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Bachelor thesis

Ing. Bára Škorpíková

Analysis of Poor Performance of Secondary Students

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supervisor: doc. Mgr. Štefan Chudý, Ph.D.

Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled *Analysis of Poor Performance of Secondary Students* by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any third person.

In Poděbrady on 19 April 2021

Bára Škorpíková

Annotation

The goal of the bachelor thesis is to analyze what share of secondary students perform poorly and what the causes are. The thesis is focused on a theoretical part covering basic definitions, causes of poor school performance, different categories of school study fields and dealing with poor school performance as well as on a practical part where a quantitative research is conducted. The basis for the research is a questionnaire with close-ended questions. After analyzing all the questions, the results are presented and possible improvements are suggested.

Key words

Student, teacher, secondary school, performance, intelligence, marks, specific learning disability, education

Anotace

Cílem této bakalářské práce je zanalyzovat, jaký je podíl studentů středních škol, kteří trpí školním neúspěchem a jaké jsou jeho příčiny. Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou část, která poskytuje základní definice, příčiny školního neúspěchu, různé kategorie oborů středních škol a řešení školního neúspěchu, a na praktickou část, kde je proveden kvantitativní výzkum. Základem pro výzkum je dotazník s uzavřenými otázkami. Po analýze všech otázek jsou představeny výsledky a navržena možná zlepšení.

Klíčová slova

Student, učitel, střední škola, úspěch, inteligence, známky, specifická porucha učení, vzdělávání

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Introduction

The topic of this bachelor thesis is Analysis of poor performance of secondary students. School performance can be a serious issue for some students and their parents and can be caused from various reasons. Poor school performance may have a bad impact for students as teenagers and even as adults in their careers and personal lives. The issue of poor school performance is something that has always existed but has been becoming even more discussed recently. People have had to face their every-day life with the global pandemic for over a year now and it has been an extremely difficult situation especially for all students. They had to adapt to a completely different approach to learning immediately. This thesis deals with the students who have been studying mostly from home for the past fourteen months.

The goal of this thesis is to analyze what share of secondary students perform poorly and what the causes are. Also, advice how to avoid it or improve it shall be suggested. The thesis has four main parts: an introduction, a theoretical part, a practical part and a conclusion. In the theoretical part, basic definitions are introduced first and causes of poor school performance follow. They are divided into five chapters: deviation intelligence quotient, unequal talent, hyperactivity and attention deficit, developmental changes and motivational deficit and negative approach to school. The topics of different categories of school study fields and dealing with poor school performance are also covered.

In the practical part, a questionnaire with closed questions is prepared. A quantitative research is conducted. A target audience of the questionnaire are secondary students from different categories of study fields: grammar students, vocational students, technical students, students from extension studies and students with special educational needs. The responses from the questionnaire are analyzed in texts, tables and graphs. After analyses according to different categories of study fields and analyses according to questions, results of the research are presented. Possible suggestions for improvement are proposed.

The author has chosen this theme of the bachelor thesis because of her teaching experience which started in 2015 and which has been significantly influenced by work with students with special educational needs. The author has worked with students of all presented categories and is familiar with their various behavior, motivation,

approach to learning. Of course, every student is different, unique. However, this thesis should provide some common signs among them and help to understand their motives. The main resources used for this bachelor thesis are publications by Vágnerová; Michalová; Průcha, Mareš, Walterová and scientific and other articles from the Internet.

Theoretical part

1 Definitions

First, it needs to be established who a **student** is. A student is a person who is taught regardless his or her age. It can be a child, a teenager or an adult.

A **teacher** is a person who participates in an educational process. Teachers create educational environment, classroom climate, organize and coordinate students' activity and manage and evaluate their work.

A **School** is a social institution with the main purpose to provide education to students of different ages in organized forms and according to certain educational programs. School provides social and personal development of students, it prepares them for a future personal and work life and also a life of a citizen. Schools are both educational and upbringing institutions.

Poor performance of students is traditionally perceived as bad marks, sometimes even leading to repeating a class or even quitting school. However, teachers see this as a wider problem. Students having difficulties at school may develop bad attitude to learning, education and teachers. Many students fear their school and that can lead to psychological distress or not choosing the right school. These choices might even influence their future life. It is important to realize that problematic students reflect their issues, they have to live and deal with them, they evaluate them. The problems have a certain impact on their lives. (Průcha, Mareš, Walterová, 2003)

An important fact is that problematic students have to face their presence in school every day. In order to cooperate with their issues and feelings, they activate their defense reactions. The reactions are either in a form of aggressive or escape response. Aggressive response can be seen as provoking one's classmates, showing physical strength or not paying attention and disturbing during classes while escape response means lying, going behind school, not paying attention or stop trying to get good results at all. (Vágnerová, 2005)

There are many factors that lead to success or bad performance in school and these are the subject of the following chapter.

2 Causes of poor student performance

There are numerous reasons why some students fail in school, why they are less successful than their classmates, why they hate school, they do not want to learn anything new, they become frustrated. According to Vágnerová (2005), there are five main categories causing poor performance:

- Deviation intelligence quotient
- Unequal talent (often specific learning disabilities)
- Hyperactivity and attention deficit
- Developmental changes
- Motivational deficit and negative approach to school

2.1 Deviation intelligence quotation

Both extremes of intelligence can cause difficulties for students. Although, low intelligence is a bigger threat for poor school performance.

Intelligence is a complex feature consisting of ability to think, ability to learn and ability to deal with different tasks. Intelligence means to learn from experience, to adapt to a certain environment, to analyze a problem deeply, being fast in speaking, thinking. People with high intelligence are often called talented people and they have good imagination, good memory and love learning new things. (<https://psychologie.cz/vlastnosti-nadanych-lidi/>) There is no strict line between talented people and less talented people but students with lower intelligence tend to have difficulties in school. However, intelligence itself does not secure good results in school. It is appropriate to test a student and measure his/her intelligence and if the results do not correlate with school achievements, there are other reasons for failing in school (e. g. lack of motivation). Then, the situation can be dealt with further. (Vágnerová, 2005).

Originally, there was only one concept of intelligence. It is called **general intelligence** or simply g intelligence. G intelligence was introduced by Charles Spearman. Spearman stated that there is one general mental ability which is used for verbal spatial, numerical and mechanical skills.

There are several theories dealing with intelligence nowadays. The most discussed ones are Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence, Cattell's theory of fluid and crystallized intelligence or Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence. However, it has not been decided whether intelligence is purely genetically inherited or it can be affected by learning, experience and social interactions. (Průcha, 1997)

2.1.1 Gardner's theory

According to **Gardner**, intelligence is divided into eight forms:

- Linguistic intelligence
- Logical-mathematical intelligence
- Spatial intelligence
- Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence
- Musical intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence
- Intrapersonal intelligence
- Naturalist intelligence

This model is different from g – general intelligence which assumes only one type of intelligence. G intelligence focuses only on cognitive functions and typical IQ tests are based on logical-mathematical intelligence only. Gardner first introduced other forms of intelligence in 1983. **Linguistic intelligence** is connected with languages, people with high linguistic intelligence are good at both oral and written language, they can use it to accomplish certain goals, they easily learn a new language and they are often lawyers, authors, journalists... People with **logical-mathematical intelligence** are good with numbers, they solve and analyze problems logically, they calculate things. They usually find themselves occupied as statisticians, accountants or programmers. People gifted with **spatial intelligence** excel at reading maps or imagining 3D objects. They succeed as surgeons, architects, designers. **Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence** is typical for athletes, dancers, craftsmen. These people move and control their body or body parts perfectly. They do it to perform some skills or create a product. People with **musical intelligence** are often singers, composers, musicians. They have the ability to hear rhythm, tone, melody. **Interpersonal intelligence**

refers to understanding others. It involves understanding their behavior, motivation, intentions, desires, emotions. This kind of intelligence suits teachers, managers, psychologists. People who have **intrapersonal intelligence** perceive their own thoughts, ideas, feelings, motivation, intentions and they can use it to be successful entrepreneurs, psychologists, coaches, trainers. The last but not least type of intelligence is **naturalist intelligence**. People with naturalist intelligence are familiar with fauna and flora, they understand nature and weather and they can use it to be meteorologists, zoologists, botanists. Some sources add existential intelligence. Gardner proposed this theory in 1998 but many argues that there is not enough scientific evidence for it. (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/multiple-intelligences.html>, <https://deti.mensa.cz/index.php?pg=home--aktualni-deni&aid=260>)

2.1.2 Emotional intelligence

Theories of **emotional intelligence** started to occur around the year of 1990. Since that, it has been argued that emotional quotient (EQ) is more important than IQ itself. Having only high IQ does not provide success in life, it needs to be in accordance with EQ. “*Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to an individual’s capacity to understand and manage emotions.*” Managing one’s emotions is something that people have to deal with every day in every situation, conversation, action, relationship, conflict, process. (<https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-theories/>)

Faltas (2017) argues that there are three major models of emotional intelligence:

- Goleman’s EI performance model
- Bar-on’s EI competencies model
- Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso’s EI ability model

Goleman set four components and twelve human features of EI. According to Goleman, these form human skills and competencies that managers need for efficient performance. The components are:

- self-awareness
- relationship management
- self-management
- social awareness

These components of EI are the basis of twelve human features:

- emotional self-awareness
- emotional self-control
- adaptability
- achievement orientation
- positive outlook
- influence
- coaching and mentoring
- empathy
- conflict management
- teamwork
- organizational awareness
- inspirational leadership

Bar-on argues that following scales and subscales influence people's behavior, relationships and performance. The scales are:

- self-perception
- self-expression
- interpersonal
- decision-making
- stress management

The subscales are:

- self-regard,
- self-actualization,
- emotional self-awareness,
- emotional expression,
- assertiveness,
- independence,
- interpersonal relationships,
- empathy,
- social responsibility,
- problem-solving,
- reality testing,

- impulse control,
- flexibility,
- stress tolerance,
- optimism

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso' created a model of four abilities:

- perceive emotion
- use emotion to facilitate thought
- understand emotions
- manage emotions

These abilities should provide clear thinking and efficient decision-making.

