



**Agata Cudowska**

University of Białystok

ORCID 0000-0001-5035-2985

**Agata Butarewicz-Głowacka**

University of Białystok

ORCID 0000-0002-9348-7115

**Bożena Tołwińska**

University of Białystok

ORCID 0000-0002-2909-9783

**Agnieszka Sobolewska-Popko**

University of Białystok

ORCID 0000-0002-7384-2423

**Marta Walewska**

University of Białystok

ORCID 0000-0002-0156-4700

## **Conditions for the development of creative life orientations of teachers**

### **Warunki dla rozwoju potencjału i twórczych orientacji życiowych nauczycieli**

**Abstract:** The aim of the article is to analyze the conditions for the development of creative life orientations of teachers in the light of the results of research carried out in a nationwide sample in 2021-2023. The first part describes the theoretical assumptions of the research project. They were composed of the sources of Agata Cudowska's original concept of Creative Orientations in Life, situated in the philosophy of dialogue and metaphysics of orientation, humanistic psychology, psychology of culture, the theory of everyday creativity and the well-being of the individual. The category of creative life orientation and the research projects carried out so far on this subject in socially diverse groups were characterized, which include the

diagnosis of life orientation preferences in the creative versus conservative dimension in the years 2001-2016. The next part of the article presents the methodological concept of the currently conducted research on teachers' creative preferences. They fit into the quantitative paradigm, focus on diagnostic and explanatory purposes, were carried out using the diagnostic survey method, in which the questionnaire technique and the proprietary CLO Preference Scale were used. A diagnosis of the surveyed teachers' preferences in terms of creative life orientations was presented, as well as the conditions for their development, which were grouped into three areas: in the family environment, at school and in the local environment. In the discussion of the results, attention was drawn to the crisis of the teaching profession.

**Keywords:** creative life orientation, teachers, research on preferences for creative orientations, teachers' preferences for creative life orientations.

## Introduction

The aim of the article is to present a diagnosis of teachers' preferences for creative life orientations. This issue is especially important in the contemporary world, since creativity is part of the dynamic approach to the human structure as a being *in statu nascendi* and is also a necessity in the rapidly changing world. It is required today of pupils, students, teachers, employees of the modern labor market, as well as of politicians and entrepreneurs. It has long been present in the teleology of education as an important goal of education and upbringing processes. Creativity is regarded not only as a human need and value, but also as a specific obligation and response to the growing dynamics and complexity of the human environment. Creative behaviors occupy more and more space in the lives of individuals and communities, in the sphere of modern human work, in various areas of social life, and should also be an immanent component of a teacher's professional biography. In the daily work of teachers' creativity may also be a kind of antidote to the deepening crisis of this profession observed for years, one of the elements of which is stress and occupational burnout (Cudowska, 2023a, in press).

The first part of the article presents the author's understanding of life orientations in the creative *versus* conservative dimension. The sources of the concept of creative life orientations and its basic assumptions are indicated. Research projects carried out so far concerning the recognition of preferences for creative life orientations among young people and teachers are briefly described. Then, the methodological concept is presented, which is the basis

of the latest research project conducted in the years 2021-2023. The second part characterizes the surveyed nationwide sample of primary and secondary school teachers, and describes the preferences in terms of life orientations of the respondents in the creative *versus* conservative dimension. The article ends with the conclusions from the research and announces a presentation of further empirical analyzes devoted to the determinants of the diagnosed preferences for creative life orientations in the surveyed group of teachers.

### **Sources of the concept of creative life orientations**

The author's concept of creative life orientations was developed almost twenty years ago and its sources lie in several fields of knowledge (Cudowska, 2004). At the ontological level, it fits into two problem areas: the philosophy of dialogue and metaphysics of orientation seeking the sense of being in participation and commitment (Schnädelbach, 1992), and the idea of *homo explorens*, "a person seeking", who perceives themselves as thinking, learning and transforming reality, experiences their ontic activity, gains awareness of their creative role, and this enables them to "deliberately create" (Cudowska, 2004). The psychological plane of the concept is described by the approach to creativity proposed by humanistic psychologists, Erich Fromm (1959, 1981), Carl R. Rogers (1954, 1961), Abraham H. Maslow (1954, 1959, 1962, 1971), Rollo May (1959, 1994), Frederick S. Perls (1969), and Joseph Zinker (1977), who associate creativity not so much with a product as with a lifestyle, perceiving it as a value that gives meaning to human life. Creative potential is attributed to each individual, but its development requires favorable conditions, hence only a few people go through the process of self-realization. In determining creative orientations it is also extremely important to perceive creativity in the psychology of culture, where it is recognized as an individual choice, interpretation and restructuring of understanding the world in connection with everyday experience of an individual (*The Handbook of Culture and Creativity*, 2018). It analyzes the functioning of a creator in a specific environment, taking into account the process of creation, creative personality and product (Glăveanu, 2010). Hence the special importance of the theory of everyday creativity in the development of the concept of creative life orientation. Creativity is perceived by Ruth Richards (1997, 1999), Marc Runco (2005, 2006) and Anna Craft (2000) as a way to achieve full mental health, identified with self-realization, and as a character orientation. Universal creativity takes place in a subjective, personal dimension and is an expression of a specific lifestyle. What fits into this kind of approach to creativity is both the creative personality and the products of creativity, i.e. products, ideas

and behaviors resulting from everyday human activity in all spheres of life, from professional work to leisure time (Richards, 1999). In this approach the creative life orientation may be perceived in terms of specific resources enabling the achievement of well-being.

