

# Secondary analysis of qualitative data: Hungarian minority kindergarten pedagogues' perspectives of the new curriculum framework in Serbia

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**Abstract:** Secondary analysis is employed to address new research questions by analysing previously collected data. This paper reports on the secondary analysis of qualitative data where the original research investigated the preschool education reform in Serbia from the perspective of Hungarian ethnic minority kindergarten pedagogues. The choice to apply a secondary analysis fulfilled the aims of (i) investigating traces of socialism in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provision in Vojvodina, a northern region of Serbia; and (ii) exploring the complexity of Christmas celebrations in nurseries. In order to address the aims, a secondary analysis of 12 semi-structured transcripts was carried out. This analysis revealed important additional findings for the original study. In light of the education reforms in Serbia we found that, first, there are strong connections between the 'socialist past' ECEC practices and what these practices may look like in the future; and, second, the traditional celebration of religious holidays outside of church organizations, such as Christmas, may change in the nurseries. This paper also offers insight regarding the importance of secondary analysis which provides an opportunity to making use of existing resources.

## Article History

Received: 20 March 2022

Accepted: 02 September 2022

## Keywords

Socialism; Christmas;  
Hungarian minority;  
Kindergarten practices

## Introduction

There is a well-established tradition of carrying out secondary analysis of quantitative research data in the natural sciences, and a more recent interest in the secondary analysis of quantitative approaches to research within social science. However, this has not been as prevalent within qualitative research, though has been recommended as a valuable strategy (Long-Sutehall et al., 2011). According to Hinds et al. (1997), secondary analysis of qualitative data is the use of existing data to find answers to research questions that differ from the questions asked in the original research. We applied secondary analysis to existing data to develop a new conceptual focus to the original research question which was 'How was the new Curriculum Framework perceived by the largest ethnic minority group, Hungarian kindergarten pedagogues, in northern Serbia?' Detailed and rich data allowed us to pursue interests distinctive from those of the original analysis.

The first part of the paper discusses the Serbian educational milieu in which the Hungarian minority group operates. This gives the background of the main study and for the secondary analysis of qualitative data. The second part of the paper reports on the methodological choice of applying a secondary analysis that fulfilled the new research aims of (i) investigating traces of socialism in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provision in Serbia; and (ii) exploring the complexity of Christmas celebration in the nurseries. The secondary data analysis process as well as the new findings and possible implications for future practice are discussed in the latter part of the paper.

## Hungarian Ethnic Minorities

The largest ethnic minority group in the region of Vojvodina (northern part of Serbia), are the Hungarians;

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therefore, we examined the national reform in ECEC in Serbia from the perspectives of the Hungarian kindergarten pedagogues. To understand the concept of early childhood practices in Serbia where Hungarian minorities are living and working, it is important to recognise the history of this region which shaped the contemporary early years' provision and professional practices. After the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary was reduced in size, in that they lost the region of Vojvodina. Hungary regained some of its territories during the WWII, but inevitably lost them again after the war (including Vojvodina) (Chiva, 2006). This event contributed to the formation of the 'involuntary' ethnic minority groups in Vojvodina, making them one of the largest minority groups in Central and Eastern Europe (Mikuska, 2021).

According to the latest Census of Population (2011) an estimated 2.7 million Hungarians live outside of the Hungarian state, often called the motherland. In order to understand the function of the ECEC for Hungarians in Serbia, major political decisions and events need highlighting. Mikuska and Raffai (2018) identified these major political and historical key events (see Table 1). The significance of these periods for ECEC in Vojvodina was the opportunity for children to attend education using their mother tongue (Raffai et al., 2018) which is fundamental for future educational success (Lendák-Kabók, 2020). The establishment of the first Hungarian language nursery in Vojvodina can be accredited to Countess Teréz Brunszvik who opened the first kindergarten in 1828 named 'Angyalkert' (Garden of Angels) in Budapest, Hungary (Nagy Varga et al., 2015). The educational approach mirrored the principles set by the Englishman, Samuel Wilderspin, whose work 'On the Importance of Educating the Infant Poor' became increasingly popular amongst Hungarian scholars (Pukánszky & Németh, 1997). In 1836, the Hungarian Society for the Promotion of Infant Schools was founded, resulting in an increase in the number of infant schools in the country. This movement influenced the opening of the first kindergarten in Vojvodina in 1843, by Makk György from Szabadka, Vojvodina (Mikuska & Raffai, 2018). Although this was a private setting, its funding was substantially supported by the town. The ECEC field was first regulated in 1891 when the Law on Upbringing of Young Children was introduced, followed in 1899 by the development of the first curriculum, entitled Programme of Work in Kindergartens (Gavrilović, 2006).