It is very important to distinguish between emotions and EI. Emotions are given by our current state of mind, our mood, our past and current experience as well as our feelings, relationships and environment we are in. They are a natural part of our lives. On the contrary, EI is the ability or skill to identify, understand and use emotions to improve the quality of one's life. EI includes making decisions, solving problems, managing stress, communicating with others or the way how people feel about themselves. (Faltas, 2017)

2.1.3 Cattell's theory of fluid and crystallized intelligence

Cattell proposed a theory that general intelligence is divided into two parts: fluid and crystallized intelligence. Crystallized intelligence is the ability to retrieve the knowledge that people have acquired while fluid intelligence means solving problems and seeing relationships between different phenomena. (<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-fmcc-intropsych/chapter/what-are-intelligence-and-creativity/>)

2.1.4 Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence

Sternberg states there are three parts of intelligence: practical, creative and analytical. Practical intelligence provides successful interactions and adaptation in everyday life, creative intelligence means using gained knowledge to deal with situations

innovatively, differently and analytical intelligence is important in school, it is for solving problems and is measured by a standard IQ test. These three elements are used for information processing. To be intelligent and successful in life, all parts are necessary. (Blesch, 2012)

2.1.5 Gender differentiations

There are significant differences between intelligence of girls and intelligence of boys. Girls' intelligence is normally around average while boys' intelligence is closer to both extremes. Boys usually have better spatial intelligence. They have better orientation in 2D and 3D space. Girls have better linguistic skills, they can speak more fluently, know more vocabulary, have better understanding of grammar. That is the reason they have better marks from languages in school. (Vágnerová, 2005).

2.1.6 Low intelligence

The overall IQ is the crucial assumption for being successful in school. Students who are below average with their IQ score are more likely to be struggling in school. They need to put more effort to deal with everyday schoolwork, they are affected with the assumption of failure which limits their motivation and effects their self-respect in a negative way. The graph below shows that about 13 % of population are people with the range of intelligence between 70 and 85 %. Vágnerová (2005) also states this fact and adds that it means that there are approximately three pupils in every primary class who are predetermined to face difficulties in their student life. When lower-secondary school starts, even students with the IQ range within 86 and 90 begin to have difficulties with learning. They tend to memorize things except trying to logically understand it. They require teacher's attention and supervision. When they are exposed to a task they do not understand, they either ignore it or only guess how to solve it. They lack verbal skills, they repeat certain phrases, use simple sentences, are not familiar with a sufficient number of terms. They have a tendency to behave childish, they have problems controlling their emotions and often rely on adults more than children with higher IQ.

One reason that causes lower intelligence is brain damage gained during childbirth. It is an injury which is not genetic and the parents are often more intelligent than their

child. The issue is that they sometimes do not see or do not want to see that their child is different from them and they expect him or her to be excellent. It only causes less motivation to the child and he or she might feel unappreciated.

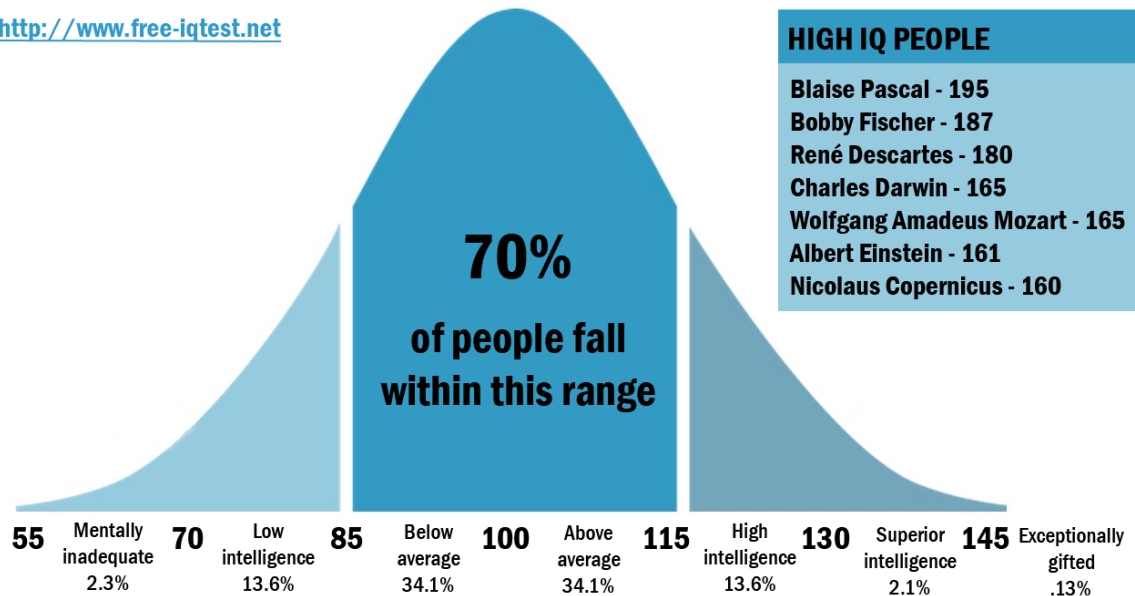
The second reason which affects a wider group of children is a combination of lower intelligence and poor upbringing. The reality is that these parents are usually not very intelligent themselves and they are not well educated. Children who belong to this group have poor language skills, they do not know how to adapt to different social roles, they do not develop their competences in balance. Nevertheless, they often excel at practical skills. It is hard for teachers to motivate those students properly and it is an important task to do as these students can usually improve in their school performance. It is a challenge to know where the child's limit is, what knowledge he or she can still absorb. Sadly, the crucial part and the part that cannot be influenced by the teacher is the child's home. The parents might not praise their children enough or if ever. It is completely un motivating for them and it is the reason why they lose their thrill to push their limits to obtain better marks and appreciation. (Vágnerová, 2005).

2.1.7 High intelligence

It is less common but students with intelligence above average can face difficulties in school, too. They usually come from stimulating home environment, their parents have tertiary education and they taught their children to have a positive attitude to learning. Exceptionally clever students have good language skills and memory. They are more flexible. They can easily analyze a problem and find the most suitable solution. They learn fast. Their weakness may be emotional and social intelligence. They do not know how to cope with personal issues, how to expect criticism and they can be hypersensitive. Also, they have problems integrating in social groups, often their class. Talented children might disturb during classes when they ask too many questions on a given topic and the teacher has to pay attention to other classmates at the same time. Students with high IQ tend to present their opinions and knowledge and they want to discuss it with the teachers and classmates all the time. This causes that the talented child is not popular among others and he or she might be a target of bullying in the worst case. Another threat is that the talented student might lose interest in school when the process of learning is too slow for him or her. This could even mean that he or she is not recognized as a child with extraordinarily high intelligence.

The IQ Test Score Bell Curve

By: <http://www.free-iqtest.net>



Graph 1: The IQ Test Score Bell Curve (source: <https://www.free-iqtest.net/iq-score-guide.asp>)

2.2 Specific learning disabilities

First, it is necessary to state that specific learning disabilities do not correlate with general intelligence, it is a developmental disorder. The consequences of SLDs are bad grammar, writing, counting, reading, speaking and a limited ability of perception. These difficulties are not primarily connected with sensory disabilities (blindness, deafness etc.), intellectual development, social environment and other psychological disorders.

The basic classification of SLDs is:

- dyslexia
- dysorthography
- dysgraphia
- dyscalculia
- other SLDs (dyspraxia, dysmusia – dysmelodia, SLD connected with poor drawing skills) (Michalová, 2004)

Dyslexia is a disability to learn to read using common teaching methods despite having average IQ and stimulating environment for social and cultural development.

