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EDUCAŢIA-PLUS
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CULEGERE SEMESTRIALĂ DE STUDII ŞTIINŢIFICE ŞI DIDACTICE

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TRAINING MASTER STUDENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POSITIVE THINKING PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract: *The topic of this study is based on the idea that school should be understood as a system with significant impact on the children`s well-being. Consequently, Therefore, school must act so as to provide an optimal educational climate that allows students to achieve the appropriate academic performance, considering and responding to their emotional and social needs (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). We found out that primary school pupils face complex problems generated by the current socio-economic and cultural context that strongly influences family, the mass media quality, the community as an educative environment, and show real difficulty in identifying an appropriate response to develop their well-being. This aspect has motivated us to propose a training program for master students in the field of education sciences through which they would develop their investigative and educational intervention competences on the school and classroom climate in order to increase the pupils` well-being as a relevant factor in optimizing learning.*

Keywords: *Master students; well-being; positive thinking; formative programme;*

Conceptual delimitations:

The differences between people in terms of their mental well-being, emotional health, and personal ability are largely determined by the structure of their personality, biological factors, family relationships, personal history, and exposure to life events. These components and their interactions are also affected by the environment, the individual`s early interaction with the educational environment is an important factor in the development of the child`s health and well-being. Over the years, most studies have focused primarily on the contribution of one single variable to the achievements (Greenwood, 1996; Wentzel, 1993), rather than an integrated contribution of learning factors. Educational performances were considered to be influenced by personal factors such as cognitive ability and motivation for achievement, environmental factors such as classroom climate, learning processes, and student-centered teaching methods (Chen, Hwang, Yeh & Lin, 2012). On the other hand, carrying out research while ignoring the complexity of teaching and learning in their natural environment can create a gap between theory and practice. Admitting that this gap can occur is not new in the study of education (Patten & Newhart, 2017). Considering this aspect, the study focuses on the meaning of positive thinking and tackles the impact of a positive thinking programme in schools on the students` academic achievements and optimal educational climate. Positive thinking creates positive feelings and leads to an active and comfortable adaptation to reality. In the same way that we convince ourselves that we cannot do anything, we can convince ourselves that we are capable of doing certain things (Seligman, 2002). There is a constant relationship between thinking and emotion, body and behaviour.

Theoretically, there are two types of thinking that can be considered in this context: optimistic thinking, which refers to the positive aspects of reality and regards goals and purposes with hope, unlike the pessimistic thinking that chooses the negative aspects of reality and sometimes leads to despair. The theoretical foundation of the study is carried out from the perspective of the paradigm of positive psychology which refers to optimal functioning of individuals and groups and to factors promoting positive emotions (Gable & Haidt, 2005), positive features, self-achievement and success (Seligman, 2010). Positive psychology has its origins in the humanist psychology (Rogers, 1980), which has been reconsidered lately. Positive psychology focuses on ways to improve the quality of life and optimal personal functioning to bring about individual and social changes (Gable & Haidt, 2005). It is based on the belief that people naturally aspire to live a meaningful and self-fulfilling life, to cultivate the best things in themselves and to enhance their experiences in love, work and play. It focuses on personal development, emphasizing the importance of identifying meaning and satisfaction in life (Seligman, 2002). Positive psychology develops three main aspects:

- *Positive emotions* that refer to past satisfactions, present happiness and hope for the future;
- *Positive personality traits* - developing each person`s potential, such as the potential for love and work, courage, compassion, creativity, curiosity, honesty, self-appraisal, moderation, self-control and wisdom (Bryan, Mathur & Sullivan, 1996).
- *Positive behaviours* - emphasizing the strong points of better communities such as justice, responsibility, good parents, work ethics, leadership, teamwork, goal setting and tolerance.

The educational system has started to explore this area, considering the advances in positive psychology and studies that clearly demonstrate the acquired ability of positive thinking.

