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CULEGERE SEMESTRIALĂ DE STUDII

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Content

E-LEARNING AS A FACTOR IN STIMULATING GIFTED STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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Abstract: *The aim of the study is to examine how gifted students are stimulated to use e-learning for academic achievement. The main questions to which an answer is sought in this context are: What types of activities do gifted students use in e-learning? How do students evaluate the adequacy of ICT resources for their academic achievements so far? What are the relationships between the use of ICT for learning and the personality traits, self-esteem, and motivational strategies of gifted people? The theoretical context consists of concepts of self-regulation, new concepts of intelligence - self-management of intellectual processes - Sternberg, emancipatory didactics. The research has used the method of systematic, non-experimental observation, and as instruments, a battery of questionnaires: (PSIKT) Protocol on students' self-perception about the importance and use of ICT and e-learning to stimulate students towards academic achievements—made for this research; Questionnaire of Motivation for Learning (LLOS-IEA), SMS-Scale of Motivational Strategies, Inventory of Competencies for Memory and Reasoning (MARCI-Stankov & Crawford), and Personality Traits (BFIIV). Metric characteristics of the instruments: Krombach's α for parts*

of the battery ranges from 0.62 to 0.83. It was used as a convenience sample, consisting of 687 students from the universities of Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš (within this number, 127 are academically gifted, with an average grade above 9.00). Basic findings: When compared to other students, academically gifted students focus more on expanding their knowledge based on their interests, research work, and interactive self-evaluation tests in e-learning. Using ICT for learning and academic success is closely related to students' personal characteristics (personality traits, self-confidence, motivation). Gifted students have stronger self-confidence, motivation, and personality traits than other students.

Keywords: *academically gifted students; e-learning; confidence; motivation; personality traits.*

1. Introduction

Modern approaches to motivating students to achieve academic success aim to find more effective ways to motivate them and direct them towards self-regulated learning. Research findings indicate that success in studies largely depends on competencies for self-learning, i.e., self-regulation. Within this, significant attention has been devoted to research findings (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020) that indicate the ways in which ICT (information and communication technology) can be used for the purpose of encouraging motivation. Thus, the findings conclude that knowledge acquired with the help of online platforms is essentially an update or change resulting from processes of solving problems encountered by an individual or a group of students, contributed to higher motivation, independence, and the acquisition of more information (Indariani & Sulivoro, 2018).

The basic concept and classification of e-learning refer to the educational context supported by information and communication technologies (ICT) (Ristić, 2009). In addition to the previous definition, the ASTD (American Society for Trainers and Development) understands e-learning as educational content or learning activities in which learning takes place with the help of electronic technology (Ristić, 2009). This understanding implies numerous learning strategies and technologies that support learning with the help of media-based educational Internet programs (DVD, CD-ROM), educational work using program content downloaded from the Internet, video conferencing systems, and distance learning with the help of the Internet. One way to define this term is that e-learning represents a new approach to learning

that is independent of time and space, and is also defined by the teacher's new role, which implies new teaching methods, new tools, and new approaches to learning. The latter is considered the most important criterion for defining e-learning, and it refers to new communication strategies between teachers and students (Ristić, 2009).

Taylor (in Ristić, 2009) distinguishes telecommunications models of e-learning based on their technologies of delivery:
- multimedia model (press, audio tapes, video tapes, computer-based training, interactive video);
- telecommunications model (audio teleconferencing, video conferencing, audio graphic communication, broadcasting TV/radio, and audio teleconferencing);
- flexible learning model (interactive multimedia and web-oriented learning or online learning);
- Intelligent flexible learning model (intelligent tutoring systems, interactive multimedia)

According to a review of Taylor's classification, the differences between models by which multimedia has been classified are essentially designated already in their names, referring to the combination of several media at the same time and the possibility of interaction among students themselves and with the teacher; interactive. The shortcoming of this model is that individuals and institutions are not sufficiently equipped with the necessary technical means for making the model functional (incompatibility, etc.). Video conferences are considered the most popular form of telecommunication. With regard to the topic of this paper, the following characteristics of the flexible learning model are important: interactivity, non-linearity, and collaboration. This model is appropriate for education because it promotes learning autonomy as a principle and mode of learning that allows teachers to tailor students' guidance to their specific needs and personalise it through mentoring work. This is an indispensable learning and teaching style for gifted students, with exceptional motivational power for self-regulation and self-direction towards high academic achievements (Siegle, 2003, 2005; Alibabi; Ziegler, 2021). The following guidelines are stated as essential prerequisites for effective e-learning when working with the gifted:

- Clear strategic determination of the educational institution for the introduction of ICT in the educational process of the gifted;
- Supporting the gifted in e-learning;
- Having appropriate e-learning standards (in addition to knowing how to mentor gifted students, mentors and other teachers should know how

to use ICT tools in order to make e-learning decisions). In addition, it is also necessary to have trained teaching staff and provide equipment and infrastructure adequate for the stimulating function of ICT in teaching activities that should motivate students towards academic achievement.

For the title of this paper, it is important to note that the above-mentioned online applications are in use in everyday life, which facilitated the technical part of their use for students' learning and teachers' cooperation with them. Communication takes place with the aid of an internet service, which has several functions contained in WhatsApp and other applications (image gallery, inserting contacts, camera for taking images, sending voice messages, coordinate maps, etc.), so that online media enables easier communication and more effective learning (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020). The advantages of this application are in the fact that it can be used to motivate students to expand their knowledge. One of the models is discussion groups where students can share opinions and information online through this virtual space, which, according to research findings (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020), combined with classroom learning, provides opportunities to reduce the gap between learning and work. This is justified by the finding that online collaborative learning, suitable for learning in tertiary institutions, is also effective for learning in larger groups characterized by differences among students and can be adapted to all levels of learning and many institutions, including universities (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020). In their research, Susilawati and Supriyatno (2020) found that online learning as a learning tool is suitable for acquiring knowledge in the sense of collaborative and cooperative learning in the form of a discussion forum. They also find that the contents of mobile tools are accepted for student learning as they enable ad hoc communication and informal interaction between students and teachers. Based on their findings, the same authors conclude that combined learning integrated with WhatsApp Messenger has several advantages, such as the quick exchange and transfer of information and knowledge and the ease of creating discussion forums. Thus, social media have already become a useful and accepted means of learning, which enables excellent and easy cooperation both between students themselves and with the teacher.

Susilawati and Supriyatno (2020) found that combined learning with WhatsApp helped students learn more. However, they also say that other models should be looked into in a more critical and thorough way. These models would provide a wider range of possibilities for choosing among

online media for learning that would be more adapted to the learning context, learning needs and abilities, or differences in student learning and teaching. The authors also point out the necessity of providing several models, because there is no single method that could be used in all conditions, while online content enables adaptation to the students' experiences for successful collaboration. So that combined learning is considered a revolution in the field of education, which was included in the educational process as a result of circumstances during the pandemic; in the same way, it showed the advantages it presents for stimulating students towards reaching academic achievements. However, research findings (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020) have already led to the conclusion that, if the online approach could be called a teaching method, using only online methods for a combined approach to learning and teaching through the Internet is not enough, because it is mainly characterized by contents in a single teaching medium, in this case the Internet, and the application of e-learning must still be used with a face-to-face approach, and by combining them, the advantages of both can be used. Numerous authors (Amri, 2014) emphasize that Internet-based social media enable students to share different types of content in accordance with their accompanying functions. This makes them popular tools for learning and collaborating with the group in the exchange of information, as they make learning related to various topics through discussing questions asked by the teacher interesting. As a result, digital generations of students perceive popular technology as providing affordable access to tools for online learning that can be less of a burden and more of a game. The motivational value of this is inestimable; we just need to develop teaching approaches that, by combining these approaches, would stimulate autonomous approaches to learning and discussing questions for which they found answers, etc. Digital technology thus provides opportunities to make learning more active, use teaching methods in which information can be obtained individually, reach information individually, find various learning contents that can be easily accessed at a time that suits the students, and take responsibility for their own advance towards academic achievements by learning either individually or in a group (Stone & Logan, 2018). This is particularly suitable for students who do not like lectures, as well as for gifted students who are looking for broader knowledge than the program provides, relating concepts from different scientific fields, etc.

Research (Stone & Logan, 2018) shows that e-learning lets students be more involved in their own learning because it focuses on personalization, which includes the ability to adapt to the student's skill level and the accumulation of

knowledge resources as mutual support (Pratama & Iusro, 2016). Adaptive attitudes will also give students room and flexibility when it comes to organizing, which will help them learn better (Pratama & Iusro, 2016).

In addition to the above, previous studies on e-learning have been characterized by discussions on learning models based on three perspectives. The first perspective is provided by studies that examine the issue of online learning as a new system of learning media that promotes learning efficiency. The second is focused on the direction of the online learning media, which could create conditions for satisfying the student's needs (Amri, 2014). The third emphasizes the importance of adequate selection of contents for online learning, i.e., it includes the selection of components that help improve learning (Boiinbode et al., 2017), which is directed towards issues of designing online content. This is an increasingly interesting issue, induced by the level of need to use the Internet, which encourages the development of learning materials that are developed based on the subject (Amal, 2019). These studies have come to the conclusion that there are currently four basic elements that must not be neglected in designing online learning: (a) learning structure, (b) presentation content, (c) collaboration and interaction, and (d) timely feedback.

The research findings also conclude that online learning implies meeting the requirements for material availability or easy access.A study conducted by Amri (2014) shows that in online learning, students tend to access course materials in the form of lecture slides, video lectures, shared assignments, and forum messages. Students with different goals, motivations, and preferences have different behaviors when accessing these materials. This difference in behavior can then affect their academic achievement. From this research, it follows that students view teaching materials related to their classroom lectures (lecture slides and video lectures) longer and more often than other learning materials. It has also been concluded that, in spite of the time spent viewing online learning materials, most of them do not use analytical tools, thereby reducing the effects of e-learning. For the gifted, it was found that their interests are broader and that they use materials from the Internet to expand their knowledge because their interest in certain issues is not covered in the mandatory program, etc. (Stojanović, et al., 2021)

According to the title of this paper, there are significant research findings (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020; Iustina et al., 2020) that indicate the ways in which technology can encourage learning motivation. Projects based on teacher-student interaction as well as those that support interaction in groups that allow the sense of competence to be recignized as a first step towards

motivation and enable to cope with difficulties in independent learning, efficient time management, orientation towards approaches to tasks, meta-cognitive skills, and perseverance towards the goal have shown good effects for this purpose (Sitar-Taut, 2021; Pelikan et al., 2021). Based on an experimental design with a specific group (test-retest), Susilawati & Supriyatno (2020) found that combining learning with the use of WhatsApp contributes to increasing motivation to learn. With the help of this platform, learning unfolds optimally, as students and teachers can communicate and share PowerPoint files, Microsoft Word files, JPG files, voice notes, videos, and links to learning resources. The experiences of this study suggest that learning activities and the learning media should be adapted to the context of the learning environment and that avoiding to impose certain activities and methods is a wise step in presenting learning experiences to students because, as previously mentioned, there is no unified method, not only for all students but also for all content. In accordance with this, Prajana (2017) suggests that the way in which ICT is used as a learning medium was able to create effective learning because it provided students with better and faster learning opportunities by loading the teaching material, showed tasks in discussion between students, and enabled organizing consultations with teachers beyond formal teaching classes. His experience with the WhatsApp application is that it is convenient because it runs on mobile devices, uses web-based social networks, and integrates with various applications used to communicate with other users, starting from education, business, entertainment, etc.

The above findings speak in favor of the efficacy of e-learning for stimulating students towards academic efficiency, but for the topic of this paper, they are just an introduction, because in addition to the previous questions, there are also significant issues related to the design of hypermedia from the aspect of types of activities that enable students to find adequate sources for academic achievements, such as the relationship between the use of ICT and personality traits, self-confidence, motivational strategies, etc. Significant in this sense are the findings of Wells & McCrory (2011). In their study, they considered theoretical and design issues related to the use of learning environments, specifically the use of hypermedia to promote recalling, synthesis, integration, and storing of information, i.e., some types of academic efficacy. It is an experimental draught with two different hypermedia systems for complex historical content. The authors concluded that the findings of their study are consistent with previous studies, which suggest that, in spite of the compelling promises of hypermedia, there are limited evidences of differential cognitive impacts based on differential design (Dillon & Jobst, 2005). It is important to note that the findings from this study suggest that linear, indexed, and/or

immersion-based designs can improve remembering the facts. Thus, they conclude that there are no structural differences in hypermedia that follow a more minimal design, which analyzes the discrete points of information instead of presenting highly interconnected information that helps learning, which otherwise allows the use of hypermedia as a system of non-sequential or non-linear text that enables readers to freely explore and relate information in ways that make sense to them (Nelson, 1965). Based on the above, it can be concluded that hypermedia, composed of multiple related texts and other forms of media (image, video, and sound), does not guarantee that the process of searching for discrete resources will force individuals to mentally construct coherent understandings of the ways resources are interrelated and that this process later facilitates certain types of learning. Also significant are the findings (Dillon & Jobst, 2005), which indicate that non-linear web presentations (i.e., those that allow viewing in multiple orders) can lead to reduced free memory and learning of factual information compared to traditional linear print-like web design. Their findings suggest, however, that a non-linear design may facilitate learning about the interrelationships of the information presented. It is also important to mention the findings of the same authors, which they reached through experimental research on a sample of students who manipulate the site design and motivation designed to test these different learning effects and examine the potential influence of two mediating variables: selective scanning and elaboration (see more in: Gojkov, Rajić, et. al. 2021; Gojkov Rajić and Prtljaga, 2916 a, b; Stojanović, et. al. 2021). Also significant is the finding of other research (Stojanović, et al., 2021), which suggests that the linear site design encourages the learning of facts while the non-linear design increases the density of the knowledge structure. However, the effects of elaboration and selective scanning are mixed. Thus, based on the previous finding, we could accept the opinion of Foltz and Landauer (1998) that systems should first be empirically tested to determine whether they are useful and usable. Accordingly, if the features of more complex systems are not more usable than those of simpler, linear systems, then findings that linear systems facilitate learning may ultimately mean that we need better designs for complex systems. The same authors (Foltza and Landauer, 1998) suggest that alternative conclusions about research findings should also be analyzed and considered. They believe that it is necessary to see to what extent the design adequately reflects the CFT theory. To what extent were the chosen principles of CFT—context-dependence and interrelationship—adequately manifested in the system? They believe that there is a possibility that, perhaps, the use of other principles or several principles would yield different results.

Also significant is their reflection on the possibility that there were systematic differences in interest and/or motivation among the participants that were not taken into account and that the differences influenced the findings rather than the conditions. The conclusion is that this study may suggest that hypermedia learning is more elusive than some studies have shown.

Based on the above, we should take into account the conclusions of several research studies that point to future trends and refer to the impression that adapting to individual differences in general and learning styles in particular, is gaining ground in current educational hypermedia research. Findings also show that most existing systems treat learning styles separately from other characteristics in the student profile (knowledge, interests, goals), which is a flaw. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate all the mentioned and other characteristics into a more comprehensive and representative student profile. In such an integrative context, implicit modeling methods should be combined with explicit methods, for a more precise diagnosis. The authors consider the possibility of educating students and teachers to properly understand and address learning styles an even more useful approach. Thus, to familiarize both students and teachers with the essence and ways of mastering meta-cognition and awareness of learning style, so that they understand their strengths and weaknesses in the learning process and persist in self-regulating learning. The most significant conclusion of these findings is the need for these systems (LSAES) to go beyond their current research status and be used in practice, gaining popularity similar to that of self-regulated learning systems. Based on the above, it could be concluded that the mentioned e-learning systems should be brought closer to each other, because in that case they would be tested in practice, verified, and their effects manifested.

Further confirmation of the above context and the need to bring the system closer to student learning can be found in the research of Popescu (2009). In diagnosing the style of the educational hypermedia learning system, she started from the position that personalizing the learning experience for each student is an important goal for educational systems, and the accurate modeling of learning based on the individual student is the first step towards achieving this goal. This author views modeling from the perspective of learning styles, which she believes is an important factor in the effectiveness of the learning process. In a critical meta-analysis, she provides an overview of existing modeling methods, highlighting the specifics and limitations of current learning style-based adaptive educational systems (LSAES). The author sees controversy in the multitude of learning style models, as a result

of partial overlap in the use of a complex of characteristics, each of which has its own importance and influence, and advocates their unification (the so-called "unified learning style model"). The controversy was not overcome by the introduction of implicit modeling methods based on the analysis of student behavior patterns. The approach has been experimentally validated, and good accuracy rates have been reported. The author concludes that the modelling components could be expanded to account for perturbations in adaptation attempts and improved with pattern threshold weights.

The following findings from an earlier study conducted by the co-author of this study (Stojanovi et al., 2021) are relevant to this research:

- The learning motivation of gifted students was manifested under the influence of internal factors, but also of factors present in the students' social and natural environments. Thus, in addition to internal factors that are under the students' control, factors that depend on the teacher, as well as contextual factors, are also important.
- During the learning process, each student develops a specific motivational structure, which consists of learning behaviors (certain activities, persistence, achievement of learning goals, quality of learning) on the one hand and their own motivational beliefs and strategies on the other (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). A well-structured hypermedia learning system, i.e., well-designed ICT learning and teaching content, can be a significant aid in all of this (Stojanović, et al., 2021).

As it can be seen from the previous short sketches of theoretical and design issues surrounding the use of hypermedia for learning, there is still plenty of room for further research into ways to make these more effective in the field of encouraging self-regulated learning in students. One problem is that it is hard to organise the modelling parts in a way that makes it possible to customise the learning experience. This is still an open methodological question that has real-world effects. Researchers continue their search for a complex of characteristics whose unification would bring them as close as possible to individual needs in the use of hypermedia for encouraging self-regulated learning and, above all, learning motivation. This was the impetus for the research, the findings of which are presented in this paper from the perspective of students. In other words, it provides an overview of the intersecting external and internal factors of e-learning and seeks to move closer to the holistic approach of adapting e-learning to individual needs, particularly for the gifted, who show higher motivation and stronger self-regulation in the research findings. In addition, e-learning heads towards

adapting educational hypermedia, which also means higher personalization in terms of stimulating the gifted to use hypermedia for their own self-development.

The study's goal was to determine how much gifted students are encouraged to use e-learning to help them do better in school. This was done so that the researchers could then look at the ways in which didactic approaches and motivational tools help internal learning factors. Formulated in this way, it addresses the following questions:

- To what extent do gifted students use ICT for independent learning? What types of activities are represented in e-learning: expanding knowledge-broader interests, increasing understanding after lectures; creating exercises or presentations based on the assignment of the professor/assistant; research work – creating papers for scientific meetings; preparation of seminar papers; (expressed by % or ranking, interactive tests with automatic evaluation) and to what extent and in what way do teachers stimulate students to use ICT?
- How do students decide if ICT sources are good enough and if they add to what they've already learned, and where do they focus on e-learning (general education, vocational, vocationally applied, and foreign languages)?
- What is the relationship between the use of ICT for learning and students' personality traits, self-confidence, motivational strategies, memory, and memorization competences? How important is the use of ICT for academic success in relation to internal factors?
- How many technical opportunities and ICT do students have, and how well do they know how to use them?

The basic idea is that e-learning is a *big part of what motivates gifted students to do well in school, which also means that it starts the process of self-regulated learning.* Therefore, the general hypothesis is that ICT, as a modern tool for e-learning, is more important than other sources of knowledge that are used to stimulate students for academic achievement.

General hypothesis: The academically gifted use ICT more than others for academic achievements.

Working hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 – ICT, as a modern tool for e-learning, is more important than other sources of knowledge used to stimulate students´ academic achievements.

Hypothesis 2 – In e-learning, the academically gifted pay more attention to broadening their knowledge than other students.

Hypothesis 3 – Academically gifted students are more focused on e-learning general education subjects and foreign language, while others are more focused on vocational and vocational-application subjects?

Hypothesis 4 – Professors stimulate students to use ICT.

Hypothesis 5 – Academically gifted students evaluate ICT resources as high-quality resources for e-learning due to the following factors:

- the program infrastructure and technical support provide an efficient, high-quality, interesting, interactive learning experience and knowledge evaluation.
- enables high success criteria, the acquisition of a large fund of information on various contents, learning activity at the appropriate level and pace,
- allows for stimulating independent reading and exposure to the most diverse areas of knowledge (arts, occupations, professions); promotes experience in creative thinking and creative problem solving with multiple solutions;
- allows for experiences in logical thinking, logical reasoning, and problem solving with a single correct solution;
- stimulates imagination and special abilities;
- encourages motivation as well as insight and understanding of one's own abilities, interests, and needs
- enable the development of independence, skills of orientation, and consistency in learning;
- enables the setting of high goals and aspirations, experience in intellectual, artistic, and emotional contacts with other students;
- stimulates the need for independence in learning (independent work and research).

Hypothesis 6 – Technical capabilities of ICT are available to students, and they have access to the Internet and IT competencies.

Hypothesis 7: The use of ICT for learning is linked to students' personal characteristics (personality traits, memory and reasoning abilities, motivation).
Hypothesis 8 – Academically gifted students have stronger self-confidence, motivation, and personality traits important for academic achievement than other students.

Predictor variables:
- having adequate technology for e-learning,
- level of competence in using hypermedia content,
- personality traits, motivational strategies, self-confidence, memory, and reasoning competencies,
- forms and methods of stimulating students towards academic achievements through e-learning

Criterion variables:
- academic success,
- assessment of the quality of online tools for achievement,
- types of competences as effects of stimulating e-learning,
- students' own ideas about how important ICT and e-learning are and how they can be used to improve academic performance

2. Method

Sample

In total, there were 204 participants in the sample. Out of those, 101 participants provided information about gender, and there were 76 (75.2%) female participants. In total, 91 participants provided valid information about their grade point average during college, and there were 71 (78%) academically gifted students, i.e., students with a GPA of 8.00 or higher. College year was treated as an ordinal variable with 7 levels, and the distributions of levels were: 32 1st year students, 62 2nd year students, 20 3rd year students, 28 4th year students, 41 1st year master students, 14 2nd year master students, and 4 PhD students.

Instruments

Big five inventory (*Goldberg's Big Five Personality Traits from the International Personality Item Pool; Goldberg, 2001).* A short version, 20 five-point Likert type item questionnaire intended to assess the big five personality traits i.e., Extraversion, Emotional stability, Intellect, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, each through 4 items. The reliability of

the scales, measured by Cronbach alpha, was: Extraversion α = 0.72; Emotional Stability α = 0.70; Intellect α = 0.63; Agreeableness α = 0.68; Conscientiousness α = 0.77.

The Memory and Reasoning Competency Inventory (MARCI; Stankov & Crawford, 1997) consists of 16 items that are graded on a six-point Likert scale. The instrument includes two subscales designed to assess memory and reasoning abilities. Cronbach's alpha for memory competences was α = 0.92 and for reasoning competences was α = 0.88 indicating excellent reliability of the scales.

The Motivation Strategies Scale consists of 21 items measured on a five-point Likert scale. Exploratory factor analysis was performed to explore the latent space of the variable, and two subscales were extracted: an organization and perseverance scale and a strategy directed at lowering or creating negative expectations. Cronbach alpha organization and perseverance was α = 0.92 and for negative expectations was α = 0.82 indicating good to excellent reliability of the scales.

3. Results

Hypothesis 1: ICT, as a modern tool for e-learning, is more important than other sources of knowledge used to stimulate students for academic achievements in order to test the hypothesis. "ICT, as a modern tool for e-learning, is more important than other sources of knowledge used to stimulate students for academic achievements." descriptive statistics for six items are presented, as well as correlations with GPA and current year in college. GPA was significantly positively correlated with lectures as a stimulus for learning, indicating that those with higher GPAs find lectures somewhat more stimulating for learning. The strength of this correlation was weak in intensity. College year was positively correlated with learning from supplementary literature and negatively correlated with learning from lecture notes, indicating that older students learn more from supplementary literature while younger students learn more from lecture notes. The intensity of these correlations was moderate. Answer distributions for these items are presented on Figures 1–6.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics for items regarding the usage and stimulation of ICT and other learning methods*

	Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Correlation with GPA	Correlation with year
How educationally stimulating you are	ICTs	1	5	3.77	1.17	0.19	0.06
	lectures	1	5	3.98	1.08	0.21*	0.02
How much time do you spend learning with the help of	Electronic content	0	100	32.21	21.57	0.07	0.14
	Textbooks	0	100	37.46	23.80	-0.01	-0.04
	Supplementary literature	0	100	15.35	16.11	0.19	0.22**
	Lecture notes	0	100	27.40	21.96	-0.15	-0.19**

Note. Correlations presented for GPA with two "How educationally stimulating you are …" items are Spearman's rank correlations, while with "How much time do you spend learning with the help of…" items are Pearson's correlations. Correlations for college year are Spearman's rank correlations; * - $p < 0.05$; ** - $p < 0.01$.

Hypothesis 1: The academically gifted use ICT more than others for academic achievements.

To test this hypothesis, a t-test was used to look for differences between academically gifted and other students for the item *How much time do you spend learning with the help of*... A Mann-Whitney U test was used to explore differences using the item "*How stimulating for learning are...* Results of t-tests are presented in Table 2. There was a statistically significant difference on one item, lecture notes, with other students having higher scores, indicating that they use lecture notes to learn more than academically gifted students. Results of Mann-Whitney U tests are presented in Table 3. There were significant differences for lectures, with academically gifted students having a higher mean rank score, indicating that they find lectures more stimulating than other students.

Table 2. *Differences between academically gifted and other students for time spent using different learning tools/methods*

	Item	Mean – others	Mean - AG	t	df	p
How much time do you spend learning with the help ...	Electronic content	30.83	31.76	-0.17	85	0.865
	Textbooks	33.82	31.72	0.34	84	0.731
	Supplementary literature	15.29	15.86	-0.14	82	0.889
	Lecture notes	41.38	28.32	2.14	84	0.035

Table 3. *Differences between academically gifted and other students for how stimulating different learning methods are*

	Item	Mean rank – others	Mean rank – AG	U	Z	p
How stimulating for learning for you are	ICTs	36.42	47.93	502	-1.78	0.074
	lectures	32.82	48.31	433.5	-2.46	0.014

Hypothesis 2. In e-learning, the academically gifted, compared to other students, pay more attention to broadening their knowledge.

In order to test the hypothesis that "*In e-learning, the academically gifted, compared to other students, pay more attention to broadening their knowledge,*" Mann-Whitney U test was used to explore differences between academically gifted students and other students. Results are presented in Table **4.** There were statistically significant differences on all 4 items, with academically gifted students having higher scores on all items, indicating that they use electronic learning more than other students for all listed topics.

Table 4. *Differences between academically gifted and other students in how much attention they pay to broadening their knowledge*

	Item	Mean rank – others	Mean rank – AG	U	Z	p
I use electronic learning for	**Expanding knowledge according to personal interests**	**34.54**	**48.64**	**480.5**	**-2.27**	**0.023**
	Completing my understanding after the lecture	**35.88**	**48.25**	**507.5**	**1.97**	**0.049**
	For research work/writing papers for magazines or scientific meetings	**33.78**	**49.44**	**465.5**	**-2.50**	**0.012**
	For interactive tests with automatic evaluation / knowledge check	**33.10**	**49.63**	**452**	**-2.55**	**0.011**

Hypothesis 3. Academically gifted students are more focused on e-learning general education subjects and foreign languages, and others are more focused on vocational and vocational-application subjects.

In order to test the hypothesis, "*Academically gifted students are more focused on e-learning general education subjects and foreign languages, and others are more focused on vocational and vocational-application subjects?*" Mann-Whitney U test was used to explore differences between academically gifted students and other students. Results are presented in Table 5. Statistically significant differences were present only for one item, vocational-applied subjects, with academically gifted students having higher scores compared to other students.

Table 5. *Differences in how academically gifted students and other students use e-learning*

	Item	Mean rank – others	Mean rank – AG	U	Z	p
E-learning is aimed at	General education subjects	37.05	48.52	531	-1.78	0.075
	Foreign languages	47.88	45.47	672.5	-0.37	0.710
	Vocational subjects	43.93	45.95	668.6	-0.33	0.742
	Vocational-applied subjects (application of knowledge, exercises, etc.)	33.85	48.83	467	-2.36	0.018

Hypothesis 4: Teachers stimulate students to use ICT.

In order to test the hypothesis "*Teachers stimulate students to use ICT through seminar papers, making exercises-presentations according to the task of the teacher, research papers for scientific conferences and journals, using tests with automatic evaluation, and referring to supplementary literature,*" descriptive statistics for five items are presented, as well as correlations with GPA and current year in college. GPA was significantly positively correlated with professor stimulation of ICT for seminar papers, references to additional literature, and preparation of exercises and presentations, indicating that students with higher GPAs on average perceive that professors stimulate the usage of ICT for these topics more than students with lower GPAs. The college year was positively correlated with references to additional literature, preparation of exercises and presentations, and research papers for scientific conferences and journals, indicating that older students assess professors' stimulation for ICT usage higher for these topics, compared to students in lower years. Answer distributions for these items are presented on Figures 7–11.

Table 6. *Descriptive statistics for items regarding teacher's stimulation to use ICT*

	Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Correlation with GPA	Correlation with year
The teacher stimulates me to use ICT through:	**seminar papers**	**1**	**5**	**3.93**	**1.30**	**0.29****	**0.14**
	references to additional literature	**1**	**5**	**3.87**	**1.21**	**0.25***	**0.20****
	preparation of exercises - presentations	**1**	**5**	**4.18**	**1.16**	**0.23***	**0.17***
	research papers for scientific conferences and journals	**1**	**5**	**3.42**	**1.30**	**0.20**	**0.29****
	using tests for automatic evaluation / self-evaluation	**1**	**5**	**3.16**	**1.31**	**0.19**	**0.11**

Note. All presented correlations are Spearman's rank correlations; * - p < 0.05; ** - p < 0.01.

Hypothesis 5. *Academically gifted students evaluate ICT resources as high quality for e-learning because of the following factors*

To test the hypothesis that "*academically gifted students evaluate ICT resources as high quality for e-learning due to the following factors*:." Mann-Whitney U test was used to explore differences between academically gifted students and other students. Results are presented in Table 7. There were statistically significant differences on five items, namely: "*Program infrastructure and technical support provides an efficient, high-quality, interesting, interactive experience of learning and evaluating knowledge,*" "*enables high success criteria, the acquisition of a large fund of information*

on various contents, learning activity at an appropriate level and pace,"
"*enables stimulation of independent reading*", " *enables experiences in
creative thinking and creative problem solving with multiple solutions*", and
"*enables the development of independence, direction skills and consistency in
learning".* Academically gifted students scored higher on all of these items,
indicating that they value ICT for e-learning as more stimulating in these areas
than other students.

Table 7. *Differences between academically gifted and other students for how
much they value ICT for e-learning as a motivator*

	Item	Mean rank – others	Mean rank – AG	U	Z	p
In terms of quality, ICT for e-learning is valuable and stimulating because:	program infrastructure and technical support provide an efficient, high-quality, interesting, and interactive experience of learning and evaluating knowledge	34.60	48.61	482.0	-2.21	0.027
	enables high success criteria, the acquisition of a large fund of information on various contents, and learning activity at an appropriate level and at an appropriate pace	33.18	49.61	453.5	-2.59	0.010
	Enables the stimulation of independent reading,	34.10	48.76	472.0	-2.34	0.019

enables openness towards the most diverse areas of knowledge, arts, occupations, and professions.	37.68	48.35	543.5	-1.72	0.085
experiences in creative thinking and problem solving with multiple solutions are made possible.	34.65	49.20	483.0	-2.28	0.022
allow for experiences in logical thinking, logical reasoning, and problem solving with a single correct solution.	40.20	47.63	594.0	-1.16	0.246
stimulates imagination and special abilities	40.68	47.50	603.5	-1.08	0.282
stimulates motivation and insight into and understanding of one's abilities, interests, and needs	37.05	48.52	531.0	-1.82	0.069
allows for the development of independence, leadership, and learning consistency	32.98	49.67	449.5	-2.63	0.009
enables the setting of high goals and aspirations	36.60	48.65	522.0	-1.89	0.059
enables experience in intellectual, artistic, and	42.87	46.20	624.5	-0.51	0.607

	emotional contacts with other students					
	stimulates the need for independence in learning (independent work and research)	38.74	47.31	546.0	-1.35	0.177

Hypotheses 6. The technical capabilities of ICT are available to students, and they have access to the Internet and IT competences.

In order to test the hypotheses "*Technical possibilities of ICT are available to students. Students have a computer of appropriate performance*" and" Students *have access to the Internet and IT competences. Students are good at using ICT.*" descriptive statistics for 2 items are presented, as well as correlations with GPA and current year in college. The means of both items were high indicating that students evaluate their competencies and technical equipment as adequate. The item "*Specifications of the computer I own are adequate for my e-learning needs*" was positively correlated with GPA. Answer distributions for these items are presented on Figures 12 and 13.

Table 8. *Descriptive statistics for items regarding technical capabilities and access to ICT*

Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Correlation with GPA	Correlation with year
The specifications of the computer I own are adequate for my e-learning needs.	1	5	4.10	1.16	0.26*	0.02
My IT competences for using the Internet for e-learning are adequate.	1	5	4.04	1.05	0.17	-0.00

Hypothesis 7. The use of ICT for learning is linked to students' personal characteristics (personality traits, memory and reasoning abilities, motivation).

Descriptive statistics for personality traits, memory and reasoning competencies, and motivation scales are presented in Table 9. All research variables had values of skewness and kurtosis in the suggested range of ±2 (George & Mallery, 2010) indicating that there were no significant deviations from univariate normal distributions.

Table 9. *Descriptive statistics for personality traits, memory and reasoning competencies, and motivation scales*

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Sk	Ku
Extraversion	1.00	5.00	2.83	0.94	0.09	-0.43
Emotional stability	1.00	5.00	2.95	0.91	0.16	-0.40
Intellect	1.75	5.00	3.73	0.82	-0.12	-0.89
Agreeableness	1.00	5.00	3.84	0.79	-0.75	0.77
Conscientiousness	1.00	5.00	3.91	0.94	-0.98	0.56
Memory competencies	1.00	6.00	4.02	1.12	-0.50	0.07
Reasoning competencies	1.13	6.00	4.21	0.95	-0.50	0.35
Motivation strategy – organization and perseverance	1.36	5.00	4.02	0.79	-1.25	1.35
Motivation strategy – negative expectations	1.00	5.00	2.72	1.20	0.28	-0.98

Note. Sk – skewness; Ku – kurtosis.

The correlations between items about using ICT for learning and traits are presented in Table 10. Using ICT for expanding knowledge according to personal interests was positively correlated with Intellect, Agreeableness, memory and reasoning competencies and organization and perseverance motivation strategies. Using ICT to complete and comprehend the lecture was positively related to agreeableness, conscientiousness, reasoning abilities, organization, and perseverance motivation strategy. Using ICT for research work was positively correlated only with organization and perseverance motivation strategy, while using ICT for interactive tests was positively correlated with Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, memory competencies and

organization and perseverance motivation strategy. All the significant correlations were weak to moderate in intensity.

Table 10. *Spearman's rank correlations between items about using ICT for learning and personality traits, memory and reasoning competencies, and motivation scales*

	I use electronic learning for			
Variable	**Expanding knowledge according to personal interests**	**Completing understanding after the lecture**	**For research work/writing papers for magazines or scientific meetings**	**For interactive tests with automatic evaluation / knowledge check**
Extraversion	0.06	0.02	-0.01	0.07
Emotional stability	0.06	0.00	-0.09	0.00
Intellect	0.22**	0.06	0.04	-0.12
Agreeableness	0.17*	0.21**	0.13	0.22**
Conscientiousness	0.11	0.22**	0.13	0.27**
Memory competencies	0.18**	0.10	0.08	0.17*
Reasoning competencies	0.34**	0.18**	0.12	0.06
Motivation strategy – organization and perseverance	0.30**	0.35**	0.24**	0.26**
Motivation strategy – negative expectations	-0.12	-0.01	-0.04	0.12

Note. All presented correlations are Spearman's rank correlations; * - $p < 0.05$; ** - $p < 0.01$.

Hypothesis 8. Academically gifted students have stronger self-confidence, motivation, and personality traits important for academic achievement than other students.

In order to test the hypothesis that "*Academically gifted students have stronger self-confidence, motivation, and personality traits important for academic achievement than other students*" binary logistic regression was conducted. A binary variable indicating whether a student is academically gifted or not was a criterion in the model, while there were nine predictors in total: five personality traits, two memory and reasoning competences, and two motivational strategies. Results indicate that the tested model is not statistically significant ($\chi^2(9) = 10.38$, p = 0.321). Even though the model was not significant, the contribution of predictors is presented (for descriptive purposes) in Table 11. The only predictor that reached significance was the negative expectations motivation strategy, indicating that this strategy is less often used by academically gifted students compared to other students.

Table 11. *Contribution of predictors in binary logistic regression model*

	Wald	df	p	Exp (B)
Extraversion	0.52	1	0.471	0.78
Emotional stability	0.84	1	0.358	0.71
Intellect	0.59	1	0.444	0.75
Agreeableness	0.65	1	0.421	1.39
Conscientiousness	0.86	1	0.355	1.41
Memory competencies	0.00	1	0.960	0.97
Reasoning competencies	0.53	1	0.466	1.55
Motivation strategy – organization and perseverance	0.10	1	0.755	0.88
Motivation strategy – negative expectations	4.10	1	0.043	0.55

4. 4. Interpretation of findings

From the perspective of the basic question of this study, which refers to the extent to which e-learning is used to stimulate gifted students for academic achievements and thus speaks about the use of the potential of e-learning for self-regulated learning, the above findings are not in line neither with the general hypothesis nor with hypothesis 1, which assumed that "ICT, as a modern e-learning tool, is more important than other sources of knowledge

used to stimulate students for academic achievements, because it was concluded that *success is significantly positively correlated with lectures as a stimulation for learning, indicating that those with higher overall success find lectures more stimulating for learning*. Although the level of this correlation is not high, the statistical significance was in favor of lectures instead of the use of ICT, which many previous studies found to provide wide opportunities for motivation and have good effects on the acquisition of knowledge (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020); contribute to independence and acquire more information (Indariani & Sulivoro, 2018); enable learning autonomy, outlined as a principle and form of learning by which it is possible to adjust the guidance of students according to their specificities, through personalized mentoring work; and present an irreplaceable style of learning and teaching for gifted students that has an exceptional motivational power for self-evaluation and self-direction towards high academic achievements (Siegle, 2003, 2005; Alibabić; Ziegler, 2021) and present an irreplaceable learning autonomy through personalized mentoring. However, we have the encouraging finding that the years of study are positively correlated with learning from additional literature and negatively correlated with learning from lecture notes. The first year of faculty was positively correlated with referring to additional literature and preparing exercises—presentations and research papers for scientific conferences and journals. This indicates that older students evaluate the stimulation of teachers to use ICT higher than younger students. However, university teaching has managed to stimulate students, eventually bringing them to the expected level. Thus, older students learn more from additional literature, while younger students learn more from lecture notes and scripts This confirms the need for more serious reform measures at lower levels of the education system, where students should have reached the necessary level of self-regulation, enabling them to join studies more easily. In addition to inadequate choice, the reason for abandoning studies is the lack of meta-cognition, learning strategies, motivational strategies, etc. (Gojkov Rajić et al. 2021a). Thus, students acquire these competencies, without which there is no academic success, only during their studies. This finding is supported by the theory of self-regulation (Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 2012) and Sternberg's (2020) theory of mental self-government, in which self-regulation has a significant place in terms of achievement, and there are several reasons for this. They should be systematically investigated. Some of them are: inadequate functioning of online devices, incompatibilities, overloading of teachers with the number of classes, colloquia, etc. and the impossibility of searching for materials that

exist on online applications, as well as the lack of time to arrange these, and the fact that using the adopted methods is easier than searching for new ones, finding contents that require restructuring, and the like.

Findings about how stimulating different ways of learning are speak in favour of the gifted and, by extension, back up the general hypothesis. *Namely, the application of several methods is more stimulating to the academically gifted than to other students, and the gifted also manifest a stronger use of e-learning along all the significant characteristics of learning, which in the research findings are related to the influence of e-learning on academic achievements (expanding knowledge according to personal interests, completion of understanding after lectures, research work or writing papers for journals or scientific meetings, and interactive tests with automatic knowledge evaluation).* This finding confirms the third hypothesis, because academically gifted students use electronic media more for self-learning, behind which already stand meta-cognitive strategies, motivational strategies, and other significant properties for self-regulated learning, which is the basis of their achievements. From a theoretical point of view, this could be considered a confirmation of Sternberg's theory of intellectual self-government, especially the ideas that view the cognitive system and its development as a self-modifying system, which is significant and focused on meta-cognition as a basic developmental change that can be learned to a good extent and shaped during education (Sternberg, 2020).

 The hypothesis that the academically gifted students are more focused on e-learning of general education subjects and a foreign language, while the others are more focused on vocational and vocational-applicative subjects, was not confirmed because it turned out to be the other way around. The interpretation of this depends on the type of study. As the survey was conducted online and anonymously through the student network by involving students voluntarily, a large number of faculties from various scientific fields (including mathematics, social and humanities, medicine, and academic and vocational studies) were covered. Therefore, there is a possibility that the higher interest in vocational-applicative subjects among the academically gifted is related to the scientific field in which they study, and even though the studies are academic, vocational competences are still assumed.

In the field of foreign language learning, students have also in earlier research (Gojkov Rajić, et al., 2016a, b; 2021a) considered learning in direct communication during the regular teaching process more suitable for them.