**Table 1.** Key Historical events and the use of Hungarian language

The establishment of the nursery network in Vojvodina which was part of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; this is the time when the first nursery was opened in 1843 in Szabadka, Vojvodina.	The official language was Hungarian (1843 – 1918).
Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1919-1929) and the State of Yugoslavia (1929 – 1941).	The first ECEC curriculum. The official language was Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian.
Vojvodina as part of the Kingdom of Hungary during World War II (1941– 1944).	The official language was Hungarian.
Vojvodina as part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) (1945–1991).	The official language was Serbo-Croatian.
Vojvodina during the Milošević era and the formation of new states (1989–2000).	The official language was Serbian. Hungarian as regional language is in official use by the provincial administration and education.
Vojvodina after the Milošević era (2000 – today).	The official language is Serbian; Hungarian as regional language is in official use by the provincial administration and education.

The ECEC field continued to develop under the governance of the state which was most obviously seen during the period of industrialisation and increased participation of women in the workforce that followed the Second World War (Bankovic, 2014). Under the subsequent socialist regime, recognising the need to encourage women to stay in the paid workforce, the government invested heavily in early childhood education. In 2004, the government of the Republic of Serbia introduced the National Action Plan for Children (Savez za Prava Deteta, 2004) which defined the general childhood policy direction of the country. This document aimed to accomplish some of the country's international responsibilities arising from its 1990 endorsement of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), Education for All (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1990), the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000) and A World Fit for Children (United

Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2002) (Bankovic, 2014). In 2007, a new government came into office in Serbia which initiated large-scale reorganisations of education. Spasenović et al. (2007) argued that the education system in Yugoslavia undertook major reforms, especially after the breakdown of the country into several independent states when they transitioned away from socialism as a consequence. Spasenović et al. (2007) further argued that these reforms were based on the modernization and reorganization of the school, supporting the country's international integration. ECEC was seen as part of the unified educational system (Gavrilović, 2006) which was regulated under the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System (Zakon o osnovama sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja, 2009) and more specifically under the Law on Preschool Education and Upbringing (Zakon o predškolskom vaspitanju i obrazovanju, 2010). These laws regulated the establishment and activities of ECEC institutions including their aims and principles, record-keeping procedures, the organisation of kindergarten pedagogues' work and role, financing, and language use in minority communities which meant that the use of the Hungarian language in early education was in place (Raffai et al., 2018).

There are three types of ECEC services in Serbia: nurseries for children from six months to three years; kindergarten for children from three to five years; and the preparatory preschool programme for children aged six (Mikuska & Raffai, 2018). Of these services, only the preparatory preschool programme is compulsory and it is free. It gives all children the opportunity to attend nursery from the age of five for a minimum of four hours a day for a minimum of six months (Kopas-Vukašinović, 2006). This rule reflects the official record of attendance specified by The National Council of the Hungarian National Minority (Magyar Nemzeti Tanács, [MNT], 2015), which claims that, in 2014/15, there were 71 Hungarian language groups in the nurseries with 1369 children attending full-day care, and 121 groups with 2041 children attending half-day care settings. The other two services are part-funded by the state (80%) with parents paying the remaining 20% of the cost. Besides the division between nurseries and kindergartens, children were further divided by their age, and language they speak (for example Hungarian or Serbian) (Mikuska and Raffai, 2018). This is also in line with the European Commission's/EACEA/Eurydice (2019) advice on the teaching of regional or minority languages in educational institutions.

