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## Professional Competencies of Teachers: Generational Differences

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### Abstract

The main aim of the study was the examination of generational differences in the professional competencies of teachers. Teachers were compared in their preferred interaction and teaching styles, didactic competencies, cognitive abilities (cognitive reflection, scientific reasoning) and motivation for the teaching profession. A total of 1,055 teachers aged 17 – 70 years ( $M = 30.58$ ,  $SD = 13.73$ ) participated in the study. Each teacher filled out a Slovak version of the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction, Slovak Teaching Style Questionnaire, Didactic Competencies Questionnaire, Cognitive Reflection Test, Scientific Reasoning Scale, and Scale of Motivation for Choosing Teaching Profession. Participants were divided into four generations: baby-boomers (born before 1964,  $n = 63$ ), generation X (born 1965 – 1980,  $n = 212$ ), generation Y (born 1981 – 1996,  $n = 172$ ), generation Z (born 1997 and later,  $n = 608$  – mostly pre-service teachers). Older generations (a) had a stronger intrinsic motivation (and weaker extrinsic motivation) for the teaching profession, (b) lower cognitive abilities (the exception was generation Z with the lowest level of cognitive abilities), (c) better-developed executive functions and didactic competencies, had a stronger preference (d) for interaction styles leadership, leading to responsibility and strict (and weaker preference for interaction styles uncertain and objecting), and for (e) teaching styles supporting, goal- and knowledge-oriented, and manager.

**Keywords:** cognitive ability, didactic competencies, interaction style, motivation for teaching profession, teaching style