Examples of typical results of dyslexia are:

- disability to read with intonation
- obstacles with distinguishing letter shapes
- omitting letters and syllables in words
- incorrect vowel lengths
- double reading (whispering first and then reading aloud)
- not understanding the content of a text
- misreading preposition phrases
- adding letters and syllables to words
- guessing word endings

(Michalová, 2004)

Disorthography is connected with grammar and students suffering from disorthography usually have dyslexia, too. Individuals with disorthography often:

- exchange voiced and unvoiced consonants in written texts
- have problems with “r” and “l” in words and syllables
- exchange letters with similar shapes in a written form
- add extra letters and syllables into words
- dislocate letters and vowels in words
- have problems to recall a shape of a letter in a written form even when they have the knowledge of the letter

People with **dysgraphia** struggle when they write. They concentrate on writing so much that they are not able to focus on the content and grammar of the given text. They have poor motor skills. Dysgraphics have these problems when they write:

- they write too slow even when they have full control of their concentration
- their writing is hard to read
- letters are of different sizes
- distinguishing between printed and cursive writing
- finishing writing letters and words
- keeping the writing on one particular line

- keeping the same distance between letters and words
- keeping the pen too tight while writing

It is appropriate to exam disgraphics more orally in order to evaluate their actual knowledge and not their written work. (Michalová, 2004)

Students with **dyscalculia** do not manage to operate with mathematical symbols as they should without the learning disability. Signs of dyscalculia are numerous:

- problems matching specific objects to corresponding numeric symbols
- disability to read mathematical symbols and their combinations
- limited ability to write numeric symbols
- problems with geometry
- difficulties with simple mathematical operations
- difficulties naming operational symbols (more, less, multiply etc.) and expressing a certain number using own fingers
- (Michalová, 2004)

Other SLDs are less probable to have or they are not always diagnosed as they are not crucial for performance in common primary and secondary school. **Poor drawing skills** result in inadequate expression of given objects or scenes in drawing concerning age of a given student. **Dyspraxia** is connected with motor skills and cognitive functions. People suffering from dyspraxia have bad body coordination and movement from their early childhood. It involves using their hands and whole body. Dyspraxia can be noticed during visual-spatial cognitive tasks and is often seen only as clumsiness. **Dysmusia** is limited perception and reproduction of music and rhythm. (Michalová, 2004)

SLDs affect primary and secondary students mainly when they learn their own language. However, these students also have problems with learning mathematics, foreign languages, science, music, performing physical education and practical training.

2.3 Hyperactivity and attention deficit

Quality of concentration is a crucial aspect of efficiency of schoolwork. Thanks to concentration, students can focus on learning, analyze information, remember information and use information. Control of one's concentration improves with age. However, some students have limited control of their concentration. They usually have either attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or attention deficit disorder (ADD) or a combination of both – ADD/ADHD. These conditions affect their behavior in everyday life.

Students with **ADHD** are impulsive, hyperactive and they have troubles concentrating while students with **ADD** have mainly problems with concentration and students with **ADD/ADHD** have mainly troubles with hyperactivity and impulsiveness.

The typical symptoms of inattentiveness are:

- *“having a short attention span and being easily distracted*
- *making careless mistakes – for example, in schoolwork*
- *appearing forgetful or losing things*
- *being unable to stick to tasks that are tedious or time-consuming*
- *appearing to be unable to listen to or carry out instructions*
- *constantly changing activity or task*
- *having difficulty organizing tasks”*
- (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/symptoms/>, 2018)

and the signs of hyperactivity and impulsiveness are:

- *“being unable to sit still, especially in calm or quiet surroundings*
- *constantly fidgeting*
- *being unable to concentrate on tasks*
- *excessive physical movement*
- *excessive talking*
- *being unable to wait their turn*
- *acting without thinking*
- *interrupting conversations*

- *little or no sense of danger*”

(<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/symptoms/>, 2018)

To actually be diagnosed with ADHD or ADD, at least six of nine criteria above must be fulfilled. They have to last for at least six months, they have to be disturbing during schoolwork and activities outside of school and this kind of behavior has to be inadequate to normal behavior at given age of a student.

These disorders are often accompanied with other difficulties such as limited development of cognitive functions, decrease of motivation, poor metacognition or inefficient systematic use of gained knowledge. This leads to problematic behavior and poor social skills. Also, about 20 % of people diagnosed with ADD/ADHD syndrome have specific learning disabilities and other disorders such as anxiety disorder, depression, autistic spectrum disorder, epilepsy. (Vágnerová, 2005).

2.4 Developmental changes

When students start their compulsory education or when they mature, they might face some temporary challenges in school. When they mature, they face emotional instability, are more impulsive and have problems with self-control and self-evaluation. They sometimes make sudden conclusions which may lead to radical changes regarding their approach to school. Also, students' relationships with their teachers and authorities change. As a result, they can lose their motivation to be successful in school completely. (Vágnerová, 2005).

2.5 Motivational deficit and negative approach to school

Complete absence or insufficient volume of motivation and negative approach to school are the last but not least assumptions for underachievement in school. Being intelligent does not ensure success in school itself. Even clever students but without proper motivation are unsuccessful in schoolwork. Being motivated comes primarily from personal motives but family, teachers and social groups play an important role, too.

Motivated students seek to learn something new and they expect to be properly evaluated according to their work. Some students are satisfied with themselves when they manage some task and others need to be praised in front of their classmates, friends, parents. The latter is more important to young pupils. Nevertheless, all students need to feel successful from time to time and they need to feel good and appreciated when being in school. Older students need to know that what they learn is useful. Schoolwork must make sense to them.

Family has a significant impact on students' motivation. Families which do not value education are likely to influence their children in a negative way regarding school achievements. These are usually families whose members have basic education.

It is important to realize that lack of motivation can cause poor school performance and vice versa. Insufficient self-evaluation and self-confidence lead to expecting more school failure and eventually students might stop trying to achieve good results completely. (Vágnerová, 2005).

3 Dealing with poor school performance

It is natural for students to be struggling in school from time to time but when the struggle becomes permanent, it is critical to deal with the situation.

Cooperation of the student, his or her family and school is crucial but when the situation is more serious and complicated, it is necessary to use help of professionals and professional institutions. The benefit of the professionals is that they have an objective point of view on the situation and required knowledge to deal with the problems.

First, a **school counselor** needs to be contacted. Some Czech schools have psychologists and special pedagogics, they can be helpful, too. School counselors are a basic bridge between the student's family and other institutions.

School counselors can advise to visit **an educational and psychological counselling center**. In these centers, psychologists, special pedagogics and social workers provide help and the centers are located in all Czech regions. The services are free. These centers provide career counseling, they help to prevent risky behaviors of children and teenagers but mainly help problematic students with an educational process.

Another option is a **special-pedagogical counselling center**. These centers are for handicapped students and their families and teachers. The staff are also psychologists, special pedagogics and social workers. They help primarily handicapped students who are integrated into a regular school, students with multiple handicaps and more serious handicaps.

The last option for more serious problems is an educational care center. The purpose of these centers is to prevent social pathological problems and if they already exist, they provide counseling and therapy. The care is again provided by psychologists, special pedagogics and social workers. They help students with serious behavioral and educational problems. (<http://www.nuv.cz/t/pedagogicko-psychologicke-poradenstvi/skolska-poradenska-zarizeni>)

Sometimes, it can be necessary to go to see a pediatrician and other doctors. This is convenient when a student e.g. does not sleep well, have digestive problems or his or his mental state is out of ordinary. Other health conditions (asthma, type one diabetes, etc.) which are not diagnosed and treated properly also lead to worse school performance. (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/school/Pages/Poor-School-Performance-How-Parents-Can-Help.aspx>)

4 Categories of secondary fields of study

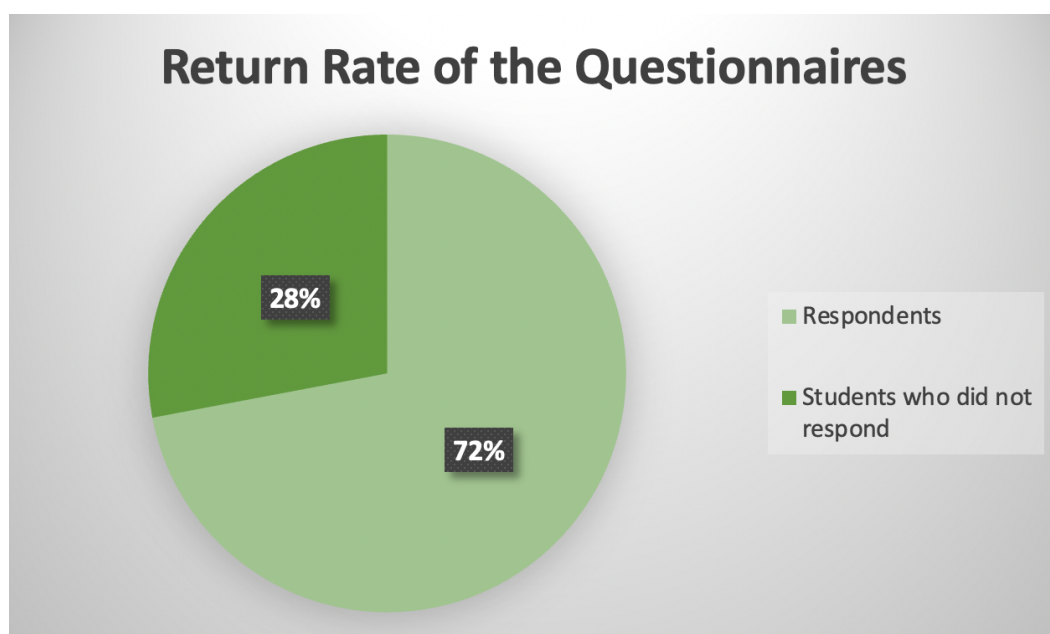
After finishing a primary school, most students are expected to continue their studies. There are various categories of fields of study to choose from. Secondary schools prepare students for their future occupation or their further studies at universities, tertiary technical schools or language schools. Secondary education is either general or vocational and finishes by obtaining a Maturita certificate or apprenticeship certificate or with final examination.