Seligman, M. () tries to apply his experience in the field of positive psychology in education as well. He believes that applying positive psychology in education can reduce feelings of insecurity and depression in children. Seligman uses his PERMA model (the five elements of well-being) to teach in schools and to help students achieve well-being and growth:

P – Positive emotions: Experiencing positive emotions such as happiness, gratitude, interest, hope;

E - Engagement: Being fully involved in activities that require your abilities and challenge you;

R – Relationships: Development of positive relationships;

M - Meaning: Involvement in a deep goal that you assign a special significance:

A - Achievement: Pursuing success, achieving performance and continence.

Clonan, S.M. and colleagues (2004) noticed that the application of positive psychology in educational environments contributed to the consolidation of individual strengths. It had a prevention role, promoted the development of a positive school climate and increased students' chances of success. Positive education has also proven to have a lasting impact on the potential to change student behaviour.

Traditional approaches to school psychology and educational counselling have focused in the past on alleviating deficiencies, problems and negative aspects. Attention has often been given to the problem, the pathology, and elements that encourage personal growth and promote mental well-being have been ignored. The positivist model, which currently guides psycho-educational interventions in schools, highlights the values of well-being, optimism, personal satisfaction, hope and happiness.

Today, it is becoming increasingly clear that effective educational programs are not those that seek to correct pupils' weaknesses and deficiencies, but programs that promote positive efficiency, autonomy and self-achievement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

1. Questions

The research question is:

How do primary school teachers, who are master students as well, perceive the activities conducted with children aged 8-10 in terms of the 5 PERMA states of well-being?

2. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to involve master students in identifying learning situations that can be correlated with the PERMA model to develop an intervention program that promotes positive emotions and strengthens positive qualities, self-achievement and success in the school where they work. We have started from the premises that if teachers are aware of the elements involved in well-being, then the possibility to facilitate the children`s well-being, the development and the academic performance is increased.

3. Research Methods

a. The subjects**.** This study involved 28 female primary school teachers from Arad, Timiș, Caras-Severin, all Master students in the field of education sciences. In terms of their age, 17% of participants are between 20-30 years old, 53% of participants are between 31-40 years old, 28% of participants are between 41-50 year. The subjects have between 1 and 25 years of experience in teaching, the average being of 14.92 years.

b. Methods and instruments. The subjects, master students, participants in the internship program in school completed a questionnaire to identify the frequency with which they feel that they involve students in activities to cultivate their well-being based on the PERMA model. The questionnaire contains a total of 15 items grouped on the five elements of well-being. Subjects can respond on a scale of 1 (I never or almost never do this) to 4 (I always or almost always do this). An average score can be calculated for both the entire scale and the five factors, separately. The case study method will be used by each master student to observe and characterize the intervention and the effects of the positive thinking program implemented on the state of well-being, on the students' performance and the climate of the classroom and of school. All case studies will have the following structure: Case limitations; Complexity, diversity and depth of the case; Development variables anchored in time and place; Connecting the case to the environment in which it operates, Development decisions.

4. Findings

Descriptive statistics indicated a low level of frequency of activities with an impact on the students` well-being that the teachers participating in the study identified initially. As it results from the analysis of the data presented in Table no 1, for the components: Relationships, Meaning, Achievement teachers do not systematically involve students in learning situations.

	Never	Once or twice	On most days	Every day
Positive emotions	9,6%	17,3%	26,7%	46,4%
Engagement	12,3%	18,1%	24,4%	47,2%
Relationship	54,5%	9,8%	12,7%	23,1%
Meaning	56,4%	17,1%	15,2%	13,2%
Achievement	52,1%	24,3%	11,8%	11,8%

Table no 1*: The teacher indicated frequency on the activities that develop the primary students` well-being throughout a week*

Based on the analysis of responses and on the awareness of the positive psychology-based intervention models, each student has developed a personalized positive learning program for the community, school, and pupils they work with. Thus, 28 programs were developed to stimulate positive thinking, built on the cognitive, emotional and social capacities according to the pupils' age, the age-related problems they face and the typical life situations for their age. The activities in the program differ from the "ordinary" lessons, each student completes a personal journal to get to know themselves and each other better. These programs focus on learning interpersonal and intra-personal skills such as self-awareness and self-management, self-control, empathy, assertiveness, problem solving, decision-making, and fighting stress and change. These programs are currently being applied in schools and each student in the subject sample will develop a case study that examines the impact of this program on performance and the classroom educational climate. During these activities, students know each other better, identify their strengths and things that make them feel better and happier.