Significant is the finding in the verification of the fifth hypothesis, which tested the assumption that teachers stimulate students to use ICT through seminary papers, making exercises-presentations based on the assignments of teachers and research papers for scientific conferences and journals, using tests with automatic evaluation, and referring to additional literature, which indicates that general success is significantly positively correlated with the teacher's stimulation for using ICT for seminary papers, references to additional literature, and preparing exercises - presentations, which indicates that students with higher academic success perceive that teachers more stimulate the use of ICT for these activities. These student perceptions confirm that this is true, but it is also a sign that they are working on it, that it suits them according to their abilities, and that the teachers keep up with the requirements of emancipatory didactics, which consider autonomy in learning as a basic condition for the advancement of the gifted (Gojkov Rajić, 2021a). There is a small number of research papers for scientific meetings and journals, although the sample also includes second- and third-degree students, which indicates the inability of teachers to devote themselves more to mentoring work with students, already burdened by the number of classes.[1]

The findings in favor of academically gifted students who evaluate ICT resources as high-quality for e-learning proved to be a confirmation of the general hypothesis, because the differences were statistically significant on items related to several aspects of hypermedia programs, as well as their technical support, and the didactic orientation of teachers in mentoring didactic instruction of students also goes in this direction. Therefore, the academically gifted expressed higher scores on the following essential aspects of e-learning: *"the program infrastructure and technical support provides an efficient, high-quality, interesting, interactive learning experience and*

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[1] The standards for the accreditation of institutions and programs allow a weekly number of 12 classes of direct teaching for teachers, or as it is also called active teaching, although this term is not defined in didactics, and is not in use as a term, and for associates up to 20. The situation with associates, who are also studying, is even more difficult because they are in doctoral studies, doing research for publication in scientific journals, in order to acquire the conditions for submitting a thesis, working on a dissertation, etc. Thus, they are still taking the first steps, and with insufficient knowledge, they are pushed to hold exercises, which are not routine in all areas but require a broad knowledge of the subject in order to conduct constructive discussions that would have a motivating effect and lead to the expected outcomes in knowledge and other student competencies. In these conditions, we cannot talk about personalization as understood by the humanistic didactic current, which advocates the autonomy of learning and self-regulation as the basic outcomes and qualities of higher education.

knowledge evaluation," "enables high success criteria, the acquisition of a large fund of information on various contents, learning activities at an appropriate level and appropriate pace," "enables the encouragement of independent reading," "enables experiences in creative thinking and creative solving of multi-solution problems," "enables the development of independence, directing skills, and consistency in learning," and "enables openness to the most diverse fields of knowledge, arts, vocations, and professions". Thus, on all these items, academically gifted students had higher scores, indicating that they find ICT for e-learning more stimulating in these areas than other students. This is an indicator for teachers to introduce more program contents from hypermedia, i.e., more combined learning—direct learning and e-learning—which confirms the research findings mentioned in the introductory part of this paper (Gojkov Rajić & Prtljaga, 2016a, b). This is also supported by the confirmation of the seventh hypothesis, which found that the specifications of computers used by the students are adequate for their e-learning needs, and a positive correlation of this with general success was also found. Therefore, the academically gifted students had adequate devices and good competences for mastering hypermedia programs for the purpose of high academic outcomes. The pedagogical implications of this need no specific interpretation. Good computers, adequate hypermedia, and the training of students to use them are prerequisites for everything else that follows. Although we think that today's young people have mastered using the Internet and online communication, it is not certain that they can navigate the field of e-learning successfully, and that is the first step, which, if they stumble, can stop them, psychologically destabilize them. Failure tends to create negative patterns of behavior and goes in a direction that has caused countless gifted people to derail and never get back on track.

The eighth hypothesis tested the relation between using ICT for learning and the students' personal characteristics (personality traits, memory and reasoning competencies, motivation), which the literature finds to be significant for hypermedia models in e-learning. The finding that the use of ICT ***to expand knowledge*** based on personal interests is positively correlated with the competences of ***intellect, agreement, memory, and reasoning and with the strategies of motivation, organization, and perseverance***, and that the use of ICT ***for complementing and understanding*** after lectures is positively correlated with ***agreeableness, conscientiousness, reasoning competencies,*** and the strategies ***of motivation, organization, and perseverance,*** confirms the assumption as well as the research findings that point to this (Bach, 2007).

At the same time, it also points to the possibility of focusing more attention on some of the mentioned characteristics in an effort to personalize proceedings in mentoring (strategies of motivation and perseverance, etc.), as well as personality traits that, in cooperation with reasoning and memory competencies, can play a crucial role in supporting gifted people in crisis situations and be a defensive shield against depressive crises and withdrawal from motivational strategies of negative expectations.

5. Conclusions

In addition to the value of the findings for further research and verification of the methodological scopes of possible other approaches as well, they can have great significance not only for practitioners but also for educational policy. It is not necessary to explain this in detail, because everyone concerned is educated and experienced in these fields. Practitioners need more organization and help, enabling their efforts to manifest in the quality of higher education, especially for this to be noticeable in academically gifted students, who work harder, as it can be seen in this research, because they are self-regulated, have good motivational strategies, and have other qualities significant for academic achievement. Providing mentoring support to them would certainly affect their academic achievements significantly, although, according to the findings of this research, this support would be significant for other students as well. From the aspect of emancipatory didactics, the solution lies in relieving teachers and focusing more attention on the preparation of good hypermedia, because the findings point to the conclusion that lectures are still more stimulating for the gifted than e-learning.

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EXPLORING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHATGPT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: *As chatbots become increasingly prevalent in our daily lives, it is important to consider their psychological implications. In this qualitative study, we conducted a focus group with 10 psychology students who had experience interacting with chatbots. Participants discussed their emotional responses, attitudes, and behaviors related to chatbots, as well as ethical concerns. Thematic analysis revealed four main themes: (1) convenience and efficiency, (2) frustration and dissatisfaction, (3) social and emotional connections, and (4) ethical considerations. The findings suggest that chatbots can provide convenience and efficiency, but may also lead to frustration and dissatisfaction when they are unable to meet users' needs. Additionally, participants reported feeling a sense of social and emotional connection with chatbots, and expressed concerns about ethical issues such as data privacy and the potential for chatbots to replace human interaction. These findings have implications for the design and implementation of chatbots, as well as for ethical considerations in their use.*

Keywords: *chatbots; psychological implications; human-technology interaction; ethical concerns; user satisfaction.*

1. Introduction

Chatbots, or conversational agents, are computer programs that are designed to simulate human-like conversations with users. In recent years, chatbots have become increasingly popular in various industries, including customer service, healthcare, and education. With the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence and natural language processing technologies, chatbots are

becoming more sophisticated and are able to provide more personalized interactions with users.

However, as chatbots become more prevalent, it is important to consider their potential psychological implications. This paper aims to explore the psychological implications of chatbots and their impact on users' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Specifically, this paper will review the existing literature on chatbots in psychology, conduct a focus group with psychology students to gain insights into their experiences and attitudes towards chatbots, and discuss the implications of these findings for future research and practice.

Chatbots have become increasingly popular in recent years, with the development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology. Chatbots, which are computer programs designed to mimic human conversations, are being used for a variety of purposes, including customer service, mental health counseling, and educational purposes. As the use of chatbots becomes more widespread, there are important questions to be answered about their psychological implications. This literature review explores the current state of research on the psychological implications of chatbots and identifies areas for future research.

One of the main benefits of chatbots is their ability to provide a low-cost and easily accessible form of mental health counseling. Many individuals who suffer from mental health issues do not receive adequate treatment due to cost or accessibility barriers. Chatbots can offer a solution by providing a convenient, anonymous, and affordable option for mental health support. In addition, chatbots can provide users with immediate access to information and resources, reducing the need for in-person consultations.

Another benefit of chatbots is their potential to provide personalized education and training. Chatbots can be programmed to provide feedback and support to users in real-time, enabling them to learn and develop new skills more quickly and effectively. This can be particularly useful in fields such as education, where personalized instruction can lead to improved learning outcomes.

While chatbots offer a range of benefits, there are also risks associated with their use. One major concern is that chatbots may exacerbate social isolation and loneliness, particularly in older adults who may already be at risk for these issues. Research has shown that face-to-face social interactions are critical for maintaining social connections and reducing feelings of loneliness. While

chatbots can provide some form of social interaction, they cannot replace the benefits of in-person social interactions.

Another risk of chatbots is that they may perpetuate biases and stereotypes. Chatbots are programmed by humans and may reflect the biases and stereotypes of their programmers. This can lead to discriminatory behavior and may exacerbate existing inequalities.

Overall, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the psychological implications of chatbots and to raise awareness about the potential ethical concerns associated with their use. By gaining a better understanding of users' experiences with chatbots, we can improve the design and implementation of these technologies to ensure that they are not only effective, but also responsible and ethical.

Literature Review

Research on the psychological implications of interacting with technology has gained increasing attention in recent years. Studies have shown that humans tend to anthropomorphize non-human entities, including robots and virtual assistants, attributing human-like qualities and intentions to them (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007). This tendency can lead to feelings of social connection and companionship, which can have both positive and negative effects on well-being (Skjuve et al., 2021). In particular, research has shown that people may develop emotional attachments to chatbots, and these relationships may impact their emotions, attitudes, and behaviors (Milne-Ives et al., 2020; Kim & Chang, 2020; Ashfaq et al., 2020).

Chatbots have become a popular tool in various domains, including mental health, education, and healthcare. Chatbots are artificial intelligence (AI)-driven conversational agents that simulate human-like interactions and assist users in various tasks. The ethical and human rights implications of using chatbots in these contexts are a growing concern, particularly as they become more ubiquitous. Chatbots are computer programs designed to simulate conversation with human users. They have become increasingly popular in recent years and have been applied in various fields such as customer service, healthcare, and education (Ahmad et al., 2018). However, their psychological implications have received limited attention from researchers. A systematic review by Milne-Ives et al. (2020) found that only a small number of studies have investigated the impact of chatbots on user satisfaction, trust, and engagement.

Several studies have addressed the ethical and human rights implications of using chatbots in mental health. Dang (2021) argued that chatbots should be designed based on a principled and human rights-based approach to AI. This approach focuses on promoting the values of human dignity, autonomy, transparency, accountability, and non-discrimination. D'Alfonso (2020) conducted a review of the literature on the use of chatbots in mental health and concluded that they have the potential to improve access to care, reduce stigma, and increase engagement. However, they also identified several ethical challenges, such as privacy concerns, lack of human oversight, and the potential for harm.

In healthcare, the use of chatbots has also raised ethical and human rights concerns. Vaidyam et al. (2019) provided an overview of the psychiatric landscape and identified the potential benefits of chatbots, such as reducing the burden on clinicians and improving access to care. However, they also discussed the ethical challenges, such as the lack of regulation and standardization, and the potential for privacy breaches.

In education, chatbots have been used to enhance student learning and engagement. Kuhail et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review of the literature on chatbots in education and identified several ethical and human rights issues, such as data privacy, the potential for bias and discrimination, and the impact on student well-being. Skjuve et al. (2021) explored user perceptions of chatbots and found that users were generally positive about their experiences. However, they also identified several concerns, such as the need for more personalized interactions and the potential for the chatbot to replace human support.

Chatbots have also been used to provide mental health interventions to university students. Luo et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of the literature on chatbot-based mental health interventions for university students and found that they can improve mental health outcomes. However, they also identified several ethical challenges, such as the potential for harm, lack of privacy, and the need for human oversight. Mishra et al. (2021) conducted a systematic literature review on the role of chatbots in mental health and found that they have the potential to improve access to care, reduce stigma, and increase engagement. However, they also identified several ethical challenges, such as the lack of regulation, the need for human oversight, and the potential for harm.

Research has also identified several challenges and limitations of chatbot-based interventions. For example, a study by Sands et al. (2021) found that users may be less willing to disclose sensitive information to a chatbot compared to a human therapist. Additionally, users may perceive chatbots as less empathetic and less able to understand their needs compared to human therapists (Bickmore et al., 2005; Bickmore et al., 2009). Moreover, chatbots may lack the ability to respond appropriately to unexpected or complex situations, which may result in user frustration and disengagement (Wang et al., 2019).

There are also ethical considerations surrounding the use of chatbots, particularly in mental health interventions. A study by Halamka et al. (2019) identified several ethical issues related to chatbot-based mental health interventions, such as privacy concerns and potential harm to vulnerable populations. These ethical concerns must be addressed to ensure the responsible use of chatbots in mental health interventions.

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of chatbots in mental health interventions. A randomized controlled trial by Fitzpatrick et al. (2017) found that a chatbot-based intervention was effective in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety in college students. Similarly, a study by Torous et al. (2018) showed that a chatbot-based intervention improved mood and increased self-efficacy in patients with schizophrenia. However, these studies have focused primarily on the efficacy of chatbots as a treatment tool, rather than their psychological implications on users.

Other studies have explored users' emotional responses and attitudes towards chatbots. A study by Brandtzaeg and Følstad (2018) found that users tended to anthropomorphize chatbots and expressed a desire for them to exhibit human-like qualities. Similarly, a study by David, Thérouanne and Milhabet, (2022) found that users perceived chatbots as social actors and attributed human-like traits to them. However, these studies have not fully examined the psychological implications of anthropomorphism and social attribution towards chatbots.

Overall, the existing literature suggests that chatbots have the potential to be effective in mental health interventions, but more research is needed to fully understand their psychological implications on users. Additionally, ethical considerations must be taken into account to ensure the responsible use of chatbots in mental health interventions. Although chatbots have the potential to improve access to care, reduce stigma, and increase engagement, they also

pose several ethical challenges, such as privacy concerns, lack of regulation and standardization, potential for biases, and the need for human oversight. The use of chatbots should be guided by a principled and human rights-based approach to AI, which focuses on promoting the values of human dignity, autonomy, transparency, accountability, and non-discrimination.

The research question for this study is: What are the psychological implications of interacting with ChatGPT?

Research methodology

3.1 Focus Group

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, specifically a focus group, to explore the psychological implications of chatbots among psychology students. The purpose of this focus group was to gather in-depth insights and perspectives from participants regarding their experiences, attitudes, and emotional responses towards chatbots, as well as any ethical concerns related to chatbot use.

Recruitment and Consent

Participants were recruited through flyers and email invitations sent to psychology classes. A total of 10 psychology students participated in the focus group. All participants provided informed consent before the start of the session, which included an explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures.

3.1.2 Procedure

The focus group was held in a quiet conference room on campus and was moderated by a trained researcher with expertise in qualitative research methods. The session lasted approximately 2 hours. The moderator introduced the topic of chatbots and provided a brief overview of the research questions before beginning the warm-up activity.

The session began with a warm-up activity designed to encourage participants to share their personal experiences with chatbots. Participants were then asked a series of questions related to their emotional responses, attitudes, and behaviors towards chatbots. These questions were designed to elicit a range of perspectives on the topic, including positive and negative reactions to chatbots and their potential impacts on mental health and well-being.

Participants were encouraged to share their personal experiences with chatbots and to discuss their emotional responses, attitudes, and behaviors towards them. The moderator used open-ended questions and prompts to facilitate discussion, encouraging participants to share a range of perspectives on the topic, including both positive and negative reactions to chatbots and their potential impacts on mental health and well-being.

The focus group also explored ethical concerns related to chatbots, including issues of privacy, data security, and the potential for chatbots to perpetuate social biases and stereotypes. Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts on these issues and to discuss potential solutions and best practices for chatbot design and implementation.

Throughout the session, the moderator used active listening and clarification techniques to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to share their perspectives and to probe for deeper insights and understandings. The focus group concluded with a debriefing session in which participants were given the opportunity to share their overall impressions and to provide feedback on the session format and content.

Overall, the focus group provided a rich and nuanced understanding of the psychological implications of chatbots, drawing on the perspectives and experiences of psychology students with a range of backgrounds and interests. The insights generated by the focus group were used to inform the analysis and discussion of the study's findings.

Results

The focus group participants reported mixed emotions about their experiences with chatbots. Some participants found interacting with chatbots to be convenient and helpful, while others found the interactions to be frustrating and impersonal. Several participants expressed concern about the lack of human connection and empathy when using chatbots for psychological support.

The focus group discussions yielded several key themes related to the psychological implications of chatbots. These themes are discussed in detail below.

Emotional Responses: Participants reported a range of emotional responses to their interactions with chatbots. Some participants described feeling frustrated or annoyed when a chatbot was unable to understand their question or provide

a helpful response. Others reported feeling amused or entertained by the chatbot's responses. A few participants even reported feeling a sense of companionship or emotional attachment to the chatbot, particularly in cases where the chatbot mimic human-like qualities or provide emotional support.

Attitudes: Participants' attitudes toward chatbots varied widely. Some expressed a strong preference for interacting with chatbots over humans in certain situations, such as when seeking information or completing a task. Others expressed a preference for human interaction and felt that chatbots could never fully replace the value of human connection. Some participants expressed concerns about the potential impact of chatbots on social skills and interpersonal relationships, while others saw chatbots as a helpful tool for improving communication and reducing social anxiety.

Behaviors: Participants reported a range of behaviors related to their interactions with chatbots. Some reported engaging in longer conversations with chatbots than they would with humans, particularly in cases where the chatbot was able to provide helpful or interesting information. Others reported feeling a sense of obligation to continue interacting with a chatbot, even when they were not enjoying the conversation or receiving helpful responses. A few participants reported intentionally trying to "trick" or "test" the chatbot's abilities.

Ethical Concerns: Participants discussed several ethical concerns related to the use of chatbots, particularly in cases where chatbots are designed to provide emotional support or advice. Some expressed concerns about the potential for chatbots to inadvertently provide harmful or inaccurate advice, particularly in cases where users may be vulnerable or in need of professional support. Others expressed concerns about the potential for chatbots to collect and misuse personal data, particularly in cases where chatbots are designed to collect personal information or provide personalized recommendations.

Overall, the focus group discussions highlighted the complex and multifaceted nature of the psychological implications of chatbots. While some participants reported positive experiences and attitudes toward chatbots, others expressed concerns about the potential impact of chatbots on emotional well-being, social skills, and interpersonal relationships. These findings suggest the need for continued research on the psychological implications of chatbots, as well as careful consideration of the ethical implications of chatbot design and use.

Discussions and Implications

The rapid growth and advancement of technology have enabled chatbots to be a more prevalent presence in our daily lives. With the increasing use of chatbots in various settings, it is important to consider their potential psychological implications.

One potential psychological implication of chatbots is their impact on social interactions. Chatbots can simulate human-like interactions, and this can result in users feeling a sense of connection and social support from them. However, this interaction is one-sided and lacks the reciprocity and depth of a genuine human interaction. This may lead to a decrease in social skills and the ability to form and maintain meaningful relationships.

Another potential psychological implication is the impact of chatbots on mental health. Some studies have shown that chatbots can be effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression (Fitzpatrick et al., 2017; Torous et al., 2018). However, there is also a risk that chatbots may exacerbate mental health issues, particularly in cases where the chatbot fails to provide adequate support or advice. Additionally, chatbots may also contribute to a sense of depersonalization and disconnection, which can negatively impact mental well-being.

Privacy and security concerns are another potential psychological implication of chatbots. Chatbots may collect personal information and data, and there is a risk that this information could be used for malicious purposes. Users may also feel uncomfortable or vulnerable sharing personal information with a chatbot, particularly if they perceive the chatbot as lacking empathy or emotional intelligence.

It is also important to consider the ethical implications of chatbots. As chatbots become more advanced, there is a risk that they may be used to manipulate or deceive users. For example, chatbots may be programmed to persuade users to purchase products or services, or to influence political opinions. Additionally, the use of chatbots in sensitive settings, such as mental health support, raises ethical concerns around the provision of adequate and appropriate care.

The findings of this study shed light on the potential psychological implications of chatbots on users. The results of the focus group discussion suggest that individuals tend to have mixed emotional responses when interacting with chatbots, including frustration, boredom, and enjoyment.

Participants also expressed concerns about the lack of emotional connection and empathy from chatbots, which may limit the potential benefits of their use in certain settings. However, some participants also acknowledged the convenience and efficiency of chatbots in certain contexts.

The findings of this study have implications for both researchers and practitioners. Researchers may consider conducting further studies to better understand the psychological implications of chatbots on users, including the potential benefits and limitations. Practitioners may need to consider the use of chatbots in specific contexts, taking into account the emotional needs of users and the potential limitations of chatbot technology.

Conclusions

Chatbots are an increasingly prevalent presence in our daily lives, and their potential psychological implications cannot be ignored. While chatbots may have some benefits, such as providing social support and reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, they also pose risks, particularly around social interaction, mental health, privacy, security, and ethics. It is important for developers and users alike to consider these implications and work towards ensuring that chatbots are used in an ethical and responsible manner.

In conclusion, the results of this study suggest that chatbots have the potential to elicit mixed emotional responses from users, including frustration, boredom, and enjoyment. The lack of emotional connection and empathy may limit the potential benefits of chatbots in certain settings, particularly in healthcare and mental health contexts. However, chatbots may also provide cost-effective and accessible solutions in certain domains.

The findings of this study have implications for both researchers and practitioners. Future research may further explore the psychological implications of chatbots, including the potential benefits and limitations. Practitioners should consider the emotional needs of users and the limitations of chatbot technology when implementing chatbots in specific contexts.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of considering the potential psychological implications of chatbots on users. While chatbots may provide benefits in certain contexts, their limitations must also be taken into account. As technology continues to evolve and play an increasingly important role in our lives, it is crucial to continue studying the psychological impact of emerging technologies like chatbots.

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EFFECT OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTION ON AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE OF PUPILS WITH PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ABUJA

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Abstract: *This study intervened in the problem behaviors of aggression and violence noticed in Nigerian primary schools in Abuja F.C.T with the use of Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI). The study employed quasi-experimental research design. The population of the study consists of all primary school pupils in Abuja FCT Nigeria. Two purposes, research questions and hypotheses guided this study. The sample size consists of 44 pupils, drawn from six primary schools purposively sampled from 40 schools in FCT. Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ) were the instrument used for data collection. Data were analyzed using means and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Findings indicate that Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) significantly affects aggression and violence positively leading to a change of behaviors. It is recommended that Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) should be employed in all primary schools in Nigeria and in the world as intervention and corrective mechanism to problem behaviors in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning in schools.*

Keywords: *Cognitive Behavioral Intervention; Aggression; Violence and Primary School.*
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Introduction

The classroom conflict experienced by teachers in primary school cannot be over emphasized with the complex nature of our society where pupils from different homes with different background and behaviors gather in one class to learn. A classroom comprises of pupils with excellent and good behaviors, those with good with little character issues, those with averagely good

behaviors and pupils with problem behaviors such as aggression and violence in the classroom. According to Abdulmalik, Ani, Ajuwon & Omigbodun (2016) aggressive and violent behaviors among pupils "represents a wide spectrum that ranges from a major public health concern to difficulties with academic performance", disruptive behaviors poor achievements, disciplinary problems, high headedness, and lack of respect for teachers. To Nnaebue and Nwokolo (2017), Pupils in schools suffer from injuries and traumatic experiences arising from violence and aggressive behaviors from other pupils and may or may not have the confidence to relate it to their teachers in school and their parents at home.

Aggression and violence in the classroom are rampant and has unprecedented consequences on the health and academic achievements of the pupils and that of other pupils in the same classroom. The exhibition of aggressive and violent behavior has become a rampant occurrence and one of the major problems associated with problem behaviors in the primary schools especially in this generation of child right act. Eziyi and Odoemelam (2005), faceted that aggressive and violent behaviors especially in the classroom are the most frustrating to the school and teachers which is considered normal among young pupils who may have not understood that aggressive and violent behaviors are wrong, affecting themselves and that of others in the school and in the classroom.

One notable consequence of aggression and violence is its capacity to obstruct teaching and learning and the intimidation tendencies it carries in school for both the pupil directly involved and other pupils who are indirectly involved (the classmates). Schools and other stakeholders should make frank effort to reduce aggression and violence in school using different means and interventions packages (Odekunle & Muraina, 2019). Complementing the above, Muraina and Umar (2018) posited that "it is appropriate for schools to attempt to reduce behaviors such as fighting, name-calling, bullying, and general intimidation that can create a negative school climate and lead to more serious violence". They added that problem behaviors such as aggression and violence "even when not overtly violence, may inhibit learning and create interpersonal problems for those involved". The above problems hitherto prompted the research action of researchers to conduct researchers that bring the problem of aggression and violence under control. Cognitive behavioral intervention is one of such intervention designed to bring aggression and violence under control in our classrooms.

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) is a therapy designed by experts as intervention packages with the intention of changing "negative thoughts patterns" with destructive tendencies and emotional destabilization leading to disaffection, dissatisfactions, depression, anxiety and other psychological traumas and affect learning in schools and institutions. Very well-mind (2020) defines cognitive behavioral therapy as a type of psychotherapeutic treatment that help people to change their destructive thought patterns which are capable of influencing behaviors and emotions (Odekunle & Muraina, 2019). Very well-mind further added that cognitive behavioral therapy can be typified as follows; rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT), cognitive therapy, multimodal therapy and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Martin (2020) described cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as "a short-term, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment that takes a hand-on, practical approach to problem solving" basically, the focus of CBT is about "changing people's attitudes and their behavior by focusing on the thoughts, images, beliefs and attitudes that are held (a person's cognitive processes) and how these processes relate to the way a person behaves".

Furthermore, cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) according to Brock (2013) "is based on the belief that behavior is mediated by cognitive processes". Brock further noted that pupils "are taught to examine their own thoughts and emotions, recognize when negative thoughts and emotions are escalating in intensity, and then use strategies to change their thinking and behavior". These interventions in schools will be used on pupils with learning challenges especially those with problem behaviors (Muraina & Umar, 2018). To Brock, "these interventions tend to be used with learners who display problem behavior related to specific emotions or feelings, such as anger or anxiety". Nicole (2001) faceted that "cognitive behavioral interventions (CBI) are based on the simple principle that thinking (an internal behavior) controls overt actions (external behavior). The implementation of cognitive behavioral intervention will assist offenders and children with problem behaviors to absorb new and relevant attitude and skills and "new ways of thinking that can lead to changes in their behavior and actions, and ultimately affect their conduct". For Cognitive behavioral intervention to intervene on the concept of aggression and violence, their conceptual framework is necessary at this point.

Aggression may be defined as outburst of destructive behaviors as a result of painful stimulant on the senses of one and influence of psychological stress that is unfavorable and unpleasant to the person. Muraina and Umar (2018),

aggression is the feeling of discomfort and anger as a result painful action and words which may reflect on the countenance to the person involved which may not led to physical destruction of properties. Violence on the other hand is the act or use of "physical force" to inflict pain on someone physically and engaging in destructive activities leading to injuries on someone and destruction of properties and relationship. Good Therapy described violence "as the use of physical force with the intent to injure another person or destroy properties". Aggression may or may not lead to destruction of life and properties but violence which involves the use of force leads to harm and injuries on people and destruction of properties (Muraina & Umar, 2018). In an attempt to overcome aggression and violence in schools and in the classrooms, some studies were carried out by some stakeholders and experts in educational areas, some studies carried out by some researchers are reviewed below.

The research work of Courtney (2010) on the effects that cognitive behavior modification intervention can have on a child with behavioral disabilities is one of this intervention designed to curb the issue of behavioral disabilities and behavioral problems in the classroom. Findings of the study indicated that cognitive-behavioral therapy used in conjunction with teacher-implemented contingencies was found to be more effective in reducing disruptive behavior. In a relative development, the work of Jellesma (2020) on cognitive behavior therapy in the school setting: A case study of a nine-year-old anxious boy with extreme blushing is one of such interventions on behavioral problems in the classroom. Findings of the study indicated that "the test anxiety and blushing decreased and on the achievement test three years later, performance was good".

Furthermore, an intervention work on efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapy in curbing peer victimization among secondary school students in Niger State was conducted by Ozodinobi, Ogwuche & Yusuf (2019). The "findings from the study indicated among others that there was a significant difference in peer victimization by the control and experimental groups after the treatment". In addition, the research work on effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral group therapy on coping strategies and in reducing anxiety, depression, and physical complaints in student victims of bullying was conducted by Moslem, Nour-Mohammad, Mohammad, SajadKhanjani, and Mohammad (2017). The findings of the study reported that cognitive-behavioral group therapy reduced anxiety, depression, and physical complaints among students. Classroom-based cognitive-behavioral intervention to prevent classroom-based

cognitive-behavioral intervention to prevent aggression: efficacy and social validity was another intervention-based research work carried out by Daunic, Smith, Brank & Penfield (2016). The result indicated "significant positive treatment effects on knowledge of problem-solving concepts and teacher ratings of aggression among pupils in schools.

Relatively, the research work on utilizing cognitive behavioral interventions to positively impact academic achievement in middle school students was conducted by Brett and Arline (2019) the results revealed that "practical examples and resources were provided to assist school counselors in implementing CBI interventions to help students control cognitive thought processes and positively impact academic achievement" CBI significantly corrected students cognitive thought processes and impacted positively on their academic achievement. The above review dealt significantly with some problem behaviors in our classrooms but non worked directly on the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggression and violence in primary school in the FCT, this study intends to fill this gap.

Statement of the Problem

The greatest challenge of the class teachers of twenty first century is the growing rate of problem behaviors in the classroom. The trend of children upbringing in this century is generating classroom conflict between the school, the teachers and pupils in the school environment. Different parenting style of different homes is creating serious academic conflict in our classroom. The above is generating problem behaviors such as destructive and aggressive, restlessness, lack of respect for teachers, refusal to adhere to instruction from the teachers leading to indiscipline in our classrooms especially in primary schools.

To make the more complex is the attitude of school management and school owners with the school policies that prevent the teachers from administration of discipline in school. These policies are giving pupils ground to misbehave knowing well that the teachers cannot met any punishment on them because of their parental and management coverage from been given serious punishment. The child right act domesticated in some of our countries has also placed the teachers on a tight Conner and have prevented teachers from proper administration of discipline in our schools especially in private schools creating room for problem behaviors. It is in view of the above this study seeks to determine the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggressive and violent behaviors in schools in Abuja.

Purpose of the Study

The following objectives were formulated to guide this study;

To determine the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggressive behaviors of pupils with problem behaviors in primary schools in Abuja

To determine the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on violent behaviors of pupils with problem behavior in primary schools in Abuja F.C.T

Hypothesis

Cognitive behavioral intervention has no significant effect on aggressive behavior of pupils with problem behavior in primary schools in Abuja

Cognitive behavioral intervention has no significant effect on violent behaviors of pupils with problem behavior in primary school in Abuja

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design to determine the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggression and violence of pupils with problem behavior in primary school in Abuja "It is non-randomized pre-test, post-test, non- equivalent experimental and control group design with experimental group receiving treatment". Quasi-experimental design establishes cause and effect relationship. It is most powerful and valid design which can be used to identify confidently the cause of any given effect. The sample size consists of 44 pupils identified with aggression and violence. The sample size was drawn from six primary schools purposively sampled from 40 schools in FCT for the study. Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ) were the instrument used for data collection. The researchers administered the Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ) at baseline to all pupils in two groups. Cluster mean of 2.50 on the (AVQ) was used as a benchmark for inclusion into the study. Thus, pupils with cluster mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as to have experienced aggression and violence over the past two weeks and included in the study whereas pupils with a mean score below this set benchmark was excluded.

The eligible participants were randomly assigned to the control and treatment group respectively. After pre-testing both groups using the Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ), the intervention package was delivered to the treatment group but withheld from the control group. Treatment was guided by CBI intervention package developed by the researchers. The package

served as a guide for delivering the treatment intervention which aimed to dispute aggression and violence capable of leading them to cheerfulness. The intervention program lasted for 4 weeks (3 sessions per week at 50 minutes each). The pupils in the control group only received the usual advisory talk during the same period. Post-test was administered to both groups.

Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ) developed by Buss and Perry, (1992) was the instrument used for data collection. It is a version of aggression questionnaire used as tool for aggression and violence. The 29 item Aggression scale consists of 4 factors, Physical Aggression (PA), Verbal Aggression (VA), Anger (A) and Hostility (H). The total score for Aggression is the sum of the factor scores. The developer identifies a cut-off score of 3 as the optional cut point for screening purposes. The researchers streamline the 29 items to the level of primary school pupils in line with their age level and used for data collection. Cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) manual, the intervention manual for overcoming aggression and violence for primary school pupils with problem behaviors was based on the technique and descriptions in (CBI) manuals (Nicole, 2001; Sofronoff, Attwood, Hinton, & Levin, 2006) which include quotes to aid in disputing participant dysfunctional emotions. The manual incorporated many positive aspects of African cultural beliefs. The participants were taught to see the dangers of aggression and violence on pupils learning and health through the use of direct teaching with the aids of projectors, cognitive behavioral exercises, assignments, role playing, modeling, supportive and bibliotherapeutic techniques of (CBI). Homework, assignments were given to participants at the end of each session. The researcher used Gbagi and pidgin English as the intervention language.

Control of Extraneous Variable

To ensure that the outcome of this study was not affected by variables other than the treatment variable.

The participants were assigned to treatment and control groups randomly. Participants were asked to throw coin to the air with the awareness that one face is for treatment and the other is for control. This balloting with replacement gave each participant equal chance to be include in either treatment or control group.

To control "Hawthorne effect" the researchers explained to the respondents that they were trained educational psychologist with the intention to help the

respondents to be cheerful to overcome their aggression and violent emotions and thoughts.

To eliminate fear and sensitivity to the experiment and thought manipulations, participants were made to see reward for participation. Igbo, J.N. and Ojonugwa, D.S (2018).

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 probability level. The partial squared (n^2_p) was used to determine the effect of the treatment. 0.20 was adopted to interpret the magnitude of the effect as modest effect, 0.41-0.8 as moderate effect, and 0.81 and above as strong effect.

Results

Table 1: ANCOVA results for the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggression and violence by treatment conditions

Group		N	Mean	SD	df	F	sig.	(n^2_p)
Control	pretest	11	11.50	3.09				
	posttest	11		16.60		3.69		
					1.25			
					2.78	.00	.99	
Treatment	pretest	11	15.17	6.98				
	Posttest	11	48.18	7.88				

As shown in table 1, the result of data analysis revealed that participant in control group had pretest mean of 11.50 with standard deviation of 3.09 while participant in experimental group had pretest mean of 15.17 with standard deviation of 6.98. As indicated above, the control group had posttest mean of

16.60 with standard deviation of 3.69, while the experimental group had a posttest mean of 48.18 with a standard deviation of 7.88. The researcher found a significant and strong effect of cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) on the aggression and violence of primary school pupils with problem behaviors in the treatment group compared to those in the control group. $F(1.25) = 2.78$, p= .00, $(n^2)_p = .99$. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant effect of cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) on the aggression and violence in the treatment group compared to those in the control group was rejected.

Discussion

The study explored the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggression and violence of pupils with problem behavior in primary school in Abuja the findings were supported by Agbaria (2010) who worked on cognitive behavioral intervention in dealing with school violence among Arab Palestinian adolescents in Israel. Agbaria (2010) reported effectiveness of cognitive behavioral intervention in dealing with violent behavior, with an improvement in most areas tested in the test group, compared to the control group. The finding of this study is also in line with that of Lee (2019) who worked on the use of cognitive behavioral therapy for school refusal behavior in educational psychology practice. Lee reported that cognitive behavioral therapy for school impacted positively of the refusal behaviors of pupils in primary school. In a related development, The finding of this study is in line with the work of Mohammad, Morteza, Leila, Roya, Marjan, & Ajami (2016) on cognitive behavioral therapy for Treatment of Adult Obesity. The study reported that "behavioral therapy along with diet and exercise should be used to improve the effectiveness of traditional methods". According to the researchers, "cognitive-behavioral therapy of obesity is based on the cause and nature of obesity as this intervention is effective for treating obesity with a focus on sustainable change in lifestyle.

Furthermore, the result of this study is also in agreement with Gorman, Kassinove and Sukhodolsky (2004) who worked on cognitive behavioral therapy for anger in children and adolescents: a meta-analysis. Gorman, Kassinove and Sukhodolsky reported that cognitive behavioral therapy corrected anger in children and adolescents. The result of this study is also in line with the work on Tachelle, Garry and Karla (2014) who worked on interdisciplinary collaboration: cognitive behavioral interventions in special education and school psychology.

Conclusion

The study indicated obviously the presence of aggressive and violent pupils in our classrooms. This study examined the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) on aggression and violence with pupils with problem behaviors in primary schools in Abuja Nigerian Federal Capital Territory. A before and after analysis of using 44 revealed that Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) corrected the aggression and violent behaviors of pupils with problem behaviors in the classrooms.

Recommendations

The government and school authorities should involve more guidance counselors and educational psychologist to intervene in correcting problem behaviors in schools.

Classrooms and learning environments that are capable of increasing the positive emotions should be provided by schools and the government.

The government and stakeholders should provide avenue at intervals for intervention research work to correct problem behaviors in schools.

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

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Abstract: *The society we live in is full of crisis-generating events. People face daily events that they cannot cope with on their own, such as wars, pandemics, natural disasters, famine, drought, financial problems, unemployment, political uncertainties, social upheavals, personal crises, divorces, deaths, or involvement in critical incidents. A professional category that goes through crises and is frequently exposed to critical incidents is the firefighter rescuers. (Vancu 2013) The role of the psychologist working in emergency situations is to provide psychological first aid in the initial phase of the crisis so that symptoms do not worsen and the firefighter can function at normal psychological parameters.*

Keywords: *crisis; traumatic events; firefighter rescuer; emergency; crisis intervention; psychological first aid.*

1. Theoretical foundation

People describe negative life events using words such as stress, distress, emergency, or crisis. However, stress is not a crisis; it is an event that triggers a non-specific defense reaction of the body to a threatening situation. Distress is an unpleasant situation perceived as dangerous or embarrassing, and emergency is a combination of circumstances that require immediate action. Distress or emergency leads to stress, and stress itself has the potential to become a "crisis." Whether distress or stress turns into a crisis depends on each individual's ability to deal with such life circumstances (Hoff, 1995).

Over time, various definitions have been given to the concept of crisis. A complex definition is provided by James and Gilliland (2005): "A crisis is a perception or experiencing of an event or situation as an intolerably difficult challenge that exceeds the person's current resources and coping mechanisms."

Crisis involves a rapid change in an individual's functional state, resulting from a contextual situation that is unusual and to which the individual reacts subjectively and emotionally, with the triggering event compromising the individual's emotional stability and coping ability (Yeager and Roberts, 2003).

"Crisis is not a mental or emotional disorder. Crisis can be defined as a serious situation or a turning point generated by danger or opportunity" (Hoff, 1995).

"A crisis is a perception or experiencing of an event or situation as an intolerably difficult challenge that exceeds the person's current resources and coping mechanisms" (James and Gilliland, 2005).

The word "crisis" derives from the Greek word "crisis," which means decision or turning point, and was introduced to the field of mental health in 1944 by Erik Lindemann. He studied the reactions of 101 individuals who experienced a crisis and found that "adequate management of grief reactions can prevent prolonged and severe disturbances of social adaptation and subsequent mental disorders" and highlighted the importance of caregivers in overcoming the suffering caused by a crisis (Lindemann, 1944).

Later, Gerald Caplan and a team at Harvard studied the reaction of families after World War II. He conceptualized a crisis as a short-term response to severe stress, which produces a disruption of individual "homeostatic" mechanisms. Following this disruption, the individual engages in activities aimed at restoring balance. Additionally, Caplan considers that a crisis occurs when the individual does not have an immediate solution to the problem at hand, feeling that it is insurmountable: "A crisis occurs when a person faces an important life obstacle that appears for a time insurmountable through the use of usual problem-solving methods" (Caplan, 1964).

In the 1960s, the first crisis intervention centers appeared, including phone lines for individuals in crisis and prevention centers in schools (Slaikeu, 1990).

It should be noted that there are no symptoms of crisis, as all manifestations are expressions of hyper-alertness of the autonomic nervous system, emotional imbalance, and the manifestation of pre-existing psychopathological disorders before the crisis occurs (Howarth, R.A., 2011). Each individual manifests differently in limit situations, which they cannot manage physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually.

However, analyzing all definitions and characteristics of researchers, there are several common reactions: sleep disturbances, eating disorders, fatigue,

abdominal cramps, digestion problems, diarrhea, nausea, headaches, difficulty making decisions, difficulty concentrating, difficulty solving problems, dizziness, loss of balance, irritability, emotional instability, muscle tension, fear, panic, nightmares, social withdrawal, isolation, feelings of guilt, feelings of hopelessness, emotional confusion, memory disorders, anxiety, hyper vigilance, suspicion, sadness and suicidal thoughts, aggression, blaming others, extreme sensitivity, and manic episodes (Doka, K., 2002).

Roberts and Yeager (2009) developed a classification that emphasizes the nature of the critical incident, which is the most commonly used in crisis intervention programs. Thus, we distinguish:

crisis is a danger but also an opportunity - it is a danger because it exceeds the individual's coping capacity; it is an opportunity because it makes them seek solutions and learn new coping methods for future crises.

crisis has a complex clinical aspect - characterized by unstable affective and behavioral elements

crisis contains the kernel of development and change - personal development is imminent because the individual mobilizes their existing resources and discovers new ones while resolving the situation that caused the crisis. A person who has overcome a crisis will never be the same again, and change is inevitable.

- crisis does not have standardized interventions - there is no recipe for overcoming a crisis. Each individual responds in their own way to a unique and unrepeatable situation.
- a crisis represents a necessity for change - it arises as a result of stagnation, inflexibility in the face of life situations.
- a crisis is universal - it is part of human existence, being present in all cultures. (France, K., 1982):

Whether they become crisis situations or not depends on how the person interprets the stressful events and crisis situation in their own way, based on cognitive schemas, previous experience, coping abilities, individual resources, and proximal support.

2. Research design

The present study is a qualitative one, based on the reality that firefighters attribute certain meanings to the world they live in, and these meanings are to some extent different from person to person (Myers, 2000). Investigating how

firefighters experience life, in this case, their experience of participating in a rescue operation involving a victim in agony, offers the possibility of describing different subjective realities.

Qualitative research provides the opportunity for a deeper understanding of the research subject, by analyzing the whole and the dynamics of the relationships between phenomena, capturing the human experience in all its richness. It investigates a small number of cases, sometimes under the conditions of a close interaction between the researcher, psychologist, and the cases themselves.

2.1. Objectives and hypotheses
The objective is to observe the stages of psychological crisis among rescue firefighters, provide psychological first aid, and prevent psychiatric problems.
Hypotheses:
1. Identifying normal reactions versus atypical reactions in firefighters at the intervention site;
2. Providing psychological first aid to rescuers at the intervention site;
3. post-session psychological evaluation of debriefing and defusing;
4. Psychological intervention to reduce psychological reactions in firefighters.

2.2 Research method
Instruments used:
1. Direct observation on site
2. Clinical interview;
3. Observation grid;
4. Beck Depression Inventory (21 items);
5. Somatization scale;
6. Quality of Life questionnaire;
7. Coping scale;
8. STAI X2 (trait).