### **Creative life orientation**

Creative life orientations are a special type of life orientations, an interdisciplinary category that combines the attitudes of an individual, their opinions and views, cherished values and their hierarchy, aspirations and life plans as well as specific behaviors and actions taken to implement them. They have a transgressive and self-realization dimension in its supra-individualistic character expressed in the realization of one's own development potential for the common good. Creative life orientations seen as creating oneself and one's world in phenomenological experiencing of everyday life fit into a broader philosophical perspective of the idea of creative life and constructing the identity of a human being as an unfinished being, constantly "becoming" in the dialogue with the world, with the Other, with themselves, looking for their place in the space of diversity and variability. Creative life orientations are a special resource conducive to achieving well-being. They are shaped during a person's life depending on many complex internal and external factors, from micro- to macro-social living conditions, depending on their personality traits, developmental potential, abilities and opportunities to develop them, as well as on the family situation, environment and everyday experiences. Among these multiple influences special attention is given to education which, as a lifelong learning process, is initiated at school, so it is a very important place for shaping a creative attitude to life, to oneself and a sense of satisfaction with functioning in social reality (Cudowska, 2004, 2014, 2017).

Creative life orientations are specific to a given person as no two ways to realize personal creativity are the same. The basic imperative of shaping the life orientation is the awareness of the choices made and undertaking the effort of self-determination. In the creative dimension life orientations are axiologically saturated and ethically involved, dynamic and processual, because they do not arise in a single act of emergence, but they constantly present themselves and change throughout a person's life. They have an emancipatory and dialogic character, are shaped in the relationship of human with the world, in the process of gaining subjectivity and freedom, in dialogue with the Other. They do not need to manifest themselves in a productive form; their measure is not a specific product, although it can be an element

of them. The realization of a creative life orientation becomes possible when an individual surrenders to the imperative of action, liberates themselves from previous limitations and strives to create something new. This requires seeing reality in a phenomenological perspective, where an ordinary thing presents itself as a phenomenon. The ability to see differently belongs to the essence of the creative subject. They see the possibilities of change in their own life, shaping it, and thus take up challenges and stand on the way to achieving personal freedom by realizing what is, what can be changed and what can happen as a result of this change (Cudowska, 2004, 2014, 2017).

The opposite of creative life orientations are conservative orientations. They are characterized by conformist behavior, a tendency to schematic and algorithmic thinking, a rigid, inflexible attitude to life. People who prefer them are reluctant to seek new solutions and take risks. They react with fear to unknown situations, have low tolerance for ambiguity and dilemmas. They are characterized by little curiosity about the surrounding world and little openness to experience. They are particularly concerned with maintaining the *status quo*, strive for stability, avoid problematic situations, do not like learning new things. They do not appreciate diversity, originality and creativity, which may arouse reluctance in them.

### **Previous research on creative life orientations conducted in the years 2000-2016**

So far, four research projects have been carried out covering the diagnosis of life orientation preferences in the creative-conservative dimension, in which 2,801 people were surveyed. The majority of the sample were university students, with 70.3% of the respondents, high school students represented 15.3% of the sample, and teachers accounted for 14.4% of all respondents. The first study of preferences in terms of creative life orientations was conducted in the years 2000-2002 among 354 pedagogy students at higher education institutions in Poland, in three cities in the north-eastern, central and southern parts of the country, that is in Białystok, Pułtusk and Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski (Cudowska, 2004). Another research project was carried out in the years 2006-2012 among 340 high school pupils, 276 university students and 322 teachers of the Podlaskie Voivodship in Poland (Cudowska, 2014). Its effect was not only the diagnosis of preferences for creative life orientations in socially diverse groups, but also enriching the narrative of the concept of creative life orientations with a dialogical approach to this category, and extending its interpretation to the context of shaping the identity of an individual. In the next, third project conducted in the years 2014-2015 among

363 students of pedagogy at the University of Białystok (Cudowska, 2017), apart from the diagnosis of creative orientation preferences, a hypothesis was verified regarding the relationship between the preference for a creative life orientation and the sense of coherence of the respondents, which is an empirical category in Aaron Antonovsky's salutogenic model of health (1979). The fourth empirical project was carried out in the years 2015-2016 and also had a comparative value. The research covered a group of 573 Polish and Belarusian students of pedagogy at the University of Białystok and the Alexander Pushkin State University in Brest (Cudowska, Baj, Siluk, Walewska, 2019). All the previous studies were conducted by means of the same tool: the author's Scale of Preferences for Creative Life Orientations (Cudowska, 2004, 2017). The reader will find a synthetic overview of all previous research projects in the article *Creative Life Orientations in Socially Diverse Groups: Research Review* (Cudowska, 2023).

