

ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes the decision-making process of parents in the field of postponing the compulsory school attendance or starting it on schedule. The qualitative research is based on an aggregate of 41 semi-structured interviews with parents and two focus groups, completed by subsequent observations and interviews with parents and teachers. The research goal consisted in illuminating the background of the high number of postponements in the Czech Republic, where every year about 20 % of children start in the first class a year later. The dissertation also provides insight on this topic in a comparative perspective and analyzes the initiation of compulsory education in selected European countries. The research results presented in the form of an established theory document that parents' decisions are based primarily on the needs of the family and especially of the need to be a good parent. The decision making is influenced also by the parents' attitude to the delay which has also impact on the weight being attached to other factors of the decision-making process, such as school maturity and individual areas of school readiness as well as the month of birth. During the decision-making process the experience of parents with enrolment in the first grade plays an important role as well. The realized survey implied that the parents' decision-making process does not correspond in many respects to a rational choice theory, which is the topic of the final discussion.

KEYWORDS

Postponement of the compulsory school attendance, established theory, school maturity and readiness, decision-making process, repeating school grades, socio-economic status.