The lowest level is **secondary education with no certificate**. This form of education takes one or two years and does not provide a Maturita or apprenticeship certificate. There are two categories: **J** and **C**. These fields of study are for students who do not aspire for study results or are severely disabled. The second type is **secondary education with an apprenticeship certificate**. To obtain an apprenticeship certificate, it takes two or three years of study. There is a traditional category **H** and a lower category **E**. E category is for students with special educational needs who did not finish all nine grades in a primary school or attended a special primary school. Students

who choose H category are mainly future craftsmen, e. g. electricians, cooks, farmers, mechanics. The third type is **secondary education with a Maturita certificate**. There are more options how to get a Maturita certificate: categories **M**, **L**, **K** and **P**. M are technical fields of study, L is an extension study after a vocational school, K are grammar schools and M are conservatories for talented artistic students.

Practical part

The practical part is based on a questionnaire with eleven closed-ended questions and one opened-ended question for additional notes. The practical part is a quantitative research. The questionnaire was distributed to one hundred and forty-three students. One hundred and three students participated. The return rate is seventy-two percent. The questionnaire was written in Czech in order to be understandable to everyone and answered online via Microsoft Forms. The goal was to gain at least one hundred responses. It took about two weeks to get the answers. All respondents are secondary students but from five different categories of study fields: E, H, M, K and L. The questions in this part of the thesis are evaluated and analyzed graphically and via tables using Microsoft Excel. The graphs and tables are also commented.



Graph 2: Return Rate of the Questionnaires (source: own creation)

As it is written in the theoretical part, school achievement is dependent on five basic criteria: deviation intelligence quotient, unequal talent (often specific learning disabilities), hyperactivity and attention deficit, developmental changes and motivational deficit and negative approach to school. Those criteria were the basis for the questions in the questionnaire.

5 Analyses according to different categories of study fields

This chapter analyzes all categories of study fields that are mentioned in the questionnaire individually.

5.1 Analysis of grammar students

From seventeen students, only five are men. Sixteen students responded that they usually passed with distinction in primary school. One woman stated she had at least one C on her study report. All respondents attended a regular primary school, none of them failed a class. Four students stated they are satisfied with their study results, seven are mostly satisfied, four are mostly dissatisfied and two are not satisfied. Only two students filled that their parents do not show any concern for their children's study results. One student is diagnosed with a special learning disability. Nobody has ADHD or ADD. Only two students enjoy going to school, eight mostly enjoy it, four students mostly do not enjoy it and three do not enjoy it at all. Three students are going to study further after they finish their secondary studies, fourteen students will probably study further.

	Passed with distinction	As, Bs	As, Bs, Cs	As, Bs, Cs, Ds	As, Bs, Cs, Ds, Fs
Marks at primary school	16	1	0	0	0
	Yes	No			
Repeating a class at primary school	0	17			
	Yes	No			
Attending a special primary school	0	17			
Satisfaction with current marks	Yes and mostly yes	No and mostly no			
	11	6			
	Yes	No			
Appreciation at home	15	2			
	Yes	No			
SLD	1	16			
	Yes	No			
ADHD/ADD	0	17			
	Yes and mostly yes	No and mostly no			
Enjoying school	10	7			
	Yes and mostly yes	No and mostly no			
Willingness to study in the future	17	0			

Table 1: Analysis of Grammar Students (source: own creation)

5.2 Analysis of students from extension studies

From total twenty-four students, six are women and eighteen are men. Their study results from a primary school are various: one student passed mostly with distinction, one student had As and Bs but without distinction, ten students had As, Bs and at least one C, eight students had As, Bs, Cs and at least one D and four students had As, Bs, Cs, Ds and least one F. One man stated that he failed a class at least once. None of the students attended a special primary school. Now, four students are fully satisfied with

their study results, fifteen students are mostly satisfied, two students are mostly dissatisfied, and three students are not satisfied completely. Fifteen students stated that they are praised at home for their school successes while nine students do not receive any support. Four students have a special learning disability and three students are diagnosed with ADHD or ADD. Two respondents like going to school, ten mostly yes, eight mostly no and four no. In the future, six students wish to study more, twelve probably yes and six probably no.

	Passed with distinction	As, Bs	As, Bs, Cs	As, Bs, Cs, Ds	As, Bs, Cs, Ds, Fs
Marks at primary school	1	1	10	8	4
	Yes		No		
Repeating a class at primary school	1		23		
	Yes		No		
Attending a special primary school	0		24		
Satisfaction with current marks	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
	19		5		
	Yes		No		
Appreciation at home	15		9		
	Yes		No		
SLD	4		20		
	Yes		No		
ADHD/ADD	3		21		
	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
Enjoying school	12		12		
	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
Willingness to study in the future	18		6		

Table 2: Analysis of Students from Extension Studies (source: own creation)

5.3 Analysis of vocational students (H)

Ten respondents are men, eleven women. It is twenty-one in total. In a primary school, one student passed mainly with distinction and one with only As and Bs. Two students passed with As, Bs and at least one C. Fourteen students passed with As, Bs, Cs and at least one D. Three students had at least one F on their study report and two failed a class at least once. One student attended a special primary school. Ten students are satisfied with their achievements in school, seven are mostly satisfied, one is mostly dissatisfied and three are not satisfied at all. Out of twenty-one responses, three students claim that their school effort is not appreciated at home. Three students suffer from a special learning disability and two have ADHD or ADD. Two students enjoy school, eleven mostly yes, six mostly no and two no. Seven students would like to continue with education, six most likely yes, five most likely no and three no.

	Passed with distinction	As, Bs	As, Bs, Cs	As, Bs, Cs, Ds	As, Bs, Cs, Ds, Fs
Marks at primary school	1	1	2	14	3
	Yes	No			
Repeating a class at primary school	2	19			
	Yes	No			
Attending a special primary school	1	20			
Satisfaction with current marks	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
	17		4		
	Yes		No		
Appreciation at home	18		3		
	Yes		No		
SLD	3		18		
	Yes		No		
ADHD/ADD	2		19		
	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
Enjoying school	13		8		
	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
Willingness to study in the future	13		8		

Table 3: Analysis of Vocational Students (H) (source: own creation)

5.4 Analysis of vocational students (E)

Seven students are men and seventeen women. Seventeen students from the total number of twenty-four attended a special primary school. Out of this number, four of them passed there with distinction, two had only As and Bs, nine had at least one C and two at least one D. From those students, who attended a regular primary school, five claimed they had usually at least one D and two at least one F. Two students filled they did not fail a class and five filled they did. However, this statistic is not completely

correct. From the answers, it is obvious that four students had at least one F and three at least one D. All students stated that they are satisfied with their marks: seventeen completely and seven partly. Also, all of them stated that their parents are interested in their study results. Eight are diagnosed with a special learning disability and none with ADHD or ADD. This data may not be completely correct as the students might not be aware of their diagnoses. Ten students like studying, thirteen mostly yes and only one does not. Eleven students want to educate themselves further if possible, seven probably yes, one probably no and five no.

	Passed with distinction	As, Bs	As, Bs, Cs	As, Bs, Cs, Ds	As, Bs, Cs, Ds, Fs
Marks at primary school	4	2	9	7	2
	Yes	No			
Repeating a class at primary school	8	16			
	Yes	No			
Attending a special primary school	17	7			
Satisfaction with current marks	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
	24	0			
	Yes	No			
Appreciation at home	24	0			
	Yes	No			
SLD	8	16			
	Yes	No			
ADHD/ADD	0	24			
	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
Enjoying school	23	1			
	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
Willingness to study in the future	18	6			

Table 4: Analysis of Vocational Students (E) (source: own creation)

5.5 Analysis of technical students

The total number are seventeen students – ten men and seven women. Five of them passed with distinction in their primary school, one had only As and Bs, six had at least one C and five at least one D. None of them failed a class. One man stated he attended a special primary school. Four students are fully satisfied with their study results, eleven mostly yes, one mostly no and one no. One man stated that his family does not show any concern regards his study results. Three students are diagnosed with a special learning disability and three with ADHD or ADD. Two students like attending school, seven mostly do, four mostly do not and four do not. If it is possible in the future, four students want to study more, six probably yes, four probably no and one no.