### **Methodological concept of research**

The subject of research in the presented, sixth project in a row, implemented in the years 2021-2023, are the conditions for the development of creative life orientations in teachers and form tutors of various types of schools in Poland. The aim of this exploration is a) to get to know stimulators and inhibitors of creative life orientations of teachers and form tutors in the school and local environment, b) to make a diagnosis of activities supporting the development of creative life orientations of teachers and form tutors undertaken in everyday school life and in the local environment, and c) to get to know the expected by teachers and form tutors forms of support for the development of creative life orientations as a basic category for the professional development of teachers and form tutors. Recognizing the condition in this regard will be used to develop workshops developing creative life orientations of teachers and form tutors. Eight detailed problems were formulated to determine the conditions for the development of creative life orientations of teachers and form tutors at school and in the local environment. They took the form of research questions about the socio-demographic characteristics of the surveyed teachers and form tutors, their preparation and professional development, the respondents' preferences in terms of life orientations on the creative-conservative continuum as well as sources of support in the development of creative orientations of the surveyed teachers in the school and local environment, encompassing various entities and institutions. In addition, we also asked about the ways to support teachers' creative life orientations in the activities carried out at school and in the

local environment, about the factors inhibiting the development of teachers' creative life orientations at school and in the local environment, and about the teachers' expectations regarding support in the development of creative life orientations.

The preferences of teachers and educators in terms of creative life orientations were examined as well as inhibitors and stimulators of the development of creative life orientations in teachers and form tutors at school and in the local environment. The analyzes were conducted in the light of factors such as: 1) socio-demographic characteristics of the surveyed teachers and form tutors (age, sex, living environment, place of work, family and economic situation); 2) preparation and professional development of the surveyed teachers (education, work experience, degree of professional promotion, forms of professional development, subject taught, school size and type (public school/non-public school)); 3) preparation and professional development of the surveyed form tutors (education, professional experience, work experience, professional development); 4) types of entities constituting a source of support in the development of creative life orientations of the surveyed teachers and form tutors: a) personal: managerial staff, administrative staff, other teachers, parents, students; b) institutional: the body running the facility, the body supervising the facility and other entities in the local environment; 5) expectations of the surveyed teachers and form tutors in terms of supporting the development of creative life orientations. Inferential statistics indices were used to determine the above features and phenomena. The research was carried out using the diagnostic survey method and the estimation method, in which the questionnaire technique and scaling with the author's Scale of Preferences for Creative Life Orientations were used. In constructing the tool, a technique was used whereby the researcher takes into account individual aspects of the object being measured and essential elements of each of these objects, resulting in a profile constituting the basis for formulating a specific question or statement in the tool. The Questionnaire of the Scale of Preferences for Creative Life Orientations includes four components of creative life orientations: New situations (Ns), New products (Np), Elasticity, flexibility and originality of thinking (E) and Creativity as a value (C). Each of them was presented in 12 sentences, so the questionnaire contains 48 statements describing the preferences of the respondent. Their indicator is the number of points obtained on the Scale of Preferences for Creative Life Orientations from individual subscales. Based on the answers, the respondents are placed on the continuum of creative-conservative life orientations. The statements of the Scale were verified in pilot studies; they



were subjected to a validation assessment using the method of competent judges. Moreover, the reliability and validity of the tool was confirmed in statistical analyzes by the Cronbach's alpha with a high value of 0.86 (Cudowska, 2017). Agata Cudowska's Scale of Preferences for Creative Life Orientations and the survey questionnaire were made available to the respondents online, and the request to send a link to the research tools was sent directly to schools whose e-mail addresses were obtained from the Search Engine of the Register of Schools and Educational Institutions <https://rspo.gov.pl/>. The sample was selected in a deliberate-random manner since the participants of the research were teachers of various types of schools (primary and secondary) located in different provinces of the country. This selection of the sample was dictated by concern for its typological representativeness, i.e. the presence in the study group of all the features of interest to the researcher characteristic of the entire population of Polish teachers. The research was conducted throughout the country, but the response from teachers to the request to participate in the research was very poor. The research was prolonged, so a decision was made to end it after qualifying for analysis less than 600 questionnaires.

### **Characteristics of the surveyed teachers**

Most teachers came from the Śląskie Voivodship (37.6%). Other voivodships were represented to a much lesser extent. Their distribution is as follows: Podlaskie (10.9%), Opolskie (9.2%), Lubelskie (8.9%), Mazowieckie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie (6.7% each), Dolnośląskie (5.4%) and Kujawsko-Pomorskie (5.2%). Few teachers were resident in the Świętokrzyskie (2.2%), Lubuskie and Podkarpackie (1.9% each), Małopolskie (1.5%), Pomorskie (0.8%) as well as Łódzkie and Zachodniopomorskie (0.3% respectively and 0.2%) Voivodships. The sample did not include teachers from Greater Poland, because we did not receive any questionnaires from this voivodship.