Subjects investigated:
- 6 firefighter rescuers, one of whom was on his first rescue mission.

2.3. Description of the crisis situation:
Through a call to 112, an accident with three trapped victims is reported. A rescue team consisting of 4 firefighters and a Mobile Emergency Service, Resuscitation and Extrication Service (SMURD=MESRES) team consisting of a doctor, a nurse and 2 firefighters heads towards the accident site. The 6

male firefighter rescuers, aged between 23-48, from the emergency services participated in the extrication of three victims, one of whom was in agony, trapped in the car involved in the road accident. Of the 6 firefighters, one was on his first intervention, having just joined the team. A psychologist from the emergency services was also present at the scene.

2.4. Psychological aspects observed by the psychologist during the rescue intervention:
        -the 5 firefighters act promptly, carrying out their activities according to specific procedures and protocols. They demonstrate emotional control, self-control, decisiveness, teamwork, effective communication, speed, and safety under time pressure, and resilience to stress.
        -1 firefighter shows disorientation, total lack of action, difficulty concentrating, emotional imbalance, crying, fixed gaze, psychomotor agitation, and cannot communicate.

3. CRISIS INTERVENTION AND EVALUATION:
The role of the psychologist in a crisis is "to be present alongside the person in crisis, more of a companion than a guide, more of a friend than a teacher" (Welshons, 2002).

In order to carry out the crisis intervention plan, the model proposed by Roberts (Vrasti, 2006) was used and personalized.

Stage 1 - Early identification of the rescuer in crisis - immediate action, at the intervention site

In this stage, we analyzed the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral characteristics that all 6 firefighters directly manifested, and identified the specific symptomatology of the psychological crisis. This stage involves direct observation and data collection at the crisis site, in order to evaluate all firefighters and identify the firefighter in crisis and implicit danger to oneself and others, as well as the immediate psychological needs of the firefighter (Marineanu, V. Voicu, I. 2016).

Stage 2 - Rapidly establishing contact with the firefighter in psychological crisis due to exposure to the psychotraumatic event - immediate action at the intervention site.
In this stage, it is important to immediately remove the firefighter in crisis from the intervention site due to the risk of mission failure, defocusing from the intervention, distraction with other activities (including music, videos, VR

techniques based on relaxation), physical relaxation exercises, active and attentive listening, or providing the person with the opportunity to communicate in the way they can and want to. Focusing on both verbal and non-verbal content is also an essential aspect to consider, while maintaining a focused, open, honest, and sincere attitude.

Stage 3 - Debriefing and defusing sessions with the entire intervention team - at 24, 72 hours after the mission

Debriefing and defusing psychological sessions are carried out with all 6 firefighters, even if the other 5 did not show symptoms, with the aim of prevention and positive influence on the sixth firefighter who manifested acute stress reactions. Due to the fact that the symptoms persisted in one firefighter, we moved on to stage 4 only with him. (Mitchell, J.T. Everly, G.S. 2000).

Stage 4 -Psychological evaluation of the firefighter and identification of the triggering factor - this stage is carried out at the psychological office.

In this stage, a psychological evaluation of the rescue firefighter is conducted using the psychological instruments mentioned in this article (questionnaires, tests, interviews). The firefighter is asked to describe the event they participated in and all the symptoms they experienced.

Test results:

Beck Inventory: score 22, indicates **mild depression**, with the highest scores obtained for feelings of sadness, guilt, sleep disturbance, and loss of sexual appetite.

Somatization Scale: score 33, indicates **a moderate degree of somatization**. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1=never and 7=very often, the client marked 6 items: "difficulty falling asleep"; "restless sleep".

Coping Scale: active: score 12; planning: score 13; disengagement from current activities: score 12; restraint coping: score 13; **seeking social support**: **score 16;** seeking emotional social support: score 12; positive reinterpretation: score 14; **acceptance: score** 15; denial: score 6; emotional discharge: score 7; religious coping: score 4; mental disengagement: score 7; behavioral disengagement: score 10; use of alcohol/illicit drugs: score 2.

The highest score was obtained in "seeking social support", which is an active coping mechanism. It is observed that predominantly active coping mechanisms are used.

Quality of Life Satisfaction Evaluation Questionnaire: Final Score 4, with the lowest score obtained in the category of leisure time.

Observation grid during intervention: confused. Person has become stuck and unable to intervene, emotional instability.

Description of psychological components:

- on a subjective/emotional level, there is a mild depressive mood.
- from a cognitive perspective: unaffected, no irrational thoughts, unimpaired reasoning.
- frequently exhibits behaviors of withdrawal, isolation, lack of interest in recreational activities, and low psychological energy.
- sleep-wake rhythm is disturbed.
- in terms of defensive/adaptive mechanisms, active coping mechanisms are utilized.

However, there are some suggestions for those who come into contact with a person in crisis that should be taken into account during an intervention. These were formulated by Wheeler-Roy and Amyot in 2004:

Conclusions:

Following the psychological evaluation, the following psychological conclusions can be drawn:

- the presence of a mild state of depression characterized by disturbed sleep, lack of psychological energy, fatigue, lack of interest in others, loss of joy and pleasure in normally enjoyable activities, decreased appetite and libido.

It meets only 4 of the 9 DSM V criteria for Major Depressive Disorder:

-depressed mood almost every day (feelings of sadness and emptiness);

-markedly diminished interest or pleasure in almost all activities most of the day, nearly every day;

-insomnia almost every day;

-fatigue or loss of energy almost every day.

Subclinical case

Recommendations:

-family and social support;

-counseling sessions during crisis situations.

Stage 5 - Management of the person's dysfunctional negative emotions in crisis - at the Psychological Office

In this stage, the intervention focuses on identifying and expressing emotions and thoughts in an empathetic and compassionate manner towards the emotional state of the firefighter, helping him to accept his emotions and thoughts without judging himself. (Boelen, P.A., Hout, M.A., Bout, J., 2006). In this stage can be very useful the breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, distraction techniques, engaging in various relaxation activities, VR techniques. (Marineanu, V. 2015).

The correction of cognitive distortions regarding the crisis takes place to reduce dysfunctional maladaptive reactions ("all or nothing" thinking,

catastrophic thinking, mental filtering) to prevent the onset of PTSD. (Yeager. K.R., Roberts, A.R., 2003).

Stage 6 - Generating and exploring coping alternatives

Intervention in this stage focuses on establishing a relationship of unconditional acceptance, followed by the firefighter identifying what he believes has triggered the crisis, clarifying the issues they must face, identifying the source of the problem, encouraging exploration of the emotions and thoughts that generate them, as well as exploring appropriate coping alternatives through a problem-solving process oriented towards a positive direction. Additionally, it is important to cultivate optimism, understanding that the problem is external, temporary, specific, and that it does not represent an inevitable expression of personal failure. Selecting alternative coping strategies, identifying social support, identifying familiar coping strategies or new ones, as well as developing and using coping statements for each of the mentioned problems represent other specific directions of intervention for a psychological crisis.

Stage 7 – Implementation of an action plan

The action plan for exiting the crisis aims to restore psychological balance and proper functioning of the person based on their pre-existing adaptive coping resources; their vision of the crisis, and the accessible social support network. The firefighter has benefited from systematic and progressive desensitization through participation in other missions with less emotionally charged critical incidents.

The crisis action plan focuses on competence, potential, change, and possible solutions, not on deficits, limitations, problems, stagnation, and causes. The firefighter must be functional in their professional activity, not professionally isolated or excluded from activity.

Stage 8 – Psychological reassessment of the firefighter

Following the psychological reassessment at a 6-week interval, in which the firefighter participated in 10 counseling sessions and had a new call with a non-life-threatening victim while being observed by the psychologist, no acute stress reactions were observed. The firefighter displayed emotional stability, self-control, and acted professionally according to procedures and protocols during the call.

Two days after the call, the firefighter underwent a psychological evaluation and the following results were obtained:

Test results:

Beck Inventory: score 4, no psychological problems

Somatization scale: score 3, indicating a **minimal degree of somatization**. He no longer has insomnia

The coping scale: active: score 14; planning - score 10; disengagement from current activity - score 6; restraint coping - score 10; **seeking social support - score 18**; seeking social emotional support - score 18; positive reinterpretation - score 20; **acceptance - score 18**; denial - score 0; emotional discharge - score 4; religious coping - score 4; mental passivity - score 7; behavioral passivity - score 10; alcohol/substance use - score 0.

The highest score was obtained for "seeking social support" and "acceptance", which are both active coping mechanisms. It can be observed that the individual has developed active coping mechanisms.

Quality of Life Satisfaction Assessment Questionnaire: final score 8, much improved score

Observation grid at a second intervention: balanced, without psycho-behavioral manifestations

Description of psychological components:

-does not show obvious psychological problems

4. Study results and conclusions

Based on the analysis presented in this paper, the hypotheses we started with are confirmed. We can say that whether an event becomes a crisis situation or not depends on how the individual interprets stressful events and crisis situations in their own way, based on their cognitive schemas, previous experience, coping abilities, individual resources, and proximal support, and most importantly, psychological intervention in crisis situations.

No one can go through a crisis alone, nor should they. We need family, friends, community energy, and psychologists to manage the repercussions of a crisis (Gaspar, 2021).

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MENTORSHIP AND TEACHING CAREER TRAINING

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Abstract: *The paper presents the results of a qualitative study carried out within the project "Professionalization of the teaching career - PROF" (POCU/904/6/25/146587) focused on the critical-reflexive analysis of the perceptions of mentor teacher trainers, students of the Prof I training program regarding the experience of their training and the values shared as mentor teachers. Trainers' training for the teaching career mentorship aimed to complete an up-to-date continuous training program, well-articulated, and structured on six topics. These are as follows: teaching career mentorship - from concept to action; elements of adults' education and the teaching career mentorship - values, principles, and characteristics; planning the mentoring activity; the management of the teaching career mentorship process; counselling for training and professional development in the teaching career mentorship, and assessment and validation of professional teaching skills. The conclusions of the study highlight the personal conceptions of the mentor teacher trainers participating in the study as regards the role and the importance of teaching career mentorship to ensure the quality of the work of novice teachers and of teachers who are in professional evolution. Moreover, it focuses on the skills and qualities required for the teaching career mentorship, supported by relevant examples from mentor teachers' teaching experience.*

Keywords: *mentoring, teaching career mentorship; mentor teachers' trainers; quality.*

1. Introduction

The complexity of social life, the changes that have occurred in the last two years, including the changes in the educational system, the post-Covid-19 recovery of the Romanian society, and the everyday problems of schools require, in general, a reconsideration of the professional teachers' training practices. Moreover, it necessitates redesigning the professional training for mentor teachers so that the educational mentorship contributes decisively to the reform of the training and professional development system of teachers in Romania.

Mentoring as an effective tool for the training and professional development of human resources is widely utilised in organisations and is frequently practiced with the aim of helping new employees adapt to specific work conditions, regardless of the field in which they operate. Recent studies on learning and skills at the workplace "show that 50% of large organisations have used mentoring in the past year, and in the United States, according to Forbes, approximately 70% of Fortune 500 companies have a mentoring scheme that is applied consistently for staff integration and development". (Starr, 2022, p.33)

Moreover, in education, specialised studies (Curry, Webb & Latham,2016, Kearney, 2017, Colognesi, Van Nieuwenhoven&Beausaert, 2020, Mkrtchyan&Gurin, 2022) highlight that mentorship programmes for novice teachers, called induction/professional insertion mentorship, increase teachers' stability in the education system. This is a critical point for novice teachers if we also take into account the pandemic period which has considerably affected the practical training of future teachers. There are studies that have shown that teachers who have a mentor are less likely to leave the education system. According to the 2018 TALIS survey, in Europe, 43.6% of teachers stated that they took part in a formal or informal induction programme during their first job. In six European education systems, including Romania, this share exceeds the European level, reaching 72.0% in England.

European educational policy documents recommend that novice teachers benefit from reduced teaching time in order to fully participate in induction activities, using this time for lesson preparation and establishing their professional network. According to TALIS 2018 findings, "a reduced teaching load during induction as well as team teaching with an experienced mentor teacher are positively correlated with teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction". (OECD, 2019, p. 141).

We share the belief that, in the first year of teaching, it is very important for the novice teachers to benefit from mentoring, coaching and counselling at the beginning of their professional career in order to optimally integrate into the school organisation and successfully fulfil their role and mission as

teachers for the new generations. This type of mentoring is only one dimension of teaching career mentorship. Equally important is professional development mentorship for dedicated teachers concerned with career advancement and professional performance with students. Stan C. (2020, p.38) states that mentors "need plans for permanent improvement of communication skills, problem-solving ability, skills to approach support situations through mentoring methods and techniques ".

Therefore, in education, mentorship is essential for professional development at all stages of a teacher's career, and all teachers should see themselves as mentors, not just students and newly qualified teachers. The necessary skills should be developed and updated through initial teacher training, induction and in-service training. In mentorship, these skills are used to support peer development as well as helping teachers to provide all young people with high quality personal support as part of the Curriculum for Excellence.

2. The context of the training of mentor teacher trainers for the teaching career

According to the legislation in force, the evolution in the teaching career in Romanian pre-academic education is achieved through the teaching degrees and begins with obtaining the final qualification in the teaching profession, then the acquisition of the teaching degree II and the teaching degree I, certification exams of the different levels of competence of the teachers. (242 paragraph 2./National Education Law no. 1/2011 updated). However, these levels of development in the teaching career must be directly accompanied by the increase in the complexity of teaching roles and the association of new responsibilities.

In order to become an internship mentor teacher, it is required to pass a specific contest that consists in assessing the candidate's portfolio and taking a practical test, a procedure regulated by the methodology regarding the establishment of the body of mentor teachers for the coordination of the practical internship in order to occupy a teaching position (Order no. 5485/2011). Moreover, the legislation provides an important aspect regarding the mentorship of the teaching career and the assignment of the role of mentor for professional development, the teaching personnel who obtained the teaching degree I, with special performances in the teaching and managerial activity, can acquire the title of professor-emeritus in the pre-academic education system and... benefits from the quality of a mentor for the continuous training of teaching personnel". (art. 243 (2) b) /National Education Law). There is a need for the mentorship of the teaching career to be much better normatively regulated both for novice teachers and for teachers who have been in career development.

Moreover, the presidential project "Educated Romania", the strategic

framework of the current educational policies in our country has, among the goals related to the teaching career, the objective (4) which aims to "develop a flexible career management system, with differentiated paths, with the role of attracting and keeping in the system teachers with performances in teaching practice, in order to ensure effective learning". Among the measures that operationalise this objective, the following are mentioned:

"a. Restructuring the ways of assessing career progress (qualified teacher status degree, teaching degrees). It is important to shift the emphasis from academic training to authentic evidence of didactic activity, in relation to the competence profile of teachers.

d. Correlation of teaching career stages with new responsibilities assumed methodologically and extra-methodologically, to be included and valued within the teaching hours". (p.61)

Among the professional development opportunities and tools intended for mentor trainers and mentor teachers in Romania, there is the continuous training programme PROF I-Teaching career mentorship within the project "Professionalization of the teaching career - PROF" (POCU/904/6/25/146587), which aims, among the specific objectives, to create the national institutional framework for pre-academic teaching career mentorship, until 2023, through the setting of the teaching career mentorship as a separate domain, structured as a network under the coordination of the National Teaching Career Mentorship Centre (https://www.edu.ro/ PROF).

The beneficiaries of the PROF I training programmes were selected based on the criteria below, established by the experts of the Ministry of Education (according to ME address no. 51/POCU_146587/2021):

-       trainee teachers have not benefited from a training programme with the same objectives and funded from the Structural Funds, during the reference period for the POCU programme;

-       trainee teachers have benefited from only one training programme within the project;

-       trainee teachers either are part of teacher's training bases, or can demonstrate their qualification as mentor teachers or the trainee teachers have at least two-year certified teaching experience and methodological activity;

-       trainee teachers own skills according to job position held;

-       trainee teachers hold full-time positions in pre-academic education system;

-       trainee teachers own at least Second Teaching Degree or the scientific title of Doctor;

-       trainee teachers obtained the annual grade Very Well, for each of the last four school years.

In the selection process, the principal criterion utilised for trainee teachers' distribution was that of maintaining homogeneity within the training groups and of including trainees from all levels of education (e.g. pre-school teachers, primary teachers, secondary school teachers, and high school teachers). By attending the PROF I training programme (table 1), the trainees were provided with a set of general and specific skills necessary to successfully exercise the role of mentor trainer for the teaching career in today's Romanian school. In essence, the general skills aimed at: "the trainees' awareness of the importance of the axiological component in professional performance, the formation of a professional culture focused on the command of modern communication techniques, the development of critical and creative thinking, the promotion of research as an essential criterion of professionalism, the development of the capacity to rethink the contents and model the teaching and evaluation techniques according to the requirements of the reform, the requirements of the local community, the peculiarities of the students of the respective class, the characteristics of students' age, the development of the ability to adapt to the plurality of instructional contexts by writing alternative textbooks, structuring of programmes and course materials for the curriculum at the decision of the school, the development of new teaching methodologies, the development of the capacities to positively value differences, the development of the capacity to build interdisciplinary and intercultural approaches based on openness, flexibility and effective communication, continuous professional and personal development with a view to career promotion, both for themselves and for the mentees". (According to the accredited PROF I training programme, pp.21-22)

Table 1. Curriculum of the PROF I training programme – content units and key concepts

Content units of the PROF I programme	Key concepts deepened within the training
U1. Mentorship of the teaching career - from concept -to action	Professionalization of the teaching career Mentor's personality Mentor's roles Mentor's skills Mentoring relationship Culture of mentorship
U2. Elements of adult education and mentorship of the teaching career - values, principles, characteristics	Professionalization of the teaching career Adult learning Learning styles Interpersonal relationships Mentoring strategies
U3. Design of the mentoring activity	The ethics of mentoring relationships Professional development

U4. Management of the process in mentorship	Teamwork
	Team dynamics
	Teambuilding
U5. Counselling for training and professional development in the mentorship for the teaching career	Assertive communication
	Counselling techniques
	Coaching techniques
	Situational leadership
	Assessment
U6. Evaluation and validation of teaching professional skills	Self-assessment
	Professional standards

3. Research Methodology

A qualitative interpretive research project was utilised. The focus was on experiences, perceptions, history of professional development, beliefs, attitudes and opinions about mentors' role as mentor trainers and insights and attitude towards the mentorship of the teaching career.

3.1. The aim of the study was the critical-reflexive analysis of mentor trainers' perceptions, trainees in the Prof I training programme, regarding the values shared as mentors throughout their teaching career and the experiences gained during training.

3.2. The objectives of the present study were aimed at:

- identifying participants' view regarding mentors' role in the mentorship of teaching career in order to increase the quality of education;

- highlighting the pedagogical procedures of implementing innovative tools in the mentorship of teaching career.

3.3. Participants

In order to achieve the aims of the research, the qualitative study involved a number of 69 trainees (mentor teachers with mentoring experience), who completed the PROF I - Mentorship of the Teaching Career training programme between October 2021 and January 2022.

3.4. Methods

The training activities took place in the format of distance practical learning communities, bringing together participants from all over the country, who implemented the new acquisitions in the application schools, practicing specific skills acquired during the training. To capture rich descriptions of the mentoring interactions and to improve the understanding of the specific

context, the structured group interview and storytelling in mentoring were utilised.

4. Results

Throughout the training programme, the participants were required to respond to several questions focused on the content unit addressed during the training. Hence, at *U4Management of the process in mentorship*, the training expert launched several open questions to identify the learners' innovative view regarding the mentorship of the teaching career.

To the question "Why do we need an innovative approach in the field of mentorship of the teaching career in Romania?" the training participants construct several convincing arguments. To exemplify further, a list of arguments that the participants may state is presented below:

-,, to link permanently theory to practice;
- to remove the routine when you have been a mentor for a very long time;
- for a real professional guidance, if the mentor is trained continuously;
- to become more aware of the role that the mentor has permanently;
- to apply new methods in the classroom and to utilise new technologies;
- for specialised intervention, by field of study, from an entire team in schools (mentor, manager, fellow professors, fellow directors, etc.);
- to restore the status of this profession among young people;
- for teachers to assume complex and various roles, to work with students with different learning needs, from various cultural backgrounds, with different learning potentials;
- to identify a possible strategy for efficient training and professional integration of future teachers, through a variety of activities that represent, in shaping the future teacher, a condition for the transfer of skills to other educational contexts;
- to inspire novice teachers and motivate them for the teaching career;
- to teach novice teachers how to apply new methods and new technologies in the classroom;
- for a change of perspective on the profession of teacher, which will emphasise the importance of the teaching profession for the society;
- for career success, including promotions, increased opportunities;
- for support in the teaching career according to mentees' needs;
- for a sense of satisfaction and professional achievement;
- to be up to date with legislative and curricular changes;
- for the need of models and support for novice teachers in the teaching profession;
- for successful professional integration".

Among the reflective questions addressed to the trainees during the training activities was the following: "How can the mentor build a relationship of trust with the mentored teacher, taking into account the variables specific to communication?". The opinions of some of the respondents are listed below (table 2).

Table 2. Examples illustrating the importance of the mentor-novice teacher relationship of trust

Categories	Opinions of mentor trainers
a. Mentor-novice teacher relationship of trust Subcategories: • professional needs • assertive communication • motivation • self-determination • self confidence • trust in the team	- *„The success of a mentoring programme for novice teachers depends, mainly, on the quality and effectiveness of the mentor-mentee team. It has been shown to be essential for novice teachers to be accompanied by a mentor with whom they can develop a relationship of trust ...Therefore, it seems a priority that the relationship should be based more on personal affinities between the parties involved... I have met mentors who are not always aware of the specific needs of their mentees..."(B.R.I, trainee);* - *„In order for the mentors to build a better relationship with the mentee, they must know their psychological profile in order to be able to identify their needs and establish a communication code according to their psychological characteristics. Moreover, it must take into account the cognitive variables, in order to build the mentoring plan, which includes the most appropriate actions to achieve the novice teacher's progress... it must be attentive to the social variables, because stereotypes and possible cultural and gender differences can be overcome if identified in time and managed carefully" (B.A.L., trainee);*; - *„The relationship of trust developed between them is very important as it provides support and helps the mentee not to adopt an avoidant attitude. The needs of both partners are significant for the relationship that is in continuous transformation. How the mentor defines herself / himself, after all, and through constant reports to those she / he mentors, to the environment, her / his position offers her / him one of the most effective ways of knowing the educational climate, so the mentoring process is a source of improvement and efficiency including for herself / himself" (D.M., trainee);.*

To improve professional practice, mentor trainers will promote instructional coaching (table 3) for novice teachers focused on raising the quality level of performance in design, teaching and evaluation.

Table 3. Examples illustrating several teaching methodology instances during the training provided by the mentor to novice teachers

Categories	Opinions of mentor trainers
b. **Training of novice teachers** Subcategories: • design focused on skills training • the quality of teaching design • designing assessment tools • organisation of assessment activities • application of the assessment methodology • organising a meeting with the parents • organisation of extracurricular activities	- *,,... the presentation of the competences from the school curriculum, a planning carried out on the competences, as well as the activity models through which they are formed... Depending on the observations in the classroom or the difficulties reported by the mentee, the mentor teacher can recommend further study of the official school documents and the specialized bibliography, apply new methods, update their design on learning units, etc. In addition to this, the mentor teacher can recommend training in teaching or in the discipline of study and the use of open educational resources"* *(D.M., trainee);.* - *,,Lesson planning is an approach to anticipate in detail the teaching activity for a school class and is designed following the curricular objectives. The teacher has the freedom to imagine, to build attractive and useful lessons for students. But this "freedom" should not havean optional meaning (that is Of course, I innovate, adapt; not that of already verified models which undoubtedly work,) but should be perceived as an asset in the voluntary fight against routine. The lesson is a creative act"* *(L.A., trainee);.* - *,,Since the activity carried out in the lesson is anticipated, pre-establishes by the teacher in the lesson plan, it represents teacher's working document or action guide. Each lesson or activity needs planning that concretises the teacher's preparation for the lesson, even if it acquires increasingly condensed forms over time, illustrating the teacher's experience and the fact that she or he has internalized and mastered methodological techniques, scientific content, effective practices. Design activity takes time. That is why lesson planning should not be complicated with unnecessary headings or be excessively detailed"* *(M.R., trainee);.*

To the question "What can we learn from beginning teachers/mentors throughout their teaching career?", the opinions of the mentor trainers were relevant and support both the professional development of the mentee and the

mentor. In table 4 below, we will quote several examples of students' arguments.

Table 4. Examples illustrating the importance of the relationship of trust between mentor and novice teacher

Categories	Opinions of mentor trainers
c. Develop together professionally Subcategories: • value exchange • exchange of experience • mutual stimulation • mutual learning • mutual appreciation • self-analysis/self-assessment • research • innovation • development	- *,,Throughout the teaching career, we learn a lot through the exchange of experience, values… This means not only new teaching methodology knowledge, but also shared and above all tested innovation, with existing feedback, evaluated and valued. At the same time, another experience determines the self-assessment. Even if there may be cultural, group, etc. peculiarities, conflicts, this interaction also means stimulation to imagine new ideas and to involve ourselves towards improvement. The mentor could remember what it was like at the beginning of the career and thus trigger a process of self-analysis important for personal development" (B.J.D., trainee);* - *,,From the novice teachers, we can take over the enthusiasm and freshness of the beginning. They are also a bridge between the university environment from which they have just come and the pre-academic environment, of which we are a part. From this perspective, they bring innovative ideas and techniques, perhaps even products of higher education research" (L.A., trainee);* - *,,This training experience was and is very valuable for me and all my colleagues. It confirmed things I knew and I learned many new things, which I reflected on during the courses and while solving work tasks. I was impressed eventually by how much a novice teacher has to know and do in order to turn into a professional, and by how laborious the mentoring activity is. And, without wanting to, I asked myself: Do only novice teachers need to go through this mentoring process? How many of the senior teachers, tenured for years, would need to go through a similar process, through which to redefine themselves and assume the role of renewing the educational system?" (D.R., trainee)*

Moreover, during the training, the participants were asked to present their own perspective on the criteria by which the effectiveness of mentor-mentee teamwork is assessed, and to argue their own choices as convincingly as possible. Below, we present the opinions of several mentor trainers regarding important criteria identified in the assessment of the effectiveness of teamwork in the mentorship of teaching career:

- *,,Assertiveness and cooperation are solutions for resolving the difficult situations inevitable in the mentoring process, and attention to results, assuming responsibilities, commitment, and trust help to create a strong team. Allowing time for members to develop relationships and the fact that the team is dedicated to the goal become rules for creating a team with a strong relationship. A particular style of interaction within the team can ensure the continuity of the mentoring process even in the case of special scenarios during the pandemic. Imbalances can be used to the advantage of the team as an engine for improvement and acceleration of the mutual learning process, taking into account the needs of the partners, therefore, I believe that even the emergence of conflicts can lead to development within the group, having a regulatory function*" *(C.D., trainee)*";

- *,,The work in the mentor-novice teacher team has a double orientation: towards the fulfilment of the established objectives, following the needs analysis of the mentee, and towards each member of the team, who has her or his own expectations, different from the other. The mentoring activity is not one-way. In addition to the common objectives, oriented towards the novice teacher, the mentor and the mentee have their own, separate objectives, derived from their own needs. For example, a mentor seeks satisfaction from her /his work and has a desire for continuous personal development*" *(F.A., trainee)*";

- *,,The team involves two adults who have chosen the same profession, so we are talking about a high level of motivation and about common goals, aimed at the novice teacher, as an individual and the two, as a team, but also at the pupils, as beneficiaries of the educational services. Therefore, the team activity becomes effective as long as it responds to the requirements/needs that the two identified at the beginning of the mentoring activity and the common objectives that they established, but also to the requirements of the pupils and the staff of which the novice teacher is a member. Meeting standards is the normative stage of the mentoring relationship, but only performance has truly transformative power. The efficiency of work in the mentor-teacher team is validated only when the partnership ends and the teacher manages to successfully meet the requirements on her or his own*" *(B.M., trainee)*";

- *,,Teamwork means a flow of information and emotional states. The efficiency of any relationship depends on the quality of communication, and trust is an absolutely necessary premise for the mentor-teacher relationship. Conflicts do not occur with no reason, but as a result of emphasising different points of view, which are, moreover, absolutely natural, considering the objective differences between the two poles. Through assertive communication and mutual trust, the initial personal*

distance is reduced and the risk of different points of view turning into conflicts is eliminated" (B.J.D., trainee)";

- *,, To assess the effectiveness of work in the mentor-mentee teacher team, several levels may be considered - the process, the content, the relationship, and the results. The areas that can be evaluated are: commitment of mentors and mentees, having a serious attitude whilst attending the training programme, satisfaction of mentors and mentees, benefits in the team climate and in pupils' results, feedback from parents regarding positive achievements in class of the mentored teacher, etc. Another aspect/criterion that can be observed and evaluated is the degree to which teamwork makes the mentor and the mentee feel part of the process of improving the quality of teaching in the school" (C.D., trainee)*".

Moreover, there are aspects that are more difficult to quantify but very important and whose presence determines the effectiveness of work in the mentor-teacher team: respect from those involved in the relationship, mutual trust, active listening, and mutual knowledge - strengths / qualities. Another evaluation criterion would be the manner and the condition to go through the four stages: initiation into the relationship - accommodation, cultivation - if there is further learning, development of skills by carrying out activities in the team, separation and redefinition in a new form, the evolution towards a friendly relationship between team members - a sign of an effective relationship that has achieved its goals. Furthermore, it is possible to assess the way of cooperation, of collaboration with win-win results on both sides, each to learn something from the respective relationship, from the professional situations encountered, from the conflicts that inevitably occur - the manner and the level conflicts emerge and the management of conflicts, the extent to which conflicts are resolved.

5. Conclusions

The continuous training of mentor trainers is the guarantee of increasing the quality of the teaching staff in our country (Romania). The process of professional development of the participants in the training is real and has materialised by acquiring new knowledge, new skills, which will be tested in the school as mentor trainers for the teaching career. The conclusions of this study highlight several important categories, subcategories and criteria in the mentorship of the teaching career. Through mentoring, the experience accumulated by the mentor teachers is passed on and the transition from one generation of teachers to another is offered. Mentoring enhances experienced teaching staff and their professionalism, offers opportunities for learning and professional development to all actors involved either individually or

institutionally: mentors, novice teaching staff, heads of departments, school managers, etc. The mentoring process becomes an increasingly effective tool in career development, having a particular impact on the school, on the development of human resources and careers, thanks to which teachers progress faster, have a sense of satisfaction and professional achievement, become more confident in their own strength, have much more effective coping skills and adapt more quickly in the community. This form of mentoring is important for the development of skills necessary to ensure a quality educational process and the career advancement of teaching staff, necessary for the personal and professional development of each teacher. The mentoring activities support the key message in the permanent education, of guaranteeing access to continuous education in order to form new basic skills, which constitute the essential foundation of active citizenship and the development of human resources, in which key European skills are included.

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PATTERNS IN CHILDREN RAISED BY SINGLE PARENTS: A TEACHER VIEW

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Abstract: *Introduction: According to European statistics, the number of single-parent families has grown alarmingly. Raising a child alone is not necessarily devastating, but it is not comfortable either (Safta, 2018), numerous studies suggesting emotional, academic, behavioral effects on the child. Objective: This study examines teachers' observations regarding the behavioral characteristics of children growing up with a single parent (CSP). Method: 48 secondary school teachers, V-VIII class leaders participated in group discussions to explore aspects of the child's/student's life in the school setting. Qualitative thematic analysis was implemented using a grounded theory framework to identify areas of CSP life that may be affected. Results: Specific aspects of CSP were identified in the following fields: a) socialization, b) attitude in relationships and towards learning, c) partnership with the family, d) early maturation e) exposure of the child to family conflicts*

Key words: *single parenthood; students; socialization; partnership with the family.*

1. Why do we care about single parenting?

Today, single parenthood has become an extremely common phenomenon, that's why the situation of these children has come under the attention of psychologists, sociologists, psycho-pedagogues, etc. The assumption of raising the child by a single parent brings with it significant difficulties in all spheres of family life. Children with a single parent are exposed to situations specific to the single-parent family: the parent is busier, so less time spent with the child (Kalenkoski, Ribar, Stratton, 2005), high level of parental stress (Weinraub, Wolf, 1983), overlap of parental roles, hence possible poor

communication (Minayo, 2020), lower financial possibilities, etc. The single parent has less time to get involved in the child's academic activities (Munir, Rani, Mahwish, Afzal, 2021) and all these factors lead to the impairment of the general well-being (Pérez-Corral, Moreno Mínguez, 2022).

The adolescent who grows up in a single-parent family has a lower level of self-esteem (Lowenstein, Koopman, 1978; Baumeister et al. 2003; Sterie, 2022), experiences poverty and depression (Huntley, Phelps, Rehm, 1987; Brown, Moran, 1997), has poorer academic results than other children (Fotoh, 2021; Pérez, Moreno, 2022; Ndinge, 2021).

Therefore, unlike other children, these situations definitely have an impact on the child, being forced to understand the only parent's perspective of the separation.

Content/Issue	Article
• nutritional deprivation	Pérez-Corral, Moreno Mínguez, (2022), Perera, (2022); Zakaria et al. 2022; Fotoh, (2021); Munir, Rani, Mahwish, Afzal (2021); Ndinge,(2021); Febrianto, (2021); Chua et al. (2020); Bago, (2022); Minayo, (2020); Dronkers, Veerman & Pong (2017); Okaka, (2012).
• clothing deprivation	Biblarz & Gottainer, (2000); Riala, Isohanni, Jokelainen, Jones, P. B., & Isohanni, M. (2003); Ermisch, Francesconi, (2001); Riala, Isohanni, Jokelainen, Jones & Isohanni, (2003); Stephen & Udisi, (2016).
• welfare deficiencies	Perera, (2022); Sackey, Mensah, Obeng, (2022); Ihedioha, (2021); Bago, (2022).
• financial difficulties	Akida, Ali, Karama, (2018); Chukwuka, (2018); Ndinge, (2021), Munir et al. (2021); Ihedioha, (2021); Wat, (2019)

| • instability in the family | Zakaria et al., (2022); Magara, (2017); Stephen & Udisi, (2016); Cheung & Park, (2016). |
| Work involvement | Akelo, (2016) |

2. The impact of single parenthood on the child/adolescent. Literature Review

The interest in the impact of single parenthood on the child has increased with the increase in the scope of this phenomenon. In addition to the contexts that lead to single parenthood (death, divorce, separation), the situation of single mothers by choice (single mother by choice), SMC, a concept that entered the mainstream in 2005 and is perceived as a myth (Bock, 2020), is becoming more precise. Concerns related to the effects of single parenthood on the child are diverse and target different spheres of the child's life, as can be seen in the table below.

Table No.1. *Literature review regarding the impact single parenthood has on the child*

3. Study design

Purpose: the study is a quick scan of the behavior of the adolescent with a single parent in school, as perceived by the teachers.

Question research

The following four research questions guided this qualitative study:

a) How does CSP behave in the group?

b) How do they relate to learning?

c) Are they distinguished in the relationships they have?

d) What are the implications of single parenthood on the adolescent?

Recruitment

The recruitment was facilitated by the school principals, being selected only the principals of grades V-VIII who have children living in single-parent families in their class.

Participants

The participants in the group interviews were teachers who teach grades V-VIII but who are conductors. This was a condition of participation in the FG, because this teacher's leadership quality facilitates mutual acquaintance and closeness to the family. 48 participants aged between 28-52, who work both in rural and urban areas, from different schools participated in 6 FG between October and November 2022. The participants confirmed that they currently have at least one child from a single-parent family and that in the past there were other cases of this kind.

Instruments

The administered interview guide was composed of questions focused on 4 dimensions: socialization, attitude towards learning, relationships, others.

4. Findings

I will present below, some of the discussion directions that have been set up, and among these, I will develop those on which an agreement could be talked about. Common experiences, therefore, have been detailed.

The teachers were asked to speak freely about the problem of the child with a single parent, respectively about the observations they made over time.

4.1. Difficult socialization

Regarding the social skills of children with single parents, we have enough data in the relevant literature. There is evidence for poor communication (Cheung, Park, 2016), negative social moods (Chukwuka, 2018), hence, impaired emotional well-being (Ntumi et al, 2016). Compared to the situation of the other classmates, they are frequently highlighted by the deprivation of the necessary materials for studies (Oyediran, 2019), lower financial possibilities (Wat, 2019) due to which these children cannot always participate in extracurricular activities that include transport, accommodation, so limiting exposure to socializing and non-formal learning situations.

  The participants in the group discussions talked about the manifestation of social and anticipatory anxiety in these children, the reluctance to get involved in events that involve exposure (public speaking, debates, supporting points of view, personal discovery). They are less courageous to express themselves

authentically, persistent concern in evaluation situations, celebrations, group exercises.

I have a very capable student who has changed a lot in the last year; she hides important things from her mother, she is absent, she is duplicitous, she is not cooperative at all, she has lost interest in any school concern. I don't know what's going on in her mind, she doesn't allow herself to be discovered, she didn't even talk to the two psychologists her mother sent her to"

She doesn't like challenges, avoids social situations, we think it's because of the fear of ridicule, or of making a mistake. It is almost certain that she has trust issues.

Often, these children have a harder time making friends, they need to be helped to enter new groups, they require greater attention in situations that involve interaction.

Pleasing others attitude

The teachers talk about increased shyness in the case of children with only one parent, frequent associations with inappropriate groups, willingness to remain in friendships where they are not valued. The low self-esteem that manifests itself in many situations is determined by self-doubt and could be maintained, according to the participants, by the absence of the other parent, by the limited time they spend with the parent, by limited financial possibilities (most often). It happens that these children cannot participate in attractive school events (more expensive trips). There are also differences in terms of the possibilities to purchase clothes or necessary items for school. The respondents identified attitudes like pleasing others in order to be liked, that's why they remain in relationships where they are not treated with respect.

Sometimes, we see how they maintain friendships in which they are offended or insulted without asking for explanations or discussing with their friend. Sometimes they react violently and then go back despite their friend's unappreciative behaviour.

The need to belong to the peer group is very high in this age, and their communication and negotiation mechanisms are very low, both in the children we are talking about and in the others. This extremely tolerant attitude is a premise for abusive and unbalanced relationships.

Attitude towards learning

The attitude towards learning varies greatly from student to student, there are many factors that mediate self-determination and academic performance (Ning & Downing, 2012; Lin & Liang, 2014). However, it was possible to outline two extremes in the teachers' perception of the self-determination or the learning attitude of children with a single parent, namely: children with a higher level of self-determination than children from two-parent families, and children who lose their motivation along with self-confidence.

The first category of children seems to demonstrate a high level of resilience and self-determination, turning the adversity factor into a growth factor. We do not have the necessary data regarding the factors that maintain this motivation.

School-family partnership

Another topic that emerged clearly was the partnership with the single-parent family, which presents several specificities. During the 6 FG, a pattern of the director's relationship with the parent who raises the child alone took shape. In most situations, the single parent is the mother, but there are also cases of a single father. According to the participants, they are in more intense contact with the directors, they are more concerned about the child's trajectory. They are very willing to talk about the difficulties in the family and are fully aware of the constraints and lacks that come with the absence of the other parent. It is more difficult for them to participate in the daily meetings, but they are in constant telephone contact.

There are frequent situations in which the parent is late, requests the teacher's help, especially in situations where there are misunderstandings between the parents regarding compliance with the rules imposed by the court. Sometimes problems arise related to taking over the child (the parent who does not have custody wants to take the child from school; differences in perception between parents regarding decisions regarding the child, etc.).

The child exposed to internal discussions and conflicts/different parentage

The participants talked about the emotional state that the child with a single parent experience. Grandparents often appear to help pick up the child from

school. An occasion in which they "complain" about the hardships of the parent left alone, the "trouble" caused by the other parent (sometimes abuse) and the difficult situation of the grandson. I often use terms such as "the poor", the Poor, the bitter, the unhappy, the girl with the child. They constantly hear that they are inferior to the other children, that they cannot afford some things, that they must understand that it is not possible, which can cause serious frustrations in the child. It is possible that they perceive their situation as humiliating, hence the low self-esteem. Parents or grandparents do not understand the impact of exposing the child to the complications of adults. Parental alienation is frequent and has serious effects on the child.

Another important aspect reported is the pressure the child feels as a result of the different parenting exercised by the two parents (when the parent who does not have custody is also involved) and the grandparents who take care of some of the children during the day. These discrepancies frighten children in general (it is also a reality in two-parent families).

Without wanting to, I was in the situation of having to listen to the confessions of both parents, asking myself to be a kind of judge.

I could observe how each parent tries to form a coalition with the child against the other parent.

Early maturing-being involved in house chores

The teachers observed a higher level of maturation of children with a single parent, and it is expected to happen this way. Some children amaze with the answers they give; they have lost their innocence; they have already come into contact with the real life that they have to face. Depending on their personal characteristics, some have a more serious attitude, are less serene, others isolate themselves and painfully perceive the differences between themselves and their colleagues. Some show strong resilience, successfully integrate into the group, even being leaders. But teachers saw few such children.

These children are in a position to reconfigure their mental map regarding their status as children; takes on household tasks, provides emotional support to the mother, takes on the role of the absent father.

Conclusions and Implications for practice

The elaborated observations of the teachers also speak implicitly about the extremely important role they play in the well-being of adolescents (Jauhiainen, Kivirauma, 1997). The first conclusion is related to the wealth of information that teachers have about their students. They constitute a particularly important filter, an interface between the student and real life. The partnership with the family is the necessary premise in approaching any type of difficulty. Although they recognize many behaviours as possible symptoms for the lack of a parent in the family structure, the teachers declare that they are sometimes overwhelmed by the situation, claiming therapeutic support for themselves and their families. Also, they do not have very detailed information about social services in the community that could help parents. Their interventions are more intuitive, based on their experience as parents.