	Passed with distinction	As, Bs	As, Bs, Cs	As, Bs, Cs, Ds	As, Bs, Cs, Ds, Fs
Marks at primary school	5	1	6	5	0
	Yes		No		
Repeating a class at primary school	0		17		
	Yes		No		
Attending a special primary school	1		16		
Satisfaction with current marks	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
	15		2		
	Yes		No		
Appreciation at home	16		1		
	Yes		No		
SLD	3		14		
	Yes		No		
ADHD/ADD	3		14		
	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
Enjoying school	9		8		
	Yes and mostly yes		No and mostly no		
Willingness to study in the future	12		5		

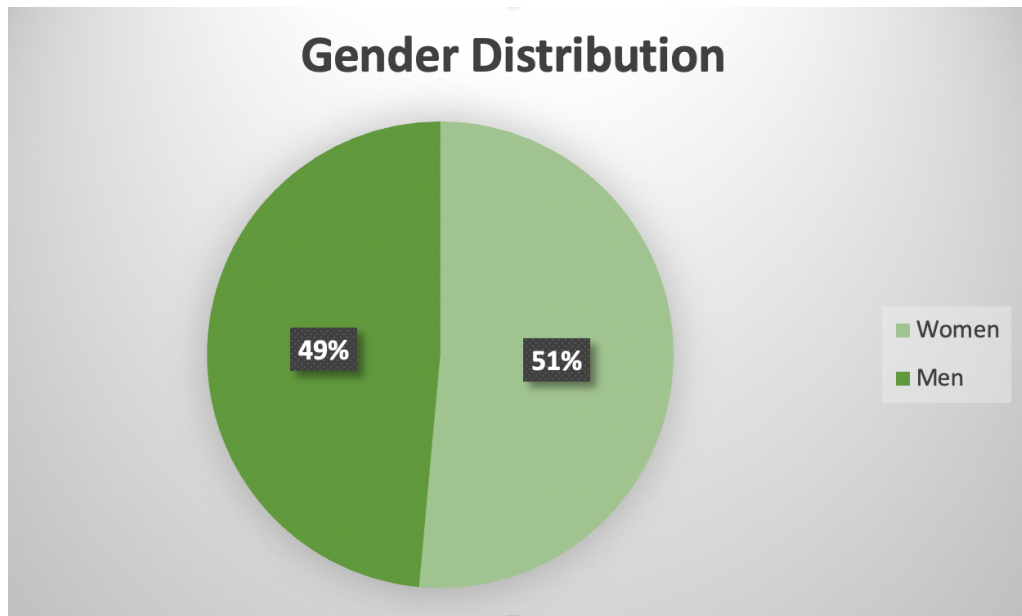
Table 5: Analysis of Technical Students (source: own creation)

6 Analyses according to the questions

This chapter covers analyses of all individual questions. The methods used here are graphs and their description.

6.1 Question no. 1

The first question was only to determine whether the respondent is a woman or a man. Fifty-three women and fifty men participated in total. It makes both genres represented equally.

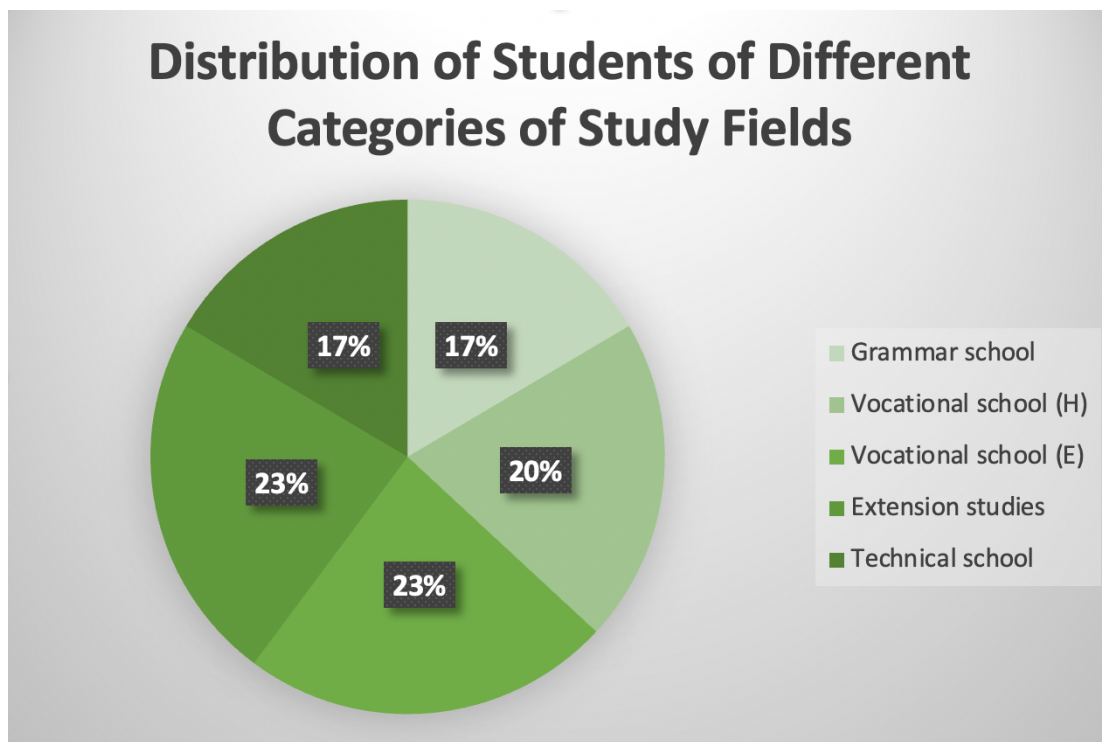


Graph 3: Gender Distribution (source: own creation)

6.2 Question no. 2

The second question was to determine what category of secondary field of study the students attend. Twenty-one respondents were from a vocational school from the category H and twenty-four were from the category E. Seventeen respondents were from a technical school of the category M, twenty-four studied extension studies of the category L and seventeen students were from a grammar school (category K).

Five men were from a grammar school, eighteen studied extension studies, ten a technical school, ten a vocational school (category H) and seven a vocational school (category E). Twelve women were from a grammar school, six studied extension studies, seven a technical school, eleven a vocational school (H) and seventeen a vocational school (E).



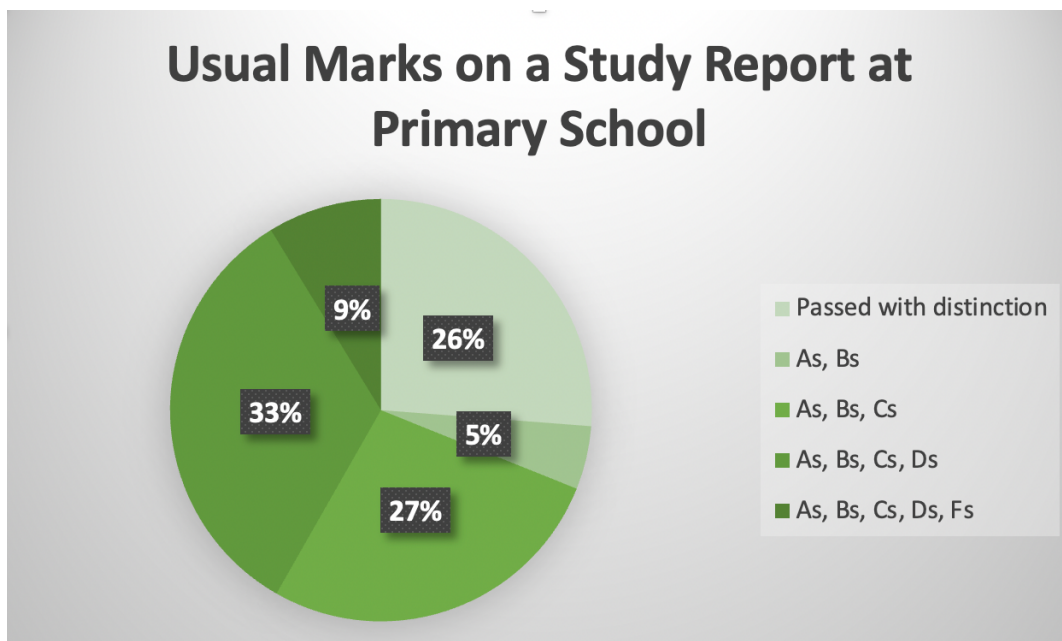
Graph 4: Distribution of Students of Different Categories of Study Fields (source: own creation)

6.3 Question no. 3

The third question was about study results in primary school. Twenty-seven students passed with distinction, five had only As and Bs, twenty-eight had at least one C, thirty-four had at least one D and nine had at least one F.

Those who passed with distinction in a regular primary school continue their studies mainly in a grammar school (sixteen respondents). Five are students of technical schools (category M), one is a student of a vocational school (H) and one studies his extension studies (L).