The largest group of respondents (26.4%) were teachers working in schools located in cities with a population between 100,000 and 300,000 inhabitants, with groups of teachers employed in schools located in cities with a population of up to 50,000 inhabitants (19.8%) and over 300 thousand inhabitants (19%) being almost equal in number. 17.8% of the schools from which the teacher-respondents were recruited were located in villages, and 17% of the schools where the surveyed teachers are employed are located in cities with a population between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants. Most of the respondents were employed in one institution (70.4%), almost 1/5 in two, very few in three, and even four and more. The surveyed teachers



worked the most hours a week in public schools (95.3%) and few of them in non-public schools (4.7%). The vast majority of the surveyed teachers worked in primary schools and constituted 81.8% of the sample, while 18.2% of the respondents were employed in postprimary schools.

The conducted research reflected the phenomenon of the feminization of teaching profession, which is observed not only in Poland, but also in other European countries. 86.9% of women and only 13.1% of men participated in it, with sex perceived in the biological context as a set of features that allow to divide individuals of a given species into male and female groups, playing complementary roles in the reproductive process, where the differences between individuals of both sexes underlie sexual dimorphism. The surveyed teachers did not signal the need to define their gender identity differently; there were no references to gender manifested in the presentation and behavior of a person.

The age range of the surveyed teachers is very diverse. Most of them are people aged 50-59 (39.5%) and 40-49 (31.4%). The third largest group are teachers aged 30-39 (17%). Few respondents were under 30 (4.5%) and over 60 (7.4%). This reflects the general aging trend of this professional group revealed in international comparative studies (European Commission, 2021). The seniority of the respondents indicates that they have considerable professional experience. Most often they have worked at school for 20-29 years (30.6%) or for 30-39 years (27.9%). The next group consists of teachers with 10-19 years of professional experience (20.7%) and teachers with professional experience of up to 10 years (17.1%). Only a few (2.8%) have been employed in school for more 40 years. No data was obtained for five people.

All the surveyed teachers have a college or university degree, with 98.5% of the respondents indicating that they have completed master's studies, and 1.5% completing studies at the bachelor's level. The largest group of respondents (42.2%) graduated from higher education institutions focused on teaching a specific subject. A group of 26.5% of the respondents declared that they had completed pedagogical studies. Over 7% of the respondents admitted that they had a diploma in the field of education and rehabilitation of students with special educational needs. Over 11% of the respondents indicated other fields of completed studies, such as: psychology, library science and information science, theology, vocational subjects, arts, law, political science and agriculture. Unfortunately, as many as 12.3% of respondents did not provide an answer in this regard.

The surveyed teachers improve their professional qualifications, develop their skills and gain new competences, also by undertaking postgraduate

studies. More than 85% of the respondents declared that they had completed post-graduate studies, which proves their involvement in the lifelong learning process. Not many, only 5% of the respondents indicated that this form of development does not apply to them, and 9.1% of the respondents did not provide an answer on this subject. In the last three years before the research, teachers used various forms of professional development, in stationary and remote form. These were, in the indicated order of frequency: courses, workshops, training and seminars (89.1%), in-school teacher training (85.4%), self-education (82.5%), passive participation in conferences (58.8%), network of cooperation and self-education (37.6%), active participation in conferences, with a paper (18.3%) and international projects (12.6%). The research was conducted during the four stages of professional promotion. 71% of the respondents had the degree of a certified teacher. Appointed and contract teachers accounted for 13.2% and 12.3% of the study group, respectively, while trainee teachers were the least numerous (3.5%).

Most of the respondents were subject teachers (63.2%), 37.8% were form tutors, 15.6% were specialists, 10.4% were integrated education teachers, 9.2% were day-room teachers. Teachers co-organizing the education process constituted 7.9% %, school library staff 4.4%, deputy principals 4.4% and principals 4.0%. Due to the small number of respondents who indicated many advisory, therapeutic and supervisory roles, they were included in the "Other" category (9.3%). The respondents could indicate more than one role at school, hence the data do not add up to 100%.

The analysis of the empirical material makes it possible to indicate the dominant subjects taught by the 403 surveyed teachers as part of their teaching load. Teaching at least two subjects is declared by 6.5% of teachers, with the first subject mentioned taken into account in the analysis. The largest group of surveyed teachers has a teaching load in the field of humanities (29.4%). The subjects taught are Polish, English and history. Only 10.8% of the respondents teach science, i.e. mathematics and computer science. Science subjects such as biology, physics and chemistry dominate for 8.6% of the surveyed teachers. Social subjects are leading for 7.7% of the respondents - this group is dominated by early childhood education teachers. For 5.4% of the respondents the main subject taught is physical education, while 4.9% of the respondents declare teaching arts, such as music and fine arts. In the surveyed group, only 1% of teachers teach vocational subjects.