Conclusions

This study highlights the fact that improvement interventions in schools can be achieved by raising awareness on problems, changing attitudes and strategies, applying current theoretical models to educational practice.

The activities carried out with the 28 students, teachers in primary education, underline the importance of self-analysis of the teacher's own ways of acting when it comes to the well-being of students and the awareness of the possibilities of practical intervention in school based on theoretical models and positive education guides.The study also highlights the particular importance of the teachers` joint work of teachers, as a learning team that structures its practice for quality enhancement and continuous improvement of training.Another important conclusion of this study is that in order to be successful in implementing the positive thinking program in schools, teachers should be trained in the awareness of certain practices specific to positive education where they believe are not so good at.

The next phase of the study will consist of producing and presenting case studies based on the results of the pupils in the classes where the positive thinking program has been implemented. These case studies will contribute with qualitative data to demonstrate whether there is a link between positive thinking, progress in academic achievement, and educational climate. By participating in the ameliorative research, through the continuous sharing of knowledge and positive experiences from activity to class, the students participating in the internship program can improve their professional image and motivation, feel a personal sense of well-being, subjective well-being - improving the way they see themselves. The ultimate goal is to disseminate the results of this study so as to introduce positive thinking programs into schools as an integrated part of the curriculum.

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HOW TO TEACH THE HISTORY OF CRYPTOGRAPHY AND STEGANOGRAPHY

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Abstract: *Students of the undergraduate course Computer Science get acquainted with the most prevalent methods of Steganography and Cryptography in history as well as with up to date applications. To teach Cryptography and Steganography is complicated, because you need to plot figures and tables at the blackboard plus calculating the frequency of characters in the text is consuming a lot of work and time. Concealing information within pictures or voices is impossible to show on the blackboard and you can only partially explain how to apply the LSB (least significant bit) technique. Therefore, we have devised some applications which are appropriate to show all these algorithms. We wanted to know the usefulness of all the programs we wrote. The safety technology engineering students attended my lectures held at different times in two groups. In the first group of lectures I presented and used the programs described above while the lectures for the second group were delivered without these materials. Our hypothesis was that a group where we used the developed multimedia applications got better marks in the papers written than the other. An analysis of the results (Man-Whitney test) showed significant difference in paper results of the two groups ($p<0,05$). This showed: the paper results of students attending the multimedia lectures were better by one mark than the results of the other group where lectures were delivered without multimedia presentations. We can say the using of multimedia applications when teaching cryptography and steganography is productive, and the students understand the methods easier, and get better result when writing papers.*

Keywords: cryptography; didactical methods; higher education; teaching*;*

1. Introduction

Students of the undergraduate course of Computer Science get acquainted with the development of the computers, printers, data storage devices and of course the most prevalent methods of steganography and data encryption in history (Kahn, 1996). Most of these are difficult to demonstrate at the blackboard not to speak of modern steganographic methods which are generally not applicable in the classroom at all. Concealing information within pictures or voices is impossible to show on the blackboard and you can only partially explain how to apply the LSB (least significant bit) technique. Therefore we decided to create multimedia applications suitable to conceal text in BMP or WAV files not visible or detectable for human eyes and ears, respectively. First we wrote a Borland Delphi program appropriate to show up to date steganographic (data concealing) methods using picture and sound files. This is not only demonstrating the use of modern steganography, but the result is visible and/or audible while helping students to take in new knowledge. To the topic of cryptography we prepared model applications presenting historic cryptographic algorithms as well as applications demonstrating how to decipher these encrypted data (e.g. using and deciphering the Ceasar code, monoalphabetic encryption and it's deciphering, etc.). Another program demonstrating the Vigenére encryption shows continuously which rows and columns are used in the process. Illustrating the Cardano grid a program was written which prepares a rotatable grid adequate to put the characters of the message to the appropriate place in the grid in order to conceal it. Now we wanted to know the usefulness of all the programs we wrote and an excellent opportunity presented itself by the big number of admitted new students (76 students). These safety technology engineering engineering students attended my lectures held at different dates in two groups. In the second group of lectures (42 students) we presented and used the programs described above while the lectures for the first group (34 students) were delivered without these materials.