### **Context of the Main Study and Literature Addressing Secondary Data Analysis**

In 2018 a new, more inclusive, concept of preschool education was adopted in Serbia with plans to implement the change from September 2019 to 2022. The new 'Fundamentals of the Preschool Education Program' (Curriculum Framework), also symbolically named 'Years of Ascent', is a result of cooperation with kindergarten pedagogues, The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Institute for the Improvement of Education, UNICEF and the Institute of Pedagogy and Andragogy of the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade University (Breneselović & Krnjaja, 2021). The 'ascent' represents the quality and direction that is dependent on everyone who is involved with, and working in preschool education and care. The new Curriculum Framework focuses on children's holistic development and well-being by taking an integrated approach to learning, play, curiosity, creativity and other activities. The programme also focuses on children building meaningful relationships with their peers and adults and creating inspirational nursery places. The biggest change is the introduction of more flexible ways of working with children, which should replace the more structured, adult led, and assessment based daily practices. The new integrated approach to learning involves developing topics/projects with children. Children are encouraged to engage in the projects that are meaningful to them and where children are challenged to explore. The links between play and other activities are based on the children's freedom of choice, creativity, variability, initiative, inquisitiveness and openness (Breneselović & Krnjaja, 2021). Training courses were rolled out to encourage everyone who works with children to attend. These training courses were delivered by mentors, first in the Serbian language and, at a later stage, also in Hungarian. At the training courses the kindergarten pedagogues were encouraged to engage with the framework in such ways that it inspires and encourages 'reflexive' ways to work with children (Davis, 2006). As Breneselović and Krnjaja (2021, p. 3) explain:

...the Curriculum Framework does not entail merely to read the document but to engage in constant, recurrent processes ... [it requires] re-reading and re-thinking one's own beliefs and starting points and also to change the

practice. At the same time, this is a means of deepening the understanding of the Curriculum Framework and developing a real curriculum based on its conception.

There is a growing body of work exploring politics and education in (post)socialist societies, addressing reflexive and reflective practices (Millei et al., 2021), which highlights that the shift from being the object of the state and political culture to a more democratic way to work with children is a long process (Aydarova et al., 2016). In order to understand how the ethnic minority group sees the new Curriculum Framework it is also important to highlight the political situation and the concept of socialism in Yugoslavia. In former Yugoslavia, the concept of socialism was different to those countries which belonged to the so-called 'Eastern Bloc' (Bogic, 2021). The term 'Eastern Bloc' referred to the former Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, including the countries of the Warsaw Pact, along with Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia (unlike countries such as East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Hungary) was on the western side of the 'Iron Curtain', the line dividing the Soviet-dominated zone from the rest of Europe. Spasenović et al. (2007) explained that, although Yugoslavia stood outside of the Soviet Union sphere in terms of political influence, the Serbian education system was built on the example of the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviet ECEC instruction to kindergarten educators of *Uputstva vaspitaču dečijeg vrta* (Instructions for kindergarten educator) was translated from Russian to Serbian in 1948, and it was in use across the country until 1966 when the government re-organised the pre-school institutions. A new ECEC curriculum was introduced called 'Osnove programa predškolskog vaspitanja 1996' (Early Years Curriculum for Preschool Children 1996) which was later altered to *The General Foundations of the Preschool Programme* (*Opšte osnove predškolskog programa* 2006). This curriculum had approaches referred to as 'A' and 'B', and it was up to the pre-primary pedagogue's discretion which one to use (Bankovic, 2014; Mikuska & Raffai, 2018).

### *Traces of Socialism*

Elements of ECEC practices in Vojvodina reflect the practices that were in place in the Soviet Union. The promotion of the *Brotherhood and Unity* was a popular slogan of the league of Communists of Yugoslavia (Bogic, 2021). This slogan evolved into a guiding principle of Yugoslavia's post-war period of collectivism that promotes and prioritizes the good of society over the welfare of the individual (Millei et al., 2021). The principle of universal equality was expressed in the collectivisation of everything, including children. Equal rights for all children to access the same and free education was considered one of the most important achievements of socialism (Bankovic, 2014). The slogan of a socialist regime, *Brotherhood and Unity*, also meant permitting individuals the celebration and expression of their own culture, religion and language. After WWII the slogan was used as a basis for policy makers in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and it was part of the federal constitutions of 1963 and 1974. For the Hungarian minority population, this was of high importance as this policy ensured the use of the Hungarian language in education institutions including ECEC especially when, in 1977, a new Education Law was passed which encouraged the use of the mother tongue (Tóth, 1994; Wright et al., 2000). This law enforced not only teaching which used the language of ethnic minorities but also that the textbooks were available in these languages.