Most of the respondents positively assessed their financial situation as good (40%) or average (47.7%). Only 6.5% of the surveyed teachers are very satisfied with their economic situation, slightly fewer people (5.2%)

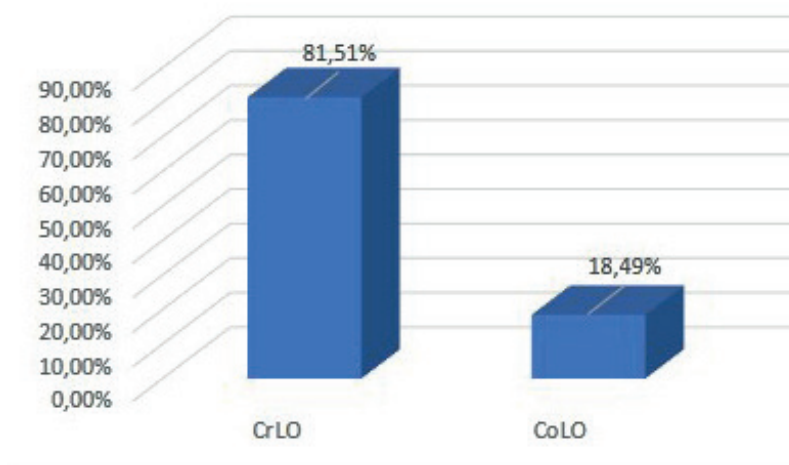
assessed their social and living situation as unfavorable or even very bad (0.5%). Most of the surveyed teachers are in formal relationships (74.9%), almost one fifth of the respondents are single people (17.8%) and the least numerous group are people in informal relationships (7.2%). The vast majority of respondents (80.2%) have children. This group is dominated by people with two children (42.4%) and one child (24%), followed by teachers with three children (11.4%), and a few (2%) with four or five children. Two respondents did not provide an answer in this regard.

### **Preferences of the surveyed teachers**

The premises of the author's concept of creative life orientations (Cudowska, 2004) and the results of research carried out so far in socially diverse groups (Cudowska, 2004, 2014, 2017, 2023) show that people with a creative life orientation are better prepared to function in a complex, dynamic reality, in an open society, because what is new and unknown evokes in them, above all, the need to learn, explore and experience. They are characterized by autonomous cognitive motivation, in which curiosity and desire for new experiences direct action. They accept change as something natural, approve of differences and can harmoniously combine contradictory traits. Thanks to the ability to see specifics, generalize, abstract, classify, and also adopt a fresh perspective, they perceive the reality more efficiently than people with conservative orientations. It can be said that by looking at the same things as others they see more, because they are more sensitive and reflective. People who prefer creative orientations are able to fully concentrate on a given issue and experience a state of fascination with a given problem. They undertake activities of various nature and scope, in many fields. Their creative attitude to life manifests itself in incidental, occasional, as well as systematic and long-term activities. They have a strong need for self-fulfilment, which they satisfy both in group activity, in a wider circle of people, and in a small family community, but also in solitude, in contact with the inner world of their experiences. Their creative attitude to life is manifested in their daily tasks, duties and challenges, as well as in the way they deal with existential crises. Updating one's own aptitudes, enriching one's self-knowledge or axiological awareness, acquiring new skills is an important, though not the only, dimension of a person's creative orientation. In the purposeful, subjective creation of one's own biography, an important place is also occupied by various types of products of creative activity, although they are not a condition for a creative life orientation. People with this orientation may seek self-fulfillment not only in everyday fluid creativity or "little c" creativity - they can also enjoy

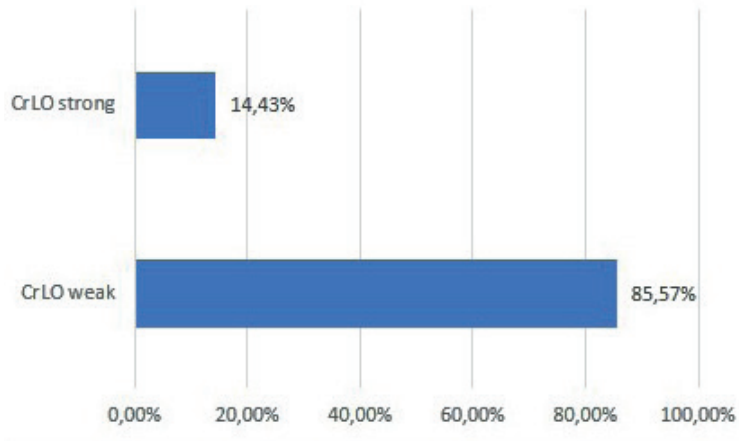
fulfillment in the field of crystallized creativity, which requires mastering specific knowledge, skills, patience, courage and perseverance (Cudowska, 2004, 2014, 2017, 2023).

Among the 595 surveyed teachers, 110 people, i.e. 18.49%, declared a preference for a conservative life orientation, whereas 485 teachers, constituting 81.51% of the surveyed sample, indicated a preference for a creative life orientation.