The question arises: and if we understand what is happening, what do we do with this information? It is useless for them to return to the parent already overwhelmed by responsibilities. Adolescents are not strangers to socialization and relationship difficulties, not even intra-family tensions. However, the context of the single-parent family is specific and involves new and diverse challenges

Limits and recommendations

 The observations of the participants in the group discussions, confirmed in different studies, cannot be generalized to the question of the category of children growing up in a single-parent family. In fact, these manifestations are also found among children who live in two-parent families. In linking the results of this study with the didactic practice in the classroom, our analysis suggests that the intervention of school counsellors and psychologists is necessary in raising the awareness of teaching staff, informing and training them about the CSP issue. The high extent of this phenomenon (single-parent families) but not only, the situation of children left behind, those with a deceased or incarcerated parent, etc. requires minimal specialized knowledge about behavioural, psychological, emotional symptoms and some work techniques to improve their situation.

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INFLUENCE OF PEER PRESSURE ON ADOLESCENTS' MISBEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OSOGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE

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Abstract: *The continuous students' misbehavior necessitates careful consideration because there are several different pressures leading to adolescent misbehavior at school. One of the contributing factors is peer pressure among students. This study therefore, identifies that there is need to investigate the influence of peer pressure on adolescents' misbehavior among secondary school students. A sample of two hundred (200) students from ten (10) secondary schools (5 public and 5 private) were randomly selected from Oshogbo Local Government Area of Osun State in Nigeria. An instrument titled Peer Pressure and Adolescent Misbehavior Questionnaire (PPAMQ) was used for data collection. The results showed that adolescent misbehavior is prevalent among secondary school students and peer group negatively influence adolescent misbehavior. Statistically there was no significant difference on the influence of peer pressure on adolescents' misbehavior based on school type and gender. (t = 2.06, df = 198, p < 0.05) and (t = 2.06, df = 198, p < 0.05). Within the limitations of the findings of this study, it is hereby recommended that school counsellors need to understand: adolescents' misbehavior in the context of school type, in order to reduce the rate of adolescents' misbehavior in school. Students should also be educated on the negative implications of adolescent misbehavior and strict disciplinary measures should be meted out to students identified with adolescent misbehavior.*

Keywords: *adolescence; misbehavior; peer pressure; positive; negative.*

Introduction

Adolescence is described as the developmental period between childhood and adulthood and is characterized by substantial physical, cognitive, social and affective changes (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004). Adolescence is the transitory period that individual passes through in his/her growth from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence is defined as a young person who is developing from child into an adult. In addition, Adedayo (2011) stated that the adolescent stage is the period of transition from dependence upon adult direction and protection to self-dependence and self-determination. Studies have shown that the period consists of pressure which may be either internal or external to the young adult (Adams, 2006 & Schneider, 2010). Besides being a transitory period, they posited that it is a time of self-definition for the young individual. Subsequently, it is noted that young people during their adolescence join different peer groups and identify themselves with these groups by participating in their activities in order not to be rejected. Peer group is defined as individuals who are equals for instance in terms of their age, status or skills. Brown & Larson (2019) defined peer group as a group of individuals in the same life stage. According to Palmer (2018), peer groups are among the most significant social contexts in adolescence that help to establish norms of behavior and normally develop a culture that manifests itself in aspects like language, dress, hairstyle, sports, and drinking habits.

However, adolescents tend to associate with peers who share similar behaviors, preferences and attitudes including academic aspiration, music taste, political opinion, fashion style or preferred leisure activities (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011). Peer groups create and maintain a culture separate from home in which adolescents are raised. Many young people spend more time with peers than with parents or other family members (Gara 2016). However, adolescents often experience peer influence to be like other peers at a time when they are trying to be more independent. This influence is pressure, planned or unplanned, exerted by peers to influence personal behavior and peer pressure is the persuasive influence that friends have over their peers, which can cause one to associate with certain people, to wear certain clothes, to use certain words and to use certain language (Palmer, 2018).

Peer pressure can be seen as the influence exerted by peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitude, values or behaviors to conform to the group. An adolescence affected by peer pressure may or may not want to belong to this group. They may also recognize dissociative groups that they do not wish to belong and therefore, adopt behavior in opposition to those of the group. However, most children in this situation are not discriminatory about the kind of group they join in as much as such behavior

is approved by their peer group irrespective of its acceptability or legality in the larger society.

Since majority of the students in secondary falls into adolescent stage, misbehavior in schools has become the concern in most schools in Nigeria and indeed many other countries worldwide (Owens, 2012). Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon (2014) identified the various common forms of adolescents' misbehavior as late coming, bunking classes, drug and alcoholic abuse, bullying, love affairs, vandalism, assault on the school prefects, insult on educators, wearing the wrong school uniform, use of the mobile phone, smoking, writing or using foul language in class, work not done, class disruption and immoral acts which constitute a great challenge to teachers.

Rima (2008) asserted that adolescents in Nigeria engage in break laws and commit crimes such as murder, stealing and abuse drugs at school.

Mattessich and Hosley (2014) found that adolescents' misbehavior rarely occurs in isolation, and that children with severe behavioral problems usually have a collection of problems thereby making it difficult to understand their problems. Adolescents' misbehavior not only escalated with time but also lower academic achievement and increase delinquent behaviors. To lessen these immediate and gradual adverse effects of student misbehaviors, it is of primary importance to identify what exactly are these behaviors inside classroom. According to Reed and Kirkpatrick (2012), adolescents' misbehaviors include; disruptive talking, chronic avoidance of work, clowning, interfering with teaching activities, harassing classmates, verbal insults, rudeness to teacher, defiance and hostility.

Kim & Got (2016) discovered high level of peer influence on delinquent behaviors with no discrimination on the platform of ethnicity. Cashwell (2016) also found that Peer group provides adolescents with the attitudes, motivation and rationalization that support delinquent behaviors and the opportunities to engage in the acts thereby attesting peer influence on delinquent behaviors. Salmivalli (2010) also attested to the above premised on the finding that violent towards others are usually seen as an indication of physically and psychologically strength among the peers of the perpetrator.
Mounts (2014) attributed peer pressure and parenting style as determinants of delinquent behaviors which are also in line with Gara (2016) and Dillon, Pantin, Robin and Szapocznik (2018). Asmak (2016) showed that peer influence on students involved in misconduct is as high as 63.3%. Male students were also found to be willing to take the risk of their actions and behaviors without considering failure in their studies in as much such behaviors is valued by their peers. Pyrooz & Decker (2013) also attested to the

relationship that exists between adolescents' misbehavior and peers influence to commit group misconduct, especially violence.

The principal's role is to design and implement the most effective learner discipline management strategies in order to instill a positive school climate. However, to be successful as an effective learner discipline management leader in his/her school, the principal must understand the various causes of adolescent misbehavior that are predominant in the school. As such, this study seeks to investigate the influence of peer pressure on adolescents' misbehavior in senior secondary schools in Osogbo Local Government Area of Osun State.

Statement of the Problem: In most Nigerian schools and homes, adolescents have proved to be very difficult to discipline. Some of these behaviors are not easy to deal with or to control. Most adolescents drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes and they are known for their misbehavior. The type of behaviors these adolescents are exposed to is believed to be highly motivated by peer pressure which leads them to commit crimes under the influence of alcohol. Such crimes include beating other children, bullying others at school, stealing, school absenteeism. In addition, there are many reported cases of suicide among adolescents.

However, since disruptive behaviors from secondary school students is a major and persistent administrative problem as well as a public health problem, it is of utmost importance to review the existing literature on the problem. And as such, this study investigated the influence of peer pressure on adolescents' misbehavior in senior secondary schools in Osogbo Local Government Area.

Research Questions: The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the prevalence of adolescent misbehaviour among secondary school students in Osogbo L.G.A?
2. What is the influence of peer group on adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students in Osogbo L.G.A
3. Would there be school type (public and private) difference in the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior in Oshogbo L.G.A?
4. Would there be gender (male and female) difference in the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior in Oshogbo L.G.A?

Methodology: A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The targeted population of the study comprised all adolescents in secondary schools in Osogbo Local Government Area of Osun State. The study employed simple random sampling technique in selecting Ten (10) secondary schools (5 public and 5 private), twenty (20) students were randomly selected

from each school making a total of two hundred (200) participants in the study. The study adopted a self-constructed instrument titled "Peer Pressure and Adolescent Misbehavior Questionnaire (PPAMQ)". The questionnaire consisted of three sections: A, B and C. Section' A' elicits responses on the demographic data of the respondents such as gender, level, school type among others, section 'B' contains 20 items on the prevalence of adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students while section 'C' contains 15 items on peer influence on adolescent misbehavior. The questionnaire was formulated on a four (4) point scale, ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the initial draft of the instrument was given to two lecturers in the field of adolescent psychology to assess the suitability of the instrument in relation to the research topic. The instrument was also administered to 20 respondents who were not part of the study sample after which the instrument was subjected to Person Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis to establish the reliability of the instrument. Their responses were analyzed using Cronbach alpha analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to 200 secondary school students and data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentages, mean, standard deviation and t-test.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students in Oshogbo L.G.A?

Table 1: Statistical Analysis of the prevalence of adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students

S/N	VARIABLES	SDn (%)	D n (%)	A n (%)	SAn (%)	MEAN	S.D
1	Some students damage school properties	56 (28.0)	65(32.5)	25(12.5)	54(27.0)	2.385	0.617
2	Students do fight each other	54(27.0)	46(23.0)	50(25.0)	50(25.0)	2.52	0.358
3	Some students are rude in their	41(20.5)	93(46.5)	29(14.5)	37(18.5)	2.69	0.521

	utterances to teachers					
4	Some students do argue blindly with teachers	135(67.5)	38(19.0)	20(10.0)	7(3.5)	1.495	0.825
5	Some students do cheat in class in class tests/examination	49(24.5)	52(26.0)	55(27.5)	44(22.0)	2.25	1.122
6	Some students do steal school properties	66(33.0)	87(43.5)	35(17.5)	12(6.0)	3.035	1.219
7	Some students do fight with teachers	23(11.5)	32(16.0)	117(58.5)	28(14.0)	2.75	1.336
8	Learners do bring other clothes to school rather than school uniform	32(16.0)	66(33.0)	38(19.0)	64(32.0)	2.33	1.072
9	Learners sometimes threaten other students	55(27.5)	46(23.0)	45(22.5)	54(27.0)	2.49	0.990
10	Students do take hard drugs	119(59.5)	51(25.5)	21 (10.5)	9 (4.5)	1.6	0.905
11	Some students do bully other students	86(43.0)	58 (29.0)	32 (16.0)	24 (12.0)	3.03	0.569
12	Some students usually smoke cigarettes in school	39(19.5)	76(38.0)	64 (32.0)	21 (10.5)	2.665	1.553
13	Learners play electronic games during lessons with phones	2(1.0)	2 (1.0)	47 (23.5)	149(74.5)	1.285	0.622

No	Statement					Mean	SD
14	Students are sometimes involved in examination malpractice	2(1.0)	2 (1.0)	47 (23.5)	149(74.5)	1.285	0.622
15	Learners do take advice from friends to threaten other students	123(61.5)	54(27.0)	19 (9.5)	4 (2.0)	1.52	0. 749
16	Some students sometimes pretend to be sick so as to stay away from school	86(43.0)	58 (29.0)	32 (16.0)	24 (12.0)	3.03	0.569
17	Students do hide school materials	39(19.5)	76(38.0)	64 (32.0)	21 (10.5)	2.665	1.553
18	Some students are not civil in their discussion with other students	2(1.0)	2 (1.0)	47 (23.5)	149(74.5)	1.285	0.622
19	Some learners engage in truancy	2(1.0)	2 (1.0)	47 (23.5)	149(74.5)	1.285	0.622
20	Learners sometimes grab things from other students e.g. Food	123(61.5)	54(27.0)	19 (9.5)	4 (2.0)	1.52	0. 749

Table 1 shows the prevalence of adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students in Osogbo Local Government Area. It can be seen that 39.5% of the respondents agreed that some students damage school properties while 60.5% of them disagreed, 50.0% of them agreed that students do fight each other while 50.0% of them disagreed, 33.0% of them said that Some students are rude in their utterances to teacher while 67.0% of them disagreed, 13.5% of the respondents opined that some learners do argue blindly with teachers while 67.0% disagreed, 49.5% of them agreed that some students do cheat in

class tests/examination while 50.5% of the respondents disagreed, 23.5% of the respondents said that some students do steal school properties while 76.5% of them disagreed, 72.5% of them believed that some students do fight with teachers while 27.5% disagreed, 51.0% of the respondents opined that Learners do bring other clothes to school rather than school uniform while 49.0% of them disagreed, 49.5% of them agreed that learners sometimes threaten other students while 50.5% of them disagreed, 15.0% of the respondents said that students do take hard drugs while 85.0% of them disagreed, 42.5% of them opined that some students do bully other students while 57.5% of them disagreed, 98.0% of them said that some students usually smoke cigarettes in school while 2.0% of them disagreed, 11.5% of them agreed that learners play electronic games during lessons with phone while 88.5% of them disagreed. 72.5% of them believed that students are sometimes involved in examination malpractice while 27.5% disagreed, 51.0% of the respondents opined that learners do take advice from friends to threaten other students while 49.0% of them disagreed, 49.5% of them agreed that some students sometimes pretend to be sick so as to stay away from school while 50.5% of them disagreed, 15.0% of the respondents said that students do hide school materials such books while 85.0% of them disagreed , 42.5% of them opined that some students are not civil in their discussion with other students while 57.5% of them disagreed, 98.0% of them believed that some students engage in truancy while 2.0% of them disagreed and 11.5% of them agreed that learners sometimes grab things such as food from other students while 88.5% of them disagreed.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of peer group on adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students in Osogbo L.G.A?

Table 2: Statistical Analysis of influence of peer group on adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students

S/N	Variables	SD n (%)	D n (%)	A n (%)	SA n (%)	Mean	S.D
1	I put on the kind of cloth my friends like	32(16.0)	48(24.0)	50(25.0)	70(35.0)	2.800	0.717
2	I cannot do anything on my own without input from my friends	15(7.50)	50(25.0)	60(30.0)	75(37.5)	2.975	0.658

3	I attend clubs in the company of my friends	25(12.5)	35(17.5)	50(25.0)	90(45.0)	3.025	0.621
4	What I do is determined by my friends	45(22.5)	70(35.0)	35(17.5)	50(25.0)	2.450	0.925
5	Most of my friends advice me to smoke marijuana	5(2.5)	50(25.0)	65(32.5)	80(40.0)	3.100	1.122
6	I like starting new activities	30(15.0)	35(17.5)	75(37.5)	60(30.0)	2.825	1.228
7	I receive advice from my friends to have a steady boyfriend or girlfriend	10(5.0)	30(15.0)	70(35.0)	90(45.0)	3.200	0.717
8	My friends taught me how to smoke	55(27.5)	35(17.5)	50(25.0)	60(30.0)	2.575	0.658
9	I want to experience relationship	30(15.0)	25(12.5)	60(30.0)	85(42.5)	3.000	0.621
10	Most of my friends advise me to drink beer or liquor	60(30.0)	30(15.0)	50(25.0)	60(30.0)	2.550	0.925
11	The friends I have advised me to give teachers a hard time	45(22.5)	50(25.0)	35(17.5)	70(35.0)	2.650	1.122
12	I discuss my learning problems	18(9.0)	19(9.5)	83(41.5)	80(40.0)	3.125	0.717

	with my friends						
13	I do not go to my friends for clarification on what I was taught	61(30.5)	64(32.0)	30(15.0)	45(22.5)	2.295	0.658
14	My friend advised me to wear the types of cloth they wear	41(20.5)	55(27.5)	30(15.0)	74(37.0)	2.685	0.621
15	I want to explore my teenage years	46(23.0)	30(15.0)	69(34.5)	55(27.5)	2.665	0.925

Table 2 shows the influence of peer group on adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students in Osogbo Local Government Area. It can be seen that 60.0% of the respondents responded that they put on the kind of cloth their friends like while 40.0% respondents disagreed. Also, from this table, it is realized that 67.5% of respondents opined that they cannot do anything on their own without input from their friends while 32.5% disagreed. 70.0% respondents agreed that they attend clubs in the company of their friends while 30.0% disagreed. 42.5% of the respondents agreed that what they do is determined by their friends while 57.5% opposed it. In the same vein, 72.5% supported that most of their friends advised them to smoke marijuana, while 27.5% of respondents discontented. 67.5% of respondents agreed that they like starting new activities while 32.5% disagreed. 80.0% of respondents agreed that they receive advice from their friends to have a steady boyfriend or girlfriend while 20% disagreed. 55.0% of the respondents agreed that their friends taught them how to smoke while 45.0% disagreed. 72.5% of the respondents agreed that they want to experience relationship while 27.5% disagreed. 55.0% of the respondents agreed that they drink beer or liquor based on advice from their friends while 45.0% opposed. 52.5% of the respondents agreed that they give hard time to the teachers based on advice from friends while 47.5% disagreed. Furthermore, the table reveals that 81.5% respondents discussed their learning problems with their friends while 18.5% opposed. 37.5% respondents opined that they do not go to their friends for clarification on what they were taught while 62.5% respondents disagreed. 52.0% of the respondents agreed that what they wear is based on friends' influence while 48.0% respondents disagreed. 62.0% of the respondents stated that they want to explore their teenage years while 38.0% disagreed.

Research Question 3: Would there be school type (public and private) difference in the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior in Oshogbo L.G.A?

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis on the significant difference between public and private school in the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior

	N	Mean	S.D	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Public	100	23.16	3.93				Not significant
				2.06	198	0.71	
Private	100	23.51	5.07				

Table 4 presents the analysis of the difference between public and private schools on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent behaviors in Osogbo L.G.A. The result reveals that there is no significant difference between private and public schools on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior in Osoogbo L.G.A. (t = 2.06, df = 198, p < 0.05). This implies that students in private and public schools do not differ on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior.

Research question 4: Would there be gender (male and female) difference in the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior in Oshogbo L.G.A?
Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis on the significant difference between male and female students on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior

	N	Mean	S.D	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	92	17.02	4.89				Not significant
				4.196	198	.000	
Female	108	24.08	4.10				

Table 4 presents the analysis of the difference between male and female students on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent behavior in Osogbo L.G.A. The result reveals that there is no significant difference in between male and female students on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent

misbehavior in Osogbo L.G.A. (t = 2.06, df = 198, p < 0.05). This implies that the perception of male students on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehaviour is the same with their female counterparts.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that adolescent misbehavior is prevalent among secondary school students in Osogbo L.G.A as majority of the respondents agreed that students fighting with another students, students always cheating in class, learners always fighting physically with a teacher learners always bringing other clothes to school other than school uniform, students usually smoking cigarettes, students are involving in examination malpractice, learners always receiving advice from friends to threatening another student and learners used to miss out lesson in school. The findings corroborate Pathak, Sharma, Parvan and Gupta (2011), Finn, Fish and Scott (2008), Jenkins (2017), Cashwell (2016), and Seidman (2005) and Evram (2018).

Furthermore, the findings also reveal that peer group negatively influence adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students in Osogbo L.G.A as majority of the students agreed that they put on the kind of cloth their friends like, they cannot do anything on their own without input from their friends, they attend clubs in the company of their friends, most of their friends advised them to smoke marijuana amongst others. The findings are in agreement with Owens (2002) and Vandivere, Moore and Gallagher (2004).

More so, the findings revealed that there is no significant difference in between private and public schools in the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior (t = 2.06, df = 198, p < 0.05). This implies that students in private and public schools do not differ on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior. The finding contradicts Kenned (2019) which identified significance difference between public and private school students with the private school in a better position.

Finally, the findings revealed that there is no significant difference in between male and female students on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior in L.G.A (t = 2.06, df = 198, p < 0.05). This implies that the perception of male students on the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior is the same with their female counterparts. The finding could be attributed to the fact that both male and female undergo the same emotional and psychological pressures during the period of adolescent.

Conclusion: In this research, a result of the survey of the influence of peer pressure on adolescents' misbehavior among secondary school students in Oshogbo L.G.A of Osun State. The study was limited to secondary school students in Oshogbo Local Government Area. Based on the findings from this study, it was deduced that adolescent misbehavior is prevalent among

secondary school students in Oshogbo L.G.A. Peer group negatively influence adolescent misbehavior among secondary school students in Oshogbo L.G.A. There is no significant difference in between private and public schools in the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior and there is no significant difference in between male and female students in the influence of peer pressure on adolescent misbehavior

Implications of the findings: A number of implications have emerged from the findings of the study. A result of the survey of the influence of peer pressure on adolescents' misbehavior among secondary school students in Oshogbo L.G.A of Osun State. School counsellors need to understand: adolescents' misbehavior in the context of school type, in order to reduce the rate of adolescents' misbehavior in school. Those in the helping profession especially counselling psychologists have a significant role to play. They have to work in hand with students in both public and private secondary school students to develop:

- Behavioral monitoring/supervision strategies
- Necessary information for students in order to educate them and solve problems relating to the misunderstanding among peers
- Programmed and seminars to educate them on morals and good behaviors
- Penalty to be awarded to adolescent students that violate school rules and regulation
- Disciplinary committee to handle all cases of adolescent misbehavior.

Recommendation

In the light of the above, it is recommended that:

1. Adolescents in public schools should be properly disciplined like their counterparts in private schools. Strict disciplinary measures should be meted out to students identified with adolescent misbehavior.
2. Students should be educated on the negative implications of adolescent misbehavior. They should also be advised to dissociate themselves from friends who engage in such misbehavior. They should be told that exhibiting such behaviors makes them unwelcomed in the society and could endanger their future.
3. A school-based mental health services should be established to handle adolescent misbehavior in most effective way by providing help to the sufferers at earliest.
4. School management should carefully monitor the activities of students mostly those observed to exhibit adolescent misbehavior. This will help to manage the student and put him/her on the right track.

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ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The COVID-19 pandemic has created a crisis that has critically affected higher education institutions. With the sudden shift to emergency remote education during the pandemic, students' online experiences have become a growing concern among teachers. This study aims to gain insights into students' experiences of online activities in a hybrid learning approach. A total of 80 students enrolled in undergraduate programs at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, responded to an open-ended online questionnaire. This study used the content analysis to find out the positive and negative experiences in online learning, the preference for continuing instruction in a certain format and the reason for choice. The results showed that students' resources and skills played an important role in terms of positive or negative study experiences: cost and time effectiveness, easy access to many study materials and good distance learning skills helped to cope with this pandemic, while little or no interaction with colleagues and teachers and too many hours on screen caused difficulties and dissatisfaction among other students. Despite these issues, most students are interested in continuing their online instruction, but also face-to-face or hybrid activities. This study can provide recommendations derived from the interpretation of participant feedback for improvements in future online learning experiences.*

Keywords: *students' experiences; online learning; emergency remote education; engineering students; COVID-19 pandemic.*

1. Introduction

A recurring theme in recent literature that has addressed teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic is emergency remote teaching (ERT). With the emergence of the current pandemic, many educational institutions had to act quickly and started providing education through electronic platforms. Specialists have described ERT as a sudden temporary shift in the delivery of

instruction to an online delivery mode due to crisis circumstances, as opposed to online courses that were originally designed to be delivered digitally (Hodges et al., 2020). The primary goal in these circumstances is not to recreate a functioning educational environment, but rather to provide immediate access to education in a manner that is easily implemented and available during an emergency or crisis. It is worth noting that this type of education depends to a large extent not only on technology or digital infrastructure, but also on a set of socio-psychological attributes that have affected the entire educational community (teachers, students, parents, etc.) (Bozkurt et al., 2020). Specialists consider that equating the idea of ERT with online teaching is not quite appropriate. Hodges et al. (2020) showed that well-designed online learning situations are significantly different from online courses offered in response to a crisis.

Moreover, a paradox emerged during the pandemic: while some studies indicated that students had a positive attitude towards emergency remote learning, others indicated that students did not prefer online teaching to face-to-face teaching in this period. On the one hand, there are several advantages of online learning, with studies suggesting that the flexible educational environment, independence in time and space, and opportunities to repeat activities asynchronously by re-accessing learning materials (Ahmed et al., 2020) were positively evaluated by the students. Then, the adoption of modern teaching-learning methods (e.g., flipped learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning etc.), the quality of course materials and videos and the adoption of alternative assessment approaches have positive effects on the learning process and student satisfaction (Elfirdoussi et al., 2020). Students had more control over when and how they completed course learning activities. However, online learning requires various student qualities, such as knowledge of using technology, time management and organization and interaction using online technologies (Joosten & Cusatis, 2020). On the other hand, during the pandemic, the digital divide increased inequality and social injustice and negatively affected the education process at all levels, with psychological effects such as anxiety, frustration or boredom on students, teachers, and parents (Aristovnik et al., 2020). In addition, Sun et al. (2020), in their study of students' experience during online courses, found that students believe that teachers should know how to adapt their lectures to the online environment, not just transfer online information that was usually taught in a traditional way and that they should provide an adequate number of projects and assignments. Other studies from Romania (Coman et al., 2020; Potra et al., 2021) showed that students reported several disadvantages of online studies, such as information overload, limited interaction, teacher-related obstacles, concentration-related difficulties, technical problems, teachers' lack

of technical skills, teaching styles not adapted to online training and considered them less beneficial in terms of achieving learning outcomes. Thus, although the negative impact of the pandemic is undeniable, we should not neglect the potential positive experiences.

Universities need to be aware of their students' preferences and attitudes towards online learning practices as opposed to their traditional learning experiences. Understanding student perceptions has important implications for the quality of learning because it affects students' motivation to learn, helps teachers rethink course design principles, provides the opportunity to adapt teaching methods to new learning environments and students' needs, and improves curricula. The study by Lochner and colleagues (2016) indicated that, when used as an additional method to traditional courses, online learning improved students' learning experience and increased their engagement in courses. Comparing traditional and online learning, the study by Alsaaty and colleagues (2016) showed that a large percentage of students assimilated more information in face-to-face courses than in online courses, and that they perceived their online learning experiences positively, although they encountered difficulties in using e-learning platforms. The study by Kedraka and Kaltsidisi (2020) concluded that the pandemic period could be seen as an opportunity for universities to improve the use of digital technology for enhanced learning experiences. While most studies emphasize positive attitudes towards online learning, other studies have shown that students believe that online courses do not provide the same value as face-to-face courses and that students would rather accept a blended learning, that is a combination of online and face-to-face courses rather than just online learning.

A widely influential model of effective online learning experiences is the Community of Inquiry developed by Garrison et al. (2000), who emphasize three dimensions of the online learning experience: the teaching presence is the content and climate developed by the instructor; the social presence involves the development of interpersonal relationships and communication in an environment of mutual trust; and the cognitive presence involves constructing and confirming meaning around course content through dialogue and reflection. For online learning, all these three dimensions and their overlap reflect the dynamics of online learning experiences, which are key elements for improving the quality of online education.

In our study, we start from the view that exploring students' learning experiences is an integral part of how educational communities can be involved in initiating effective adaptations to digital transformations in higher education in a post-pandemic evolution.

2. Methodology

2.1. Objective

This study aims to gain insights into students' online experiences in the hybrid approach within the courses they have attended.

1. What are the positive aspects that students have experienced in online learning?

2. What are the negative aspects that students have experienced in online learning?

3. What are the students' perceptions regarding the format of continuing their instruction and the reasons for choice?

2.2. Participants

A total of 80 undergraduate students from the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca participated in this study, of which 49 males and 31 females, 64 urban residence students and 16 rural residence students, 10 first-year students, 23 second-year students, 37 third year students and 10 fourth year students.

2.3. Instruments

A qualitative method was utilized to collect data to achieve the purpose of this study. Four open-ended questions were used to ask students about their perception on the positive and negative experiences of online instruction in the hybrid approach, the preference for continuing instruction in a certain format and the reason for choice. The online questionnaire using Google Forms was sent through the e-learning platform. Data were analyzed using NVivo 12 qualitative analysis software, which facilitates efficient management of qualitative data, grouping and regrouping of data to discover meaningful topics, categories, and themes and to increase the efficiency of data interpretation processes. Qualitative responses to the four questions were grouped into themes and several key themes emerged. The students were also assured that the information they provided would only be used to fulfil the purposes of the research. Their participation was entirely voluntary, anonymous and in no way affected the evaluation of the study subjects.

At the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, our university approved the transition to online courses and face-to-face seminars, laboratories, and other forms of practical activity in a blended approach which is designed as a combination of online approach (in case of lectures and theoretical speeches)

and face-to face approach (in case of exercises, assignments or for the more practiced trainings).

3. Results

The open-ended questions asked students to express their most significant positive and negative academic learning experiences during the pandemic, then their preference for continuing instruction in a certain format and the reason for choice. Their suggestions were assorted and after coding, were divided into several themes, as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. Students' positive and negative experiences of online learning

Suggestions	Frequency	Percent
Positive experiences	122	51.69
cost and time effectiveness regarding travel and accommodation	20	8.47
easy access to many study materials	19	8.05
good distance learning skills	13	5.51
flexible opportunities for participation	11	4.66
modernization of teaching, learning and assessment	8	3.39
audio-video recording of courses/ laboratories	8	3.39
time for personal development	8	3.39
emphasis on practical and essential aspects of activities	6	2.54
well-functioning telecommunications	5	2.12
more time spent with family	5	2.12
learning from the experiences of all colleagues	4	1.69
good communication skills	3	1.27
time for both academic study and work	2	0.85
good emotional health	2	0.85
social support from teachers	2	0.85
no positive experience	2	0.85
other positive experiences	4	1.69
Negative experiences	114	48.30
little or no interaction with colleagues and teachers	18	7.63
fatigue due to many hours on the screen	13	5.51
low study skills	11	4.66
lack of practical aspects	10	4.24
unclear, excessive and short-term assessment	10	4.24
poorly functioning devices and software	9	3.81
poor study motivation	8	3.39
teachers' poor digital pedagogical skills	4	1.69
non-objective evaluation	3	1.27
teaching not adapted to the digital environment	3	1.27
anxiety, fear of communication, depression	3	1.27
confusion about future studies	3	1.27
low efficiency of online courses/ laboratories	2	0.85
lack or deletion of records after a while	2	0.85
daily routine	2	0.85

low hygiene safety measures	2	0.85
confinement	2	0.85
no negative experience	2	0.85
other negative experiences	7	2.97
TOTAL	236	100

Looking at the positive experiences of online learning, the results indicate that cost and time effectiveness regarding travel and accommodation (f = 20) was most valued especially by students in the pandemic context. It is worth mentioning that up to 19 students had easy access to many study materials despite these times. About 13 students expressed their good distance learning skills (independent study skills, time management skills, study materials organization skills), while good communication skills (ease of expressing opinions, ask questions, get information, present projects) were highlighted only by 3 students. The high frequencies of student experiences regarding flexible participation opportunities were appreciated by 11 students. Personal development time (f = 8) was quite valued by the students, while 5 students stated that they spent more time with their family. Also, efficient use of time for both academic study and work was mentioned by 2 students. The modernization of teaching, learning and assessment, especially the methods of promoting interaction are mentioned in the answers of 8 students, as the possibility of recording courses and their resumption is expressed by 8 students. The focus on the practical and essential aspects of the activities is highlighted by 6 students. Well-functioning telecommunications were mentioned no more than 5 times in the student responses. Teamwork and active group support as indicators of the functioning of a learning community were valued by 4 students.

In terms of negative experiences of online learning, the results showed that little or no interaction with peers and teachers, lack or poor functioning of the learning community had the greatest negative impact on learning during the pandemic (f = 18). Fatigue due to too many hours on the screen was felt by 13 students. Some students had problems in understanding the content, in focusing attention (f = 11) and it was perceived as a challenge in the home environment. According to student comments, distance learning involved more self-learning, and the tight schedule of meetings required the content to be reviewed independently afterwards. Lack of motivation to learn (f = 8) due to the uncertainty and increased stress caused by the pandemic was another negative experience. Feelings of loneliness, anxiety, fear, depression were expressed by 3 students, mentioning the need for support from teachers or peers, while another 3 students highlighted confusion about continuing their studies. Students mentioned that in their experiences with online learning they

faced teacher's lack of digital pedagogical skills (f = 4). Students also stated that they missed practical aspects, practical works and said that there was too much theory (f = 10). Unclear or excessive assignments, large number of exercises in the allotted time, too short time for assessment, announcing the change of assessment conditions shortly before the exam are some of the opinions expressed by the 10 students. Also, many respondents admitted to having problems with the operation of devices and software, connecting to the Internet or the learning platform (f = 9).

Table 2. The preference for continuing instruction in a certain format and the reasons for choice

Suggestions	Frequency	Percent
Preference for continuing instruction in a certain format	103	100
face to face	21	20.39
online	65	63.11
hybrid	11	10.68
I don't know	6	5.83
Reasons for continuing instruction in a certain format		
face to face:	21	20.39
losses in online education	8	7.77
effective, interactive learning	7	6.79
other reasons	6	5.83
online:	65	63.11
no travel, saving time and money	11	10.68
many online materials, reviewing them	10	9.71
better time management	9	8.74
a more efficient, safer, simpler, easier way of teaching and learning	8	7.77
flexibility regarding time and space	8	7.77
the importance of personal and other health	4	3.88
carrying out parallel activities at the workplace with academic ones	4	3.88
better communication of information, clear explanations	3	2.91
the best and safest solution through online education	3	2.91
quiet, comfort at home	3	2.91
other reasons	2	1.94
hybrid:	11	9.71
online courses and face-to-face laboratories/ seminars	9	8.74
other reasons	2	1.94
TOTAL	103	100

For students who opted for face-to-face/ conventional instruction, the participants list the losses recorded in online instruction: lack of communication, attention, understanding, fatigue problems, lack of practical experiments, damage to mental health. For others, the reasons emphasized the possibility of teacher-student and student-student interaction. Students thought that in the face-to-face classes, it would have been easier to ask for help from teacher or peers, and learning would have been more efficient then. Most students did not know their colleagues at all and for this reason, group work was felt to be difficult. Some respondents felt that there were no opportunities for critical thinking or discussion during online activities, others mentioned that teachers did not take into account the students' previous skills. Because of this, some students became frustrated with either too slow or too fast progress in the course. Most students said that it would be important to continue their online instruction because they have easy access to many study materials and the opportunity to review them. Other reasons for continuing the online instruction that students said were saving time, especially for those who must travel long distances to get to classes, flexibility of time and space, but also the fact that it is a more efficient, easier, simpler way of teaching and learning. For 11 students, the possibility of a hybrid instruction seems to be the best option in which the courses are conducted online, and the laboratories, seminars and other practical activities take place face to face.

In short, the results of the open-ended questions analysis provide us with important insights into students' experiences. There is still a need to rethink activities for the "new normal" and that it is time to reinforce the positive experiences and look deeper into the negative experiences.

4. Discussion

This study focused on engineering students' reported experiences with online activities in the hybrid approach during the pandemic. Within the open-ended questions, the aspects that strengthen and weaken learning experiences can be divided into different categories, from students' resources and skills to the delivery of instructional activities and the use of digital technologies. The results of the study showed that online instruction brought a mix of positive and negative experiences during the pandemic. Participants' experiences varied widely and are, therefore, in line with previous studies.

It is noteworthy that students highlighted positive experiences in online learning, the rating being determined by the ability to save time for travel and accommodation, to have easy access to study materials, to have good distance learning skills or to have flexible opportunities for participation. The flexibility offered by online education, cost, and time efficiency in terms of travel and accommodation were highly valued by most students. While it is

important to set guidelines and be consistent, a little flexibility is very important to meet the needs of digital natives and show them support, especially for those students who are experiencing difficult times, stressors, or health issues. This finding is also highlighted in previous research that has shown that online learning allows students to use their time more efficiently (Jung & Rha, 2000; Fidalgo et al., 2020). Also, in terms of cost-effectiveness, it has been stated that online education is generally cheaper than face-to-face education (OECD, 2020). Saving time is accompanied by a combination of personal development activities and time spent with family. Lacking control over face-to-face interaction, many students do not spend time reviewing study materials before class, preparing their workspace, or getting ready for online learning.

Furthermore, students' own resources and skills played an important role in positive and negative online learning experiences: on the one hand, good distance learning skills helped them cope with the pandemic situation, on the other hand, poor understanding of content and low concentration of attention caused difficulties and dissatisfaction among the other students. The results of this study are consistent with research by Bhagat and Kim (2020), which highlighted a growing demand for online learning and the need for digital skills to make the teaching-learning experience richer and more value-oriented for all students. Negative experiences may be related to students' learning behaviors and the degree to which they have the skills to succeed in online learning. Research by Yeh et al. (2019) showed that certain learning strategies and behaviors can help students achieve better results in online learning. One of the challenges of higher education is educating students to be able to activate and maintain thoughts, emotions, motivation, and behaviors aimed at achieving learning goals, a process called self-regulated learning. These types of strategies are desirable because students who adequately regulate their learning typically acquire more in-depth knowledge, pursue learning goals, and achieve higher performance. Regarding the focus on the digital classroom, students stated that they were distracted from the home atmosphere because it was a non-private place of study. Additionally, distractions often occur when students lack time management skills, causing them to do household chores and homework at the same time.

Another negative experience reported by students was the lack of communication and interaction practices with teachers or peers. Affecting the opportunity for informal communication that accompanies the educational process, most students often indicated problems related to the socio-emotional aspects of learning, such as: lack of socialization and direct interaction, lack of sharing experiences and information between peers or enjoying social interaction during breaks. Social relationships and interactions are considered

important to the learning experience in online environments. Recent research findings emphasize the importance of social interaction and collaboration as sources of student well-being and learning satisfaction (Miller, 2020; Kedraka & Kaltsidisi, 2020). It is suggested that teacher-student interaction can be developed through face-to-face meetings and/or online learning activities. Online etiquette suggestions for student teaching include verbal/ visual confirmation of student attendance, frequently asking students to raise their hands or participate, using poll and interactive discussion forums, and breakout rooms. Students experienced positive emotions because the courses were conducted online, giving them flexibility in the schedule, more free time, or the opportunity to express opinions or ask questions. However, students experienced negative emotions in online learning: academic stress, fear of failure, boredom and depressive thoughts that distracted students from academic activities. As Miller (2020) points out, the pandemic affected families, students, and teachers both emotionally and psychologically, and feelings of fear, anxiety, uncertainty "were as contagious as the Coronavirus and affected learning climates" (2020, p. 4). Teaching during a pandemic can be beneficial for building resilience. Interactions between students and teachers are the key to fostering collaboration and relationships, but it is not enough to ensure a social presence. The connectedness of the participants, their emotional and affective responses to each other, and their interactions by sharing their ideas increase social presence. For instance, teachers could ask their students if they are still doing well and what learning remedies or alternatives they could agree upon as a class, rather than just a one-way ERT approach.

For successful online teaching-learning-assessment activities, the important elements are for teachers to ensure that students are active, not passive in front of digital devices and to establish a close relationship with students based on respect, professionalism, availability, and support, because positively influences students' motivation to study. Adopting an online learning environment is not only a technical matter, but also a pedagogical challenge that can be overcome by selecting and adapting the educational content and materials, by designing and implementing appropriate instructional strategies. The focus should be placed on minimal attention to students' needs, on active processing of information (making connections with prior knowledge and from other disciplines, critically analyzing information etc.), on interest to feel excited (Clark & Mayer, 2016). Also, an aspect highlighted in our study is that the academic workload increased during emergency remote education. Academic integrity in assessments is another key factor affecting student motivation for study and objective examination. To ensure the objectivity of assessments and to prevent academic fraud, emphasis should be placed on

continuous assessment throughout the semester (e.g., projects or topics with a certain degree of complexity, critical analysis topics, problem solving etc.). Another possibility expressed by students would be the open-book online exam with the possibility of addressing some topics of analysis, critical thinking, case studies, solving complex problems etc.

Lack of practical aspects and unclear and excessive assignments caused students' discomfort. During the fully online education period, laboratory activities were particularly frustrating for students, because they anticipated the opportunity to handle equipment that did not materialize in the online learning environment. By moving to the hybrid approach and participating in face-to-face laboratory activities, students were able to physically contact and manipulate different materials. However, to compensate for the lack of physical presence at the lecturers, the teachers recorded videos that briefly describe the practical aspects and the appropriate equipment in them, to be used during the online meetings with students. As a provider of high-quality education, the university must pay special attention to the practical training of students, otherwise both the individual and society may pay the price of educational failure. On the one hand, students need to develop functional competencies that will facilitate their access to the labor market. On the other hand, employers may have difficulty to find workers with the appropriate competencies. Thus, in the development of a sustainable society, the training and development of professional and transversal competencies are key factors.

The above results obtained from the students' answers in combination with the technical issues, underline the need for a better knowledge of communication applications, both in synchronous and asynchronous form. Schleicher's study (2020) indicated the lack of training of a significant percentage of teachers in distance learning of new technologies, which affects the instructional practices that teachers choose to communicate with students, but also the way they create, share, and present the educational material. Emphasizing that teachers should be familiar with learning platforms and educational technology, have the skills to use this technology, and be encouraged to use educational technology at a minimum in all courses, regardless of training mode, can help institutions and teachers to be better prepared in the future. Implementing teacher professional development with reference to online pedagogy and the use of digital tools could benefit both university instructional practices and student experiences.

Finally, we should not overlook students' responses to the reasons for continuing instruction in a certain format in the post-pandemic perspective. Impressively, more than half of the answers to this question were directed towards online instruction. Most of them refer to reasons such as access to

many study materials and their revision, saving time, more efficient, safer, and simpler way of teaching and learning, but also flexibility of time and space. This conclusion is consistent with the study of Karalis and Raikou (2020) who also showed that students favor online education because attending the course was easier and the difference from the face-to-face process was exciting. Based on the results of this and other studies, it is necessary to identify students at risk of school failure and then support them in developing learning skills in all areas.

Thus, both online and face-to-face instruction are needed; while the flexibility of time and space offered by remote learning is seen as an advantage, the need for face-to-face interaction and a learning community, especially in the early stages of their studies, seems obvious to our students. As Holzer and colleagues (2021) concluded, online learning should be designed in a way that maximizes the strengths and limits the weaknesses of online education.

5. Conclusion

Despite the moderate acceptance of online learning by the students, some challenges have been identified. Taking students' responses into account, this study recommends the following ideas to teachers and policy makers:

- Investing in online instruction to ensure the continuation of academic studies, especially in times of emergency.
- Creating a community of support to help students better cope with the psychological and educational implications, including in emergency situations.
- Creating and fostering student-teacher and student-student interactions that will help reduce students' feelings of isolation and increase their confidence and engagement in learning.
- Developing students' self-directed learning and time management skills by promoting the values of commitment, adaptation, resilience, integrity, and self-confidence.
- Familiarizing teachers with models/ frameworks that allow the combination of pedagogy and technology.
- Avoiding overloading students with courses, assignments, and assessments, because especially during periods of disruption, students' physical and psychological well-being is of great importance.
- Strengthening the training of teaching staff related to the development of digital pedagogical skills, together with practical interactive ways of working with students.

