

## **ATTITUDES OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS TO INTERNSHIPS IN THE KINDERGARTENS**

### **Team**

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### **Description of the problem**

**Kindergartens provide children only with female behavior and role models. Stereotypes about male and female professions contribute to the nearly 100% female teaching staff. Due to the low pay and public image of the profession, it is not attractive for young graduates in pedagogy with more diverse qualifications, like foreign languages and arts or graduates in psychology and as a result they rarely specialize in this area.**

**There is a big demand on the part of the parents for additional classes in music, arts and English language in public kindergartens. For answering the demand the kindergartens ensure external teachers in foreign languages and arts. These services are additionally paid by the parents. All graduates in pedagogical specialties in their final year of study have compulsory practical internships.**

### Object of the survey

To explore the attitudes of male and female students to work with the age group of 3-5 years. For this purpose three parallel surveys were conducted – two in Sofia and one in Plovdiv – among students in different specialties in four universities.

### Object ives of the survey

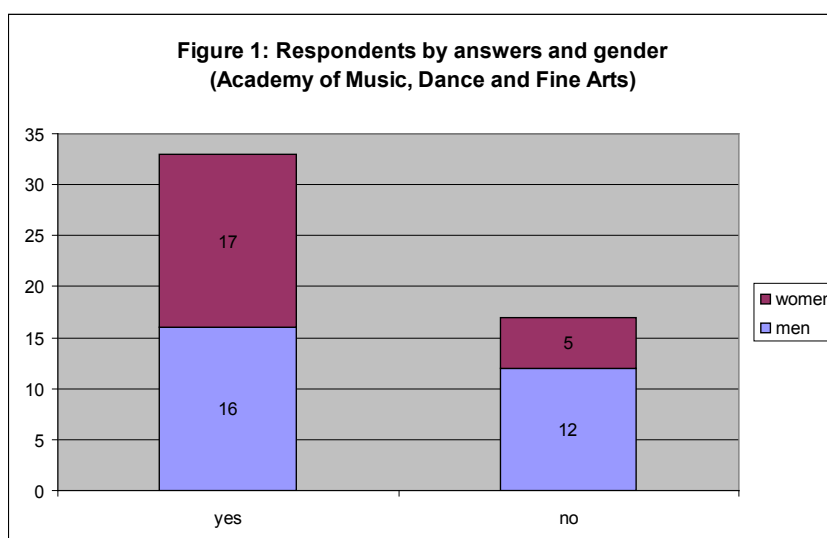
To identify the attitudes of students men and women to: (i) work with children between 3-5 years; (ii) do their internship in kindergartens instead of/and in schools; and (iii) choose a topic of their diploma paper, related to this age group.

### Data (R1, R2)

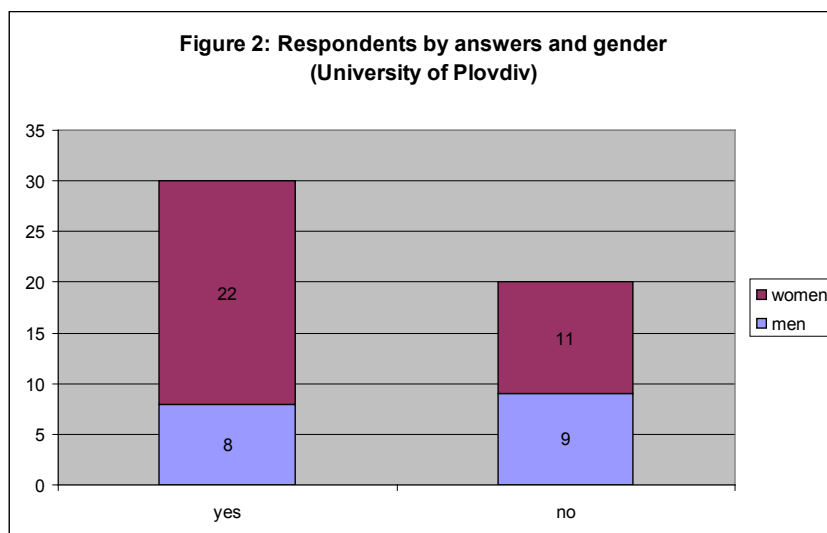
The data for R1 (representation) are presented separately for the tree surveys.

*In Plovdiv* were interviewed 100 students from eight specialties in two universities.

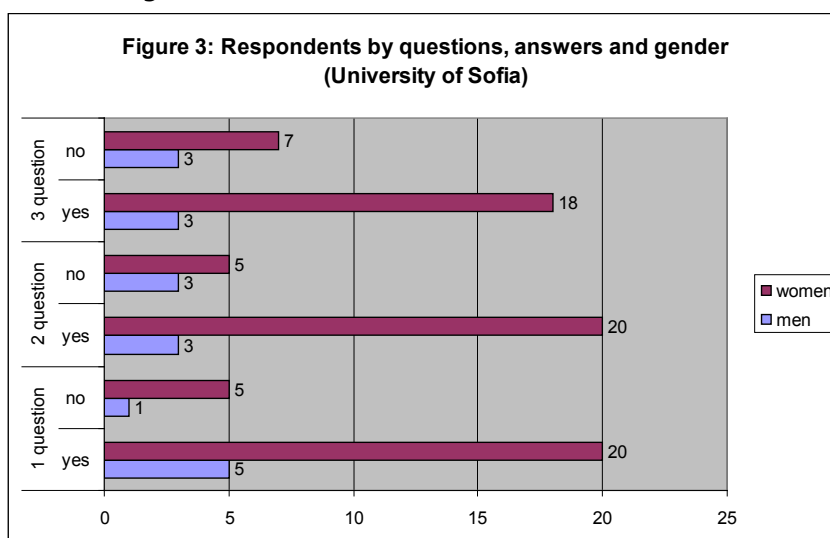
*In the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts* of all 50 respondents (28 men and 22 women) 57% men and 77% women gave positive answers about the possibility to have their internships in kindergartens or to choose a topic of diploma paper related to the age group of 3 to 5 years (Figure 1).