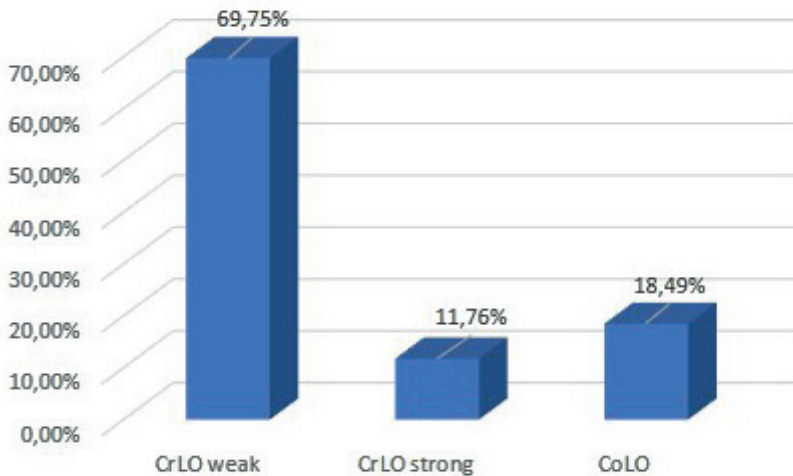
**Chart 1.** Distribution of life orientation preferences in the creative-conservative dimension in the surveyed sample of teachers (N=595)

The majority in this group, however, are people with low acceptance for creative orientation, situated in the area of ambivalence, a kind of indecision as to their real preferences - they constitute 85.57% of the group of people with preferences for a creative life orientation. Only 14.43% of the surveyed teachers declared strong support for the theses describing a creative life orientation, which is an unsatisfactory indicator in this professional group.



**Chart 2.** Strength of creative life orientation preferences in the group of teachers declaring creative preferences (N=485)

On the other hand, among all the surveyed people, teachers with weak creative preferences constitute 69.75% of the sample. In the group of teachers declaring preferences falling within the scope of creative life orientations 70 people, who in the entire surveyed sample constitute only 11.76% of teachers, show strong preferences for creative orientation. This is twice as less than in the group of teachers surveyed over a dozen years earlier, in the years 2006-2012. In those studies, about 25% of teachers declared unequivocal acceptance of the creative model of life. The deterioration of results in this area confirms the already raised issue of the progressing crisis of this profession.



**Chart 3.** Strength of preferences for creative life orientations in the tested sample (N=595)

It is assumed that socio-cultural conditions that favor or inhibit outstanding creativity are also stimulators or inhibitors of creative life orientations. However, defining these conditions is probably not possible, because the results of scientific research on these conditions in relation to outstanding creativity are ambiguous, often contradicting the findings of biographers of people creating outstanding works. Human creative activity is entangled in various antinomies and paradoxes - what stimulates one person to creativity may discourage another. The formation of creative life orientations is also a multi-conditioned process that requires the harmonization of biological, mental and social mechanisms, as well as individualization, which probably determines biographies to the greatest extent and decides about preferences in terms of life orientations. So far, no research has been conducted on the conditions conducive to the development of a creative attitude towards life; we have only partial information on this subject, limited to selected aspects of the family situation of people who prefer creative orientations. In the presented project, an attempt was made to identify family, school and personal determinants of preferences for creative life orientations of the surveyed teachers. The results of these analyzes are not possible to present in this article due to the limitations for the volume of text and therefore they will be presented in subsequent works.

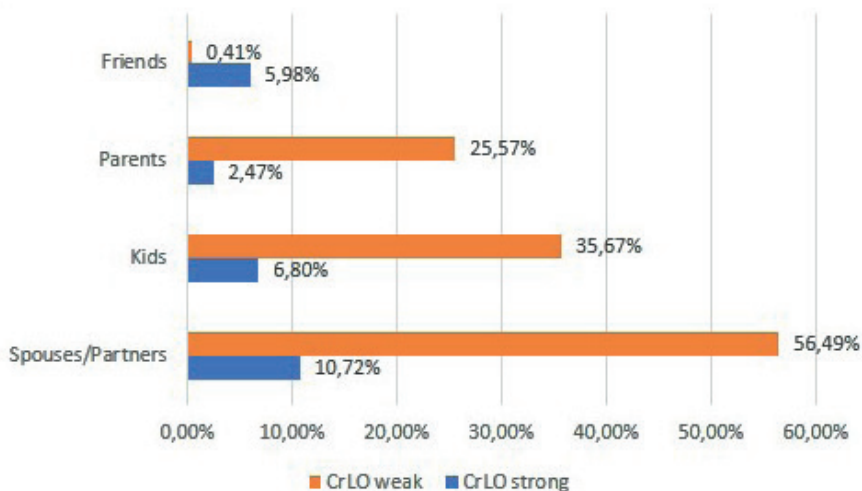
### **Determinants of the creative orientations of the surveyed teachers**

In the course of analyzing teachers' preferences, biological gender did not differentiate the study sample. The distribution of preferences among women and men is very similar and reflects the general trend observed in the entire sample. Among female teachers, there are slightly more people declaring acceptance of a creative life orientation (81.6%) than among male teachers (80.8%), but this difference is not statistically significant, as it amounts to only 0.8%. Unfortunately, despite the high preference index for creative life orientation, the vast majority of indicators point to a low level of acceptance, which was already shown in the analysis of results obtained in the entire study group. Less than 18.4% of women and 19.2% of men expressed preference for the conservative orientation.