Although digital technologies are transforming the nature of university teaching and learning, or even disrupting students' learning experiences, they will inevitably continue to be an integral part of the future of university

education around the world. Understanding students' perceptions and learning experiences is considered important in the process of integrating online forms into didactic activities, as well as in the implementation of blended learning. This study has some limitations, so that due to the rather small number of participants in our study, more general conclusions could not be drawn based on the results obtained. Collecting additional data through face-to-face interviews would have benefited this study. The fact that the data were collected from only one public university in Romania and from undergraduate studies is another limitation of the study. Despite these limitations, this study makes important contributions to improving our understanding of how blended learning might be conducted in the post-pandemic perspective.

Although the pandemic has presented a very difficult challenge for universities to change their approach to education, to use new technologies and to find new ways for students to learn, we should not waste this valuable learning opportunity.

Biographical note

Lorena Peculea is lecturer PhD at the Specialized Department with Psycho-pedagogical Profile from Technical University of Cluj-Napoca. Her teaching and research interests are interdisciplinary ones, such as education and curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, e-learning, pre-service and in-service teacher training, psycho-pedagogical counselling, educational management, ethics and academic integrity. Scientific contribution was materialized by participating in research-development-innovation projects and institutional projects, participating in national and international conferences, and publishing the studies and articles in prestigious national and international journals.

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SCIENCE TEACHERS' AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF INNOVATIVE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS IN SCIENCE CLASSROOMS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract: *The growing need to survive in a 21st century global competitive society has presented the need to restructure the teaching and learning process to not just employ innovative instructional approaches that can promote learning but also formative assessment techniques that can help improve classroom instruction for effective delivery. In this light, the study sought to investigate science teachers' awareness and utilization of innovative formative assessment techniques (IFAT) for assessing students in science classrooms in Anambra state. Two research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. 150 science subject teachers, drawn using simple random sampling technique, comprised the sample of the study. An instrument titled "Checklist on Science Teachers' Awareness*

and Utilization of Innovative Formative Assessment Techniques (CSTLAUIFAT)" developed by the researchers for the teachers was used for data collection. The 50-item checklist was subjected to face and content validity by three experts and with a reliability coefficient of 0.82 established using Cronbach Alpha. Frequency count, percentages, weighted Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that although science teachers are aware of some of these innovative formative assessment techniques, they however do not utilize most of them in the teaching and learning process. Based on the findings, it was then recommended among others that education stakeholders should organize workshops, seminars, symposia, and conferences to educate teachers on these innovative assessment techniques and how to implement them in the classroom.

Keywords: *science; assessment; formative assessment; innovative formative assessment.*

1. Introduction

Science has long been recognized as the cornerstone for present-day technological advancements as it has contributed immensely to the development of the world. This is probably why, Nwuba et. al. (2022) emphasized that the applications of science to every sphere of life has necessitated every nation, both developed and still developing, to strive for its advancements in science and technology. Science is the systematic study of nature or universe, acquired through observation, experimentation, measurement and recording, whose knowledge is applied to every aspect of life (Obidimma & Osuafor, 2019). Anaekwe, Nzelum, Olisakwe and Okpala (2010) defined it as a dynamic process of seeking for knowledge about nature, acquired through systematic observation and experimentation, which is applied to every aspect of life. Hence, science may simply be defined as the systematic study of nature, acquired through the use of scientific method.

As a field of study, which comprises subjects such as biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, economics, agriculture, science has done a lot for mankind over the years. For instance, with the knowledge of science, man has been able to understand his environment enabling him to manipulate the conditions of the environment to his benefit and that of the society. Supporting this, Nwanguma (2014) stated that the knowledge of science helps man know more about the universe and with the application of this knowledge, it will be easier for man to explore the environment and existence. In light of the premise, it becomes imperative to note that the importance of science to man

cannot be overemphasized, and with this notice, calls for the restructuring of approaches employed in the classroom to promote and foster the acquisition of scientific knowledge and skills. This restructuring, in recent times, has caused a paradigm shift in education shifting emphasis from the normally used conventional methods of teaching and assessments techniques to innovative approaches that aims to impact knowledge, develop skills and foster abilities in learners. This paradigm shift which is geared towards making the teaching and learning process learner-centered and activity-based oriented, implores teachers to employ not just innovative methods of instruction but also innovative formative assessment techniques during classroom instruction to improve classroom delivery.

Assessment is a vital tool in education as it helps education stakeholders ascertain within or at the end of every program or lesson the extent to which learners have achieved the stated objectives. Erwin cited in Bugg (2013) defined it as the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting information while using the information to increase students' learning and development. It is a tool that educators are using in classrooms to understand what students are learning, how students are learning, and where students may need interventions (Bugg, 2013). Hence, Assessment may be defined as any tool or technique used in any learning process to determine the extent to which a stated objective has been achieved. Assessment techniques used in various classrooms today, according to Akanwa, Agommoh and Ihechu (2019) are of three forms: diagnostic, summative and formative assessments. Akanwa et. al. posited that although each assessment may serve different purposes, their primary focus is on the students' performance index. In the content of the study, formative assessment was discussed.

Formative assessment also referred to as "assessment for learning" according to Dodge (2018) is an integral part of effective teaching and learning that enables the teacher to decide how best to help the learners understand the subject matter and support their learning during learning process. It is the name given to assessments which monitor students' progress, without grading, and using this information to adapt teaching and learning to facilitate the students' needs during the task or activity (Cullinane, 2011). West Virginia Board of Education (2018) defined formative assessment as a deliberate daily process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides actionable feedback used to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended learning outcomes. It is a process in which teachers and students provide feedback during instruction to organize the learning and teaching process in order to increase and enhance instruction. (Prashanti

&Ramnarayan, 2019). Hence, formative assessments are simply tools or techniques employed by teachers and students during classroom instruction to improve learning outcomes, give feedback to students and/or guide their instruction.

Considering the above definitions, one can categorically posit that the importance of formative assessment in the teaching and learning process cannot be overemphasized. Keeley cited in Cullanine (2011) asserted that formative assessment; activates thinking and engages learning, make students ideas explicit to themselves and as well as the teacher, encourages participation of all learners by increasing comfort in making one's ideas public (particularly quieter students who often may not contribute to lessons), presents a stimulus for discussion and scientific argumentation, determines if students can apply scientific ideas to new situations as well as give and use feedback (student to student, student to teacher and teacher to student). In line with the premise, Wuest and Fisette (2012) posited that formative assessment informs teachers whether the students have learned indicating qualification for how the teachers should plan their next lessons. Similarly, Reiger (2012) stated that formative assessment strategies enable teachers' heck for understanding of students learning and to make decisions about current and future instruction. Reiger further stressed that through formative assessment, teachers can discover the rate at which students are learning, the current knowledge of students, what information or skills students still need to learn, and whether the learning opportunities they are providing for students is effective or if they need to change or adapt their instruction. Summarizing the above benefits, Prashanti and Ramnarayan (2019) in their study gave ten maxims of formative assessments as follows: Formative assessment remains faceless, facilitates active learning, encourages feedback, engenders feed forward, reiterates focus on learning and not on grading, provides flexibility, happens fast, occurs frequently, propagates a friendly learning environment and generates fun in learning.

Prior to innovations in education, formative assessment techniques employed in schools have been limited to mostly questions, tests, projects, oral presentations which aim specifically improve classroom delivery for effective teaching. Ritchhart, Church, and Morrison (2011) asserted that although these techniques make students responsible for their own learning, give each student a chance to create their own knowledge of the subject, make students work together with their peers and their teachers, expand student's framework and move towards more complex knowledge and understanding, not all questions, tests, projects, and oral presentations are compelling. In other words, not all the above-mentioned techniques actively involve the learners in activities that

goes beyond classroom instruction that can promote creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills for effective survival while fostering classroom delivery in the process. Supporting the premise, Price, Pierson and Light (2011) in their study posited that to promote students learning in an emerging competitive economy, it is important to transform how teachers assess their students' learning in the classroom as the constant use of recall test, or by asking content questions during a lecture has proved to be ineffective in producing 21st century competent citizens. In this light, there arises the need to inculcate assessment techniques that can promote skill acquisition while actively enhancing classroom delivery, hence the innovative formative assessment techniques.

Innovative formative assessment techniques (IFAT) are those novel and creative tools employed by teachers in the classroom to not only efficiently improve classroom delivery but also develop higher mental process skills in learners. They are those newly employed classroom assessment tools used to ascertain learners' assimilation level of a taught concept while developing and fostering learners' problem-solving skills in the process. McMillan (2014) stated the innovative assessment tools adopted in the 21st century classroom has gone beyond tests, projects, oral presentations as educational planners and implementers are continuously searching for tools that can help students engage better, achieve better and become productive members of the society as learning in the world today has gone beyond just classroom applications. Similarly, Price, Pierson and Light (2011) in their study posited that with current trends in the 21st century competitive economy, IFAT should be adopted in schools as high quality teacher-designed assessments provide insight on what and how students are learning in time for teachers to modify or personalize instruction, allow teachers to assess a broader range of skills and abilities in addition to content recall as well as give students new roles in the assessment process that can make assessment itself a learning experience and deepen student engagement in content.

Innovative formative assessment techniques employed in schools today are vast and wide. For instance, VanVoorhis (2008) listed Exit/Admit cards, Authentic questioning, Brainstorm, Chunking (graphic organizers), concept links, clip board pass around, discuss with a partner, group Q and A, E resources, mental rehearsals, one minute paper, read-write-pair-share, reciprocal questioning, retelling, student generated test questions, think-pair-share, value line-up, whip around, write questions, metacognition, yesterday news among others as examples of IFAT. Similarly, Price, Pierson and Light (2011) identified Rubrics, Performance-based assessments (PBAs), Portfolios, Student self-assessment, Peer-assessment, and Student response systems as

formative assessment techniques particularly relevant to the educational context of developing countries. In the same vein, Reiger (2012) and Lambert (2012), in their respective publications, both agreed that the major forms of innovative formative assessment techniques include ABC brainstorming, Analogies, use of demonstration stations, exit cards, graphic organizers, inside-outside circle, one minute essay, one sentence summary, peer assessment, self-assessment, placemats, think-pair-share, three facts and a fib, three-minute-pause, three things, whip around, concept maps, three things, 3-2-1, four corners, graffiti walls, individual whiteboards, performance tests, portfolios, reciprocal teaching, metacognition, idea spinner, take and pass, list 10 things, problem solving etc.

Having conducted several studies on the various forms of innovative formative assessment tools, Cambridge Assessment International Education (2017) asserted that when IFAT are effectively employed, they are very useful during the teaching and learning to help teachers and students evaluate progress in terms of understanding and skills acquisition, as well as provide guidance and feedback for subsequent teaching and learning. Similarly, McMillan and Hearn (2008) emphasized that in contrast to the traditional teacher-designed, administered and graded tests, which demand a low level of cognition, IFAT involves students throughout the assessing process fostering their metacognition, active participation, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills as these techniques ultimately puts students at the center of the learning process. IFAT when effectively implemented encourages student/teacher relationships, teacher's ability to personalize instruction, acquisition of 21st century skills, student engagement and student metacognition (Price, Pierson & Light, 2011). Supporting the premise, Chu et. al. (2016) stated that in employing these 21st century assessment tools, students' competency is effectively activated enabling them demonstrate their proficiency in various skills in a low-risk environment, thus promoting teaching and learning to the students' advantage. Considering these benefits associated with adopting IFAT in the teaching and learning process, the researchers deemed it necessary to ascertain science teachers' awareness of these techniques and how often they utilize them in their science classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

The growing need to improve and foster effective classroom delivery during the teaching and learning process have driven researchers in search of not only innovative methods of instruction but also formative assessment techniques to employ in the teaching and learning process that can help foster students understanding, retention, academic achievement, higher order thinking skills

as well as acquisition of the 21st century skills of communication, creativity, critical thinking and collaboration in the classroom. This restructuring of the education system has caused a paradigm shift from the normally used conventional methods of formative assessments to innovative formative assessment techniques with the aim to promote school-industry linkage while making assessment an activity-based and integral part of the learning process. In this light, the study sought out to ascertain science teachers' awareness of these innovative formative assessment techniques and the extent to which they utilize them in the classroom.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What innovative formative assessment techniques are science teachers aware of for assessing students in science classrooms?
2. To what extent do science teachers utilize innovative formative assessment techniques for teaching and learning in science classrooms?

2. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. 180 science subject teachers drawn from the 262 secondary schools in Anambra State using simple random sampling technique, without replacement, constituted the sample of the study.

A 50-item instrument titled "Checklist on Science Teachers' Awareness and Utilization of Innovative Formative Assessment Techniques (CSTAUIFAT)" which was developed by the researchers from experiences in teaching and different review of literature was used for data collection. CSTAUIFAT comprised of three sections: Section A sought information on the personal data of the respondents, section B contained research question one with its items while section C contained research question two, and its items. Research question one contained a checklist of 25 items with a two-point response options of Aware (A) and Not Aware (NA) while research question two had the same 25 items but with a 5-point Likert-like response options of Always (A), Often (O), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N).

For face and content validity, the instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Science Education and One from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was that of internal consistency established

using Cronbach Alpha, since the instrument was polychotomously scored. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained showing that the instrument was highly reliable.

The collected data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the items in the research questions. For research question one, frequency counts and percentages were used to answer the items while weighted mean and standard deviation were used to answer the items in research question two. In taking decision on items in research question one, 50% and above was considered "Aware (A)" while a percentage value below 50 was considered "Not Aware (NA)". For research question two, any item with a mean score of 3.00 and above was taken to be "Utilized (U)" while any with a mean score less than 3.00 was taken to be "Not Utilized (NU)"

3. Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What innovative formative assessment techniques are science teachers aware of?

Table 1: Science Teachers' Frequency Count and Percentage Responses on their awareness of innovative formative assessment techniques

S/N	Item	AWARE F	AWARE %	NOT AWARE F	NOT AWARE %	Decision
1	Brainstorming	89	59.3	61	40.7	Aware
2	Think-Pair-Share	79	52.7	71	47.3	Aware
3	One Minute Summary/Essay	103	68.7	47	31.3	Aware
4	Analogies	87	58	63	42	Aware
5	Performance Test (Authentic Assessment)	92	61.3	58	38.7	Aware
6	Individual Whiteboards	43	28.7	107	71.3	Not Aware
7	Whip Around	23	15.3	127	84.7	Not Aware
8	Concept Maps	138	92	12	8	Aware

9	Four Corners	21	14	129	86	Not Aware
10	Graffiti Walls	45	30	105	70	Not Aware
11	Use of Demonstration Stations	87	58	63	42	Aware
12	Exit Cards	93	62	57	38	Aware
13	Graphic Organizers	99	66	51	34	Aware
14	Inside-Outside Circle	34	22.7	116	77.3	Not Aware
15	Peer Assessment	102	68	48	32	Aware
16	Self-Assessment	112	74.7	38	25.3	Aware
17	Student Generated Questions	142	94.7	8	5.3	Aware
18	Three Facts And A Fib	32	21.3	118	78.7	Not Aware
19	Three-Minute-Pause	82	54.7	68	45.3	Aware
20	Problem solving	104	69.3	46	30.7	Aware
21	Reciprocal Teaching	68	45.3	82	54.7	Not Aware
22	E-Resources (online sources)	148	98.7	2	1.3	Aware
23	Portfolios	57	38	93	62	Not Aware
24	Numbered Heads together	86	57.3	64	42.7	Aware
25	Metacognition	56	37.3	94	62.7	Not Aware

Science Teachers' Awareness of Innovative Formative Assessment Techniques for Assessing Students in Science Classrooms

Table 1 presents the frequency counts and percentages of science teachers' responses on their awareness of innovative formative assessment techniques for teaching in the classroom. Analysis of the collected data shows that majority of the respondents (science teachers) agreed that they are aware of 16 out of the 25 listed innovative formative assessment techniques namely: brainstorming, think-pair share, one minute summary/essay, use of analogy, use of concept maps, performance tests, use of demonstration stations, exit cards, graphic organizers, peer and self-assessments, students generated

questions, three minute pause, problem solving, E resources, and numbered heads together since they all had a percentage value of 50 and above. The respondents however revealed that they are not aware of individual whiteboards, whip around, four corners, graffiti walls, inside-outside circles, three facts and a fib, reciprocal teaching, portfolios and metacognition as they all had a percentage score below 50%.

The findings of this study disagree, and somewhat to an extent, agrees with the findings of Herman (2017) who revealed in his study that most science teachers are not aware of some, if not most, of the innovative formative assessment techniques and hence, cannot utilize what they have no knowledge of.

Research Question 2: To what extent do science teachers utilize innovative formative assessment techniques for teaching science subjects in the classroom?

Table 2: Science Teachers Mean Responses on extent of utilization of innovative formative assessment techniques

s/n	Item	Mean (X)	Std. De.	Decision
1	Brainstorming	3.17	1.52	Utilized
2	Think-Pair-Share	2.90	1.28	Not Utilized
3	One Minute Summary/Essay	3.25	1.49	Utilized
4	Analogies	3.67	1.39	Utilized
5	Performance Test (Authentic Assessment)	2.31	1.11	Not Utilized
6	Individual Whiteboards	2.01	1.22	Not Utilized
7	Whip Around	2.33	1.25	Not Utilized
8	Concept Maps	4.00	1.13	Utilized
9	Four Corners	2.05	1.10	Not Utilized
10	Graffiti Walls	1.91	0.97	Not Utilized
11	Use of Demonstration Stations	1.82	1.09	Not Utilized

12	Exit Cards	1.92	1.03	Not Utilized
13	Graphic Organizers	2.25	1.11	Not Utilized
14	Inside-Outside Circle	1.83	1.15	Not Utilized
15	Peer Assessment	2.36	1.72	Not Utilized
16	Self-Assessment	2.32	1.23	Not Utilized
17	Student Generated Questions	3.55	1.33	Utilized
18	Three Facts And A Fib	1.59	0.84	Not Utilized
19	Three-Minute-Pause	3.56	1.26	Utilized
20	Problem solving	3.84	1.27	Utilized
21	Reciprocal Teaching	1.80	0.91	Not Utilized
22	E-Resources (online sources)	4.28	0.91	Utilized
23	Portfolios	2.28	1.31	Not Utilized
24	Numbered Heads together	3.00	1.20	Utilized
25	Metacognition	2.51	1.14	Not Utilized

Science Teachers' Utilization of Innovative Formative Assessment Techniques for Assessing Students in Science Classrooms.

Table 2 presented science teachers' responses on their utilization of innovative formative assessment techniques in science classroom. Analysis of the data collected from the respondents in table 2 revealed that out of the 25 listed IFAT, only 9 techniques were agreed to be utilized by of the respondents. That is, the respondents agreed that they utilize E resources, concept maps, problem solving, three-minute pause, analogies, student generated questions, one minute summary/essay, brainstorming, and numbered heads together, since they all had a mean score of 3.00 and above. But disagreed that they utilize Think-pair-share, performance test, individual whiteboards, whip around, graffiti walls, four corners, use of demonstration stations, exit cards, graphic organizers, inside-outside circle, peer and self-assessment, three facts and a fib, portfolios, reciprocal teaching and metacognition, even when aware of the some of the unutilized techniques, since they all had a mean score below 3.00.

The findings of this study agree with the findings of Akanwa, Agommuoh and Ihechu (2019) who revealed in their study that science teachers use most of the conventional formative assessment techniques avoiding sophisticated and upgraded result-oriented strategies that include Listen-Think-Pair-Share, Progress monitoring system, Student self-assessment, and Exit assessment, even when aware of some of them. This inability to utilize some of these techniques, they are aware of, may be attributed to lack of pedagogical knowledge, inadequate time allocation or poor teaching incentives from the state and federal government.

4. Conclusion

The study sought out to investigate science teachers' awareness and extent of utilization of innovative formative assessment techniques for assessing students in science classes. Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that most science teachers in Anambra State are aware of some of these innovative assessment techniques but do not utilize all of them. That is, out of the 16 innovative formative assessment techniques agreed by the respondents to have knowledge of, only 9 is being utilized in science classrooms. This inability to utilize these techniques could be attributed to many factors ranging from the cumbersome nature of the science curriculum, high workload, lack of practical applications knowledge, inadequate time allotted to science classes to unavailability of instructional materials and facilities to effectively implement these techniques in the classroom.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Workshops, seminars and conferences should be organized by education stakeholders for science teachers to educate them on these innovative formative assessment techniques and how to effectively implement them in the classroom.

2. Instructional materials and facilities should be provided for teachers by education stakeholders, for their use, when necessary, in assessing their students in science classes.

3. Teacher training colleges and institutions should foster the use of innovative formative assessment techniques in training (assessing) student-teachers, when in school, to inculcate in them the practical applications of these techniques.

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WHY DO STUDENTS GO TO COUNSELLING?

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Abstract: *This research set out to identify the reasons why students attend the faculty/university counseling office and to identify students' preferred ways to promote the services of their faculty/university counseling office for the years 2019 and 2022. The research method used was a questionnaire survey (Alpha Chronbach coefficient is .790), applied to 207 students. The counselor's personality matters the most (5.2464- on average value) when students address the counseling office, followed by the promotion made to the counseling office (5.1304 average) and the students' interest (5.0242 average). The reasons for addressability to counseling is centered on: the need for individual counseling services (105 choices, N-207), the need for career counseling (47 choices) and the students' need for information (15 choices). Students acknowledge that they need individual counseling services (105 choices) and career counseling services (47 choices) but some are unaware of the existence of the counseling office (69 choices) and would need counseling, because they are not self-confident (51 choices). The ways students prefer to promote counseling services are flyers (26.06%) (mean - 3.69 with standard deviation - 13.41) and Facebook posts or on student groups (25.31%) (mean - 3.58 with standard deviation - 13.43).*

Keywords: *student counselling; counselling addressability reasons; promotion of counselling services.*

Introduction

Psychological counselling is defined by the British Association for Counselling (1989, 1992) as the professional, relationship based on principles, within the client is helped to gain a better understanding of self and to support their emotional growth and optimal development of their own personal resources. The main purpose of counselling is to support the developmental

process of young people, a process that does not necessarily results in brilliant academic achievements, but often it offers the chance to identify possible alternative paths, that might be compatible with their aspirations and inclinations (Adamo, et al., 2010). The person who supports this process of (self)knowledge, supports them to find meaning in their experience, so that they can manage their life in a less distressed way (Godelek, Kaya, 2012). There is a correlation between core knowledge, communication skills, cultural skills and counselling competence (Setiyowati, et al., 2019).

Background

In universities/colleges, The Counselor provides academic (educational), vocational, and psychological counseling (McCarthy, 2014). Students are seeking counseling services as the number is increasing and the severity of problems is increasing (Prince, 2015). There are students who turn to the counsellor out of a need for self-awareness or for support in overcoming academic difficulties (group counselling with problem-solving approach enhances educational self-efficacy - Sohrabi, Mohammadi, Aghdam, 2013), or those in managing emotional difficulties (Lindsay & Langevin, 2017), or for exploring the field of cross-cultural therapy, in the case of young people who are divided between family culture and culture in academia ((Ilhan, et al., 2012; Terranova-Cecchini & Toffle, 2014), for managing crisis situations (serious illness, divorce, death, pandemics (Ahmad, et al., 2021), or for managing (self)destructive behaviours by improving the development of knowledge, attitude, confidence and skills of students in addictive situations (alcohol, drugs, food, medication, etc.) (Xia, et al., 2021), for integrating students with disabilities (hearing, visual, motor) and raising peer awareness of special educational needs issues (Pisano, Miller, 2018) or for supporting gifted and/or gifted students (Ishak & Bakar, 2010). To the situations listed above, the issue of career counselling is added. Students face difficulties in making career decisions, know too little about the processes leading to career choice, about career options, about possible career-related barriers (Milot-Lapointe, Savard, Le Corff, 2018), about job opportunities and their expectations for the future. Aspirations are not always related to their own knowledge and skills, lacking a coherent career plan (Crișan, Pavelea, Ghimbuluț, 2015). In Romania, one of the most important sources of anxiety for students is their professional future. In this respect, career counselling comes as a solution. Universities offer career counselling services for prospective students or focus on tracking the employability of graduates (Richițeanu-Năstase, Stăiculescu, 2015). A 2010 survey stated that more than

50% of students preferred to deal with their own problems and seek career and academic help on their own (Ishak, Bakar, 2010). Hopefully things have now changed for the better.

A study conducted at Ankara University, Faculty of Education provides insights into students' counselling needs: Academic needs ("exam anxiety", "poor study skills", "fear of failure", "managing procrastination", "academic pressures"), relational needs ("relating to faculty" , "public speaking anxiety", "being assertive" and "relationship difficulties"), emotional needs ('finding meaning in life', 'emotional instability', 'shyness', 'controlling behaviour') and career issues ('career uncertainty', 'feeling anxious about finding a job') (Bishop, Bauer and Becker, 1998; Bostanci, et al. , 2005; Gizir, 2005 ; Güneri, 2006; Güneri et al, 2003). Research Researchers have also investigated the less common needs for which students turn to counselling: self-destructive behaviours ('drug use', 'suicidal tendencies', 'excessive alcohol or tobacco use' and 'conduct disorder'), sexual concerns ('anxiety about contracting a sexually transmitted disease, including AIDS', 'dealing with sexual harassment'), problem gambling and excessive credit card spending (Gallagher, 2009; Kitzrow, 2003). Differences in the level of the year of study have also been investigated. Thus, freshmen year 1, reported more concern about "exam anxiety", "adjusting to university life" and "relationship difficulties" while senior year students had more "job anxiety" and "career uncertainty" (Atik, Yalçın, 2010). In general, students accessing counselling services exhibit difficulties in the area of relationship, revealing an internalist emotional-adaptive profile (Collins & Mowbray, 2005; Cimino, et al., 2010; Biasi, et al., 2015). Salovey & D'Andrea (2010) are of the same opinion, adding academic educational difficulties as addressability issues. These difficulties refer to: exam anxiety, concentration problems, low self-esteem, depressive states, vague fears (Kreß, et al., 2015).

If we focus on the accessibility to counselling services and look at it from the perspective of gender and age differences, it is reported that: women address more than men, young female students seek psychological help more often than their older female colleagues. The problems they address come from the social area (high scores in problems related to an avoidant personality and difficulties in establishing interpersonal relationships) and the emotional area (high scores in depressive behaviors and anxiety) (Biasi, et al., 2015).

Another segment of students who come to the counselling office are students with disabilities. A research conducted by Margaritoiu, Eftimie, Enache (2011) states that for: 94% of mentaly disabled students, the choice of a profession is conditioned by the educational system – both, the educational

offer and the family, were neglecting their professional interest; 86% of youth want to practice a profession other than the one obtained after graduation; 67% do not know the techniques to search and apply for a job. The authors of the article above, draw attention to the fact that it is necessary to develop career counselling programs for this type of students, in order to maximize their chances of employment (Margaritoiu, Eftimie, Enache, 2011).

Let's not forget about foreign (international) students, who, are coming to a different country, with a different culture and customs, may have difficulties to adapt. They encountered problems related to language, food, habits (Ilhan, et al., 2012). For Asian international students coming to study in the US, there are issues related to: perceived influence of social networks on the decision to seek counseling, perceived stigma, expectations of a medical model of counseling, perceived cultural incompetence of counselors, positive counseling experience (Liu, et al., 2020; Liu, J. & Gao, L., 2021) emerged. Universities should implement a range of programs and activities aimed at increasing interaction between international and Euro-American students. Three factors have been identified as critical in this regard: self-esteem, educational barriers, and system problems (subjectively graded tests by the Professor, poverty, discrimination) (Cervantes, 1988). Rates of use of counseling services by international students, however, are low despite their increasing presence in American colleges and universities. One study examined international students' use of counseling services at a Midwestern university over a 5-year period. Their results indicated that international students underutilized counseling services; more women used services than men; the majority of international students who accessed counseling services were Asian; and the majority of students who accessed services had appointments set only after exam sessions were completed (Hwang, Bennett, Beauchemin, 2014).

Lipshits-Braziler, Gati & Tatar (2015) proposed a model of strategies for coping with career indecision (SCCI), comprising three main types of strategies: productive coping, assistance/support seeking and non-productive coping. It was found that a decrease in the use of non-productive coping strategies and an increase in the use of productive coping strategies predicted students' progress in making a career decision (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015). A career counseling program conducted over six meetings significantly reduced career-related indecision, anxiety, uncertainty, and insecurity (Obi, 2015; Zarei, Shaikhi Fini, Fini, H.K., 2010).

It has been observed that the use of an approach with motivational interviewing, discussion, demonstration, role-playing, self-assessment and

interevaluation, are effective means to build the grid of necessary skills of students engaged in counseling (Ghasemzadeh, Saadat, 2011; Garza, et al., 2020).

Academic advising is considered as one of the most important factors of students' educational success, as it guides them in the right direction of academic success and helps them to cope with academic challenges, especially students with learning disabilities (Thawabieh & Atallah, 2011). Career counseling also has long-term impact observing higher qualitative levels of participants in implementing career projects, a decrease in indecision, longer-term career projects and a stabilization in terms of students' life satisfaction (Perdrix, Rossier, 2012). There are also weaknesses of counselling activities: students can wait quite a long time for and between appointments, stigmatisation of their poor mental health and their ability to seek help (Gasteiger, Fleming, Day, 2020). Based on the findings, awareness campaigns are recommended to be done by university counsellors for students so that they understand the importance of these activities (Yunusa, 2020). The increase in the number of applications requires an increase in the number of counselling centres where qualified staff are employed (Yuksel-Sahina, 2012; Kreß, et al., 2015). It can also train university's staff on counseling issues related to the problematic of academic counseling, since they are among the first people to notice the difficulties that their students face. (Dibia & Obi, 2013).

Research Methodology

The present research aimed to: 1). identify the reasons why students approach the faculty/university counselling office; 2). identify the preferred ways for students to promote the services of the faculty/university counselling office. The questionnaire survey was the method used in the research. The instrument developed for this research had 27 items, grouped into six dimensions: students' addressability to the counseling office, services offered by the counseling office, students' counseling needs, reasons for addressing the counseling office, and strategies for promoting the counseling office. The items used were: closed, dual or multiple choice or open items. The present questionnaire was developed and validated specifically for this research (Chronbach's Alpha = .902, high value coefficient).

Data were collected from May to June 2022. The questionnaire was self-administered. Participants were assured of data confidentiality. On average, completing the questionnaire took 10 minutes per participant. Completion of the instrument was done by about 90-95% of the students of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences - Transilvania University of Brasov -

specialization in Educational Sciences. Initially 215 questionnaire were collected, out of which the incomplete ones were eliminated. Consent was obtained prior to the application of the instruments, explaining to the subjects the purpose of the research, the research methodology and instrument, the related risks and the rights of each research participant.

The group of participants consisted of 207 subjects, 1st and 2nd year students of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences - Transilvania University of Brasov - Romania - specialization in Educational Sciences. Of these, most of them, 93.7% (194 subjects) were female, the remaining 6.3% (13 subjects) were male. According to background, there were 92 subjects (44.4%) from urban areas, with 115 (55.6%) subjects from rural areas. Looking at where they live, with most students coming from rural areas, it was found that 39.6% (82 subjects) live in a dormitory, then 31.4% (65 subjects) live in rented accommodation and 27.1% (56 subjects) live in Brasov with their family. Very small percentages, 1.5% (3 subjects) and 0.5% (1 subject) respectively, declare that they live in a privately owned apartment, alone, or live with their family but commute. If we look at the group of subjects in terms of age, the majority of subjects are aged between 18 - 20 years, namely 144 subjects (69.6%), followed by 57 subjects (27.5%) aged between 21 - 25 years; 1 subject (0.5%) aged between 26 - 30 years and 5 subjects (2.4%) aged over 31 years. All of them were undergraduate students in the daytime form of education. More specifically, 51.7% (107 subjects) were first year students, the remaining 48.3% (100 subjects) were second year students. Most of them aged 18 - 20 years, as marital status, are single (94.7% - 196 subjects), only 5.3% - 11 subjects, being married.

Results

The interpretation of the results began with the analysis of the first objective: to identify the reasons why students approach the faculty/university counselling office. We expected that if students knew about the existence of the counselling office and the services it provides, they would contact it. But, the highest addressability was recorded due to the personality of the counsellor. The advisors human side, mattered most (5.2464- on average value), followed by promotion made (5.1304 average) and student interest (5.0242) (see Table 1). The knowledge of the existence of the counselling office and the knowledge about the services offered by the counselling office, were placed as the last reasons.

Table 1. Addressability of the counseling office

	Average	Std. dev.
Addressability_ knowledge of the existence of the counseling office	4.7923	17.686
Addressability_ knowledge of the practice's services	4.9275	17.660
Addressability_ students' needs	4.9420	17.645
Addressability_ student interest	5.0242	17.629
Addressability_ promotion made	5.1304	17.607
Approachability personality of the counselor	5.2464	17.641

We aimed to investigate more closely the reasons for addressability. Therefore, the questionnaire presented two open-ended items. The first of these items was: "I think students turn to the counselling office for that............". The responses received were concentrated around 3 broad themes and 11 sub-themes. The broad themes were: the need for individual counselling services, the need for career counselling and the need for information. There were also students who did not respond to this item, so the first of the themes recorded 105 choices (N-207), the second 47 choices and the third 15 choices. This is basically the broad areas that counselling and guidance centres in universities and colleges deal with.

The sub-themes were identified as follows:

Theme 1. the need for individual counselling services
- the need for guidance/support in different personal problems/needs
- the need for guidance of qualified people
- are not sure of themselves / do not trust themselves (see, Bishop, Bauer and Becker, 1998; Bostanci, et al., 2005; Gizir, 2005 ; Güneri, 2006; Güneri et al., 2003)
- have specific educational, academic problems (see, Sohrabi, Mohammadi, Aghdam, 2013; Salovey & D'Andrea, 2010))

Theme 2. The need for career counselling
- concretely want career counselling
- they want to be informed about job placement and career development opportunities (see, Milot-Lapointe, Savard, Le Corff, 2018)
- they want support in drawing up career plans (see Crișan, Pavelea, Ghimbuluț, 2015).
- they want support in choosing a career path
- they want to know their skills (see Crișan, Pavelea, Ghimbuluț, 2015)

Theme 3. need for information
- need information / more information
- have doubts

The second item that wanted to deepen the addressability to the counselling office was: "I think students do NOT approach the counselling office because ". It is the reverse meaning of the item analysed above and recorded 5 themes and 18 sub-themes as follows:

Theme 1. Lack of awareness of the existence of the counselling office - 69 choices
- did not know there was such a couseling office
- they do not know the benefits of the services of the practice

Theme 2. Lack of confidence in themselves as a person - 51 choices
- lack courage
- are shy (see, Cimino, et al., 2010; Biasi, et al., 2015)
- are introverts (see, Lindsay & Langevin, 2017)
- shame intervenes (see, Liu, et al., 2020).

Theme 3. Not for me - 43 choices
- do not need support from the cabinet
- do not need the services offered by the cabinet (see, Ishak, Bakar, 2010)
- are not interested
- do not have time

Theme 4. Lack of trust in the counsellor / his/her activities - 11 choices
- are skeptical about the activities of the counsellor
- do not trust the counsellor's activities
- don't know what the counsellor's reaction will be
- don't know exactly how it will be / what it will be

Theme 5. Stereotypes related to counselling activity - 11 choices
- are afraid of being seen differently
- are afraid of being judged by others and stigmatized (Gasteiger, Fleming, Day, 2020)
- fear of being marginalized

Students acknowledge that they need individual counselling (105 choices) and career counselling (47 choices) but are unaware of the existence of counselling offices (69 choices) and would need it because they are not confident (51 choices). It attracts attention the high number of choices (43 choices) of students who state that it is not the case of accessing counseling services, by them that they access counseling services (Ishak, Bakar, 2010). Could it be out of mistrust, lack of knowledge or self-sufficiency?

Because there were many students from rural backgrounds in the study group (55.6%) t-scores were calculated for their background. The significance threshold for all calculated values is less than 0.05, which means that there are statistically significant differences between urban and rural people. The means

obtained by urban students are higher than those from rural areas (see Table 2).

Table 2. T-test for Equality of Means - by innate environment background

		Mean	Std. d	t	df	Sig*	
Adresabilitate_ cunoașterea existenței cabinetului	Equal variances assumed		-2.245	205	.026	R - 2.3478	R - 9.10662
	Equal variances not assumed		-2.063	111.5,85	.041	U - 7.8478	U - 24.23372
Adresabilitate_ cunoașterea serviciilor cabinetului	Equal variances assumed		-2.236	205	.026	R - 2.4957	R - 9.09055
	Equal variances not assumed		-2.056	111.567	.042	U - 7.9674	U - 24.20174
Adresabilitate_nevoile studenților	Equal variances assumed		-2.203	205	.029	R - 2.5478	R - 9.08463
	Equal variances not assumed		-2.025	111.560	.045	U - 7.9348	U - 24.19009
Adresabilitate_ interesul studenților	Equal variances assumed		-2.217	205	.028	R - 2.6174	R - 9.07627
	Equal variances not assumed		-2.038	111.567	.044	U - 8.0326	U - 24.16357
Adresabilitate_ promovarea făcută	Equal variances assumed		-2.197	205	.029	R - 2.7478	R - 9.05911
	Equal variances not assumed		-2.019	111.525	.046	U - 8.1087	U - 24.14264
Adresabilitate_persoana și personalitatea consilierului	Equal variances assumed		-2.130	205	.034	R - 2.9304	R - 9.23354
	Equal variances not assumed		-1.959	112.332	.053	U - 8.1413	U - 24.13359

*Sig. (2-tailed

Spearman correlations were performed and the following values were obtained: r- 437** with p-0.05 between information on employability and career development opportunities and support offered to students to make realistic career plans respectively, r - 421** with p-0.05 between counselling for employment in fields suitable for the specialization followed and information on employability and career development opportunities. These results confirm the need for career counselling for students.

The research continued with the investigation of the second objective: to identify students' preferred ways of promoting the services of the faculty/university counselling office. The majority of students (93.2% - 193 subjects) were of the opinion that for a better awareness of the services offered by the counselling office, it would be desirable to better promote them.

If it comes to the ways students prefer to promote themselves most prefer flyers (26.06%) (mean - 3.69 with standard deviation - 13.41) and Facebook posts or student groups (25.31%) (mean - 3.58 with standard deviation - 13.43) (Yunusa, 2020). At a relatively small difference, promotion is also desired through posters (24.69%) (mean - 3.49 with standard deviation - 13.44) and the least students prefer promotion done through year coordinators (23.94%) (mean - 3.39 with standard deviation - 13.46) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Mean values for students' preferences regarding the promotion of counselling services

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Promotion through year coordinators	207	3.3913	13.46252
Promotion through posters	207	3.4976	13.44708
Promotion through flyers	207	3.6908	13.41681
Promotion via Facebook posts or student groups	207	3.5845	13.43381

We analyzed how students prefer the counseling services to be promoted, and further we looked into the moment they prefer to be promoted. The criteria more often and quickly predominate, for most choices (92 subjects - 44.4%) preferring this to be done whenever necessary, then 74 subjects (35.7%) would like that services promotion to be done at the beginning of every semester (see Table 4). The option: every beginning of the academic year is chosen by only 35 students (16.9%).

Table 4. Mean values for students' preferences in promoting counselling services

	Frequency	Percent
at the beginning of each semester	74	35.7
at the beginning of each academic year	35	16.9
as often as necessary	92	44.4
Whatever	3	1.4
don't know / don't answer	3	1.4

Conclusions
In Romania, considering the context of the development of career services, there is the need for student counselling as real and growing (Cojocariu, Puiu, 2014; Cojocariu, Cojocariu-Ciotir, 2015). Universities are expected to further invest in career counselling in order to increase graduates' chances of integration (Richițeanu-Năstase, Stăiculescu, 2015). The expectation was that students' addressability to the counselling office would exist, if students knew that this office, existed within the faculty/university. But, the highest addressability was recorded due to the personality of the counsellor. The

human side of the counsellor mattered the most (5.2464- on average value), followed by promotion made (5.1304 average) and student interest (5.0242). (Prince, 2015). Awareness of the existence of the counseling office and knowledge of the services offered by the counseling office was ranked as last. There were many students in the study group who were inate from rural areas (55.6%), which is why t-scores were calculated related to their background. The significance threshold for all calculated values was less than 0.05, which means that there are statistically significant differences between people from urban and rural backgrounds. The means obtained by urban students are higher than those from rural areas. The reasons for addressability were centered on: the need for individual counseling services (105 choices, N-207), the need for career counseling (47 choices) (see, Milot-Lapointe, Savard, Le Corff, and see, Crişan, Pavelea, Ghimbuluţ, 2015) and the need for student information (15 choices). These are the broad areas that counselling and guidance centres in universities and faculties deal with. Students admit that they need individual counselling services (105 choices) and career counselling services (47 choices) but are unaware of the existence of counselling offices (69 choices) and would need counselling because they are not confident (51 choices) (see, Bishop, Bauer and Becker, 1998; Bostanci, et al, 2005; Gizir, 2005 ; Güneri, 2006; Güneri, et al., 2003). Attracting attention is the high number of choices (43 choices) of students stating that it is not the case for them to access counselling services (Ishak, Bakar, 2010). Could this be out of mistrust, ignorance or self-sufficiency? Spearman correlations were performed and the following values were obtained: r- 437** with p-0.05 between information on employability and career development opportunities and support offered to students to make realistic career plans respectively, r - 421** with p-0.05 between counselling for employment in fields suitable for the major followed and information on employability and career development opportunities. The results confirm the need for career counselling for students.