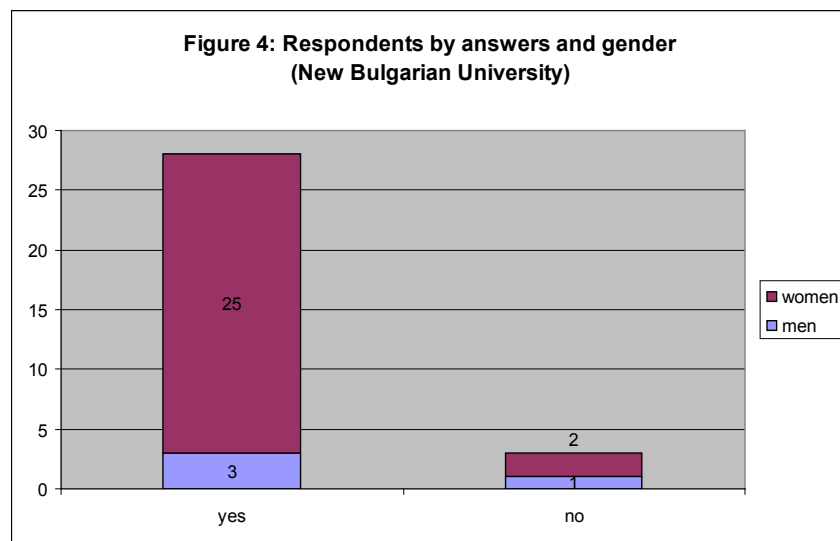
In the *University of Plovdiv* were interviewed 50 students,(17 men and 33 women). Of all respondents 47% men and 67% women gave positive answers about the possibility to do their internships in kindergartens or to choose a topic of their diploma paper related to the age group of 3 to 5 years (Figure 2).



Of the interviewed 31 students (6 men and 25 women) in the *University of Sofia* positive answers gave: to the first question – 5 men and 20 women (83% and 80% of the respondents men and women); to the second question – 3 men and 20 women (50% and 80%); and to the third question – 3 men and 18 women (50% and 72%) (Figure 3).



**In New Bulgarian University in Sofia the survey questionnaire was filled in by 31 students in total – 27 in the Bachelor and 4 in the Master Program in Psychology – 27 women and 4 men. Only 3 students – 2 women and 1 man gave negative answers to the three questions (Figure 4).**



**Regarding the R2 (resources) as an extremely important one is seen the pedagogical qualification and/or willingness of students to follow research careers and their acquired knowledge and skills to work with different age groups, including children aged 3 -5 years. The internship is compulsory, not paid and it is part of the mandatory program of the students. It should cover a certain number of classes. Another resource are the public kindergartens which are 61 on the territory of Plovdiv and 139 on the territory of Sofia.**

### **Analysis and conclusions (R3)**

**Although the surveys are not representative, they gave an idea about the attitudes of students to teach in kindergartens or to follow a research career focused on children's behavior (aged 3-5).**

**In both universities in Plovdiv 24 men and 39 women or 63 students in total are opened and interested in doing their internships in kindergartens. In general,**

**the students from the Academy of Arts are more willing to teach in kindergartens – 57% of the men и 77% of the women interviewed gave positive answers. Regarding the University of Plovdiv these percentages are: 47% of the men and 67% of the women are positive to the idea. It is extremely important that from all respondents (45) men – 53% gave positive answers. The biggest interest shown by men studying pedagogy of teaching fine arts (6) and pedagogy of teaching music (5) at the Academy of Arts.**

**In Sofia University and in New Bulgarian University only a small number of students filled in the questionnaires, of which there were few men. This fact is to some extent indicative for the general attitude, especially regarding the University of Sofia, where the students are almost equally represented by gender. On the other, there is quite a high percentage of positive answers of the respondents men and women. This age group is of particular interest for psychology graduates because they would have the chance to observe closely the formation of the personality identity. On the whole, the bigger part of all respondents is willing to and interested yo work with the age group both as pedagogues and researchers.**

**This willingness is extremely important as more young teachers and especially men in the kindergartens can bring a number of advantages for the children and the education process. The children will:**

- have the possibility to communicate with more young people – men and women.**
- have better access to education in foreign languages and arts (free of charge classes) which will develop their imagination and skills.**
- enjoy a more diverse programme and teaching methods, which will contribute for a better environment.**
- have the possibility to communicate with male teachers which will introduce the male role model in kindergartens.**

## Action Plan

- **To further develop the questionnaire for the survey of students' attitudes.**
- **To make an analysis of the feedback information on the results of the intervention, provided by students and tutor teachers during the internships.**
- **To conclude an agreement between the Municipality of Plovdiv, the University of Plovdiv, the Academy of Arts and one municipal kindergarten for students' internships as a pilot initiative. Preliminary negotiations between the managing bodies of the universities and the kindergarten have already been held and showed positiveness and interest to the idea.**
- **To start negotiations between the Municipality of Sofia and Sofia University and New Bulgarian University for internships of students in kindergartens in Sofia, chosen according to their possibilities and willingness to accept interns.**
- **Both municipalities to prepare and disseminate information among parents about the idea, and to explore their opinions on the possibility interns – men and women, to work with children as well as to explore their interest for additional classes.**