The selected determinants of preferences for creative life orientations in a nationwide sample of teachers included the family environment represented by the life partner of the respondent, his or her parents, children and friends. Statistically significant relationships were observed between the respondents' preferences for creative life orientations and the above-mentioned elements. They are expressed in the following values:  $\chi^2=128.96$ ;

$df=3$ ;  $p<0.001$  indicating statistically significant differences; the contingency coefficient  $C_{kor} = 0.50$  indicates a clear relationship between the variables. Regardless of the strength of preferences for creative life orientations, 67.22% of respondents indicated primarily their spouses or life partners as the people from whom they receive the most support in the development of their creative potential and in the implementation of creative professional and private ventures. In the second place, 42.47% of responses, teachers mentioned the help they receive from their children, 28.04% of respondents appreciated the support from their own parents. A small group of respondents, constituting 6.39% of the entire sample, indicated friends as people who help them in creative pedagogical activities undertaken at school and in the development of personal creativity outside the school.

**Chart 4.** Family sources of support for the surveyed teachers' preferences for CrLO (N=485)



The second circle of support for the development of teachers' creative life orientations analyzed in this research was the school environment, as the workplace of the surveyed teachers. Regardless of the type of institution, its location on the map, size or managing body, the analyzes included such sources of support as: the principal and administration staff, other teachers and specialists, students and students' parents. Unfortunately, statistical analyzes indicated the lack of statistically significant relationships between teachers' preferences for creative life orientations and support from the school. This is a very disturbing result, proving the weakness of the institution which, due to its specificity, should take action to help teachers develop



their creative potential and implement creative pedagogical activities for the benefit of students. Many studies show that only a teacher who is a creative person himself can recognize and support the creativity of his students.

An analogous situation occurred in the case of the third, broadest circle of support for creative life orientations of teachers, i.e. the local environment. All the examined sources of support for the purposes of the analysis were grouped into six categories, including: the school governing body and the body exercising pedagogical supervision over it, cultural institutions, security and assistance services, non-profit organizations and churches, Teacher Training Centers, and pedagogical libraries and other schools located in the studied environment. The analysis did not reveal any statistical relationship between the indicated variables, which indicates that the examined teachers do not experience support in the development of creative potential from the local environment institutions mentioned here.

## Conclusions

The diagnosis of teachers' preferences in terms of life orientations included in the creative *versus* conservative dimension revealed not a very favorable state of affairs in this respect. A creative attitude to work, which emerges from preferences for a creative life orientation, is shared by a definite minority of the respondents. Despite a fairly common declaration supporting the creative model of functioning, only a small group of teachers express an unequivocal recognition for creativity as a value in human life, highly evaluate new, original products, as well as thoughts and ideas serving the common good, are open to new experiences, willing to learn new situations and are sensitive to flexibility, elasticity and originality of thinking. The creative preferences of this less than 12% group of respondents are probably reflected in the way they fulfill their professional role, in the creative implementation of tasks and functions, in relations with students, other teachers and parents and in everyday work at school.

At the same time, such a small number of teachers with strong preferences for creative life orientations seems to confirm the crisis of this profession, observed in Poland and other European countries. It is caused not only by the unfavorable financial situation of this professional group in most European Union countries, and in Eastern Europe in particular, but also by the aging of teachers, young teachers leaving the profession, low enrollment rates for teacher and pedagogical training, diverse and unsatisfactory career opportunities in this profession and many others (Cudowska, 2023a). The conservative and ambivalent life orientations of a large group of teachers

broaden the range of symptoms of the crisis. The worsening working conditions of contemporary teachers, the multiplying number of new responsibilities going beyond teaching itself, from administrative and bureaucratic to therapeutic and caring, require not only excellent pedagogical preparation of trainees in this profession, but also a significant dose of their openness, willingness to learn, learning new things, creativity in solving problems, readiness to accept the ambiguous, looking differently and noticing what others do not see - therefore they require a creative life orientation.

The lack of activities supporting the development of creative life orientations of teachers and educators undertaken in everyday school life and in the local environment, as identified in the course of research and analysis of results, does not serve to overcome this crisis. The inhibitor of the development of teachers' creative potential, which also inhibits their pedagogical creativity, is the lack of support in the school environment, which should be a place stimulating the development of personal creativity of all participants in the educational dialogue. However, this cannot be achieved without creative teachers, who are committed to their work, full of passion and curiosity, as Henryk Rowid wrote in his concept of the creative school (1926).