The need for counselling can be used to better promote the services of counselling offices. The ways students prefer to promote themselves are: flyers (26.06%) (mean - 3.69 with standard deviation - 13.41) and Facebook posts or student groups (25.31%) (mean - 3.58 with standard deviation - 13.43) (Yunusa, 2020). At relatively small difference, they also want to promote themselves through posters (24.69%) (mean - 3.49 with standard deviation - 13.44). The least students prefer promotion done through year coordinators (23.94%) (mean - 3.39 with standard deviation - 13.46). If we also look at the question: when do students prefer promotion to be done, it was observed that they want promotion that meets their needs. The criterion more often and quickly predominates, most (92 subjects - 44.4%) prefer it to be done as often as necessary, then 74 subjects (35.7%) would like promotion to be done at the beginning of every semester. Only 35 students (16.9%) would prefer to be

promoted at the beginning of each academic year. The issue of student counselling is important and remains open, with the desire for a true partnership between students and counsellors, the latter being in fact the link between the two main educational actors: teachers and students.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN UNIFIED TERTIARY MATRICULATION EXAMINATIONS AND CUMULATIVE GRADE POINTS AVERAGE AT YUSUF BALA USMAN COLLEGE DAURA, NIGERIA

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Abstract: *The study was carried out to assess relationship between students' performance in Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations and Cumulative grade point average at Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education Daura, Katsina State. The study adopted ex-post facto research design. The population of the study consisted of two thousand, six hundred and twenty-eight (2.628) while the sample for the study consisted of one thousand, three hundred and fourteen (1,314) students drawn from five (5) departments through purposive sampling technique. A proforma designed by the researchers was used for data collection. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyses the data collected. Findings of the study showed that there is significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA in Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education Daura. based on these findings, it was recommended that screening exercise for admission as a post-UTME should be commenced in the institution to help the management to select candidates who are adequately prepared for successful pursuance of courses of study in the institution.*

Keywords: *students' performance; unified tertiary matriculation examinations; cumulative grade points average; college of education.*

Introduction

The importance of education cannot be overemphasized because it is the process through which the cultural values of a people, knowledge, understanding skills and abilities are transmitted among its populace in order to prepare them for further membership and participation in the maintenance, growth and development of the society. Education remains the veritable instrument of positive change for sustainable human development. It is a sacred ingredient of development and a potent means of an enduring life. Education is the bedrock of economic development of any nation. Hence, no worthwhile development and progress can take place in any society unless the citizens are well educated and are fully equipped to use their education as a tool for solving the diverse and complex problems facing that society, thereby bringing about meaningful change and positive progress in that society (Eze, 2014).

Academic performance plays a vital role in producing competent graduates that are well equipped with knowledge and skills. Students' academic performance is measured by the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA. CGPA calculates the overall average of students' academic performance for all examinations' grade for all semesters during the tenure years in the college (Broh, 2012; Stephens & Schaben, 2012).

The system of academic at Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education was established without hindrance. Candidates are admitted into the college NCE regular programmes through the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examinations. This is because this body of examination (JAMB) was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria through Act 2 of 1978 to regularize the intake of students into the universities and later which other tertiary institutions are included in order to solve the multiple admissions problem given to some candidates at the expense of others.

The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board was set up in 1978 under decree (Act) 2 of 1978 amended by Decree (Act) 33 of 1989 with the fundamental Mandates: to conduct Matriculation Examination for entry into Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria including Universities, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Education, and to place suitable qualified candidates in the available places in the institution (Akoso, 2012). The Board was established to streamline and co-ordinate admission practice in Nigeria. the first examination of the Board which was conducted in May 1978 was without hitches.

Examination in Nigeria schools is dated back to the arrival of formal education. Therefore, in the tertiary institutional setting, success in and examination is being assessed through the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) by students in all courses registered from year one to the final year. As such, a student is deemed to have performed very well to the level of second class upper division if the CGPA is between 3.50 and 4.49, or first class if CGPA is 4.50 and above on a 5-point scale. Hence the cumulative grade point average in Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education determines the success level of a student from one semester to another. The grading of the CGPA is such that 4.50 and above is distinction, 3.50 – 4.49 is credit, 2.50 to 3.49 is merit, 1.50 to 2.49 is pass while grade 1.00 – 1.49 is minimum pass.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a sharp difference between the students' academic performance at entry point and their final CGPAs. At a certain level during the course of study students admitted into the College, there comes a variation in grades. To sort out the level at which this variation started and to identify whether there exists a relationship between the entry point scores (JAMB scores) and the final CGPA is the most concern of this research. The researchers are therefore interested in only those that graduated in 2017, 2018 and 2019 academic session.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to find out the relationship between students' performance in UTME and final cumulative grade points average (CGPA) at Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought information on:

1. Relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA scores in Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura in 2017 graduation year.

2. Relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA scores in

   Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura in 2018 graduation year.

3. Relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA scores in

   Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura in 2019 graduation year.

Research Hypotheses

In this study, three (3) null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College (YBUCOE) Daura in 2017.
2. There is no significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura in 2018.
3. There is no significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura in 2019.

Methodology

The researchers adopted ex-post facto research design for the study. Ex-post facto design was used for this study, because the phenomena under investigation (UTME and Students' final CGPA) had already been taken, and it is possible to compare group differences in terms of some independent variables on a given dependent variable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2013).

The population of this study comprised all the graduated students at Yusufu Bala Usman College (YBUCOE) Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria in 2017, 2018, and 2019 academic years. The actual number of graduated students in 2017, 2018, and 2019 academic years into the three schools were put at eight hundred and fifty-six (856) in 2017, eight hundred and twenty-five (825) in 2018, and nine hundred and forty-seven (947) in 2019 which make the total population to be two thousand, six hundred and twenty-eight (2,628) (Source: Office of the Academic Secretary of Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura, 2020).

Simple random sampling technique was employed to select three schools from the total number of four (4) schools in the College. Also, the researchers purposively selected a total of one thousand, three hundred and fourteen (1,314) graduated students in 2017, 2018, and 2019 academic years comprising both male and female across the three schools of the College.

A proforma developed by the researchers was used for data collection. The proforma consists of seven (7) items namely; serial number, name of school, department, registration number, gender, UTME and CGPA scores. The relevant data were collected from the departments of each eligible students' file using the proforma. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was

used to analyse hypotheses One (1), Two (2), and Three (3). The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

To test the three hypotheses, PPMC) statistical tool was used to analyse the data collected for this study and the results is presented below:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura in 2017.

Table 4.4.1: PPMC Showing the Relationship between Students' performance in UTME

and their CGPA in 2017.

Variable		UTME 2017	CGPA 2017
UTME 2017	Pearson Correlation	1	.142**
			.003
	Sig. (2-tailed) N	426	429
CGPA 2017	Pearson Correlation	.142**	1
		.003	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	426	426

Note: ** means Significant at 0.01

Table 4.4.1 reveals r - value of .142**, which is significant at 0.01 alpha levels, (r = .142***; P < 0.01). Therefore, the null hypotheses of no significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA scores in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura (YBUCOE) in 2017 is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between students UTME and their final CGPA scores in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura in 2017 graduation year. Thus, students' performance in UTME is a good predictor of their final CGPA performance in YBUCOE.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura in 2018.

Table 4.4.2: PPMC showing the relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA scores in 2018.

Variable		UTME 2018	CGPA 2018
UTME 2018	Pearson Correlation	1	.487**
			.000

	Sig. (2-tailed)	413	413
	N		
CGPA	Pearson	.487**	1
2018	Correlation	.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	413	413
	N		

Note: ** mean significant at 0.01, p < 0.01

Table 4.4.2 reveals an r - value of .487**, which is significant at 0.01 alpha levels, (r = .487***; P < 0.01). Therefore, the null hypotheses of no significant relationship between students' performance UTME and their final CGPA scores in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura (YBUCOE) in 2018 is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between students UTME Scores and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura in 2018. Thus, students' performance in UTME is a good predictor of their final CGPA performance in YBUCOE.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between students' performance in UTME scores and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura in 2019.

Table 4.4.3: PPMC showing the relationship between students' performance in UTME

and their final CGPA scores in 2019.

Variable		UTME 2019	CGPA 2019
UTME	Pearson Correlation	1	.549**
2019	Sig. (2-tailed).		.000
	N	475	475
CGPA	Pearson Correlation	.549**	1
2019	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	475	475

Note: ** mean significant at 0.01, p < 0.01

Table 4.4.3 reveals an r - value of 0.549**, which is significant at 0.01 alpha levels, (r = .549***; P < 0.01). Therefore, the null hypotheses of no significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA scores in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura (YBUCOE) in 2019 is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between students UTME and their final CGPA scores in Yusufu Bala Usman College of Education Daura in 2019. Thus, students' performance in UTME is a good predictor of their final CGPA performance in YBUCOE.

Discussion of Findings

From the results of the analyse, hypotheses one (1), two (2) and three (3) indicated that there were significant positive relationships between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura in 2017, 2018, and 2019 graduation years. This simply means that in all these three years of graduation, it was found that students' UTME scores had a significant relationship with their academic performance in CGPA in 2017 ($r = .142***$; $P < 0.01$) graduation year, partially weak significant relationship in 2018 ($r = .487***$; $P < 0.01$) graduation year and strong significant relationship in 2019 ($r = .549***$; $P < 0.01$) graduation year. Therefore, it can be deduced that students' performance in UTME is a good predictor of their final CGPA performance in Yusufu Bala Usman College (YBUCOE) Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria.

This finding agreed with that of other researchers like Afolabi, Mabayole, Togun, Oyadeyi, and Raji (2007) and Adeyemi (2009) in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Oyo-State, Nigeria, also discovered that students' UTME scores correlate positively with their final CGPA scores. Also, this finding contradicts that of Ukwuije and Asuk (2011) in selected faculties in the University of Port Harcourt. Descriptive research design was used in which 2,732 students were purposively selected in the colleges. They found that no significant relationship exists between UTME scores and students' academic performance as measured by CGPA scores. This implies that, UTME is not a good predictor of academic performance as measured by CGPA scores, and that might be the best possible reason for the introduction of Post UTME in many tertiary institutions, especially universities. Post UTME is an Examination after UTME where individual Universities screen students in order to authenticate the scores they got from UTME and it is the final matriculation examination taken by candidates seeking admission into tertiary schools in Nigeria. The essence is to maintain standard and ensure sanity in the admission process, so that qualified candidates are admitted for suitable courses or programs.

Conclusion

The results of the analyses from the data collected indicated positive and significant relationship between students' performance in UTME and their final CGPA in Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura in 2017, 2018, and 2019 graduation years. Thus, it can be concluded that students' performance in UTME is a good predictor of their final CGPA performance in Yusufu Bala Usman College (YBUCOE) Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn in this study, the following recommendations are made to relevant stakeholders in education.

1. The screening exercise for admission as a Post-UTME admission process should be continued by the tertiary institutions who are currently doing so. It is also recommended that the tertiary institutions which have not yet commenced the Post-UTME screening exercise like Yusufu Bala Usman College Daura should start doing so in order to serve as a revalidation of the students' UTME scores.
2. JAMB should take measures to improve the conduct of the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (UTME) so as to help tertiary institutions to select candidates who are adequately prepared for successful pursuance of courses of study in the institutions.
3. Since, students' performance in UTME is a good predictor of their final CGPA performance in Yusufu Bala Usman College (YBUCOE) Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria, candidates with high UTME scores should be admitted into the College in other to have students with good CGPA performance.

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RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF A TRANSLATED MUSIC INVENTORY IN A SMALL SAMPLE

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Abstract: *The present study sought to investigate the MUSIC inventory reliability and structure validity. Previous research developed on various samples indicated that the instrument proved to be an instrument with good or excellent Cronbach's Alpha values for each scale and despite some higher correlation between these scales, its structure validity was considered acceptable. Considering these good results, the MUSIC inventory, due to its length (only 26 items) and simple way to get answers can be a useful instrument in any quantitative research preoccupied to determine motivational aspects in an academic setting. Because of these previous findings, MUSIC inventory was considered an instrument that could be translated and tested on a Romanian sample. The hypothesis was that the students' perceptions measured using MUSIC inventory would prove the reliability and construct validity of the translated version. The sample of this study consisted of a voluntary group of 28 students who studied the Psychology of education in the first year of the psycho-pedagogical module, from several specializations. The study had a cross-sectional design. The search of results for this study was accomplished through various types of statistical analyses: reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha), factor analysis and correlation analysis. Interpretation of results from this study suggested that the hypothesis of the study was only partially confirmed, reliability was proved by Cronbach Alpha coefficients are excellent (above 0.9) for Usefulness and Interest scales and good (between 0.7-0.9) for the remaining three scales, but, on the other hand, construct validity of the inventory was not confirmed by the results obtained in the present study.*

Keywords: *MUSIC inventory; reliability; validity.*

Background

Motivation is the main factor that orientates children behaviors in school and proved to be relevant for their academic success (Robbins et al., 2004). Given the importance of motivation in school related activities and its positive effect on academic results different authors developed several motivation scales, such as: Ryan and Deci (intrinsic motivation), Guay, Vallerand and Blanchard (Situation Motivation Scale), Harter (Scale of Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Orientation in the Classroom) (Nortje, 2021). Despite the abundance of already existing motivation scales, new scales on this psychological process continue to be tested and in the present article the focus is drawn upon the MUSIC inventory (Jones, 2022). The author's publications indicate a long and constant effort dedicated for many years. At the beginning of his book „Motivating students by Design: Practical strategies for Professors Jones D. Brett proposes a definition of the motivation as the „extent to which one intends to engage in an activity" and then explains each concept: extent as a magnitude, intent as goal-directed behaviors, engagement as a measure of behavioral and cognitive effort done by a person, activities as specific activity the person is interested in (Jones, 2018). In the same book Jones D. Brett proposes a relationship between these concepts, also relating these concepts to the five factors of MUSIC inventory:
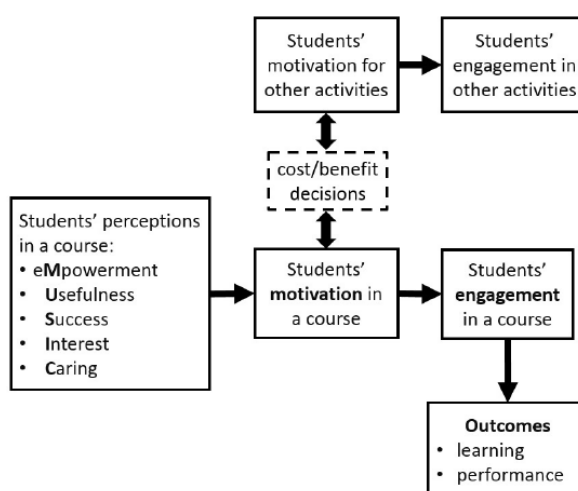
Fig. 1. The relationship between students MUSIC perceptions and their motivation, engagement, and outcomes (Jones, 2018, pg. 10)

The justification for the MUSIC model is considered its ability to improve the motivation, that later is related to higher engagement and leads to more effort done by students to learn and finally all these would lead for a higher academic succes. The model is considered that could offer a tool for a better control of school related activities although some external conditions are not in its central

focus. In conclusion, the main goal of the MUSIC model is to enable teachers to consider any changes in teaching that could have a beneficial effect on students so that they would get a higher level of motivation, engagement and academic knowledge and skills. Several articles proved that the MUSIC inventory has a good validity (Jones et al., 2019, 2021; Jones & Sigmon, 2017; Jones & Skaggs, 2016, Jones & Wilkins, 2023; Pace et al., 2016).

Hypothesis
Students' perceptions measured using MUSIC inventory would prove the reliability and construct validity of the translated version applied to 28 Romanian students.

Research design
This study follows a cross-sectional design aimed at conducting a correlational type of research.

Sample
This study was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021 on a voluntary group of students who studied the Psychology of education in the first year of the psycho-pedagogical module. The questionnaire was distributed in the last week of the first semester, and 107 students were invited to participate. Of these, 28 completed the questionnaire received. The mean age of the sample was M = 27.50 (S.D. = 10.871). Given the high value of the standard deviation, the value of the median (19.50) and the mode (19) were also calculated. These values indicate a group with significant age differences between its members, the minimum value being 18 years and the maximum 50 years. The distribution of frequencies by sex indicated 19 females and 9 males. The mean age for female students was M = 26.63 (S.D. = 11,558) and for male students M = 29.33 (S.D. = 9,631). The calculation of the significance of the difference between the two means (T-test Independent Sample) indicated that although there is a difference of almost 3 years between the means, there was no statistically significant age difference between the two subgroups (students): t (26) = - 0.607, p = .549.
A Crosstab-type analysis using age and sex variables indicated the following frequencies (Table 1):

Table 1. Crosstab analysis for variables Sex * Age

		Age												Total
		18	19	20	28	31	32	35	37	42	43	48	50	
Sex	Feminin	2	9	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	19
	Masculin	0	3	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	9

Total		2	12	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	28

And, a Crosstab-type analysis that used the variables specialization and sex indicated the following frequencies (Table 2):

Table 2. Crosstab analysis for variables Specialization * Sex

		Sex		Total
		Feminin	Masculin	
Specializarea	Administraţie publică	2	0	2
	Asistenţă socială	3	0	3
	Drept	1	1	2
	Educaţie fizică şi sportivă	2	6	8
	Kinetoterapie şi motricitate specială	3	1	4
	Sociologie	1	1	2
	Terapie ocupaţională	7	0	7
Total		19	9	28

Instruments

The tool used was the MUSIC inventory. In the User Guide for Assessing the Components of the MUSIC® Model of Motivation, the author, Jones D. Brett, enumerates the inventory principles/scales: Empowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest and Caring. Although the inventory evolved and were developed shorter versions (of 20 or 19 items) in this study the original 26 items inventory was used. The inventory uses a 1to 6 rating scale, each number being associated a verbal description. Each principle is measured by a number of items:

- Empowerment score = (item 2 + item 8 + item 12 + item 17 + item 26) / 5
- Usefulness score = (item 3 + item 5 + item 19 + item 21 + item 23) / 5
- Success score = (item 7 + item 10 + item 14 + item 18) / 4
- Interest score = (item 1 + item 6 + item 9 + item 11 + item 13 + item 15) / 6
- Caring score = (item 4 + item 16 + item 20 + item 22 + item 24 + item 25) / 6

The inventory was used in several large studies (Jones et al., 2021, 2022; Jones & Wilkins, 2023)

In this study the MUSIC inventory was translated by two translators in Romanian; these translations were merged through a synthesis by a committee

(two translators, previously mentioned, and an expert in the field) and finally, the Romanian version was translated again in English by another translator and a second expert in the field.

Results

In order to be able to perform the analyses needed to test the hypothesis, it was necessary that answers from the survey be converted into numerical variables and scores for all five principles/scales calculated. These calculated scores were used in the descriptive statistics and in the correlation analysis (Table 3 and Table 6).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the MUSIC inventory five scales

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Empowerment score	28	2,80	6,00	4,5929	,87345
Usefulness score	28	3,40	6,00	4,8857	,87674
Success score	28	2,25	6,00	4,5089	,95617
Interest score	28	3,17	6,00	4,7381	,95304
Caring score	28	3,17	6,00	5,2024	,75816

Table 4. Reliability Statistics - Cronbach's Alpha

	N	Cronbach Alpha	Number of items
Empowerment score	28	,833	5
Usefulness score	28	,916	5
Success score	28	,877	4
Interest score	28	,914	6
Caring score	28	,859	6

In this study were used same criteria as those provided by Kline (2016) to evaluate the alpha values of the five MUSIC scales: above 0.9 / excellent, 0.7 - 0.9 / good, between 0.6 -0.7 /acceptable, and below 0.6 / unacceptable.

Table 5. Factor analysis for the MUSIC inventory scales - Component Matrixª

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
TM_1_nr	**,882**	,246	,060	,011
TM_2_nr	**,684**	,220	,322	-,234
TM_3_nr	*,619*	,121	**-,680**	,121
TM_4_nr	*,543*	**,546**	-,219	,442
TM_5_nr	**,739**	-,147	-,357	,295
TM_6_nr	**,816**	,169	-,284	,222
TM_7_nr	**,578**	-,180	-,525	-,068
TM_8_nr	**,661**	-,296	*,541*	,245
TM_9_nr	**,887**	-,261	,082	,034
TM_10_nr	**,856**	-,176	,083	-,023
TM_11_nr	**,843**	,062	,057	,274
TM_12_nr	**,595**	-,393	*,480*	,331
TM_13_nr	*,664*	**-,677**	,121	,139
TM_14_nr	**,736**	-,409	,155	-,206
TM_15_nr	**,784**	-,249	,308	-,274
TM_16_nr	**,590**	*,532*	,320	-,324
TM_17_nr	**,835**	,004	-,038	-,168
TM_18_nr	**,793**	-,246	-,352	-,004
TM_19_nr	**,871**	-,254	-,266	-,159
TM_20_nr	**,774**	,238	,057	-,381
TM_21_nr	**,850**	-,187	-,253	-,177
TM_22_nr	**,674**	,664	,110	,100
TM_23_nr	**,825**	,046	-,148	-,306
TM_24_nr	**,638**	,244	,480	,288
TM_25_nr	*,428*	,262	,060	**,457**
TM_26_nr	*,578*	**,623**	,060	-,216

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a. 4 components extracted.

The factor analysis or the MUSIC inventory was performed without specifying in the analysis to be done for 5 factors (as its theoretical model indicates); the analysis identified only 4 components/factors.

Table 6. Correlation analysis for the MUSIC inventory scales

		Empowerment score	Usefulness score	Success score	Interest score	Caring score
Empowerment score	Pearson Correlation	1	,585**	,687**	,813**	,683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,001	,000	,000	,000
	N	28	28	28	28	28
Usefulness score	Pearson Correlation	,585**	1	,808**	,823**	,588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001		,000	,000	,001
	N	28	28	28	28	28
Success score	Pearson Correlation	,687**	,808**	1	,819**	,493**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,008
	N	28	28	28	28	28
Interest score	Pearson Correlation	,813**	,823**	,819**	1	,695**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000
	N	28	28	28	28	28
Caring score	Pearson Correlation	,683**	,588**	,493**	,695**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,001	,008	,000	
	N	28	28	28	28	28

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

Hypothesis of this study is only partially confirmed; there are several studies that indicate that different variants of the MUSIC inventory is a reliable instrument and results obtained in this study also indicate that Cronbach Alpha

coefficients are excellent (above 0.9) for Usefulness and Interest scales and good (between 0.7-0.9) for the remaining three scales (see table 4). On the other hand, construct validity of the inventory is not confirmed by the results obtained in the present study.

Comparing to previous results (Jones et al., 2019) in this study correlation coefficients are much higher. Jones et al. presented a table with correlation coefficients obtained in three studies and mentioned that their criteria to interpret these coefficients were: „large effect size (0.50 or greater), ... medium effect size (0.30 to 0.49), ...small effect size (0.10 to 0.29)". Taking in consideration these criteria for the present results indicate that one coefficient indicates a medium size effect (between Success and Caring scales) and all the remaining associations indicate a large effect size (see Table 6).

Further, the factor analysis, considering more aspects, had an unexpected result. First of all, the analysis did not find 5 scales but only 4. The statistical software has the option to impose a specific number of scales/components but this option was not used during the statistical analysis because its purpose was to check if the 5-scale structure would result without imposing it as a condition. Secondly, among the four scales identified through the factor analysis, factor/component „1" presented the highest loading for 21 items (marked in bold in Table 5, column 1), factor/component „2" had only 3 items with highest load (Items 4, 13 and 26) the third and fourth factor/component had only one item with the highest load (Item 3, respectively, Item 25; items are marked in bold in column 3 and 4). Thirdly, these items that had the highest load on factors/components „2", „3" and „4" had also a high load on factor/component „1" and these are considered problematic items.

Last two analyses, correlation analysis and factor analysis do not confirm the expected construct validity of the MUSIC inventory. Comparing to previous studies that confirmed the construct validity of the MUSIC inventory, the previous study used a smaller sample and also a translated version of this instrument. Because the translation was carefully accomplished by a grup of translators and two specialists in this area, the most probable cause for these results different from the previous one, was the smaller sample size.

Conclusion:

The MUSIC inventory is considered a reliable instrument that has both excellent or good Cronbach's Alpha coefficients and a good structure validity but, in this study the structure validity was not confirmed, most probably due to the sample size; so that, using this inventory on small samples should be followed by checking its reliability and structure validity.

MUSIC Inventory

- To be administered while the student is enrolled in college
- Use the instructions below. Title the survey following the directions in a prior page of this User Guide. Also, use the directions on a prior page for how to format the 1 to 6 scale.

Instructions

Thinking about the [insert name of major or program] courses you have taken and are currently taking in your academic major (i.e., [insert specific majors]), please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

There are no right or wrong answers for these questions. Please answer them honestly. Some of the questions might seem repetitive, but it is important that you answer them all to obtain the best possible results.

Also, note that the word "coursework" refers to anything that you did in these courses, including assignment, activities, readings, etc.

_____ 1. The coursework holds my attention.

_____ 2. I have the opportunity to decide for myself how to meet course goals.

_____ 3. In general, the coursework is useful to me.

_____ 4. The instructors are available to answer my questions about the coursework.

_____ 5. The coursework is beneficial to me.

_____ 6. The instructional methods used in the courses hold my attention.

_____ 7. I am confident that I can succeed in the coursework.

_____ 8. I have the freedom to complete the coursework my own way.

_____ 9. I enjoy the instructional methods used in the courses.

_____ 10. I feel that I can be successful in meeting the academic challenges in the courses.

_____ 11. The instructional methods engage me in the courses.

_____ 12. I have options in how to achieve the goals of the courses.

_____ 13. I enjoy completing the coursework.

_____ 14. I am capable of getting a high grade in the courses.

_____ 15. The coursework is interesting to me.

_____ 16. The instructors are willing to assist me if I need help in a course.

_____ 17. I have control over how I learn the course content.

_____ 18. Throughout the courses, I have felt that I could be successful on the coursework.

_____ 19. I find the coursework to be relevant to my future.

_____ 20. The instructors care about how well I do in their courses.

_____ 21. I will be able to use the knowledge I gain in the courses.

_____ 22. The instructors are respectful of me.

_____ 23. The knowledge I gain in the courses is important for my future.

_____ 24. The instructors are friendly.

_____ 25. I believe that the instructors care about my feelings.

_____ 26. I have flexibility in what I am allowed to do in the courses.

(Jones, 2022)

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TEACHER – PARENT COLLABORATION IN PLANNING AND PRACTICING OUTDOOR EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract: *The present brief study is based on the issue of planning and practicing outdoor education in primary school. We have enhanced the role of adults in planning, which means projecting and preparing space, time and resources. Also, we have underlined the aspect of including parents in all aspects, starting from the planning phase and also to be actively present in the practicing part. In the second part of the article, we have included research, about the role of adults in outdoor learning activities in primary school. In this matter, we are going to present the results of a focus group, organized both with parents and teachers from a primary school in Arad County. The preliminary results show the fact that parents expect better communication from teachers in order to get better prepared and involved in the outdoor activities of their children.*

Key words: *collaboration; primary-school; outdoor; education; parents.*

Introduction

Collaboration between schools and families refers to the process of working together to support the education and development of children. It involves a partnership between teachers, administrators, parents, and other family members to create a supportive learning environment for children. Collaboration between schools and families can have a positive impact on children's academic, social, and emotional development. It creates a supportive environment that promotes student success and helps to bridge the gap between home and school. (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008, Cerghit & Petcu, 2018)

There are many ways in which schools and families can collaborate, including:

- Regular communication: Schools and families can keep in touch through newsletters, emails, phone calls, and parent-teacher conferences to discuss the progress of the child and any concerns.
- Volunteer opportunities: Parents and family members can volunteer at the school to support activities, events, or classroom activities.
- Parent education: Schools can offer educational workshops or sessions for parents to learn about child development, effective parenting strategies, and ways to support learning at home.
- Shared decision-making: Schools can involve families in decision-making processes, such as developing policies or setting goals for the school.
- Home-school partnerships: Schools and families can work together to create a home-school partnership to ensure that children receive consistent support and reinforcement of learning goals. (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997)

Good communication between schools and parents has many advantages, including improved academic performance, when parents are informed about their child's progress, they can work with teachers to support their child's academic success. This can lead to better grades and higher achievement. Parents who are involved and informed about their child's behavior at school can work with teachers to reinforce positive behavior and address any concerns before they become bigger problems. Good communication can help parents feel more connected to their child's school and education, which can lead to increased participation in school activities and events. When schools and parents work together, they can build positive relationships based on trust and mutual respect. This can lead to a supportive and welcoming school environment for all students. Good communication allows schools and parents to identify any concerns early on, which can lead to early intervention and support for the child. (Dughi, 2020) Effective communication can help parents better understand the curriculum, learning objectives, and school policies, which can improve their ability to support their child's learning at home. In summary, good communication between schools and parents is essential for promoting academic success, positive behavior, parental involvement, positive relationships, early intervention, and enhanced understanding of school policies and procedures. (Buzducea & Manu, 2018, Ciucă & Bărbulescu, 2017)

Theoretical foundation

Outdoor education is an approach to learning that takes place outside the traditional classroom setting. It involves experiential learning activities that take place in natural environments, such as forests, mountains, rivers, and oceans. Outdoor education programs can include a wide range of activities, such as camping, hiking, canoeing, rock climbing, and environmental studies. These activities are designed to provide students with hands-on experiences that allow them to learn about themselves, others, and the natural world. The goals of outdoor education are to promote personal growth and development, environmental awareness, and leadership skills. Outdoor education programs are often used to complement traditional classroom learning and provide students with an opportunity to apply what they have learned in a practical and real-world setting. Outdoor education has been shown to have many benefits for students, including increased confidence, improved social skills, enhanced academic performance, and a greater appreciation for the environment. It can also help to foster a sense of community and teamwork among students and teachers. (Wardle, 2019; Waite & Pratt, 2020)

Outdoor education is not yet fully integrated into the Romanian school system, but there are some initiatives that promote experiential learning and outdoor activities. Some Romanian schools have introduced environmental education programs that include outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, and exploring nature. These programs aim to promote environmental awareness and appreciation, as well as to provide students with an opportunity to learn in a hands-on and engaging way. There are also several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Romania that specialize in outdoor education and provide programs and resources for schools to incorporate into their curriculum. These organizations work with schools to organize outdoor activities, provide training for teachers, and develop educational materials that promote experiential learning. In addition, some universities in Romania offer outdoor education courses and programs for future teachers, which provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate outdoor education into their teaching practice. Overall, outdoor education is still developing in the Romanian school system, but there are some initiatives and resources available for schools to incorporate experiential learning and outdoor activities into their curriculum. (Buburuzan & Duca, 2019, Dobrescu & Danciu, 2017)

Recent perspectives

Planning and projecting outdoor educational activities involve careful consideration of several factors, including the purpose of the activity, the

target audience, the location, and the resources required. Here are some steps to help you plan and project successful outdoor educational activities:

- Define the objective: Begin by defining the objective of the activity. What do you want your participants to learn or experience? Is the activity intended to build teamwork or leadership skills, or to teach a specific subject such as biology or geology?
- Choose a location: Once you have defined the objective, you can choose a location that is suitable for the activity. Consider the environment, the accessibility of the location, and the facilities available.
- Determine the resources required: Determine the resources required for the activity, including equipment, transportation, and personnel. Make sure you have everything you need to ensure the safety and success of the activity.
- Create a detailed plan: Create a detailed plan for the activity, including the schedule, activities, and any necessary instructions or guidelines. Be sure to include contingency plans for unexpected events, such as inclement weather.
- Obtain necessary permissions: If the activity is being held on public or private property, be sure to obtain any necessary permissions or permits.
- Communicate with participants: Communicate with participants before the activity to ensure they are aware of any necessary preparations or requirements, such as appropriate clothing or gear.
- Conduct the activity: Conduct the activity according to your plan, ensuring that everyone is safe and engaged. Be flexible and adapt the plan if necessary to ensure the best possible experience for all participants.
- Evaluate the activity: After the activity, evaluate its success and make note of any areas for improvement. This will help you plan future activities more effectively.

PLANNING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
Steps and structure

Fig. nb. 1. Steps in planning outdoor activities

Involving parents in the planning and activity phases

Involving parents in outdoor learning activities can be a great way to enhance the educational experience for students. Some ways in which this can be achieved is to permanently communicate the importance of outdoor learning and share with parents the benefits of outdoor learning and why it is an important part of their child's education. This can help them understand the value of their involvement in such integrated activities. (Roman, 2014, Dughi et al, 2022, Roman & Bran, 2015)

Also, invite parents to participate in outdoor learning activities, such as field trips, nature walks, or outdoor projects. This will give them a firsthand experience of what their child is learning and provide an opportunity to engage with their child in a unique and meaningful way.

It is very important to encourage parents to volunteer their time and expertise to support outdoor learning activities. This could involve assisting with logistics, providing specialized knowledge, or serving as chaperones on field trips.

When thinking in terms of planning, it is important to provide opportunities for parent-child activities. Plan outdoor activities that involve both parents and students, such as camping trips, nature scavenger hunts, or community service projects. This can help strengthen the parent-child relationship while also reinforcing the educational content. (Gurney et al, 2017)

Not the least, it is mandatory to share resources and information: Provide parents with resources and information about outdoor learning activities, such

as recommended books, apps, or websites. This can help parents support their child's learning outside of school and encourage further exploration of the natural world.

After the activities are over, it is important to ask for feedback on outdoor learning activities and how they can be improved. This demonstrates that their opinions and involvement are valued and helps to strengthen the partnership between parents, students, and educators. (Young et al, 2020, Cojocaru & Popescu, 2018)
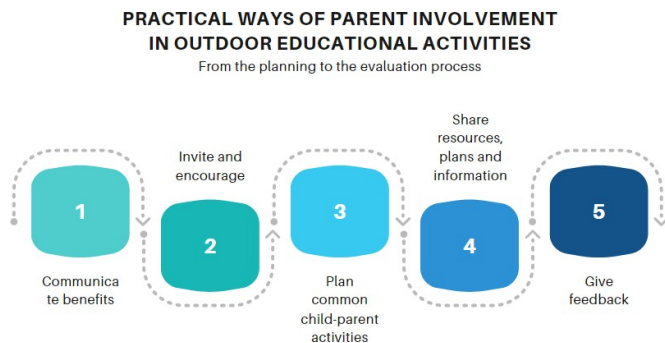

Fig. nb. 2. Practical teacher-parent collaboration in outdoor educational activities

Research questions
1. How can teachers involve parents in the planning process of outdoor educational activities?
2. What is the real situation of Romanian primary schools in terms of collaboration with parents, regarding outdoor educational activities?
3. How do parents respond to the requests of teachers regarding outdoor educational activities within the schooling process?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the present study is to find out at what extent teachers involve parents in the planning and the process of outdoor educational activities, and how parents respond to these invitations.

Research methods and research instruments

The main method used in the present study was the focus group, and the main instrument was the focus group interview. There have been two different focus groups, one with the teachers and one with parents of children studying in the dame schools where teachers come from.

In the meetings that were designated for teachers, there has been 2 meetings, and in both meetings, there were 14 teacher participants, all from primary schools from Arad County. In the parent focus groups, there were 54 participants (both male and female) in 4 meetings.
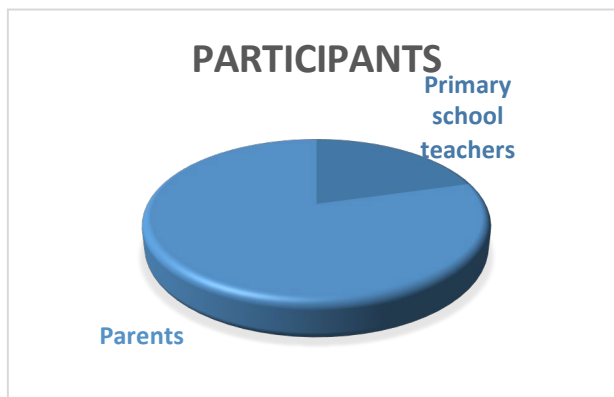

Fig. nb. 3. Participants in the focus group meetings on outdoor education and collaboration between teachers and parents

During these meetings, the main topic was outdoor education and the main ways in which this new education type can be used properly in the teaching learning process, in order to bring more and better results. After the separate meetings ended, we have found it necessary to have a common meeting with parents and teachers, in order to discuss on the main topics and to find new ways of communication, collaboration and sharing ideas and resources, all for the benefit of pupils.
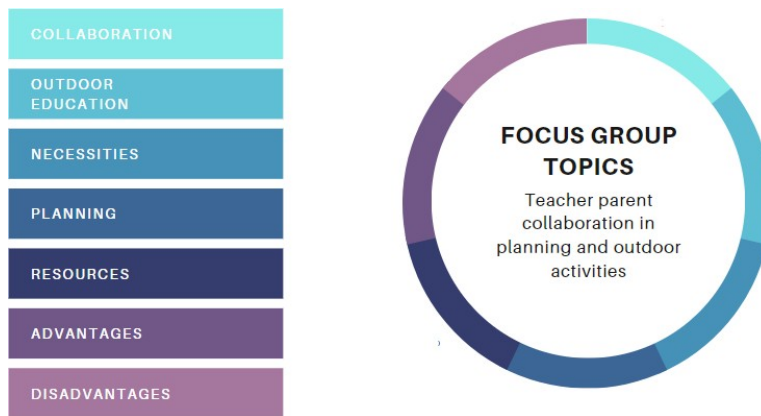
Fig. nb. 4. Topics of the focus group meetings

Findings

At the teachers' meetings we have found the following:
- A number of 10 primary school teachers out of 14, engage at least monthly in outdoor educational activities;
- All primary school teachers are familiar with the concept;
- Teachers responded that they are in search of new communication methods in order to include parents in the planning process of outdoor education;
- The main needs that were enhanced are presented as it follows: better communication system that are sustainable, resources and instruments, financial help, transportation, moral support, openness to new ideas, motivation for kids.

At the parents' meetings we have found the following:
- 80% of parents, consider that teachers do not involve them properly in the planning and activities that take place outdoors;
- 92% of parents have not been explained about the benefit's outdoor educational activities;
- 75% of parents think that the risks in outdoor education are more that the benefits;
- 92% of parents consider that teachers never give enough explanations about the activities that are going to be planned;
- 90% of parents consider that after engaging in activities, teachers haven't given them feedback about the results;
- 82% of parents would offer to volunteer in outdoor educational activities if being asked;
- 97% of parents, consider that they would be able to donate resources if being asked;

- 100% of parents are present on the classroom groups and are open to receive demands regarding outdoor activities for their children;
- 98% of parents would feel safer to leave their children to engage in outdoor learning activities if they could volunteer to be present too. (Torkos & Egerău, 2022)

After the meetings the following aspects have changed in the cooperation system between teachers and parents, in the matter of outdoor educational activities, from planning to the actual activities:
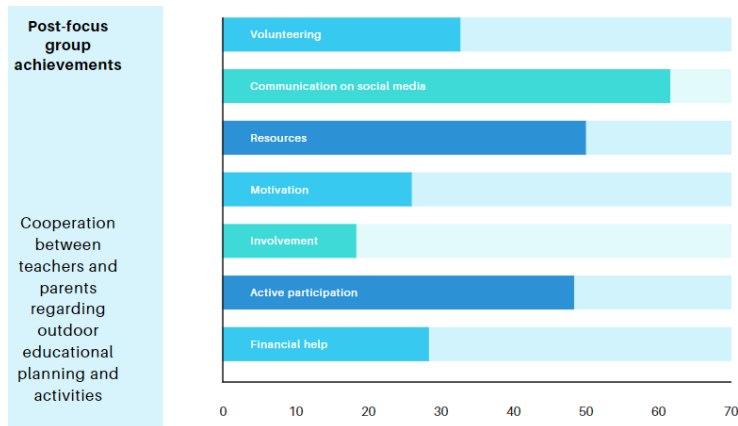

Fig. nb. 5. Post focus-group achievements

Conclusions

Teacher-parent communication is an essential component of any learning environment, including outdoor learning. Teachers should establish clear communication channels with parents, such as email, newsletters, or a class website. Parents should be provided with relevant information on what will be taught during outdoor learning, the benefits of outdoor learning, and any safety precautions that will be taken. Regular check-ins with parents can help teachers keep them informed about what their child is learning and how they are progressing. These check-ins can be done in person or through phone calls, emails, or video conferences. Teachers should communicate the learning objectives and outcomes of outdoor learning activities to parents. This can help parents understand the value of outdoor learning and how it contributes to their child's overall development. Teachers can provide parents with resources and suggestions for outdoor learning activities that can be done at home. This can help parents continue to support their child's learning outside of school. Also, teachers can encourage parent involvement in outdoor

learning activities by inviting parents to join in on field trips or volunteering to help with outdoor activities. This can help parents feel more connected to their child's learning and provide them with a firsthand look at the benefits of outdoor learning. (Băban & Fătu, 2018, Zainea & Sorescu, 2019, Popescu & Cojocaru, 2019)

Overall, effective teacher-parent communication is essential for successful outdoor learning. By establishing clear communication channels, sharing learning objectives and outcomes, and encouraging parent involvement, teachers can ensure that parents are informed and supportive of their child's outdoor learning experiences.

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THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE TEACHING CAREER OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract: *One of the greatest challenges of the 21st century school is to rethinking teacher training according to new social digital trends. A lot of study underlines that teacher's competences hierarchy has been changed: new competences as digital competences, pedagogical creativity or socio-emotional competences are a priority. Teachers must be aware of this major change and accept that the students of the 21st century have different ways of thinking, different activities and interests. The purpose of this research was to identify the factors of emotional intelligence, which are involved in the teaching profession and shape the student`s learning and behavior. The present study was conducted in a mixt methods structure, which employed both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, embedded in a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm. One of the main conclusions of the research is that emotional intelligence and social skills are important tools for adaptation to learning and development for the student's needs. A study has shown that a teacher with a high level of emotional intelligence, above average, positively influences the relationships formed within the class, namely the "student-teacher" and "student-student" relationships. The student-teacher relationship is based on communication, understanding, and friendship, and mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning.*

Key words: *emotional intelligence; social skills; teaching competences.*

1. Introduction

It is a fact that the evolution of technology must be accompanied by moral and emotional development. Students have to learn how to use technology as a useful instrument for human development, to promote a new 21st century ethic based on responsibility, self-agency, while interacting with others and interacting in and with the world.

In 2022, OECD has proposed four scenarios for future education. An important conclusion is that despite of any scenario the teacher profession must be restructured according with to new trends of human and society development.