All ECEC establishments worked on the basis of a 'single approach' that clearly distinguished age groups, identifying the number and content of lessons necessary for each age group as well as norms for children's physical and psychological development such as what a child should know and be able to do at each age level (Kopas-Vukašinović, 2006). This included knowledge of the mother tongue (speaking skills), physical education, and knowledge of the environment, fine arts, music and fundamentals of mathematics. The formation of the current daily routine in early years' settings features the individual needs of each child that must be met in a way that fits into a clearly understandable routine for the entire group, so that the children know what to expect. Adult led and children centred approaches are interwoven and simultaneously exist alongside each other. The daily routine generally follows the same pattern in every setting of circle time, free play, breakfast, focused activities, lunch, free outdoor play, sleeping/resting, and tea (Tóth, 1994).

### *Celebration of Christmas Traditions*

To achieve national unity in the former Yugoslavia, which was characterised, among other features, by religious diversity, in 1947 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia banned the celebration of religious holidays outside of the church organisation (Bogdanovic, 2018) and the state removed the traditional holidays of a religious nature (Easter, Christmas, All Saints' Day) from the list of public holidays (Rihtman-Augustine, 1990). Troch (2013, p. 233) argued that it was necessary to separate modern and secular national unity from religion, explicitly from 'secular national ideologies which relegate religion to a marginal aspect of national identity, although they rarely discard and remove religion completely'. As Troch (2013) identified, the tradition to celebrate Christmas, despite all the efforts to be banned, remained.

When the Communist Party took power in Yugoslavia after WWII, they introduced a secular Santa Claus based on Russia's Deda Mraz (Father Frost). As in the Soviet Union, but not in parts of the rest of Eastern Europe, Christmas in Yugoslavia was combined with the New Year, along with the usual Christmas festivities. This included the decoration of the Christmas tree, also called a New Year's Tree, waiting for Father Frost, and for Baby Jesus (Jezuska) who travelled the country on Christmas Eve, delivering presents to the children who had behaved well in the past year. Children are taught that it is Baby Jesus who brings the decorated tree and gifts for all on Christmas Eve, traditionally in the afternoon of Christmas Eve. While adults secretly set up the Christmas tree, children are banned from the room where the Christmas tree is erected. Rihtman-Augustin (1990) explained how gradually some of the symbols of Christmas were transferred to New Year's Day; thus, Christmas was merged into the New Year and lost most of its religious connotation. The official holiday was New Year's Day, a staunchly secular festivity (Rihtman-Augustin, 1990). Similar to other Western countries who celebrate Christmas and engage children in early years provisions (Papatheodorou & Gill, 1999), in Vojvodina, kindergartens, schools and other education institutions have all been involved in celebrating this modified version of Christmas traditions.

### **Methodological Approach: Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data**

The methodology underpinning the secondary analysis was driven by the quality and richness of the data collected for the main study. Long-Sutehall et al. (2011) suggested that, when doing a secondary analysis, an assessment must be made regarding the quality of the dataset available and whether the primary dataset has the potential to answer the questions of the secondary research. It is recommended that the research questions for the secondary analysis be sufficiently close to those of the primary research, as well as the data collection and analytic techniques in the primary dataset being similar to those that will be applied in the secondary analysis (Johnston, 2017; Vartanian, 2011). Whilst some authors have re-used a complete primary dataset for their secondary analysis, it is more usual that some form of 'sorting' of data takes place (Vartanian, 2011). Sorting may be applied for different reasons such as to focus on one type of data so that analysis can be selectively limited to specific themes or topics. This was the case for the secondary analysis reported in this paper. Despite having gained ethical permission for the main study from the relevant university ethics committee, it is advisable to revisit ethical considerations for secondary analysis (Long-Sutehall et al., 2011) such as whether permission had been gained from participants to reuse the data. Previously obtained consent from participants covered the possibility of reusing the interview data for publication purposes, as long as careful reference was made to the ethical guidelines of the British Education Research Association [BERA] (2018); therefore, no new application was required, and no further approach was needed to the original participants. All of the original provisos were still in place as we continued to treat traceable and personal data (including participants' names) confidentially.

