Degač and Vukić, 2023).

there is no fixed rule or piece of incontrovertible evidence to guide them" (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, 94).

Recent research supports presented results, especially in placing a high importance on teachers' high emotional work and experience of (negative) emotions during DTL (Auger and Formentin, 2021; Carver-Thomas *et al.*, 2021; Farhadi and Winton, 2021; Hatzichristou *et al.*, 2021; Rio Poncela *et al.*, 2021). Previous research indicated that negative emotions and emotional exhaustion are the result of "surface acting" (Auger and Formentin, 2021, 392). One of the reasons for these complex experiences lies in the fact that teachers became responsible for policy enactment during DTL (Farhadi and Winton, 2021), and negative experiences can arise from the lack of support and recognition from educational authorities (Rio Poncela *et al.*, 2021). DTL is also characterized by a high focus on students with an individual approach and more feedback (Bishop, 2021), care work with pronounced gender differences (Rio Poncela *et al.*, 2021), and a high teacher workload (Carver-Thomas *et al.*, 2021) expressed teachers' motivation and time resources invested. In DTL, high importance was placed on strong teacher relationships (Kim *et al.*, 2021; Kim and Asbury, 2020), which means that teachers' social capital and networks are of high importance during times of societal (and specifically educational) disruptions and uncertainty (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2007).

Since one of the themes refers to not expecting support from institutions and another shows the relevance of social capital and teacher networks, we propose to examine the relationship between expected and perceived support from institutions and expected and perceived support from colleagues, while keeping in mind teachers' different levels of digital skills. Furthermore, we did not put greater emphasis on gender which is an important question when the profession is female-dominated. However, it should be examined if there are differences in activated feminine capital (Grinshtain and Addi-Raccah, 2020) and social capital by teachers' gender.

This study faces limitations referring to sampling bias due to the recruitment technique. In this research, we interviewed motivated and networked teachers willing to participate and teachers with developed digital skills. Thus, specific groups of teachers (teachers with lower digital skills, unmotivated and non-networked teachers) were underrepresented.

Conclusion

When normal school life was disrupted by great social changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the responsibility of re-establishing its illusion of normality was placed on teachers as the first in line in interacting with students. With this research, we wanted to examine the forms of institutional support teachers perceived they received and to analyze the types of capital and resources teachers had to activate to respond to the new education circumstances. In doing so, Turner's (Turner, 2007, 2016a, 2016b) concepts of social dynamics and proximal and distal bias proved to be useful in explaining the experiences of teachers with education authorities and their colleagues. Themes related to institutional support indicated a mix of positive and negative experiences, showing a possibility of distal bias and disintegrating dynamics related to macro-level structures. Regarding proximal bias, it is shown that teachers' capital and resources, among which are social capital and teacher networks, proved to be important for the transition to DTL.

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»NISAM NEŠTO PRETJERANO OČEKIVAO PA NISAM NI BIO...
BAŠ RAZOČARAN«: INSTITUCIONALNA POTPORA I AKTIVACIJA
KAPITALA I RESURSA NASTAVNIKA U VRIJEME NESIGURNOSTI

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U svrhu razumijevanja promjena u obrazovanju uzrokovanih prelaskom na nastavu na daljinu, koristimo sociološke koncepte poput Turnerova koncepta društvene dinamike kako bismo teorijski postavili promijenjene odnose između pojedinaca, institucija i društvenog sustava, a koristimo se i različitim konceptima kapitala u razumijevanju aktivacije kapitala i resursa nastavnika. Osnovni ciljevi istraživanja bili su analizirati (a) institucionalnu potporu nastavnicima iz njihove perspektive i (b) kapital i resurse koje su nastavnici morali aktivirati tijekom nastave na daljinu. Tijekom 2020. godine provedeni su intervjui s 32 nastavnika iz Hrvatske i potom je primijenjena deduktivna tematska analiza. Rezultati pokazuju da se prilagodba iz perspektive nastavnika najviše oslanjala na njihov neposredni rad s učenicima te na aktiviranje osobnog i profesionalnog kapitala i resursa, dok je institucionalna potpora bila od sekundarne važnosti. Teme vezane uz institucionalnu potporu ukazuju na mješavinu pozitivnih i negativnih iskustava, s time da su negativna iskustva izraženija u pogledu potpore na nacionalnoj razini. Socijalni kapital i razmjena iskustava s kolegama ističu se u usporedbi s institucionalnom potporom na nacionalnoj razini, što je u skladu s Turnerovom analizom društvene dinamike.

Ključne riječi: društvena dinamika; institucionalna potpora; nastavnici; kapital nastavnika