Heargreaves (2000) proposed that the evolution of teacher professionalism can be categorized into four distinct ages. The most difficult of these is the fourth age, which he refers to as the postmodern or post-professional age. The main characteristic of teaching and teacher professionalism, outside of new technology communications skills, is a new type of relationships with parents (as a consequence of changing family structures, dynamic of workplace), colleagues and community. Teachers have to learn to work within a more diverse community, to see parents as sources of learning and support rather than interference, to communicate more to social workers and second language teachers" (Hargreaves,2000:172).

Regarding the digital age we are in, the entire educational process is constantly changing, teachers must be aware of this major change and accept that the students of the 21st century have different ways of thinking, activities and interests than the students of the past and these is closely related to technology. (Leu et al., 2004)

Swadia, 2018, considers that the adaptation of the educational process to the needs of the students of the 21st century, students also called "digital natives", implies: the digitization of education, the development of a relationship of collaboration and cooperation with students, learning to be active and interactive, to be based on life experiences, the main priority of teachers should be to form life skills.

The teacher`s responsibilities must be redefined according to the social movement. They must be more than educational actors, agents of social changes, promoters of new social ethic, digital citizenship etc. Therefore, teachers need to develop new key competences which help them to face the learning needs of new generation.

1.2. The role of social competences and emotional intelligence in future world

The most important skills, to be successful in life, are the social and emotional ones. (OECD,2015). These skills greatly influence achievement across the board (school/academic results, job performance, professional achievement, mental health, and personal and social well-being). Many times, social skills influence a person's life both directly and indirectly. For example, an adult with developed social skills will be able to successfully negotiate a job interview, a child with developed social skills will be able to adapt more easily to the school environment, will have a group of friends, consequently will have a "state well" at school. This well-being leads to very good school results, performance and balance, which will later bring professional, social fulfillment and success. Curiosity and the ability to have an "open mind" help the individual (regardless of age) to approach learning actively and thus develop and improve their native cognitive capacities.

Richardson (2000) indicates that adults whose social and emotional competence are less developed are at risk of becoming self-centered and unable to empathize and relate to others. According to Goleman (2011), the most worrying findings were made following a longitudinal study carried out in the USA, in which more than over 2,000 children who were evaluated by parents and teachers that having a lower level of emotional intelligence and undeveloped social skills, as adults they became impulsive, angry individuals with isolation and depressed tendencies.

When we talk about contemporary pedagogical mastery, we think of a combination between effective communication and an empathic attitude, and on this basis will be "placed" teaching strategies, relevant content and student involvement. Very often, students have various uncertainties and feel misunderstood, they can encounter all kinds of communication blockages, or difficulties in expressing themselves, and here the teacher's empathy becomes support through speeches and explanations, by bringing one's own person into the student's pose, by offering examples to highlight that there are many people who were in the same situation but got over it, developed beautifully and harmoniously through self-acceptance. (Postolache 2020)

Middle childhood (5-11 years) is often treated as a period in which children develop unidirectionally. But the range from kindergarten to 5th grade includes a series of changes, on several directions and levels: biological, social, cognitive and (very important) emotional changes. Children are exposed to an ever-increasing number of contexts, to an ever-increasing volume of information, and that's why it is expected for them to develop a set

of skills to be able to face multiple challenges. That is why we have a strong argument to emphasize the importance of training these social-emotional skills and competencies during primary school. Children who master these skills and competencies get along better with others, do better in school and have a successful career and a better mental and physical level. (Jones, Bouffard & Weissbourd, 2013)

1.3. The Role of emotional intelligence in teachers work

The link between emotional intelligence and professional success is strong in every profession/work. In teachers' work, emotional intelligence as part of social competences is an important condition for students learning.

The recent research (Hattie 2014, Cozolino2017) underlines the link between teachers' affections or sociability and students' motivation and show that in teaching profession competence social as emotional intelligence, self-control, communication are important for students learning and students well-being.

Moreover, the teacher's social skills are valued differently according to the educational levels. For example, they are very important for pre-school and primary level and become secondary in high school education.

This underlines the fact that for the development of learning skills, students from preschool and primary need a very good emotional relationship with the teacher.

Ivić et al. al., (2001 cited in Sneˇzana Stojiljkovic´ et al. 2012) emphasizes the fact that today's teacher must cooperate with parents and partners in the local community. This competence has risen in the hierarchy of teachers `competences along with that of students learning counseling or professional development.

 Many studies show the positive influence of the teacher with a developed level of emotional intelligence on the students. Teachers are able to support students, trying to understand the true meaning of their behavior. It has been shown that students who have teacher with a developed level of emotional intelligence in the classroom have fewer problems with learning motivation and are more conscientious and persistent. They can easily understand students' behavior, students achieve better academic results and their social development is harmonious. (Klis M., Kossewska J., 2000).

 Analyzing the roles that a teacher has in the classroom, we can see that the emotional dimension is included in all roles, we can even say that it represents the basis. Both social relations and classroom activity are based on this ability

to understand, beyond words, the behavior of the people they interact with (students, parents, etc.). A teacher with a high level of empathy will be able to easily manage the relationships he has with the community as well as with students and their parents, we are talking here about interactions with a great diversity of people who come from different backgrounds, with different principles and values different. Only an emotional intelligent behavior can make a teacher be able to manage all situations, constructively, leaving aside the ego and, at the same time, realizing that it is not about his own person but about his students. So, we can conclude that emotional intelligence is the main dimension, as far as this job is concerned, an increased level of emotional intelligence makes the difference between mediocrity and excellence.

2. Methodology

This study addresses two research questions study: Who shapes the teachers emotional intelligence the didactical behavior and students learning? How does the teacher's emotional intelligence of the teacher influence his own didactic behavior and the behavior of the students?

The goal of this study is to analyse and describe how the teacher's emotional intelligence shape the students' behavior

The present study was conducted in a mixt methods structure, which employed both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, embedded in a constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm. We are interested in deeply understanding specific cases within a particular context. (Patton, 2002).

2.1. Participants

This study involved research conducted over the course of one school year (September 2022 to June 2023). The study included two female primary school teachers from urban schools in Brasov County, Romania. The two teachers taught classes of 26 and respectively, 28 children.

Were two primary teachers from the same school and their students. These two teachers were observed in their classroom for one year. One of them is 66 years old with over 45 years of experience (S.M.), while the other one is 47 years old with 20 years of experience (R.B.)

2.2. Research Tools

2.2.1. The Multidimensional Emotional Intelligence Assessment

MCSEIT test is a psychological instrument used to evaluate a person's emotional intelligence. This test measures five dimensions of emotional intelligence: recognition of emotions, management of emotions, use of emotions to make decisions, empathy, and social skills. Each dimension is measured by several sub-tests, and the final score provides an evaluation of a person's ability to recognize and manage their own and others' emotions.

2.2.2. Scale for evaluating student behavior

The observation grid is based on the operationalization of the "consequences of empathic behavior" of the teacher towards students, with behaviors specific to students who interact in class with an empathetic teacher. The influence of the teacher's empathic behavior is reflected not only in the "student-teacher" relationship but also in the "student-student" relationships, which is why the grid also targets behaviors within the "student-student" relationship.

2.2.3. Narrative observation grid for student-teacher and student-student relationships

This observation grid is designed to capture the attitudes of students and teachers through indicators (verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal) in two key contexts of a lesson - the teaching context and the evaluation context. These indicators are essential in observing the dynamics of the "student-teacher" and "student-student" relationships.

2.2.4. Scale for evaluating teacher behavior

The observation grid is based on the operationalization of the "empathic behavior" of the teacher. The higher the level of empathy of a teacher, the more often the targeted behaviors are manifested.

We also conducted an interview with parents, consisting of eight open-ended questions, where they are interviewed about their opinions on certain teacher behaviors in class that reveal the teacher's level of emotional intelligence.

3. Results and interpretation

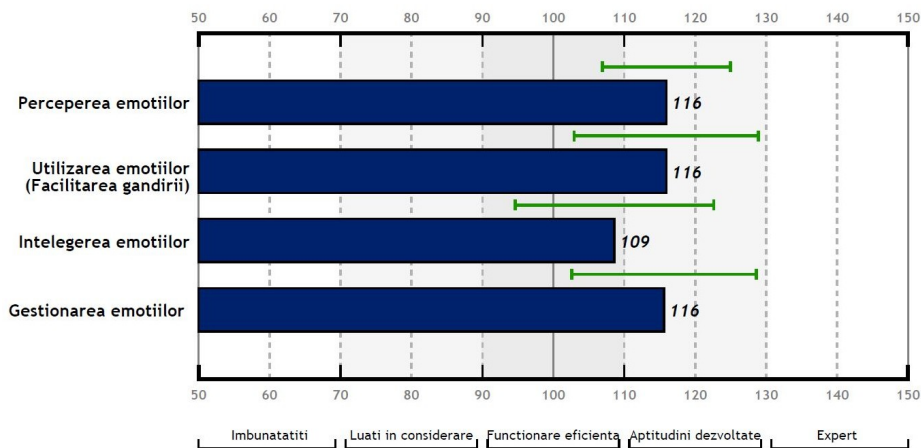**The results obtained for each branch of emotional intelligence.**

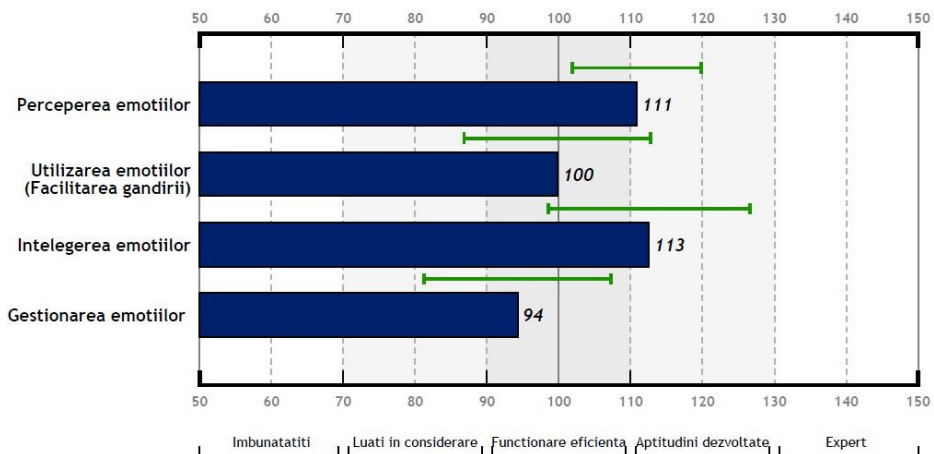Figure no. 1 - R.B. results for each branch of emotional intelligence

Figure no. 2 - S.M. results for each branch of emotional intelligence

By analyzing the scores obtained by each subject in the different areas, we can observe that subject R.B. is at the "developed skills" level in three of them, specifically Perception of emotions - score 116, Utilization of emotions (facilitating thinking) - score 116, and Management of emotions - score 116. In one area, the subject is at the level of efficient functioning - specifically Understanding emotions - score 109. As for subject S.M., she is at the developed skills level in two of the areas - Perception of emotions - score 111, Understanding emotions - score 113, and at the efficient functioning level in

two of them - Utilization of emotions (facilitating thinking) - score 100, Management of emotions - score 94.

Based on the observation of their behavior and the completion of the narrative observation grid, the following behaviors were identified, correlated with the level of emotional intelligence areas in which each teacher is positioned:

> ❖ **Emotion perception**
>   In this area, the two teaching staff obtained the following scores:

  S.M. – emotion perception – score 111/ developed aptitudes

  R.B. – emotion perception – score 116/ developed aptitudes

Following observations in both classes, during the first part of the lesson, there was a calm atmosphere. In the second part, the children began to become restless, fidgeting and talking to each other. At that moment, the teachers used nonverbal language to calm them down. They raised a hand and the children stopped talking. If the noise continued and the students who were disturbed by the noise also raised a hand, then it was known that more people were bothered and the noise stopped in the end. This behavior denotes a high level of emotion perception capacity from the teachers, but furthermore, through imitation, the children learn how to perceive others' emotions and manage situations constructively and calmly. Additionally, both teachers often have a positive attitude when a student gives a wrong answer, noticing when a student does not understand a task without the student verbally expressing it. The qualitative analysis of the answers to the questionnaires revealed that teachers create positive atmosphere in classroom. To the question" How *would you define the overall "atmosphere" in the classroom?"* Both teachers answered that the classroom atmosphere is playful, friendly, harmonious, and that students are free to express their opinions. The atmosphere is based on solid communication based on mutual respect and empathy, and motivates students to learn. *To the question" How does verbal/nonverbal feedback you receive from students during teaching/evaluating a lesson influence you?"* both teachers claimed that feedback from students, whether verbal or nonverbal, is very important. It is an important indicator for the entire course of the lesson. Teachers are attentive to the confusion or uncertainty in the children's eyes or attitude, and thus realize that explanations must be rephrased or simplified, or a different approach must be found to reach their minds. Those who are inattentive or bored are asked for their opinion or solutions/ideas to be anchored back into the lesson.

The qualitative analysis of the answers to the questionnaires revealed that parents have a positive attitude. The answers to the question" What *do you*

consider to be the strengths of your child's teacher?" reflect that the teacher is well-prepared, balanced, organized, punctual, shows love and understanding towards the child. The strengths are patience, empathy, involvement, and gentleness with which each child is treated. The teachers show them how empathy works and how each "conflicting party "gains something by being empathic towards each other. They describe the relationship between children and teacher based on respect, collaboration, and admiration. One parent of a student in R.B.'s class claimed that "when the teacher is upset or happy and the child also is...".

We can conclude that both teachers have a high level of emotional perception ability, which has a major influence on the teacher's connection with each student, influences the classroom atmosphere which, as we can see with both teachers, is warm and calm, conducive to learning and generates a sense of well-being for the child. But in addition to these aspects, the high capacity for understanding emotions of the teachers also helps students develop this ability through imitation, which leads to positive and constructive social relationships with classmates.

❖ **The use of emotions to facilitate thinking**
In this area, the two teaching staff obtained the following scores:

*R.B. **-** Use of emotions (facilitating thinking) - score 116/developed skills*
S.M. - Use of emotions (facilitating thinking) - score 100 / efficient functioning

This ability refers to the use of feelings and emotions to improve the thinking process and assist in decision-making. For example, when we are motivated and confident, we are more likely to find creative solutions to our problems. At the same time, when we are stressed or anxious, we may feel blocked and have difficulty making important decisions. Therefore, it is important to be aware of our emotions and manage them effectively to help us think more clearly and make better decisions.

Following the observation of behavior and completion of the narrative observation grid, the following behaviors were identified as indicating a high level of use of emotions in facilitating thinking: regarding feedback, it was given both verbally, through phrases such as "try again", "well done", "very good", "I think you can do even better", "try and you will see that you can" etc., feedback was mostly given individually, after each answer or task. Verbal feedback was accompanied by paraverbal language, with a calm, warm tone and low voice. Nonverbal feedback was given through "broad smiles", "facial expressions", "widened eyes", "hugs", and "applause". They always have a

positive attitude when a student gives a wrong answer, showing tolerance, smiling, and relating without discrimination. Regarding this profession, I believe that this ability is reflected more in the ability to be aware of the influence of positive emotions in facilitating the learning process in children, especially young children who do not have a well-developed emotional self-regulation. Therefore, we can observe that both teachers have an encouraging attitude regarding the feedback they give, which is constructive, even if there are things to be corrected. Their attitude creates a sense of well-being regardless of the results they achieve, supports the progress of children, and helps them stay motivated in the learning process.

The difference in score between the two teachers may be due to the difference in motivation generated by each one's professional stage, but we believe that in this area, there is also an aspect related to the kinesthetic ability of each teacher. R.B. is a more kinesthetic person, as evidenced by the tendency to embrace students when giving feedback and always touching them on the shoulder, head, etc. during the lesson. The theory states that kinesthetic individuals tend to have a higher level of empathy, and empathy is a basic component of emotional intelligence that increases awareness regarding the use of emotions in facilitating thinking.

❖ **Emotion management**

In this area, the two-teaching staff obtained the following scores:

R.B. - Emotion management - score 116 / developed aptitude

M.S. - Emotion management - score 94 / efficient functioning

Emotional management refers to the ability to recognize, understand and manage one's own emotions and emotional reactions in a constructive and efficient manner. It also includes the ability to communicate and relate to others in a healthy and positive way, even in stressful or challenging situations. This dimension of emotional intelligence is best reflected in the relationships that teachers have with their students, as well as in the relationships that students have with each other. At this young age, children learn a lot through imitation, so with positive behavioral models and good guidance, they will know how to manage their own emotions and have healthy relationships as future adults.

Based on observations of the behavior of students and teachers and the two interviews conducted, it can be said that the "student-teacher" and "student-student" relationships are positively influenced by the teacher's emotional management skills. Data analysis revealed that the "student-teacher"

relationship is a bilateral one, in which students have the courage to freely express their point of view, view mistakes as learning opportunities, and communicate verbally, non-verbally, and para-verbally. Students feel safe, and their relationship with the teacher provides them with emotional comfort. The relationship is based on communication, understanding, friendship, support, and unconditional acceptance. They are motivated to learn and at the same time have confidence in their own abilities, and their self-esteem increases, leading to the development of student autonomy. Increased self-esteem and self-confidence help the student develop the ability to adapt to different situations, which is "vital" as a future adult in a constantly changing society. A positive and constructive "student-teacher" relationship ensures students' harmonious development from all points of view (psycho-social, cognitive, emotional), making the school a reliable partner in the "school-community" relationship.

From the observations made, the following are the behaviors that teachers frequently manifest and demonstrate the above-mentioned qualities:

- They have a positive attitude when a student gives a wrong answer.
- They notice when a student does not understand a task without the student having to express this verbally.
- They relate to students without discrimination.
- They always smile.
- They use phrases like "please" and "thank you."
- They encourage students using phrases like "well done," "great job," "you did it," "I think you can do even better," "try it and you'll see that you can."

The following are the behaviors that students frequently manifest and demonstrate the above-mentioned qualities:

- They participate with interest and pleasure in activities.
- They show interest in correcting their own mistakes.
- They have the courage to ask for help when they do not understand a task.
- They show motivation in everything they do.
- They take responsibility for solving tasks on their own.

Additionally, literature supports the above-mentioned aspects, Connell (1993 cited in Swan, Riley, 2012) highlights the relational aspect of the teaching process. The teacher's activity in the classroom is guided by emotional aspects of the "teacher-student" relationship, such as sympathy, interest, surprise, boredom, humor, anger, frustration, trust, determination, and

motivation. If there is a relationship based on harmony, calmness, communication, and attitude, then the outcome will be accordingly. Moreover, he supports that teaching in school is one of the most emotionally demanding jobs, realizing the major importance it has in the instructive-educational process, this affective bridge created by the teacher through the type of relationship they have with the student (positive-negative).

The qualitative analysis of the answers to the questionnaires revealed that the teachers create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom children are free to express their opinions while following basic rules regarding behavior and communication based on empathy, respect, and tolerance. The relationship with students is based on respect, honesty, and trust. They are always open to their suggestions/proposals if they are well-reasoned. They like to see them happy, coming to school without fear. The qualitative analysis of the answers to the questionnaires revealed that parents have a positive attitude. They believe that the relationship between teacher and students is based on mutual respect and trust. The children are very close to the teacher, trust her, and relate very well, being very open when she talks to them. The children are very excited about school, colleagues, and the teacher.

❖ **Understanding emotions**
   In this area, the two teaching staff obtained the following scores:

   S.M. - Understanding emotions scored 113/ developed aptitude

   R.B. - Understanding emotions scored 109/ indicating efficient functioning

Understanding emotions refers to the ability to recognize and interpret the different emotions that people experience and how these emotions affect behavior and mood. This ability involves the capacity to perceive and interpret facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and other nonverbal signals to identify the emotions that a person is feeling.

From the observations made in the classroom, the following behaviors were identified as supporting a high level of emotional understanding: The two teachers can tell when a student does not understand a task without the student expressing it verbally. Feedback is accompanied by paraverbal language, with a calm, warm, and low-tone voice. Nonverbal feedback is provided through a "broad smile," "facial expressions," "widened eyes," "hand gestures," "crossing of arms and legs," etc. This indicates that students have also picked up the ability to perceive emotions by interpreting the nonverbal language of the teachers.

This is supported by the responses given by the teachers, to two questions asked in an interview. To the question" How *does verbal/nonverbal feedback from students influence you during teaching/evaluation of a lesson?"* the subjects stated that feedback from students, both verbal and nonverbal or paraverbal, is very important. It is an important indicator for the entire course of the lesson. Teachers are attentive to confusion or uncertainty in the children's expressions or attitudes and thus realize that explanations need to be repeated or simplified, or another way to reach their minds needs to be found. For the inattentive or bored, their opinions or solutions/ideas are sought so that they can be anchored again in the lesson. Feedback helps to adjust the pace and flow of the transmitted information during the lesson. To the question *" What do you do if a student starts crying in the middle of a lesson?"* the subjects responded that a child's suffering cannot be ignored, the lesson is stopped and the problem is addressed, the child is hugged and assured that whatever happens, there is a solution. If the problem is not related to physical pain, the student is involved in an activity as a helper so that they can forget about the problem they are having (e.g., missing their mother, refusing to go to after-school classes, etc.). One subject responded strictly from an educational perspective, stating that during teaching/consolidation/recapitulation and synthesis of knowledge lessons, it has not happened that a student cried. However, it happened, sometimes, during evaluation, when some students who did not understand certain knowledge "lost" themselves in the "maze" of exercises/problems (for example, in the subject of Mathematics, when performing exercises with the order of operations, equalities/inequalities, or solving methods: the graphic method, the comparison method, etc.). The reaction was to calm the student and "guide/lead" them towards remembering some necessary elements for solving the problem.

4.Conclusion

In educational settings, emotional intelligence is particularly important for teachers and students. Teachers who are able to recognize and respond to students' emotions can create a positive and supportive learning environment, which can lead to better academic outcomes. Students who are emotionally intelligent are able to manage stress better, form positive relationships with peers and teachers, and make responsible decisions.

Analyzing the total scores, 118 the teacher R.B. – 47-year-old with 20 years of experience, and 105 – S.M the teacher 66-year with 46 years of experience, it is noticed that the teacher with more experience and older age has a lower score, which can be influenced by psychological wear and tear and a decrease in motivation that occurs with age. This fact is supported by the theory of

psychologist Reuven Bar-On, called "Bar-On's model of emotional intelligence in teachers." According to this theory, emotional intelligence is essential for a teacher's success in interacting with students. It refers to the ability to perceive, express, and regulate one's emotions, as well as to understand and influence the emotions of others. According to Bar-On's model, the older and more experienced a teacher is in the field of education, the more likely it is for their level of emotional intelligence to decrease due to psychological overload and fatigue. This can lead to a decrease in the ability to perceive children's emotions and manage their difficult behaviors.

This research aimed to highlight the importance of teacher's behavior towards their students. We live in a society where everything is changing, and we can argue that we are in a period of transition. Interpersonal relationships play an important role, both at a personal level and within the community, and they often form the foundation of a child's life in terms of developing high self-esteem and confidence in their abilities. These aspects are extremely important in becoming a well-balanced adult with an increased ability to adapt, capable of functioning in a constantly changing society.

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THE ROLE OF THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM (TEACHERS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, SUPPORT TEACHERS, PSYCHOPEDAGOGUES, ETC.) IN MEDIATING CONFLICTS BETWEEN PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND PARENTS OF TYPICAL CHILDREN, IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract: *Our study wants to find if the success of the functional integration of children with disabilities depends on the degree of involvement of specialists in the mediation of conflicts with the parents of typical children and their opposing attitude towards integration. In order to have a functional integration and all the children in the class, typical or disabled, in order to benefit from education, they need the attention and involvement of specialists, the support of parents, and relationships with classmates. The involvement of specialists in counseling parents with disabilities as well as typical ones, may facilitate a successful integration. In order to identify the benefits of integration for all children, the support of school managers and the support of school inspectorates is essential.*

Key words: *functional integration; parents with SCR (special counseling requirements); parents of typical children.*

The integration of children with disabilities in mainstream education is not a new topic anymore. Ever since Salamanca Conference (1994), which promoted the acceptance of diversity by offering equal educational opportunities to all disadvantaged students (Salamanca Declaration on Special Needs Education), the foundations of the principle of normalization were laid. In turn, the principle of normalization, as a concept, favored the integration of

these children into mainstream education. Together with the child, a real and very important partner is the parent who, naturally, wants the best school, the best teachers and the most harmonious development environment for his child. When we talk about the integration of children with disabilities, we expect that in the group of the parents in a class we will have parents of children with disabilities (fewer) and parents of typical children (the majority). Children with disabilities are perceived as different by the other children in the class, implicitly by their parents. Being different for them may become a problem, an obstacle for them in the way of their own chance to achieve performance, to develop harmoniously. They do not understand what a different child is looking for in their classroom, they reject him and demand his removal from their group.

On the other hand, the disabled child, assisted by his parents, in ideal cases, or by legal guardians, often supported by legislation, has the right and wishes to attend mainstream school. The parents of children with disabilities are parents with SCR (special counseling requirements). They choose a mainstream school and want their son or daughter to be accepted, to have access to the best education so that they can be recovered as best as possible and to benefit from the best specialists (Salloum, 2017, page 117).

Becoming a parent does not require ti finish some courses, a diploma or certification. In fact, anyone can become a parent, regardless of his or her status, state of health, occupation or background. The human quality of the individual does not change the moment he or she becomes a parent. In addition, every future parent wants a healthy, smart and resourceful child, and the appearance of a different child turns their life upside down. This find them totally unprepared; they don't know what are the first steps they need to take, and often they waste very precious time in which early intervention cannot be done. The parent goes through the classic stages (denial, anger, bargaining, depression) until he or she can accept the new situation he is facing. Even then, the situation is not resolved, this is only the moment when parents of a child with disability realizes the importance of collaboration with teachers, with school specialists, when he or she becomes their real partner, for the benefit of his or her own child.

On the other hand, the stigma faced by the child affects the whole family, many other challenges arise (medical, financial, administrative, relationship problems with relatives, with other members of society, divorces, problems with jobs, etc.) all disrupting parents' lives. They are overcome with too many problems and they need to be advising.

Several studies that focused on the families of children with disabilities concluded that there is a positive correlation between the socio-familial environment of children with disabilities and their educational success. Children's interactions with their mothers, mothers' intellectual level, their language, have an essential impact on children's psycho-intellectual development (Gherguț, 2005, page 286).

Parents of schoolmates of students with disabilities integrated in mainstream education can be grouped into three categories (Salloum, 2011, page 55):

- *Parents who are against accepting children with disabilities* in the respective classes, more or less vehemently. Some of them threaten to transfer their own child if the disabled student does not leave the respective class. Most of them justify their position with statements like:

• The teacher wastes too much time with the disabled student;

• It is a negative example for my child, because he cannot cope with the requirements of a regular class;

• He always expects help from our children, maybe more, but he or she is lazy and takes advantage of others;

• He or she is strange, otherwise, his place is in the special school;

• He or she is dangerous for my child

- *Neutral parents*, who do not refer to the presence of children with disabilities in their own child's class. Such situation is indifferent to these parents.

- *Parents who agree with the presence of a disabled child* in their own child's class. Some of them express their opinions:

• I am happy because this way my child can see how lucky he is to be healthy;

• My child will become more sensitive and kinder to the other people;

• He or she is a disabled child and it is not his or her fault;

• He or she is a poor child, enjoys the presence of children of his age;

• His or her parents are good people and take care of him or her;

• He or she doesn't harm anyone.

One of the possible explanations would be the fact that the parents of typical children do not know the particular situation of children with disabilities, many of their problems being attributed to social disadvantages. In mainstream schools there is a competitive climate and students with SEN are held responsible for lower class results. Also, it isn't well understood what a personalized intervention plan means, namely the differentiated assessment and the high grades obtained by students with disabilities (Buică, 2004, page 360).

Another observation we can mention concerns the severity of the children's disabilities. We have also observed that the parents of typical children are more supportive in the situation of integrating children with mild disabilities than severe ones (Schmidta, Krivecb and Bastičc, 2020, page 699).

One of the possible reasons for the negative attitude of some of the parents of typical children may also be the fact that there are not everywhere specialists trained to support the successful integration of children with disabilities, and then the teachers who teach these classes are overworked, thus the educational level can be affected (Elkins, van Kraayenoord and Jobling, 2003, page 128).

In order to have a successful integration, it would be ideal for the specialists from the school to form a multidisciplinary team, to create together a personalized intervention plan for each child with a disability. Each specialist knows the school curriculum according to which he or she works, he or she can best adapt its content according to the child's limits. It is also very important that the evaluation of the children to be done in accordance with the personalized intervention plan, to be aware that the maximum marks obtained by the disabled child do not mean that he becomes the winner of the class, that there are parallel evaluations, one for typical children and one another for children with disabilities. If this is not done, the disabled child will always be demotivated, he or she will never be able to be rewarded for his or her effort, although the personalized intervention plan has specified the maximum level he or she can reach. The requirements would be above these maximums.

Team members plan the intervention process together, crossing disciplines to maximize communication, interaction and cooperation, and decisions are made by consensus.

Methodology

The **general objective** of our research is the functional integration of children with disabilities.

In order to achieve this aim, we have also proposed some **specific objectives**:

• The awareness of the role of mediator by the specialists involved in the integration process of children with disabilities;

• The involvement of specialists in counseling parents with disabilities (parents with SCR/ special counseling requirements);

• The identifying of the benefits of integration for children with disabilities but also for typical children, respectively for the parents of all children;

• The awareness of the parents of typical children by making them find the benefits of integrating children with disabilities as well as for them.

The assumption from which we started our study is: *There are significant differences in the success of the functional integration of children with disabilities, depending on the degree of involvement of specialists in the mediation of conflicts between the parents and their opposing attitude towards integration.*

The participants in our research were 121 specialists:

	Quality		urban/rural environment
	Support teachers	27	24/3
	Psychologists	9	9
	Teachers (V-VIII)	38	23/15
	Teachers (I-IV)	19	11/8
	Kindergarden teacher	21	17/4
	Total	114	84/30

The tools used by us: the study of the children's documents in the personal disability files, the documents in which we found the school results, the observation, the questionnaire, compiled by us and administered online.

Interpretation of results

From the first data collected by us, we food that of the 144 participants, 84 come from the urban environment and 30 from the rural environment. Most of

the support teachers are from schools in the urban environment, in the rural environment, considering the smaller number of students, they are less. Also, there are no school psychologists at rural schools. The integrated children our participants have the following disabilities: intellectually disabled (62), autism (14), down (5), hearing impaired (3), ADHD (9), behavioral disorders (21).

To the question *What problems have you encountered in the collaboration with the parents of the disabled child?,* the most frequent answers were: a) many parents do not accept the fact that they have a disabled child and he or she needs special intervention (38), b) the parents are dissatisfied with the fact that their children are not accepted by other children and feel that they are not helped enough (22), c) parents do not consider that they need to continue recovery activities at home (37), d) the parents are involved, even overprotective (17).

Next question: *What problems have you encountered in working with parents of typical children?* pointed out some predictable perspectives: a) a part of the parents of typical children expressed their dissatisfaction that in the classes where their children learn there are children with disabilities (87), of these 19 threatened to transfer their own child if the disabled children are not removed, only in two cases were there transfers of children.

To the next question: *Have you had complaints from parents of typical children?* The majority of answers were affirmative and the following arguments were mentioned: a) the disabled child is a bad example for my child (34), b) I don't like the fact that there are such children in the class, they can be dangerous (41), c) teachers waste too much time with these children instead of dealing with the other children (27), d) I don't think there are problems (12)

For the question: *What were the most frequent reasons cited by them?* the most reasons cited were: a) too much time is wasted with these children at the expense of typical children, b) they can be aggressive, dangerous for other children, c) their place is in school centers for inclusive education.

Next question*: Were there situations in which the conflict escalated to the school management or ISJ?* confirmed that yes, unfortunately, quite frequently parents complain to the school management, even before talking to the classroom teachers.

Referring to *Which were the disabilities that raised the most problems?* the most complaints were for children with behavioral disorders (49), ADHD (31) and autism (12).

To the question: *What were the methods used by you in mediating conflicts?* the answers were: a) we tried to advise the parents, to invite psychologists to advise the parents (21), b) we held meetings with the parents of typical children with those of children with disabilities to which we invited representatives from the school inspectorate (17), c) we did not manage to do anything by ourselves (24), d) we appealed to the school management (37).

For the following question: *Among the methods used, which were the most effective?* the most useful methods mentioned were a) meetings with all the parents of the class (22), b) individual counseling of dissatisfied parents with the aim of sensitizing them (14)

Trying to find solutions, to the question: *What do you think it could be done to prevent such unwanted situations?* the answers received were: a) self-improvement of teaching staff to be prepared to correctly address the problems that arise (47); b) sensitizing parents of typical children (12), c) counseling parents of children with disabilities (19).

The next question: *How did you manage to collaborate with your colleagues?* emphasized the fact that in kindergarten and primary school things were solved relatively easier (28), most problems occurred with teachers who teach in secondary school (53).

To the question: *Did you have the necessary support from the school management when it was necessary?* the answers signaled, unfortunately, that the interest for children with disabilities in mainstream schools is minimal (16), we can rather talk about some tolerance (42).

To see where we should do in the future interventions, we asked: *What would you change in the approach to this problem if you could?* The answers were: a) I would like to have many specialists to help the child and us (47), b) more information about integration should be promoted among typical parents, it is not just our task (53), c) more money should be invested in materials and means for schools to become truly inclusive (14).

Conclusions: Our study, through the analysis and comparison of the answers received from the participants, confirms that the success of the functional integration of children with disabilities depends on the degree of involvement of specialists in the mediation of conflicts between the parents of classes and their opposing attitude towards integration. Awareness of the role of mediator by the specialists involved in the integration process of children with disabilities is essential. Integration must become functional, for all children in the class, typical or disabled, they all have the right to education, they need the attention and involvement of specialists, the support of parents, and

relationships with classmates. The involvement of specialists in counseling parents with disabilities as well as typical ones in order to identify the benefits of integration for all children, the support of school managers and the support of school inspectorates can facilitate a successful integration. Rural schools, even if they have fewer children, need more specialists, the children who study here have also the right to education like all other children.

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EMPOWERMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE, OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES FOR USER SELF-DETERMINATION

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Abstract: *Health is the most important component of human life, and mental health even more so; the quality of mental health depends on the way individuals understand social relationships, manage to integrate in the family, in the group of friends, in the community, in social life. The European project KA202 - Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training (Empow'Them) aims to develop an innovative methodology, which offers continuous, non-disruptive, free training addressed to all professionals. The project is a plea for the important role of self-determination in the recovery and reintegration of people suffering from various mental illnesses. This idea is in line with the Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 (WHO, 2013) and the*

European Commission Green Paper of 2005, which states that self-determination and empowerment of people with mental disorders are fundamental concepts in mental health to improve social inclusion. Self-determination is seen to act as a catalyst for beneficiaries' ability to make decisions about their own lives, remobilize, take responsibility for their choices and become full citizens, regardless of the severity of the illness. The project represents a reflection, search and implementation of viable solutions to support people in a vulnerable moment of their lives. The "Empow'Them" project is consistent with the actions supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2008), as it aims to contribute to the respect and dignity of people affected by mental illness through professional practices that support their individual freedom.

Key words: *mental health; self-determination; reintegration; social inclusion; dignity*

Introduction

Mental health is a person's ability to maintain a balance between all intellectual and emotional psychic functions, so that they can easily adapt to the challenges of social life (Johannes Thome, and all, 2020). Mental health ultimately represents that state of well-being that manifests itself in three poses: feeling good with yourself, feeling good with the others and being able to fulfill the duties of everyday life (Gavrila-Ardelean, M., & Kelemen G., 2021). Any disease, but especially the mental one, means "a break in the biological balance, followed by social maladjustment, social disengagement and therefore the break in the social balance of the individual", so vital for health (Chiara Samele, Stuart Frew and Norman Urquía, 2013). The "Empow'Them" project aims to help with their recovery and social reintegration through a methodology of developing self-determination at the level of patients with mental disorders (medical, psychological and sociological). The medical research recorded in the specialized literature brings into discussion the possibility of recovering the mentally ill even after a serious mental illness by stimulating motivation and self-determination (Ryan M., Richard, Deci L., Edward, 2017).

1. Recovery, readjustment, reintegration

Recovery is defined by specialists as the development of a new meaning and purpose in life, with an emphasis on the capacity and potential of each individual for recovery, readjustment and social reintegration. Achieving this

goal involves a process that leads to the rehabilitation of the person who has suffered a mental illness (Corbière, M., Lecomte, T., Lachance, J.P., Coutu, M.F., Negrini, A., et Laberon, S. 2017). Recovery also aims at psychological preparation for creating an appropriate affective-motivational state by experiencing satisfaction in relation to the performed activity and maintaining a prolonged psychological comfort through it. Social policies recommend a collaborative relationship between the different sectors and professions in order to recover and reintegrate the mentally ill into activity. People with severe mental disorders rarely experience positive results at the workplace (Gavrila-Ardelean, M., 2016). Their employment rate is very low, no more than 11%. At the same time, people with mental illnesses represent a constantly growing category among the beneficiaries of sickness pensions, which represents a burden for the social insurance budget, representing a failure of the public integration policies (Corbière, M., Coutu, M. -F., Bergeron, G., Samson, E., Negrini, A., *Sauvé, G., et Lecomte, T., 2018). Despite these statistical data, many mentally ill people want to work, and social reintegration through work is an important part of the rehabilitation efforts. When a person with serious mental health problems intends to enter the free labor market, she has to overcome a series of obstacles. These can be at the level of the patient (lack of vocational experience and cognitive disabilities), at the level of the potential employer (stigmatization of the mentally ill) and at the level of mental health services (deficient offer of social and vocational rehabilitation services). Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to find ways to optimize the skills and practices of all interested parties: beneficiaries, professionals and employers with the aim of employment and social reintegration of the beneficiaries.

2. Self-determination, stimulus for intrinsic motivation

Currently, specialists discuss the impact of self-determination as a factor of social inclusion, and recent research shows that this ability, if properly stimulated, contributes to the improvement of the beneficiaries` lives (Deci and Ryan, 2016). The "Empow'Them" project is in line with the actions supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2008), as it aims to contribute to the implementation of those measures that lead to the respect and dignity of users through professional practices that support their individual freedom. In the last decades, there has been put a lot of emphasis on the practical implementation of some measures starting from the theory of self-determination in the case of people suffering from mental problems. Thus, a number of researchers leaned on this theory, looking for methodological solutions for the recovery and reintegration of the mentally ill, establishing objectives, targets and practical applications (Edward Deci and Richard Ryan). The self-determination theory of motivation contradicts the prevailing belief that the best way to get human beings to perform tasks is to

reinforce their behavior with rewards. So Ryan also claims that if motivation is supported from the perspective of human needs, then it becomes intrinsic and acts as a stimulator in mobilizing the individual towards recovery. It is said that there are three things that people feel the need to satisfy in order to be internally motivated: the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness. When we refer to autonomy, of course, we think of choices: being free to decide how you do your task and how you achieve your goals (Okon, S., and Webb, D., 2014). This does not exclude the need to establish some limits, but it contradicts the theories of current management, focused on command and control (I say something and I make sure you will do it). Motivation determines work with pleasure, while punishment makes people inactive, inhibits and blocks them. Demotivation can happen very easily, it appears when there is a conflict between words and actions, through criticism in public, by restricting the power of choice, by preventing development or by manipulation. It is important to realize that in the work process there is also the need for competence from the desire to do things well, from the desire for development, growth and performance (Ryan M., Richard, Deci L., Edward, 2017).

Equally important is the need for relationships, group membership, common contribution to something considered important. This is where intrinsic motivation interferes. You can motivate a person to participate with pleasure and interest in carrying out a task if you create an environment that respects the person's intrinsic needs: autonomy, competence and relationship. Only this way will the individual get involved in the action, according to expectations. Most of the time we don't just do things that make us pleasure and bring us various benefits, most of the time we are forced to make compromises due to certain external stimuli, which become determinants. Finding inner balance is especially important for maintaining well-being. The theory of self-determination proposes certain tools to contribute to the achievement of this emotional balance and to the stimulation of intrinsic motivation in different social contexts: in sport (Pelletier et al., 2013), in professional activity (Gagné et al., in press), in education (Vallerand et al., 1989, 1992) and even in very specific situations (Guay, Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000). Some researchers propose the self-congruence model, explained as being based on those goals that represent people's real interests and passions, as well as their core values and beliefs (Sheldon, 2002; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001). In the theory of self-determination, positive emotion and subjective well-being are determinants of need satisfaction, all forms of mental health are ultimately supported by the fulfillment of psychological needs, they are "psychological nutrients" (Kennon M. Sheldon, 2012).
This model states that self-determining elements create a congruence between the self and external variables and lead to the most adaptive behaviors

regarding motivation from the perspective of human needs. Health care providers have the responsibility to respect and encourage the autonomy and self-determination of all individuals in their care. This desideratum is also a need for people living with a mental illness. Their journey to personal recovery should rely heavily on personal involvement, on their own choices.
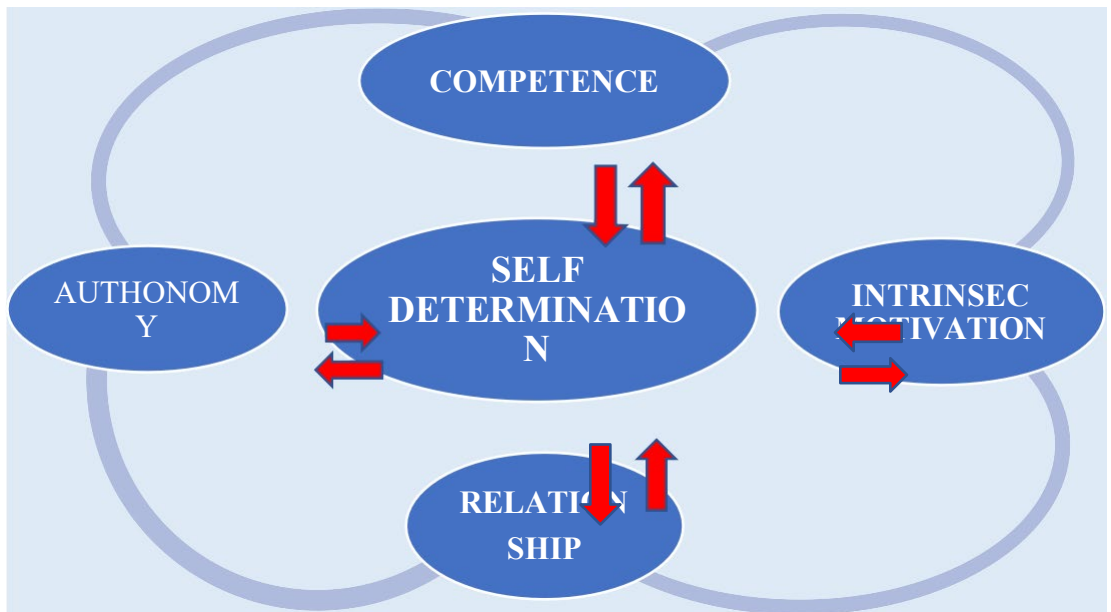

Fig.1.*Model of self determination*

3. The objective of „Empow'Them" project

The goal of the project comes as "a challenge, an innovative approach of pedagogical engineering, a training that allows professionals to respond to the needs of the beneficiary-professional binom effectively (project guide). Thus, the project mobilizes a multidisciplinary team, made up of eight partners, from six different countries and with complementary expertise, in actions aimed at creating a specific training that will remain available with open access (Creative Commons license) on a Moodle platform for a period of at least three years after the end of the project. To begin with, a practice analysis guide will be developed in the form of a questionnaire based on the main scientific databases. The development of the educational methodology is inspired by reverse pedagogy and constitutes the heart of the innovation of the "Empow'Them" project. It focuses on the belief that there is a need to introduce innovative tools that allow the mobilization, stimulation and activation of self-determination for the development of the interpersonal skills of the beneficiaries.