For the main study, Hungarian kindergarten pedagogues were e-mailed by the researchers with the invitation to participate in the project. In total, thirty-five e-mails were sent out and twelve responses were received. Online interviews using Microsoft Teams were conducted by one researcher (one of the authors) who was not living in Serbia and who did not know the participants. All interviews were conducted in the

Hungarian language, recorded, transcribed and translated into English by the authors of this article. Each interview lasted between one and two hours. All participants had a higher education degree level qualification, they were all working in the region of Vojvodina, and came from nine different local authorities. They were all females and had substantial experience of working with children (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Participants

Participants	Years of experience	Role	Programme they followed
P1	24	KP	old
P2	10	LDL	new
P3	25	KP	old
P4	30	LDL	new
P5	23	LDL	old
P6	40	KP	old
P7	19	KP	old
P8	31	KP	old
P9	40	KP	new
P10	18	KP	new
P11	13	KP	old
P12	40	KP	new

KP – Kindergarten Pedagogue

LDL - Local District ECEC Leader

Twelve transcribed texts from the recordings of the interviews were available from the main study, and each transcript was assessed for the quality of the data. As Johnston (2017) suggested, in secondary data analysis we begin with an investigation regarding what remains to be learned about the research aims. We also considered previously collected relevant and supporting literature on the topics of how the past socialist regime still influences the current practice as well as celebrations of Christmas traditions in the nurseries. The use of thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008) for the secondary analysis was based on the process adopted in the original research, and it was during this initial analytic interpretation that the ideas explored in this secondary analysis were first identified. The decision to revisit the transcripts was based on the desire to take the analysis further and expand a developing category. This meant revisiting the transcripts, and searching for paragraphs that addressed the aims of the secondary research as previously described. These sections were colour coded and notes were made on the transcripts (Riessman, 2008).

### Findings of the secondary analysis

Secondary data analysis revealed that a more flexible way of working with children, that is the proposal to replace the mainly structured, adult led, daily routine, had been a concern for many participants. Although participants talked enthusiastically about the job they love to do, they explained that their main concern was how to shape and modify the practice of collaborating with children and their families especially when parents and carers had other responsibilities. Most participants had been in the ECEC sector for decades (see Table 2), and the ways in which the preschool education practices were run had not changed a great deal. The new Curriculum Framework was received with mixed feelings as participants in this project were still familiarising themselves with the change.

### Use of Hungarian Language

The slogan of a socialist regime, that is *Brotherhood and Unity*, meant permitting individuals the celebration and expression of their own culture, religion and language. Therefore, it was not surprising that all participants in this study mentioned the use of the Hungarian language in the training programmes. Participants' main concerns were regarding the training they attended which was mainly available in the Serbian language. Some participants specifically spoke about their concerns, stating that:

Language... yes language is a massive issue. There are some pedagogues who don't speak fluent Serbian and for them attending these further training courses is not beneficial. (P2)

The further training which was in the Serbian language was about how to transit or shift from the old to a new programme; this is not necessarily an issue but when we need to express the practical element of the practice then the language nuances are really causing a concern as we may not be able to express ourselves precisely. (P4)

I have attended two further education courses. Both of them were in the Serbian language which itself wasn't a big issue for me. But there were other pedagogues present who didn't understand everything and there was no translator available and they were very uncomfortable because it is not only that they didn't understand the speakers fully, but these speakers were contradicting each other, causing concern and posing more questions than offering answers. (P11)

These examples demonstrated the impact of the language segregation which was rooted in the 1974 constitution. The concern is not only about the language in which the presentation of the new Curriculum Framework occurred, but it was more about the future practices with preschool age children that are built upon the Hungarian culture, folk music, rhymes and the tradition of storytelling. While the Serbian and Hungarian cultures are neighbouring cultures, and both stem from a Christian civilization, they are culturally and linguistically different (Todosijević, 2008). Most Serbians follow the Serb Orthodox Church whereas most Hungarians follow the Roman Catholic Church, and the Serbian and Hungarian languages are not related. The following extract indicates how important it is for Hungarian minority kindergarten pedagogues to endorse the learning of the Hungarian language and Hungarian traditions:

Personally, I really like the rhymes, folk tales and fairy tales as they are the basis of our communication. The trio of Hungarian folk art, folk music and folk tales is what we teach; generations grew up on these folk tales, on Benedek Elek [Hungarian great folk-tale teller]. Kindergartens act as a place to promote the language and culture, to give a good foundation for children's future and ... and this is what I would like to continue to teach.