### References:

- Antonovsky, A. (1979). *Health, Stress, and Coping*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Craft, A. (2000). *Creativity Across the Primary Curriculum*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Craft, A. (2001). Little c Creativity. In: A. Craft. B. Jeffrey. M. Leibling (eds.), *Creativity in Education* (pp. 45–61). London-New York: Continuum.
- Cudowska, A. (2004). *Kształtowanie twórczych orientacji życiowych w procesie edukacji (Shaping Creative Life Orientations in the Process of Education)*. Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteckie Trans Humana.
- Cudowska, A. (2014). *Twórcze orientacje życiowe w dialogu edukacyjnym. Studium teoretyczno-empiryczne (Creative Life Orientations in the Educational Dialogue. Theoretical and Empirical Study)*. Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteckie Trans Humana.
- Cudowska, A. (2017). *Twórcze orientacje życiowe. Zdrowie i dobrostan (Creative Life Orientations. Health and Well-Being)*. Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku.
- Cudowska, A., Baj, E., Siluk, L., Walewska, M. (2019). *Twórcze orientacje życiowe studentów. Polsko-białoruskie studium porównawcze (Creative Life Orientations of University Students. Polish-Belarusian Comparative Study)*. Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku.

- Cudowska, A. (2023). Creative Life Orientations in Socially Diverse Groups: Research Review. *European Review*, vol. 31, Issue 2, 180-195. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Academia Europae, doi:10.1017/S1062798723000029
- Cudowska, A. (2023a). The condition of teachers in a comparative perspective, *Studia z Teorii Wychowania*, vol. XIII, no. 3(44), 125-136.
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, (2021). *Teachers in Europe: Careers, Development and Well-being. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Fromm, E. (1959). The Creative Attitude. In: H. H. Anderson (ed.), *Creativity and its Cultivation. Addresses Presented at The Interdisciplinary Symposia on Creativity* (pp. 44-54). New York: Harper and Row.
- Fromm, E. (1981). *To Have or to Be?* New York: Bantam New Age Books.
- Giddens, A., Sutton, P.W. (2021). *Essential Concepts in Sociology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Cambridge, Medford, MA: Polity.
- Glăveanu, V. P. (2010). Paradigma in the Study of Creativity: Introducing the Perspective of Cultural Psychology. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 28, 79-93.
- Leung, A. K.-Y., Kwan, L. Y.-Y., Liou, S. (eds.) (2018). *The Handbook of Culture and Creativity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1959). Creativity in Self-actualizing People. In: H. H. Anderson (ed.), *Creativity and its Cultivation. Addresses Presented at The Interdisciplinary Symposia on Creativity* (pp. 83-95). New York: Harper and Row.
- Maslow, A. H. (1971). *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York: The Viking Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1962). *Toward a Psychology of Being*. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row Publishers.
- May, R. J. (1959). The Nature of Creativity. In: H. H. Anderson (ed.), *Creativity and its Cultivation. Addresses Presented at The Interdisciplinary Symposia on Creativity* (pp. 55-68). New York: Harper and Row.
- May, R. J. (1994). *The Courage to Create*. New York-London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Perls, F. S. (1969). *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*. New York: Real People Press.
- Richards, R. (1999). Everyday Creativity. In: M. A. Runco. S. R. Pritzker (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Creativity* (pp. 683-689). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Richards, R., Kinney, D. K., Lunde, I., Benet, M., Merzel, A. P. C. (1997). Creativity in Manic-Depressives, Cyclothymes, Their Normal Relatives,

- and Control Subjects. In: R. Richards. M. A. Runco (eds.), *Eminent Creativity, Everyday Creativity and Health* (pp. 119-136). London: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Richards, R. (2007). Everyday Creativity: Our Hidden Potential. In: R. Richards (ed.), *Everyday Creativity and New Views of Human Nature. Psychological, Social, and Spiritual Perspectives* (pp. 25-53). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Rogers, C. R. (1954). Towards a Theory of Creativity. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 11, 249-260.
- Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Rowid, H. (1926). *Szkola twórcza: podstawy teoretyczne i drogi urzeczywistnienia "szkoły pracy"* (Creative school: theoretical foundations and ways of implementing the "school of work"). Kraków: Skład Główny: Gebethner i Wolff.
- Runco, M. A. (2005). Creativity Giftedness. In: R. J. Sternberg. J. Davidson (eds.), *Conceptions of Giftedness* (pp. 295-311). Cambridge: University Press.
- Runco, M. A. (2006). Reasoning and Personal Creativity. In: J. C. Kaufman. J. Bear (eds.), *Creativity and Reason in Cognitive Development* (pp. 99-116). Cambridge: University Press.
- Runco, M. A. (2007). To Understand is to Create: An Epistemological Perspective on Human Nature and Personal Creativity. In: R. Richards (ed.), *Everyday Creativity and New Views of Human Nature. Psychological, Social, and Spiritual Perspectives* (pp. 91-107). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Schnädelbach, H. (1992). *Zur Rehabilitierung des Animal Rationale: Vorträge und Abhandlungen 2*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Zinker, J. (1977). *The Creative Process in Gestalt Therapy*. New York: Vintage Books.