4. Methodology

The project claims to offer professionals, beneficiaries and all interested parties' courses on digital media (videos) with an approach inspired by inverted pedagogy. Videos are built on theoretical, scientific knowledge, such as definitions and history of self-determination, principles of support, socio-pedagogical relationship. The course material is developed in such a way as to be a guide for facilitators on the field, for those who work directly with people affected by various mental illnesses, but also for the direct beneficiaries. The educational activities, inspired by the reality on the field, are presented in a sequential, short-term and progressive manner.

5. Results of the activities of the project

- Production of hat videos for each of the themes;

- Production of a hat video for the training of facilitators;
- Creation of a shared file to centralize all feedback on the first training sessions;
- Production of a summary sheet: "What message did the future facilitators/facilitators get across?":
- Update of the questionnaire for the two training courses;
- Created of a PPT update for facilitator training;
- Realization of a certificate model for the two training courses;
- Realization of the translation of the scripts in each language of the country implied in project;
- Progressive evaluation.

6. Conclusions

Respecting the person's intrinsic needs: autonomy, competence and sense of belonging is how the individual will engage in action. These goals will be concluded in the form of practical courses within the Empow'Them project.

The innovative part of the project is the intellectual product on digital support in the form of a guide with educational videos. Its purpose is to provide easily accessible materials both to professionals, but also to beneficiaries and their families, to stimulate the empowerment of people with special mental health needs. The guide was built using reverse pedagogy approach techniques. It started from the real needs of the beneficiaries, tested on the basis of a guided interview. The work of the project team was focused on these needs and the results were finalized at the international level.

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CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER MENTORING

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Abstract: *From the perspective of the ideas promoted by modern educational paradigms, the role and activity of the mentor teacher must converge with them, both in terms of carrying out the practical educational activity by the mentor teacher and in terms of advising beginning teachers or the students/pupils carrying out their pedagogical practice. How they carry out the mentoring activity and how they coordinate and direct the didactic activities of the beginning teachers or students are essential factors in their initial training with an impact on their future didactic activity. A current, modern perspective of the mentor regarding the elements of the educational process, regarding its procedural teaching-learning-evaluation, will support the shaping of an appropriate, up-to-date vision for the mentored individuals, which will be reflected in their own teaching activities. The quality of the teacher mentoring activity is conditioned not only by the characteristics that define the profile of a competent mentor (pedagogical expertise, interpersonal skills, communication, the ability to provide constructive feedback, to ensure proper management of lessons, etc.) but also by the implementation in the educational practice and the mentoring activity of the trends of modern educational paradigms. In correlation with the abovementioned ideas regarding the development of the teaching mentoring activity following the characteristics of modern educational paradigms, we investigated the opinion of a group of teachers in pre-university education regarding the importance of carrying out the teacher mentoring activity and the didactic activity in general in agreement with the trends in the evolution of didactics and current paradigms.*

Keywords: *teacher mentoring; modern educational paradigms; initial training of teachers; the mentor's role; instructive-educational process.*

Teacher mentoring. Legislative markers

Teacher mentoring is a supportive relationship for learning, training, and personal development between a teacher with a wealth of professional expertise and a trainee, usually a beginning teacher, in which the teacher intentionally shares their knowledge and experience with the trainee, helping the latter to develop their professional knowledge. (C. Stan, 2020)

Mentors in the educational field are professionals who advise a person with less experience or at the beginning of their teaching career; they offer informed opinions about the profession and share their experiences and knowledge, thus facilitating the induction of the beginning teachers or those in the process of training and the fulfillment of their potential (E. Lazăr, G. Leahu, 2020).

Depending on the stage of training in which the mentored person is, two forms of mentoring can be identified:

- Pedagogical practice mentoring was introduced in the legislative provisions long before the professional induction mentoring was added and is aimed at training students from vocational high schools with a pedagogical profile or students opting for the psycho-pedagogical training program in order to certify their skills for the teaching profession.
- Professional induction mentoring was stipulated and regulated in the Romanian education system by the new National Education Law (2011).

National legislation provides for the introduction of mentoring through the National Education Law No. 1/2011, through the Government Emergency Ordinance (GEO) no. 49/2014 regarding the establishment of measures in the field of education, and through the Order of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport no. 5485/2011 which regulates the establishment of the body of mentor teachers for the coordination of the practical internship in order to occupy a teaching position.

The training of teaching staff in Romania is carried out according to the provisions of the National Education Law No. 1/2011 as well as other normative acts and related secondary documents. The National Education Law No. 1/2011 implements a series of changes regarding educational policies and practices concerning the initial and continuous professional development of teachers.

In the National Education Law No. 1/2011, the practical internship is stipulated as part of the initial training: each beginning teacher must carry out a practical internship lasting one school year, in an educational institution, under the coordination of a mentor teacher. Art. 61 of GEO no. 49/2014 specifies that the performance of the practical internship is conditional upon obtaining a bachelor's degree and either the teaching master's degree or the certificate of completion of level I or II of the psycho-pedagogical training programs. We note that the National Education Law No. 1/2011 provides for the position of a mentor teacher in educational institutions to ensure the initial training and professional induction of teaching staff.

By establishing the need for beginning teachers to complete a practical internship to practice the teaching profession under the assistance and coordination of a mentor (National Education Law No. 1/2011, Art. 248, paragraph 1), a solution is offered to improve and facilitate the professional induction of beginning teaching staff.

The mentor is the person who exercises roles regarding the facilitation of the professional induction of beginners. The concept of professional induction defines the process of integrating a beginner into an organizational, professional environment (L. Ezechil, 2008, 2009).

By employing the Order of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport no. 5485 of 29.09.2011 for the approval of the methodology regarding the constitution of the body of mentor teachers for the coordination of the practical internship required in order to carry out a teaching role, in Romania the process of selection and training of professional induction mentors was started. Obtaining the didactic function of a mentor teacher for the professional induction of beginning teachers is achieved through a competition consisting of fulfilling minimum conditions regarding the experience and accumulations within the continuous learning process and participating in an examination. Teaching staff who have the role of mentor teachers and are part of the body of mentor teachers benefit from a reduction of two hours per week of their teaching norm or remuneration for mentoring activities carried out outside the base norm.

The end of the initial teacher education stage is represented by the national permanent teacher certification exam.

The legislation and the fundamental normative acts that regulate mentoring activities and in which the status, functions, and roles of the professional induction mentor are specified are as follows: the Occupational Standard -

Mentor, Bucharest, 1999; the National Education Law No. 1/2011; the Occupational Standard - School Inspector for Mentoring, 10/10/2011; the Order of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth, and Sport No. 5485 / 29.09.2011 for the approval of the methodology regarding the constitution of the body of mentor teachers.

The role of the mentor from the perspective of current educational paradigms

The education projects for the third millennium aim to transform traditional educational practices based on the new principles specific to contemporary education and pedagogy: global education, lifelong learning, inclusive education, education for all, equal opportunities, and partnership in education. In-depth learning, based on the action and responsibility of the learner, competency-based learning, integration of knowledge in application structures, interactive teaching, and inter- and transdisciplinary curriculum are just a few concepts and ideas on which contemporary pedagogy is based, being generated by the shift of European societies towards globalization and the knowledge-based society, the need for synchronization between the development of society and the development of education, the new results of some evaluations and applications in education systems, the need for the integration and globalization of education.

The postmodern paradigm in the field of education, objectified by the new perspectives and solutions in educational theory and practice, developed along the lines of continuity and restructuring of the paradigm of modernity, but also of new directions and educational projects, took shape in response to the need to adapt the school to the changes and problems of the contemporary world.

In a study devoted to the analysis of the evolution of pedagogical theory from the perspective of the postmodern paradigm, E. Păun (2002) highlights the following characteristics of postmodernity in education:

- Education centered on the student, as a person with individual, differentiating characteristics that must be valued and maximized in the educational act (idea located at the center of the existential-humanist paradigm, subsumed by the postmodern perspective).
- Reasserting the value of the subjective-affective dimension in the educational relationship, of the actions and behaviors of the subjects that have a unique, situational, and contextualized character.
- Regarding the educational relationship as an interaction in which the teacher and the student are engaged in a process of cognitive and

affective investment, and in which the teacher works together with the pupils towards their development and building their status as learners.

- Achieving a balance in the school between the promotion of competition and cooperation.
- Overcoming the prescriptive, normative, and formalized vision of the curriculum theory and pursuing its integration in the class of students as a cultural space in order to analyze the cultural contexts in which the curriculum is structured and enable its continuous re-elaboration and development.

All these directions of restructuring the educational reality, which appeared and developed as responses to the challenges of the contemporary world, are reflected in the principles of the new educational paradigm (Table 1), synthesized by Bruno Wurtz and presented compared to the principles of the classical educational paradigm (as cited in C. Cucoș, 1999, pp. 32-33):

Table 1: The principles of the new educational paradigm

The principles of the classical educational paradigm	The principles of the modern educational paradigm
- Emphasis is placed on the content and the accuracy of the acquired knowledge.	- Emphasis is placed on access to information, lifelong learning, establishing connections between pieces of information, and openness to new concepts.
- Learning is regarded as a result or an outcome.	- Learning is seen as a process.
- The presence of a hierarchical, authoritarian structure that encourages and rewards conformity.	- Promoting anti-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian principles that encourage individualized, different thinking. Teachers and learners regard each other as people, not as roles.
- The structure of the teaching-learning process is rigid, with compulsory analytical programs.	- The structure of the teaching-learning process is flexible, with optional subjects and alternative didactic strategies.
- Establishing a mandatory rhythm for knowledge assimilation for all students. - Emphasizing efficiency, performance, and success. - Emphasizing the outside world.	- Respecting the individual progression rate of the students through the subject matter. - Valuing the individual and emphasizing the development of their personality.

	- Emphasizing the importance of the inner experience by promoting the activation and the development of imagination.
- Emphasis on developing analytical thinking.	- Emphasis on the valorization of the entire intellectual potential by combining rational strategies with those based on intuition.
- Evaluating the students and their performance with the help of labels – a practice which leads to stigmatization.	- Labeling is reduced to an auxiliary role, purely descriptive.
- Concern towards norms and standards exterior to the students. - Emphasis on theoretical, abstract knowledge.	- Concern towards the performance of the students as related to their personal potential. - Combining theoretical, abstract knowledge with experiments within and outside of the classroom.
- Designing the classrooms based on criteria related to their purpose and functionality.	- Taking into account ergonomic aspects (lighting, chromatics, physical comfort, and the possibility of student-student interaction).
- Resistance towards proposals from the collective.	- The proposals from the collective are considered and supported.
- Education is considered a method for achieving the minimum level of skills required in the present. - The flow of knowledge is unilateral, from the teacher to the student.	- Education is targeted toward the future, takes place throughout the entire life, and is lifelong. - The flow of knowledge works both ways, promoting the reciprocity of learning.

From the perspective of the ideas promoted by modern educational paradigms, the role and activity of the mentor teacher must converge with them, both in terms of carrying out the practical educational activity by the mentor teacher and in terms of advising beginning teachers or the students/pupils carrying out their pedagogical practice. How they carry out the mentoring activity and how they coordinate and direct the didactic activities of the beginning teachers or

students are essential factors in their initial training with an impact on their future didactic activity. A current, modern perspective of the mentor regarding the elements of the educational process, regarding its procedural teaching-learning-evaluation, will support the shaping of an appropriate, up-to-date vision for the mentored individuals, which will be reflected in their own teaching activities. In addition to the theoretical elements that describe the role and aspects of current educational paradigms, the examples from teaching practice provided specifically by the mentor teacher are of significant importance in establishing the bases of skills and competencies used in educational practice by beginning teachers or students/future teachers.

Methodology

In correlation with the abovementioned ideas regarding the development of the teaching mentoring activity following the characteristics of modern educational paradigms, we investigated the opinion of a group of teachers in pre-university education regarding the importance of carrying out the teacher mentoring activity and the didactic activity in general in agreement with the trends in the evolution of didactics and current paradigms.

Following a semi-structured interview applied to groups of teachers who carry out teaching activities in two pre-university educational institutions in Cluj-Napoca, we formulated the items of a questionnaire through which we sought to identify their perception regarding the role of teacher mentoring as a stage in the initial teacher education and regarding the importance of employing the ideas and trends of current educational paradigms, especially by the mentor teachers.

The questionnaire items through which we investigated these aspects are:

I consider teacher mentoring an essential and necessary stage in the initial training of teachers.

I believe that the ideas of the current educational paradigms must be reflected in the mentoring activity.

I believe that the educational practice of mentor teachers must be carried out in accordance with the ideas of modern educational paradigms.

The aim of the investigation was to highlight the importance of the teacher mentoring activity as a stage in the initial training of teachers and the role that the mentor teacher fulfills by carrying out the educational practice following the trends in the evolution of didactics and modern educational paradigms.

Research objectives:

- Identifying the importance and necessity of teacher mentoring as a stage in the initial training of teaching staff.
- Highlighting the importance of implementing the trends of modern educational paradigms in the mentoring activity.
- Highlighting the importance of carrying out the didactic activity following the trends of modern didactics.

Research hypothesis: we assume that bringing awareness to the role and importance of the teacher mentoring activity in the initial training of teachers has a positive impact on the quality of the mentoring activity by ensuring that it is carried out in convergence with the trends of modern educational paradigms.

Target group: the questionnaire was applied to a sample of thirty teachers, both beginning teachers and experienced teachers, who carry out teaching activities in two pre-university educational institutions in Cluj-Napoca.

Results and discussions

Following the application of the items from the questionnaire aimed at evaluating the perceived importance of the teacher mentoring activity and its implementation in agreement with the trends of modern educational paradigms, we recorded the following results.

Table 2: *I consider teacher mentoring an essential and necessary stage in the initial training of teachers.*

	Frequency	%
I agree	25	83.3
I partially agree	3	10
I do not agree	0	0
I do not know/No answer	2	6.6
Total	**30**	**100,0**

Table 3: *I believe that the ideas of the current educational paradigms must be reflected in the mentoring activity.*

	Frequency	%
I agree	23	76.6
I partially agree	6	20
I do not agree	0	0

	Frequency	%
I do not know/No answer	**1**	**3.3**
Total	**30**	**100,0**

Table 4: *I believe that the educational practice of teacher mentors must be carried out in accordance with the ideas of modern educational paradigms.*

	Frequency	%
I agree	**28**	**93.3**
I partially agree	**2**	**6.6**
I do not agree	**0**	**0**
I do not know/No answer	**0**	**0**
Total	**30**	**100,0**

The answers of the teaching staff highlight their perception regarding the role and importance of the teaching mentoring activity in the initial training of teaching staff and its development in convergence with the trends of modern educational paradigms. We note that the majority of teachers surveyed highlight the importance and necessity of teacher mentoring as a stage in the initial training of teachers. Furthermore, the opinion of most of the teachers questioned concerning the need to implement the trends of modern educational paradigms, both in everyday practice and in the teacher mentoring activity, highlights their awareness of the role of the mentor teacher for beginning teachers or students carrying out teaching practice.

From the initial meaning of mentoring, which involved the preservation and transmission of knowledge from one person to another, the concept has undergone paradigm and direction changes that highlight features of the constructivist paradigm, following the principles of adult learning (M. Crașovan, 2016, p.65):

- The role of the mentee: transforms from a passive receiver to an active partner (adults learn best when they are involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning).
- The mentor's role: changes from authoritarian to facilitator (to maintain a supportive climate that promotes the conditions necessary for learning).
- The learning process: from a mentor-mentee direction and the mentor taking responsibility, it becomes self-directed learning with the mentee taking responsibility for their own learning.

- The duration of the relationship: it evolves from a focus on the calendar to a relationship determined in time by its purpose.
- Mentoring focus: from focusing on the product, the result, embodied in assimilated knowledge and its transfer, it evolves towards focusing on the process through critical reflection and application.

The mentioned perspective shift regarding mentoring and the mentor-mentee relationship is consistent with the principles of the constructivist paradigm of instruction and learning. Adherence to the constructivist principles of training and learning is increasingly present in the educational process in Romania after the education reform, and it involves the knowledge and transference into the educational practice of some base aspects of constructivist learning, which highlight the central role of the student and the structuring of the teaching-learning-evaluation processes starting from the student's needs, abilities, and experiences (E. Joita, 2006):

- It favors the organization of information in structures and systems based on individual experience and particularities.
- It aims to build new knowledge through direct mental and actional involvement and not its acquisition through hearing and receiving.
- It is a process of internalizing the method of knowing, and understanding is experiential, subjective, and interactive.
- It is active learning based on research, processing, prediction, critical analysis, interpretation, personal reasoning, and then collaboration.
- The resulting constructs are based on the students' experience, encounters, and their own interpretations.
- The objectives and ways of supporting learning are adjusted through differentiated treatment according to individual particularities in learning.
- The practice of constructivist theory focuses on the student's learning and not the teacher's teaching.
- Students learn to organize and carry out their own learning and knowledge in a personalized way, achieving the objective 'to learn to learn, to know, to understand.'
- Experiences must facilitate the approach of problems from several points of view and perspectives, allowing the valorization and affirmation of the variability of the particularities and learning styles of the students.
- It is accompanied by affectivity, motivation, and attitude that support active participation, experiencing successes, and overcoming difficulties.
- The interests, wishes, and needs of the students are respected.

Conclusions

The characteristics and trends of education in the future, of the paradigm of postmodernity in the field of education, should constitute the fundamental characteristics of the current education systems, exemplified in aspects such as: focus on the learning process, on learning competencies and abilities; learning through problem-solving, critical thinking; monitoring through high performance, success; design and management in a school-community partnership; student/adult-centered education; varied learning paces and styles; customized, individualized teaching-learning activities; adapting the school to the characteristics of the student; the preponderance of interactive experiences that generate deep learning such as co-operative teaching-learning, lessons based on life experience.

The quality of the teacher mentoring activity is conditioned not only by the characteristics that define the profile of a competent mentor (pedagogical expertise, interpersonal skills, communication, the ability to provide constructive feedback, to ensure proper management of lessons, etc.) but also by the implementation in the educational practice and the mentoring activity of the trends of modern educational paradigms.

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THE VERSATILITY OF THE MEANINGS OF CONTINUITY

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Abstract: *In the article "Versality of the meanings of continuity" a selective presentation of the phenomenon of the continuity of modern debates on the functional character of education is made. The scientific crossing of the concept of continuity in pedagogy, in search of its applicative essence, generates a vision that includes as much of the space of the respective phenomenon as possible. Approaching the problem in the title, we do not have a polemical intention in mind, but we want to show why we need to return to this problem, which is actually not a new one. The phenomenon of continuity is examined from various perspectives, from which the idea of a complex process emerges, namely: connection, system, principle, process, legitimacy, requirements, conditions, factors, functions. In order to illustrate some dimensions of continuity in learning, a complex pedagogical experiment was carried out, from which we present a sequence aimed at the initial level of development of children's specific formations within preschool education, based on a technological ensemble of the functionality of integrity - continuity.*

Key words: *continuity; principle; system; systematization; systemic learning; evolution; succession; lifelong learning; continuity mechanisms.*

Introduction

Approaching the concept of continuity in pedagogical science reveals a rich range of meanings. Thus, currently, there is no unanimously acceptable opinion on the definition and interpretation of the pedagogical essence of continuity. According to the statements of specialists in the pedagogical field, the notion of continuity has had and continues to have a special evolution and a special impact on the education system, starting with preschool and up to higher school, on personality formation, on human activities in postmodernity

[I. A. Comenius, C. Cucoș, Gh. Stanciu, T. Callo, L. Cuznetov, Vl. Guțu, O. Dandara, etc.]

The applications of the concept of continuity are in the perimeter of the learning activity, which, as is known, is also carried out for the purpose of distributing the study material.

The successive distribution generates the connection and agreement between the steps and stages of the educational process. The interpretation of the assimilated at a new, advanced level, belongs to the development process that conditions the continuity and evolution of the child on a higher level.

The theoretical dimension of continuity

As is well known, the issue of continuity as a principle was theoretically argued for the first time by the Czech pedagogue I. A. Comenius [1], in the work "Marea didactica". I. A. Comenius proposes a fundamental pedagogical principle: education should be done taking into account the individual's stages of development, his particularities of age. Starting from this principle, the author reaches the following conclusion: the content of the training must be distributed according to the age levels, so that nothing is taught *that would exceed the child's ability to understand*.

Although the principle has been perceived for a long time, and in the process of examining continuity, I. A. Comenius examines the continuity of positions as *a necessity* of the learning process, noting that, in general, the knowledge acquired throughout life must be distributed in such a way so as to make up an *encyclopedia* [ibidem, p. 58], today there are still conceptual "balancing" in this sense, both continuity and "encyclopedism" being put under several question marks.

Therefore, as we deduce from the above, I. A. Comenius, for the first time, tried to identify continuity *as a universal pedagogical category*, which has an impact on all pedagogical problems, as well as educational ones, directly relating continuity to learning.

Also in this ideological framework, the approach of the Swiss pedagogue J.H. Pestalozzi is relevant, who among the first proposes structuring the learning process according to the legalities of children's mental development, formulating the rule of *gradual graduation and rigorous succession* in training. According to the author, learning involves ascending succession in steps, from accessible to difficult, from near to far, from present to future. In this framework, as a priority, the author considered the fact that continuity becomes an *internal process* of development, which, in the end, must end with

self-development, self-movement. We also find the tendency to establish *continuity relationships* between different learning stages [Appud 3, p. 88].

J. J. Rousseau's opinions are current in the context of the active personalization of learning in postmodernity, which affirms the need to respect childhood in correlation with the principle of conformity with nature and urges to know the nature of the child in order to understand and respect the particularities of his age. In this sense, the author notices: *"the child is not an adult in miniature, but a being with specific particularities, with its own requirements and aspirations"* [Apud 2, pp. 146-150]. This fact fully supports the idea that the functionality of completeness and continuity requires the shaping and optimal *capitalization of children's age possibilities*. We refer, in particular, to children aged 6-9.

The continuous nature of learning, according to A. Disterveg, occurs when the student is able to go through each stage, with a degree of independence that corresponds to the particularities of age, so as to reach the general goal: the development of independence and the "rightful" knowledge of matter. In the learning process, the author mentions, not only the child's nature must be taken into account, but his *individual peculiarities* must also be respected. It is from here that we once again "extract" the idea of active personalization of learning in the context of continuity. We cannot fail to appreciate the author's statement that "at each stage of learning, successive sequences of matter are identified and do not admit radical interruptions, and some data are extracted to awaken the student's curiosity" [10, pp. 79-84].

Reflections on the versatile nature of the perception of continuity also lead us to the central idea of J. Fr. Herbart's *theory of psychological steps* [5, p. 23], who claims that the learning process inevitably goes through the *deepening of the learned material and its awareness*. In their turn, these two processes, deepening and awareness, can be achieved either in a state of rest or in motion. Therefore, clarity, association, ordering and overview represent continuity. In addition to this, J. F. Herbart also formulates an acceptable explanation with reference to *ensuring continuity of relations* in the activities of educational agents (students-teachers), between different generations. Each generation, the author argued, has the circle of the concrete age, which is closed. Both the pedagogue and any individual, each with his ideas, discoveries, trials and, respectively, his experience. Each era is characterized by some specificities typical of this period. The eternal truth remains that, a priori, no domain of an era can be considered finished, we can never say that a system approaches a finality. Therefore, the pedagogical process is uninterrupted, and with the change of generations, continuity ensures the transfer of experience from one historical period to another [ibidem, p. 41].

Thus, continuity in learning is characterized by:

- *The invariable component* - determines part of the learning content, which is preserved with the transition to the next learning stage;
- *The functional component* - offers the possibility of passing quantitative changes into qualitative ones;
- *The component that has the role of operator* during the transition period from one learning stage to the next and ensures the preservation of previous knowledge at the new stage [14, p. 89].

Continuity finds its expression in the category of pedagogical principles that ensure *coherence* and *reciprocity* between *all levels of education*, starting with preschool education and up to higher education: the principle of systemic approach, continuity and consecutiveness; the principle of systematization and continuity (didactic principle); the principle of unity and continuity (principle of education); the principle of reverse connection (feed-back); the principle of unity, continuity and systematization, etc. All these principles converge towards the idea of the system of order, because a sustainable and effective learning is carried out in a *logical-systemic order* and takes place in a continuous manner, without jumps and interruptions. The educational units and elements are arranged in a hierarchical order, so that each content element follows others and is followed by others. Learning is cumulative, and its process intervenes as an act of systematization, integrating new knowledge into previously existing cognitive-informational systems. This fact determined the approach of continuity as a *didactic principle*.

Here the question arises if the specificity of postmodernist discontinuity does not totally cancel this principle of continuity, if children/students learn better when certain learning topics are approached more broadly and "enter" issues located in sophisticated networks of relationships. From this perspective, it seems relevant to us that each new element of knowledge **becomes a property** of the child when it is based on what is already known, when it easily fits into what is already acquired. The solution to the dilemma lies in the fact that the *connection between new and old*, valid for any orientation in education, should be set in motion from old to new, as well as from new to old, with multiple "jumps" of perception and assimilation. The new will become a property of the student's consciousness only if it is organically included in the system of knowledge and skills, when the pedagogue takes this into account, knows in what doses to integrate the new material so that it is fully included in the child's consciousness. So, *active and systemic personalized learning* is a *condition* of

continuity in the assimilation of knowledge, from one step to another [Apud 11, pp. 59-62].

Starting from the idea of continuity, the ideas formulated by contemporary authors are quite conclusive. Thus, Vl. Guțu, addressing *the principle of systematization and continuity*, states that it expresses the requirement to achieve intra-curricular and inter-curricular continuity. In the researcher's view, this process aims at: continuity in the organization of interdisciplinary learning units, from class to class, from level to level (*from one course to another course, from one cycle to another cycle* - emphasis is ours); continuity in the design of objectives and the training of students' skills; the continuity of the organization of the contents in an intercultural plan; continuity in the application of didactic and evaluation strategies [4, p. 305].

From this perspective, another important finding should also be noted, namely the fact that *the principle of systematic and continuous learning* manifests itself in the educational area in the context of two levels and presents two aspects for each of them [6, pp. 150-151]:

1. *At the level of the education system*, where a coherent and open system can be built and organized through educational policy; the development of educational documents that explicitly stipulate systemic coordination and natural continuity between the different education cycles.
2. *At the level of the educational process*, the two aspects of this principle call for learning carried out in a systematic and continuous manner.
   - *the systemic aspect* involves an ordering of information according to a logic of the act of learning, of the respective discipline and of didactics. Thus, each element of the studied material should be logically linked to other elements, the present ones being based on the previous ones and being support for the ones that will follow them.
   - *the continuous aspect* implies the fluent, logical, staggered, permanent, consistent and without jumps of the educational process.

If we look from a psychological perspective, then systematization and continuity are based on the *principle of transfer* (specific and non-specific), on making intra, inter, pluri, transdisciplinary connections [7, p. 355]. The requirements of this principle concern the activity of the teaching staff to the same extent, as well as that of the students. On the one hand, *systematization* expresses the requirement that all the content designed and transmitted to

students be organized in a system and ensure the appropriate conditions for its integration into the system of the students' previous acquisitions, on the other hand, *continuity* is a natural consequence of the conditions of systematization, highlighting the logical articulation of the contents assimilated in different temporal moments. So, the observance of this principle has formative effects at the personality level, by forming the skills of systematic activity, perseverance, the spirit of rigor in thinking and action, which allows the child to adapt without great difficulties in the next stage of the educational system.

The opinions that propose the combination of the principle of *harmony, systemic, succession, continuity* and correlation in a single principle, *the holistic one*, are conclusive in the area of continuity approach. In this way, the material that was learned today must reinforce that of yesterday, opening the way for the next day [12, p. 316].

From the above, it is obvious that researchers approach continuity from the perspective of different *meanings*: as part of the systematic and continuous principle; as a didactic condition; as a means or way; as a system; as a method etc. It should be noted that most researchers highlight the content-informational aspect of continuity in learning. Therefore, these approaches to continuity in learning outline the essence, emphasize its universality and polyfunctionality.

The principle of continuity plays a special role *in the continuing education system*. Studies indicate that continuity manifests itself as an *integral quality* of the education system. In the context of *continuing education*, the category "continuity" becomes *universal*. Its content is much richer, because, in this case, we are talking about relationships and complementarity of subsystems in general of education, included as *components* in the *unique system of continuous education* [9, p. 24]. Through a descriptive meaning of the structuring principles of the continuous education process, we observe the relationship between the *principle of continuity* and the *principle of progressivity*. At the same time, the principle of progressivity implies the evolutionary character of the educational process and ensures the successive movement of the individual from one social step to another more mature, advanced one [13, p. 79].

Therefore, the principle of continuity is a necessary condition for achieving continuous, evolutionary, integrative and harmonious education. Achieving the principle of continuity is an important factor in making education more efficient. We must remember that from the perspective of *permanent education*, the integration of the contents is approached by L. Hainaut both as a vertical integration, which ensures the coherence of the different stages of

education, and as a horizontal integration, which determines the formation of competences to transfer the acquired knowledge in new contexts. The author opts for the following principles of *vertical integration*:

- no phase is the last, each one has its reason for being;
- the delimitation of the stages must be judicious in relation to the intellectual maturity, motivation and age of the learners;
- no phase is isolated: each one leans on the previous one and opens to the next one;
- the phases are complementary;
- the transition from one stage to another must operate without a break [8, p. 23].

Results

Thus, for the representatives of continuity theories, its general picture sums up several important aspects, reflected in Figure 1.
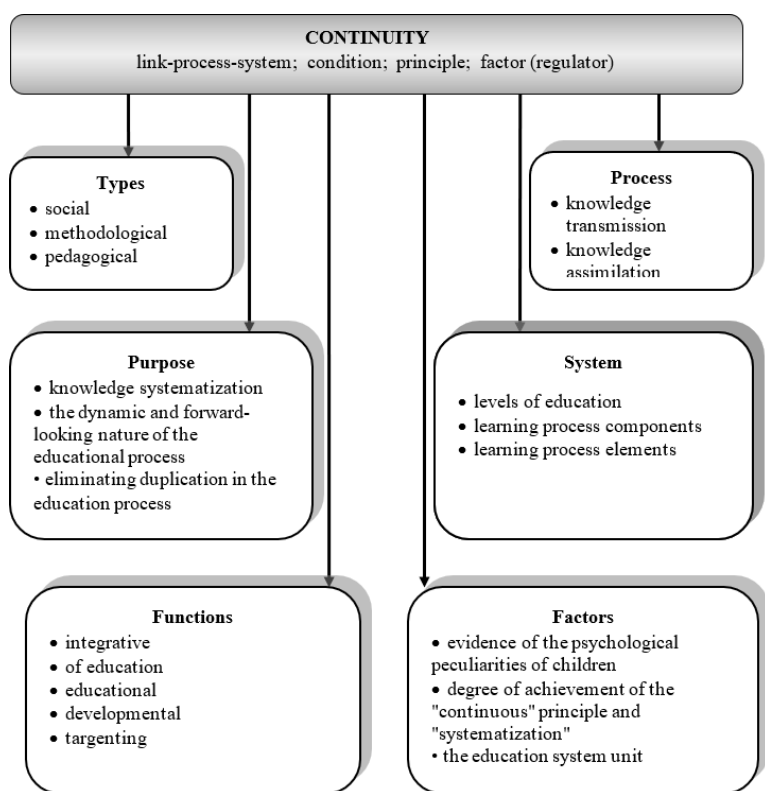

Fig. 1. The pedagogical significance of continuity

The experimental dimension

To illustrate some aspects of continuity in learning, a complex pedagogical experiment was carried out, from which we present a sequence aimed at the initial level of development of the specific formations of children in preschool education, based on a technological ensemble of the functionality of integrity - continuity.

For example, the finding test I (three+three) involved the inclusion of the subjects in an integrated activity of three didactic games and three learning activities: the "Colors" game, the "Happy/Sad Color" game; the game "Color of the holidays"; the learning activity "Merging words"; the "Sentence" learning activity and the "Plural" learning activity.

Table 1. Subject evaluation reference

The criteria of assessment (dependent variables)	Evaluation indicators (independent variables)
The imagination **He sees the world around him in pictures**	*Capacity:*
	1. to notice the whole
	2. to fully perceive objects, phenomena
	3. to understand meanings
	4. to discover things already known in a different way, anew
	5. to express his opinion operatively
Creativity	*Capacity:*
	1. to create verbal images

Create word pictures	**2. to adapt to various instructions in order to solve the task**
	3. to think independently
	4. to combine the contents in the reproduction of the new
	5. to express one's original opinion
Thinking **It actively positions itself in relation to the surrounding world**	*Capacity:*
	1. to see the surrounding world through notions
	2. to take an active position in relation to the knowledge task
	3. to carry out elementary research actions
	4. to reflect on the information
	5. to show flexibility in solving a task
Personalization of learning **Has motivation for learning**	*Capacity:*
	1. to motivate learning actions
	2. to act independently, creatively with objects
	3. to show flexibility in expressing thoughts
	4. to show confidence in expressing their own opinion
	5. to adopt various action procedures in realizing new situations

Reference levels: L I (unsatisfactory); L II (below average); L III (satisfactory, average);

L IV (high). The quality of the answers was assessed according to the qualifiers: *to a great extent*

big; satisfactory, average; below average; unsatisfactory.

Examining the answers of the subjects involved in the ascertainment stage, the distribution was made by levels according to the indicators, by applying the degrees of success (in percentages) and the quality of the tests was ascertained. In order to give a comprehensive character to the evaluation undertaken and to avoid descriptivism as much as possible, we have centralized the data obtained following the application of the six tests. Data are presented as a percentage.

Table 2. Synthetic results for the ascertainment phase (preschool age, 6-7 years)

Block 1 (second semester, academic year 2015-2016)					
		Appreciation levels (%)			
Subjects	Coordinates	I (unsatisfactory)	II (below average)	III atisfactory, average)	IV (high)
118 children (6-7 years)	Imagination	13,5%	42,4%	35,6%	8,5%
	Creativity	15,3%	44,1%	33%	7,6%
	Thinking	15,3%	45,7%	31,4%	7,6%
	Personalization of learning	16,1%	44,1%	32,2%	7,6%
Block 2 (second semester, academic year 2017-2018)					
76 children (6-7 years)	Imagination	15,8%	42,1%	35,5%	6,6%
	Creativity	17,1%	42,1%	35,5%	5,3%
	Thinking	15,8%	44,7%	32,9%	6,6%
	Personalization of learning	17,1%	42,1%	34,2%	6,6%
Average (Block I, Block II)					

Levels	Imagination	Creativity	Thinking	Personalization of learning
I	14,7%	16,2%	15,6%	16,6%
II	42,3%	43,1%	45,2%	43,1%
III	35,5%	34,3%	32,1%	33,2%
IV	7,5%	6,4%	7,1%	7,1%

If we refer to each variable, we find the following:

Imagination. Indicator: *Sees the world around in pictures*. Based on the results, we find that at the *high level* (IV) of imagination they were placed (7,5%). This category of subjects fully perceives objects, express their opinion operatively, capitalize on various methods of action in order to rediscover things already known. Subjects formulate correct, consistent, relevant and original answers. (35,5%) subjects were registered at a *satisfactory medium* (III) level of imagination. During the evaluation, the subjects adapted to the learning task with distrust, showing instability in the exposition of thoughts, less able to reinterpret already known things (for example, to assign other meanings to colors and to argue the opinion). The children showed less confidence in expressing their own opinion, they presented answers with some inaccuracies in relation to correctness. Another part of subjects (42,3%) demonstrated *below average level* (II). This category of children showed incomplete understanding of the meaning of what was reported, showing a dispersed attitude towards the task. As a result, the subjects demonstrated a reduced flexibility in solving the task, they encountered difficulties in exploiting, anew, the known things, they encountered difficulties in operatively expressing their own opinion; the response is below average in terms of correctness, consistency, relevance and originality. It is worth noting that at the *unsatisfactory level* (I) there were assigned (14,7%) subjects who did not understand the meaning of things, as evidence a lack of interest in the instruction and in the task was found. They failed to subordinate the work actions to the task they were to accomplish; the children did not show any response.

Creativity. Indicator: *Create word pictures*. The *high level* (IV) of creativity is recorded by (6,4%) of the subjects who understood the meaning of things, easily adapt to the instructions for solving the task, as a result they create correct verbal images. They express their opinion operatively. This category of children shows independent thinking, they are flexible in combining

contents, thus using some new elements. The answers were correct and original. The answers of the subjects who placed themselves at the *average satisfactory level* (III), (34,3%), indicate the following: the children had difficulty understanding the meaning, they had difficulty adapting to the instruction of the pedagogue and the task they had to perform, they presented answers incomplete, they did not always demonstrate independent thinking. The answers given were less accurate and relevant. Another category of subjects demonstrated *below average level* (II) and represents (43,1%) children. This group of children had difficulties in creating verbal images, they hardly adapted to the teacher's instructions. The subjects showed less independent thinking. They were less able to combine the contents to reproduce some new topics. Responses were below average relative to experimentally designated criteria. Subjects who did not present any answer, thus demonstrating a lack of interest in the task and the instruction of the pedagogue, were placed at the *unsatisfactory level* (I) and constituted a number of (16,2%).

Thinking. Indicator: *It actively positions itself in relation to the surrounding world*. *High level* (IV) of thinking was demonstrated by (7,1%) of the subjects. These subjects took an active position towards the task, they perceive the surrounding world through notions. A distinctive characteristic of this group of subjects is the research actions, the new perception of things already known, the ability to reflect on the basis of information. The answers were correct, consistent, relevant and original. Another group of subjects (32,1%) demonstrated *medium satisfactory level* (III). These children did not really show an active position to know, respectively the low interest in research actions. They demonstrated less flexibility in solving tasks. Responses were satisfactory in relation to the assessment descriptors. (45,2%) of the subjects were placed at the *lower middle level* (II). This category of children did not show interest in the knowledge task, they sporadically try some basic research actions, but they do not succeed. Partial subjects showed flexibility in solving the tasks. They were less able to reflect on the information presented to them. Responses were below average. Subjects (15,6%) who demonstrated an *unsatisfactory level* (I) were also certified in the respective samples. This group of children showed no interest in the instruction of the pedagogue in relation to the completion of the task, in relation to the information presented. The children did not show any response.

Personalization of learning. Indicator: *Has motivation to learn*. The percentage accumulated at this coordinate demonstrates the fact that a significant part of children (43,1%) demonstrated a *below average level* (II). Children with difficulty explaining and motivating the actions they have to perform, at the same time have an unstable attitude towards the task; partially

capitalize independently and creatively on materials/information. Responses were below average. Another part of children (33,2%) demonstrated a *satisfactory average level* (III). The children adapted with distrust to various instructions in solving the task. During the performance of the task, they showed instability in the exposition of their thoughts. They were less able to adopt action procedures in carrying out new tasks. The answers presented were satisfactory in relation to the descriptors. *High level* (IV) was recorded in (7,1%) subjects. The operational children expressed their opinion, motivated the operational actions to achieve the task, at the same time they showed an active attitude towards the task. During the performance of the tasks the subjects demonstrated flexibility in the presentation of thoughts. A distinctive characteristic of this category of subjects is the confidence in expressing their own thoughts, in adopting the procedures of action to accomplish the tasks. The answers were correct, consistent, relevant and original. At the same time, it was found (16,6%) subjects with an *unsatisfactory level* (I) of personalization of learning actions. These children showed a lack of interest in the learning task, they cannot act independently, creatively with the objects, they show insecurity in the actions they perform. It did not complete the task.

Conclusions

In an attempt to synthesize the ideas that essentialize continuity, we can agree the following findings:

1. In postmodern education, continuity is manifested as an objective component of the formative process, fulfilling the function of regulating its uninterrupted character. Continuity remains a *didactic principle* that includes:
   - continuous connection between and within different sides, parts, stages and steps of learning;
   - expansion and deepening of knowledge, accumulated at the previous stages of learning;
   - the evolutionary survey of the entire educational process, taking into account the content, forms and working methods.
2. Continuity is a process of evolutionary development of the personality at each stage of the education system, it is based on the relationship between the stages of learning and development of the child, which is carried out on the basis of the new *formations* of the previous stage, and, as a result, the creation of a system of conditions, which would favor the easy transition of children from one stage of the learning process to another and the development of an integral personality.

3. Experimental results converge towards the idea of the need to respect the principle of *continuity* at all learning stages, starting with preschool education.
4. Generalizing what has been reported, it can be stated that the pedagogical phenomenon of continuity is a current one, being a complex process, which involves: links, system, principle, process, requirements, conditions, factors, functions, in a wide diversity of approaches with special meanings.

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