### **Sleeping Ritual**

The new Curriculum Framework prompted participants to think more creatively about their roles and how to engage more with children and their families. While considerable attention was paid to changing the previously adult led activities, the non-individualised daily routine was generally overlooked. The daily routine represents a significant part of life for children in kindergarten. Most participants described that the daily routine followed the same pattern, starting with the circle time (registration and linguistic routine), followed by breakfast, indoor focused activity, lunch, sleep, outdoor free play and snack time. The following extract is just one of many similar stories that describe the 'sleeping ritual'. This particular participant worked across all age ranges from 6 months to children aged 7 in a rural nursery. She had 19 years of experience and holds a degree level qualification. When she was asked to talk about the daily routine, she described the sleeping ritual as follows:

Participant 7: Every child needs a rest. Especially those small children, they need a good sleep as they are in the kindergarten from very early hours and they are very small.

Interviewer: What about the 6 or 7 year old children?

Participant 7: What do you mean? They need a rest too.

Interviewer: Would they actually sleep?

Participant 7: Not everyone, but it was never an issue and they know the daily routine. Some of them are not sleeping but they are quietly resting which is also very important for their development especially after lunch. We do have our sleeping rituals, we sing lullabies, rocking some of them, or gently swaying the smaller children in our arms. Part of the ritual is to get them into their pyjamas, and by repeating this ritual on a daily basis they learn the routine and they do this willingly, they never complain. Now that you asked me specifically about the sleeping time, I was thinking whether we have had a child who wanted to go to play instead ... but I cannot think of a single case.

### **Santa Claus Called Father Frost**

The new Curriculum Framework suggests the creation of a relationship between an adult and a child where there is a responsibility for the adult to empower the child and her/his capacities. Secondary data analysis exposed the concerns about how to involve children in continuing the celebration of the Christmas traditions in nurseries. For many participants the issue was how to engage the child if they were not

interested and how to ensure the continuing children's language development through festive nursery rhymes and stories. Participants raised their worries in relation to the change they would have to make in their practice under the new Curriculum Framework. Participant 1 for example stated:

My understanding is that it is not necessary to celebrate Christmas in the kindergarten. Children can attend and celebrate the festive season outside of the nursery... Unless the child initiates it, these kinds of celebrations fall outside of our remit from now on. (P1)

Another participant was more concerned about the continuity of maintaining the tradition because it had been in place for decades. Participant 8 said that:

Similarly to previous years, we organised Father Frost to come to our setting where children were able to pick up their presents. Children have learnt a short poem or a song and they were singing this to Father Frost. Although the presents were all the same and not kept as a secret we discuss home traditions too and this is what we aim to keep alive, the Hungarian traditions. My family keeps the tradition of Baby Jesus bringing secretly the tree and gifts. In our family, once the tree is set up, a small bell is played as a sign that Baby Jesus has brought the tree and gifts and then the children run to find their presents. Here in the kindergarten, all the gifts were organised by the local authority, and the bags are all the same. (P8)

### Discussion

As a result of the secondary data analysis, this provided an opportunity to revisit the quality of the dataset available which had great potential to address the new research aims (Long-Sutehall et al., 2011). In the socialist regime, it can be argued that, by teaching the feel of the *collective* experience of the same events, this transforms the children's behaviour (Millei et al., 2021). The Christmas presents organised by the local authority demonstrate this very well by the promotion of a shared and similar experience for all, along with the common sleeping ritual which shows the collectiveness. While participants spoke in a gentle and caring way, focusing on children's well-being, expressing the worry about the 'fast life style' in general, they all stressed the importance of rest. The ritual of sleeping shows the notion of teaching the *collective*, and teaching children to be compliant to the kindergarten's pedagogue and through them to society. As Millei et al. (2021, p.44) argued, the political socialisation is passed on to children 'either through implicit or explicit socialisation and teaching'. At the same time, using traditional nursery rhymes (including lullabies and songs) and storytelling across a variety of early childhood education programmes encourages 'multiple domains of child development such as language and cognitive development, communication skills and emotional maturity' (Mullen, 2017, p.51). Therefore, the sleeping ritual has multiple benefits when it is practised effectively with children of different ages, yet it can be argued that, despite the benefits of this practice, it excludes the child and their views.