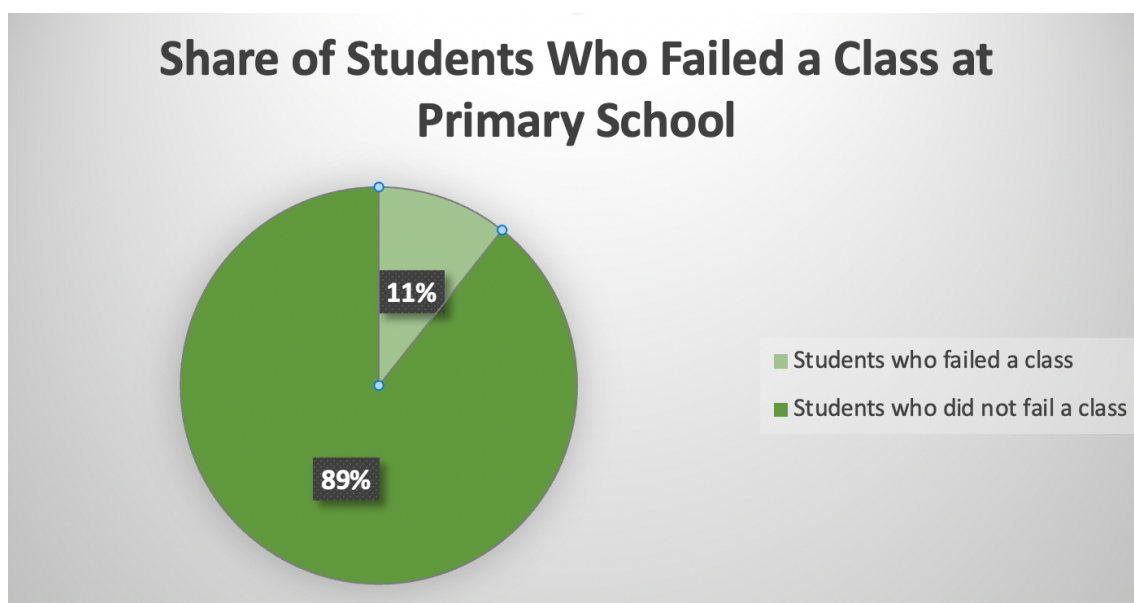
There are forty-three students with Ds and Fs on their study report. Nine of them are vocational students (category E), twenty-nine of them attend or attended a vocational school (category H) and five of them are technical students (nevertheless, they did not have Fs).



Graph 5: Usual Marks on a Study Report at Primary School (source: own creation)

6.4 Question no. 4

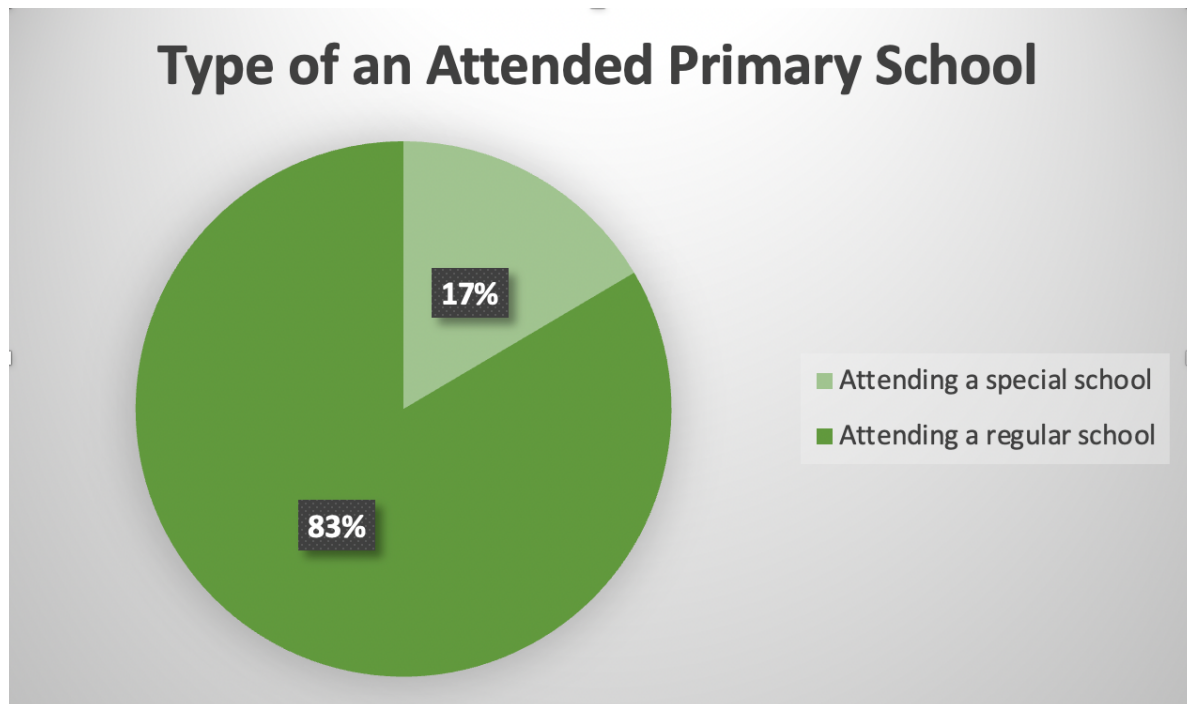
In the fourth question, eleven students stated they failed a class at least once in a primary school. Ninety-two students did not. Those who failed a class are vocational students of the category E (six students), vocational students of the category H (2 students) and one student attends his extension studies. However, he was a vocational student before, too.



Graph 6: Share of Students Who Failed a Class at Primary School (source: own creation)

6.5 Question no.5

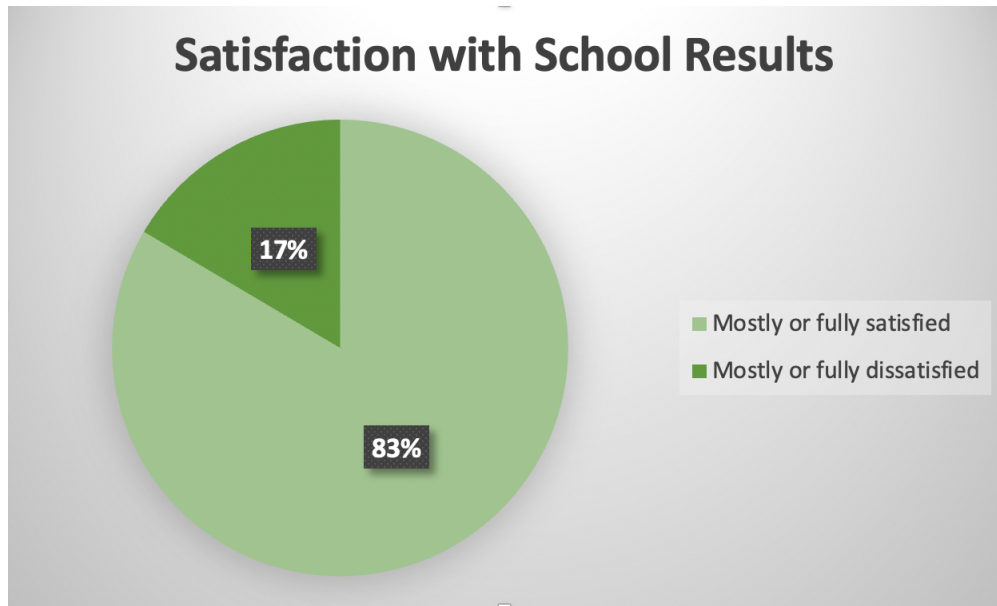
The fifth question was to determine whether the students attended a regular or special primary school. Seventeen students went to a special primary school and eighty-six to a regular one. From those from a special primary school, fifteen continue their studies in a vocational school (category E), one in a vocational school (category H) and one in a technical school (category M).



Graph 7: Type of an Attended Primary School (source: own creation)

6.6 Question no. 6

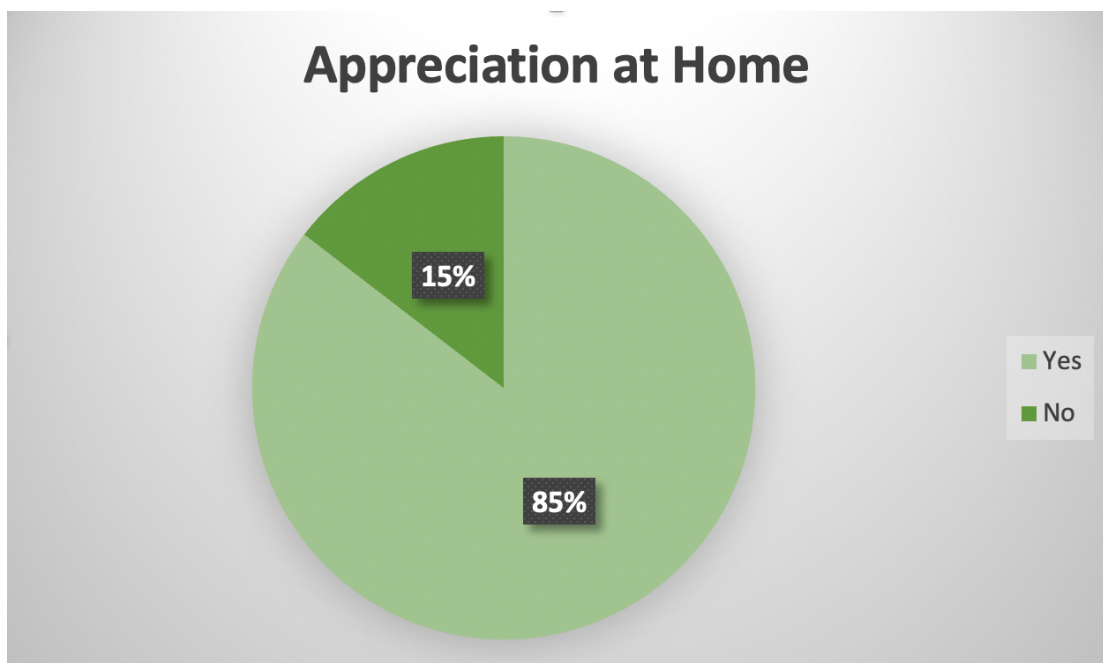
The sixth question was about students' satisfaction with their study results. Thirty-nine students filled they are satisfied with their marks, forty-seven are mostly satisfied, nine are mostly not satisfied and eight are not satisfied completely.