Songs, rhymes and storytelling play an important role in language development and can pave the way for young children to engage in the more cooperative learning of a second language, as argued by Bodden (2010). The selection of the songs, rhymes and takes and how they should be implemented in the learning process is one of the roles of the Hungarian kindergarten pedagogues (Wright et al., 2000). The use of musical tales in ECEC as a tool for teachers to learn how to communicate fluently the use of music (Mullen, 2017), literature, and drama in the same activity makes the perfect combination to help children learn and develop their native language, as it improves vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the communicative competence in general (Lendák-Kabók, 2020). For the child to feel safe and empowered, Breneselović and Krnjaja (2021) argue, the ECEC worker should build relationships based on active engagement, maintaining balance and respect for the child by following their interests. Not only can they help boost the linguistic development of a child, rhymes are memorable, and as such can help children retain certain pieces of information. When linked with physical actions, they encourage the development of motor skills (Mullen, 2017). Through celebrating Christmas traditions, children not only develop their culture, but also this enriches the mother tongue which is an important feature for future educational achievement (Lendák-Kabók, 2020; Wright et al., 2000). Therefore, it can be argued that the importance of language development, learning poetry and Christmas songs, and festive storytelling plays a key role in children's language development. Christmas traditions were celebrated in the pre-school education institutions for decades (Rihtman Augustin, 1990). The participants' extracts thereby demonstrate the



importance of celebrating and maintaining the continuity of Christmas traditions. All children received presents that were subsidised by the local authorities and, as Papatheodorou and Gill (1999) explained, the magical experience and the feelings of excitement and wonder to which children are exposed via the celebration of this particular festive tradition are highly rated by parents. Therefore, it could be argued that celebrating traditions has in the past and can have in the future positive effects on children and their holistic development.

## Conclusion

Our aim for this article was to highlight how secondary analysis has potentially important implications for qualitative researchers especially when rich qualitative data were collected for the main project. Making existing qualitative datasets available for secondary analysis could be a way forward to gain skills in data collection, data analysis and synthesis, as well as grappling with the epistemological and ontological questions generated by the use of this methodology. The question of ethics has to be considered in terms of asking permission from participants as well as considering if there are enough data about the topic of interest. This paper aims to offer some clarification of the processes involved and to encourage researchers to consider this methodology. Furthermore, the new aims for the secondary analysis draw attention to some of the issue kindergarten pedagogues may face such as how to change the everyday practice of sleeping rituals. Therefore, nursery pedagogues have to be prepared to provide new solutions for often complex and dynamic work with children in their setting. It was evident that those who participated in the main study worked hard and reflected on their practice, seeking solutions and new opportunities to address new ways to work with children. This element manifested when we explored the connection between the 'past', such as the celebration of Christmas, with how it may look in the future.

It is important to reiterate that the data for the main study were collected in the middle of the transition from the old to new Curriculum Framework, and it was expected that some participants would experience confusion and concerns. Our plan is to conduct a second interview with each participant to see how, and if their views and experiences have changed. What we see so far is that such a significant transition should be a slower and more considered process with greater opportunities to access professional training that addresses localised culture, identity, language, and other ethnic characteristics with fully trained mentors.

## Declarations

### *Author's Declarations*

**Acknowledgements:** We would like to thank all the participants for giving up their valuable time and for sharing their information so generously with us and for the reviewers for their constructive feedback which helped to improve the paper.

**Authors' contributions:** Each author contributed equally.

**Competing interests:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Funding:** No funding was received for this project.

**Ethics approval and consent to participate:** Ethics approved as well as consent collected to participate

### *Publisher's Declarations*

**Editorial Acknowledgement:** The editorial process of this article was carried out by Eleonora Teszenyi, Anikó Varga Nagy, and Sándor Pálfi.

**Publisher's Note:** Journal of Childhood, Education & Society remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliation.

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