Graph 8: Satisfaction with School Results (source: own creation)

6.7 Question no. 7

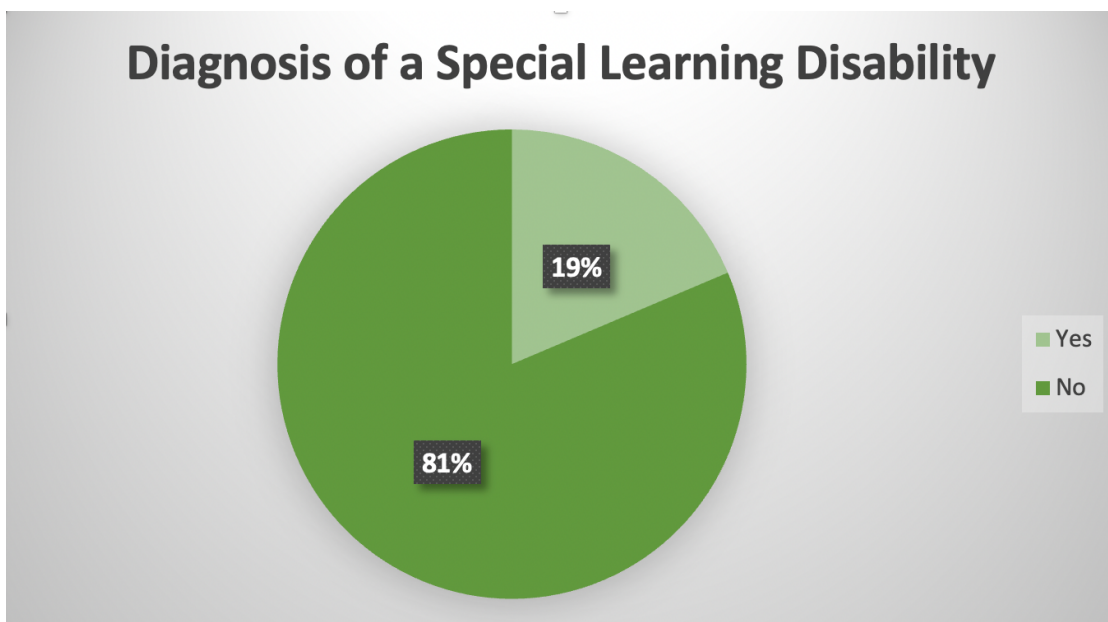
The seventh question examined whether the parents show interest in their children's school results. Eighty-eight students think they are appreciated at home when they succeed in school and fifteen do not. From the fifteen students, the majority (nine students) are from extension studies, two are from a grammar school, three are from the vocational school (category H) and one is from a technical school.



Graph 9: Appreciation at Home (source: own creation)

6.8 Question no. 8

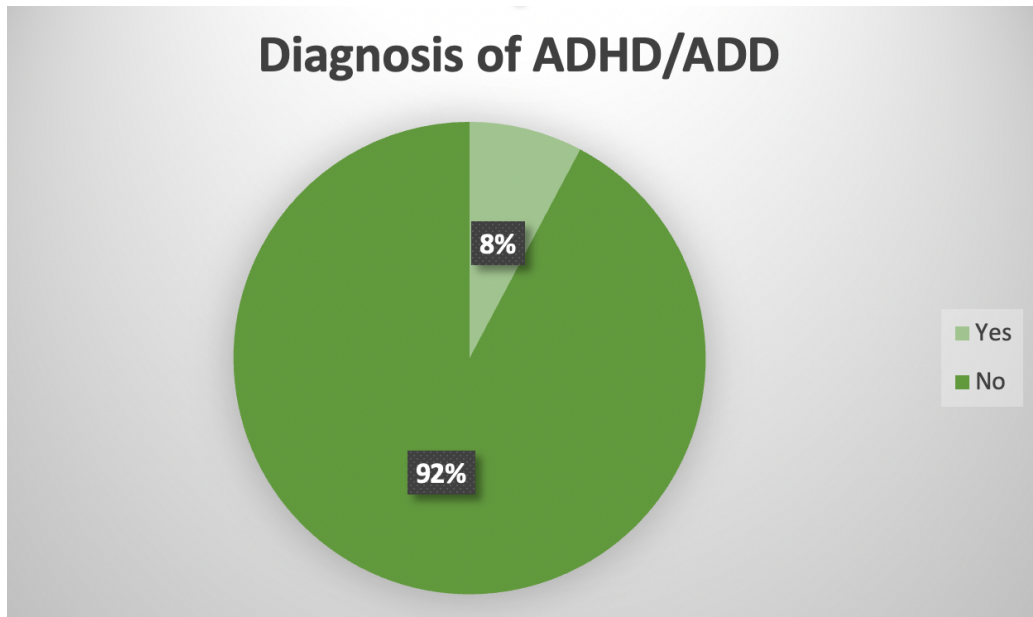
The eighth question was to determine how many students are diagnosed with at least one special learning disability (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dysorthography,...). Nineteen students stated they have at least one while eighty-three do not have any. One student with an SLD is from a grammar school, four are from extension studies, three are from a technical school, three are from a vocational school (category H) and eight are from a vocational school (category E).



Graph 10: Diagnosis of a Special Learning Disability (source: own creation)

6.9 Question no. 9

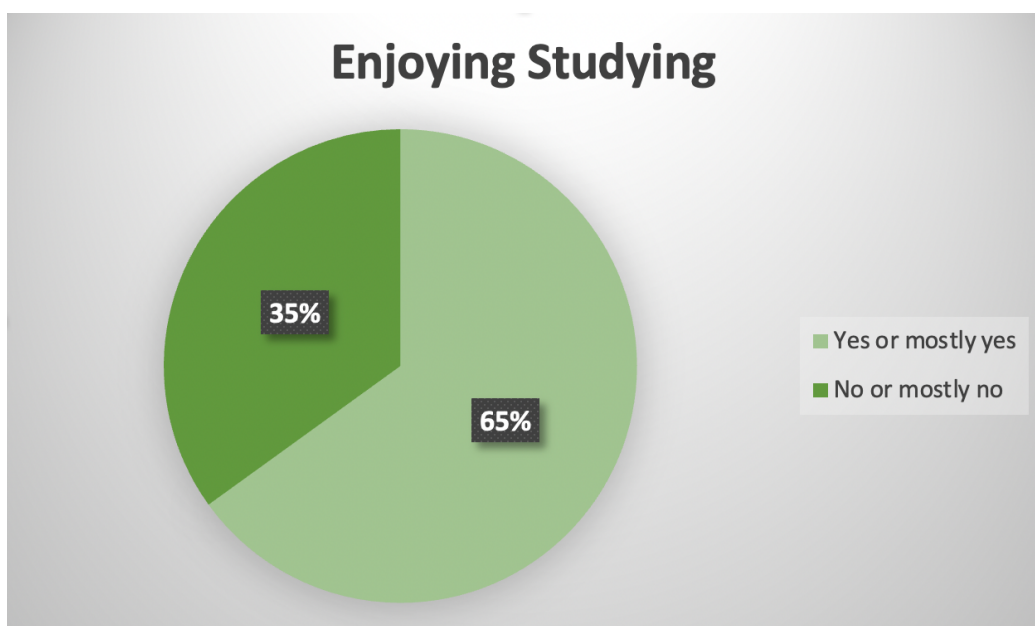
The ninth question was to determine how many students suffer from ADHD or ADD. Eight of them have the diagnoses and ninety-five do not. Three students with ADHD or ADD are from a technical school, three from extension studies and two from a vocational school (category H).



Graph 11: Diagnosis of ADHD/ADD (source: own creation)

6.10 Question no. 10

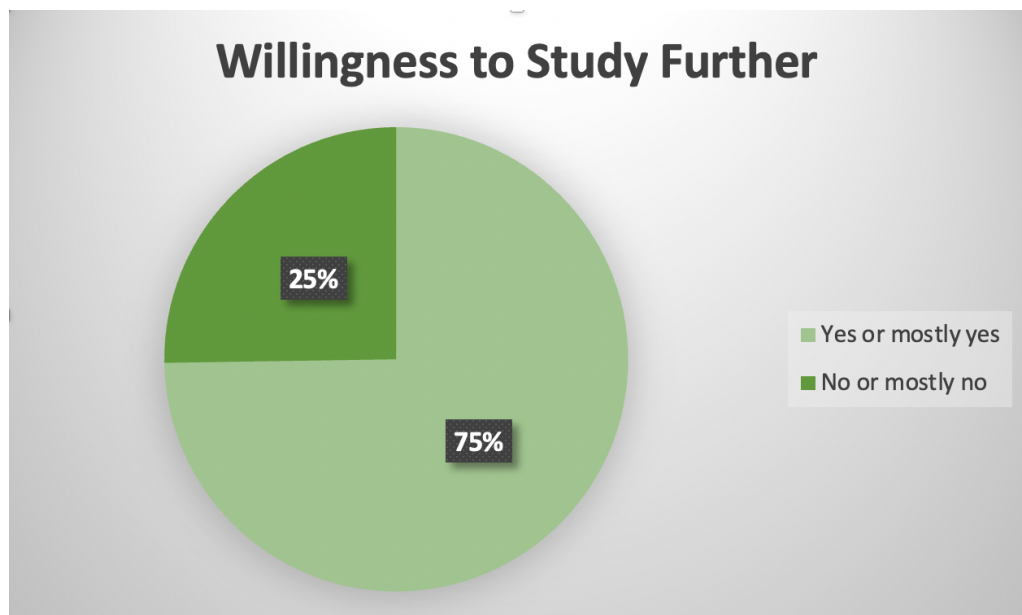
The tenth question determined how many respondents like attending school and studying. Eighteen of them stated they enjoy school, forty-nine mostly do, fourteen mostly do not and twenty-two do not. From those who do not enjoy or mostly do not enjoy going to school, seven are grammar students, twelve are students from extension studies, eight are from a technical school, eight are from a vocational school (category H) and one is from a vocational school (category E).



Graph 12: Enjoying Studying (source: own creation)

6.11 Question no. 11

The eleventh question was to establish how many students are willing to educate themselves in the future if it is possible. Thirty-two students stated they want to study, forty-five probably want to, sixteen probably do not want to and nine do not want to. From the students who are not interested or mostly are not interested in further education, six are from extension studies, five are from a grammar school, eight are from a vocational school (category H) and six are from a vocational school (category E).



Graph 13: Willingness to Study Further (source: own creation)

6.12 Question no. 12

This question was for additional notes and comments. No valid information was written there.

7 Results and Discussion

First, it is important to realize that studying a more prestigious school does not automatically mean better school achievements. It means that not all grammar students are happy in school and satisfied with their marks. It applies for vocational students vice versa. For pupils in primary school, it is crucial to choose a secondary school which is in accordance with their intelligence, study habits and expectations etc.

According to the answers of grammar students, they have chosen their school rationally. All of them had good study results before and they plan to continue studying in the future. On the contrary, a considerable share of them do not appreciate their studies (forty-one percent) and results (thirty-five percent) now. This should be examined. An appropriate way to examine unattractiveness of the studies could be via some tools on the Internet which are anonymous. The teacher could ask some specific questions about their dissatisfaction and the students could share their opinions. An online discussion with a form teacher should follow with the purpose to find a solution. For the case that only some specific subjects would be problematic or not attractive enough for the students, the given teachers should lead their own research. From the students who feel unsuccessful (thirty-five percent), only one is not appreciated at home, nothing else indicates a rational explanation for this consequence.

Students from extension studies had mainly average or under-average marks in primary school. They are students who finished successfully their vocational studies (usually the H category) and decided to obtain a Maturita certificate. Thirty-eight percent of them stated that their schoolwork and achievements are not appreciated at home. However, eighty-nine percent of those students are satisfied with their study results. Those students probably did not have enough support while they were in primary school. They have a sufficient volume of inner motivation to get a complete secondary education now. They could have originally chosen a different secondary school if they had had better conditions at home. From five responders who are not satisfied with their study results, four of them (eighty percent) performed very poorly in primary school, one is not appreciated at home (twenty percent), one is diagnosed with a SLD (twenty percent), two with ADHD or ADD (four percent), four do not like going to school (eighty percent) and three are not willing to study in the future (sixty percent).

A majority of vocational students (category H) had poor marks in primary school. Although eighty-one percent of them had Ds and some of them even Fs on their study reports, the same share are happy with their marks now. It proves they chose their secondary school well. Sixty-one percent enjoy going to school and want to study further. It might be assumed that some of those students will apply for extension studies further. Only four students do not feel successful now. Only one student (twenty-five percent) is diagnosed with ADHD/ADD, three had bad marks in primary school (seventy-five percent), one is not appreciated at home (twenty-five percent),

three do not like going to school (seventy-five percent) and three do not want to educate themselves in the future (seventy-five percent).

There are two possible conditions how to become a student of the category E. One is attending a special primary school and the second one is repeating a class in primary school at least once. One of those conditions have to be fulfilled. This system provides that only children with special educational needs can actually study this category of study fields and it seems to be working perfectly. One-hundred percent stated that they are satisfied with their results and appreciated at home. Ninety-six percent enjoy going to school and seventy-one percent are willing to educate themselves in the future. All students feel successful, there is no poor performance in this case. Sometimes, a few of those students decide to apply to extension studies. It would be appropriate to discuss it with a school councilor. In past, there were occasionally students who did not really belong to the E category, the conditions to get there were not so strict. There were some exceptions of students who passed their vocational studies (E) and extension studies successfully. However, it is not the case anymore. The system still allows them to apply to extension studies but they only waste their time there, loose motivation, confidence, self-respect. Even though the system is set and will not be probably changed soon, schools and teachers are still able to provide advice to students and should always have their best interest in mind and not the vision of getting more money for school.

Distribution of marks of technical students from primary school is quite various. Although, nobody stated to have Fs, twenty-nine percent answered to normally have Ds. It is a surprising fact that only twelve percent (two students) are not satisfied with their results but about fifty percent do not like going to school. Those two students did not state any answers that would suggest why they feel unsuccessful in school. Technical schools are the opposite to general studies, primary students should choose their field of study carefully and rationally. More help with the decision-making should be provided.

The results of the questionnaire are positive. It is a great achievement that only seventeen percent feel unsuccessful in school. From this share of students, only eighteen percent are not appreciated at home, six percent are diagnosed with an SLD, eighteen with ADHD/ADD but sixty-five percent do not like going to school and thirty-five percent are not willing to study anymore. From all five categories, the best statistic results have vocational students (E). The reason for it is they have to fulfill special

conditions to get admitted and the category of the study fields is designed perfectly for their special educational needs.

Although, the results are very good, there are still things that could be done better. The crucial assumption is to choose the right secondary school for every student. That is why primary schools provide career guidance in the ninth grade.

The support of school counselors and psychologists usually also work. Teamwork of form teachers, other teachers, school management and parents is a common practice, too.

The issue occurs with some students in their secondary studies. Thirty-five percent do not like going to school, it is not an insignificant number. One of the causes might be unattractiveness of school subjects or more specifically the way how they are taught. It is appropriate nowadays to use modern and interesting teaching methods such as cooperation with businesses, inviting professionals to school, doing projects, involving students more during classes, working in teams, tandem teaching or going on excursions. The problem might be that the average age of teachers is about fifty years and they are not willing to try new teaching methods. (<https://www.msmt.cz/ministerstvo/novinar/ministerstvo-zjistovalo-stav-ucitelu-v-regionalnim-skolstvi>)

After exploring the topic of school performance and analyzing the questionnaire in this thesis, it would be interesting to focus on the problematics of attractiveness and practical use of taught subjects in the Czech Republic. It could be even compared with an educational system of some foreign country.

Conclusion

The goal of this bachelor thesis was to analyze what share of secondary students do not perform well and what possible causes might there be. Some recommendations and advice were also suggested.

In the theoretical part, basic definitions were explained, five causes of poor school performance (deviation intelligence quotient, unequal talent - often specific learning disabilities, hyperactivity and attention deficit, developmental changes and motivational deficit and negative approach to school) were covered, different categories of school study fields were introduced and dealing with poor school performance was also covered.

For writing a practical part, a questionnaire with close-ended questions was conducted. One-hundred and three responses from secondary students were obtained. The responses were analyzed according to the studied categories using tables and according to the particular questions using graphs. The results were surprising for the author. Majority of students are satisfied with their school performance but about one third of them have a negative approach to school. Mainly the negative approach to learning was a subject of the chapter Possible improvements for the future. A more complex issue was discovered. Changes in the whole Czech educational system should be discussed. It is not functioning well. Students should appreciate the time when they can study, they should feel it is meaningful.

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List of Abbreviations

SLD (special learning disability)

IQ (intelligence quotient)

EQ (emotional quotient)

EI (emotional intelligence)

ETC (et cetera)

E.G. (for example)

Attachments

Attachment 1: Questionnaire (source: own creation)

1. Jsem

- žena
- muž

2. Jsem studentem

- středního odborného učiliště
- středního odborného učiliště v Nymburce na E oboru - kuchaři, cukráři, malíři střední odborné školy
- nástavbového studia
- gymnázia

3. Na ZŠ jsem měl převážně

- vyznamenání
- jedničky, dvojky bez vyznamenání
- jedničky, dvojky a aspoň jednu trojku
- jedničky, dvojky, trojky a minimálně jednu čtyřku jedničky, dvojky, trojky, čtyřky a minimálně jednu pětku

4. Na ZŠ jsem aspoň jednou propadl

- ano
- ne

5. Chodil jsem na speciální školu

- ano
- ne

6. Teď na SŠ jsem spokojený/á se svými známkami

- ano
- spíše ano
- ne
- spíše ne

7. Doma jsou rádi a třeba mě pochválí, když se mi ve škole něco podaří

- ano
- ne, je jim to jedno

8. Mám diagnostikovanou nějakou specifickou poruchu učení (např. dyslexii, dysgrafii, dysortografií, dyskalkulii)

- ano
- ne

9. Mám diagnostikované ADHD nebo ADD

- ano
- ne

10. Chodím do školy a učím se rád/a (bez ohledu na koronavirus)

- ano
- spíše ano
- ne
- spíše ne