First of all, we need to look at how human memory is working (Bloom, 1969), the taxonomy of learning, teaching, assessing (Anderson, 2001) the levels of learning to guide the students through the process of learning (Hoffmann, 2011). The multi-representational learning environments can support learning in many different ways (Ainsworth, 1999).

The hypothesis was that the group where we used the developed multimedia applications would achieve better results in the papers. Start typing the body of your paper here. Papers will outline the issue addressed and research questions, the literature and background to the topic, the analytical frame, the methodology and the research results.

2. Cryptography

2.1. The Caesar's code

First of all I want to give some information about the developed applications and about the background, how the methods works (Kahn, 1996).

The Caesars' code had been Julius Caesar who used it first in the time of the Gall wars and this way he asked help from Cicero.
Using the software students can see how the Caesar algorithm works, how the decryption goes, or how to brake the encrypted text (Figure 1.).

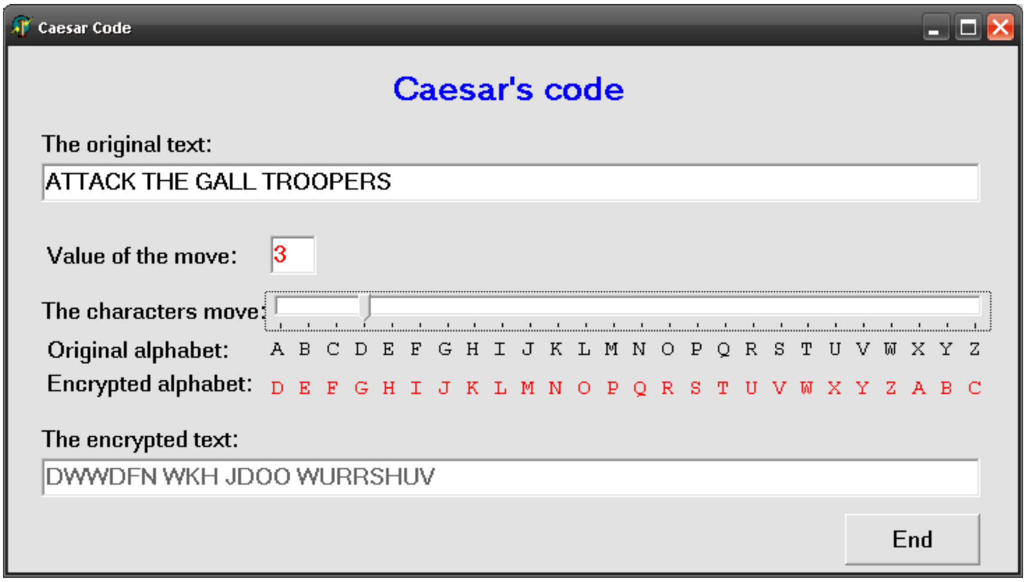

Figure 1. The Caesars' code.

So students understand easier the method because they see on the screen the text and how to produce the encrypted text. They type in the text and give the number of characters to move in the alphabet. (E.g. if this value is 3, then replace A with D, B with E, etc.). To brake a text encrypted with Caesar code is easy, because we must try 25 move in the alphabet at most, so this is not a safe encryption.

2.2. The Monoalphabetic Substitution

The Monoalphabetic Substitution algorithm is much better, because we can construct freely the unique pairs of characters. The value of pairing possibilities is 26!, which is quite a big number, it's value being about $400x10^{24}$. If we would like to brake and try one in a second, it would take $128x10^{17}$ years. Through the middle ages in Europe people believed this encryption method unbreakable and was widely used in correspondence. The pen-pals have to know exactly which character stays for which in the original.

Although this algorithm seems to be safe, it is easily breakable either. Historically arab mathematicians in the 9th century found that the occurrence of some characters in a language is higher than others and they worked out a method how to brake a text encrypted with monoalphabetic encryption.

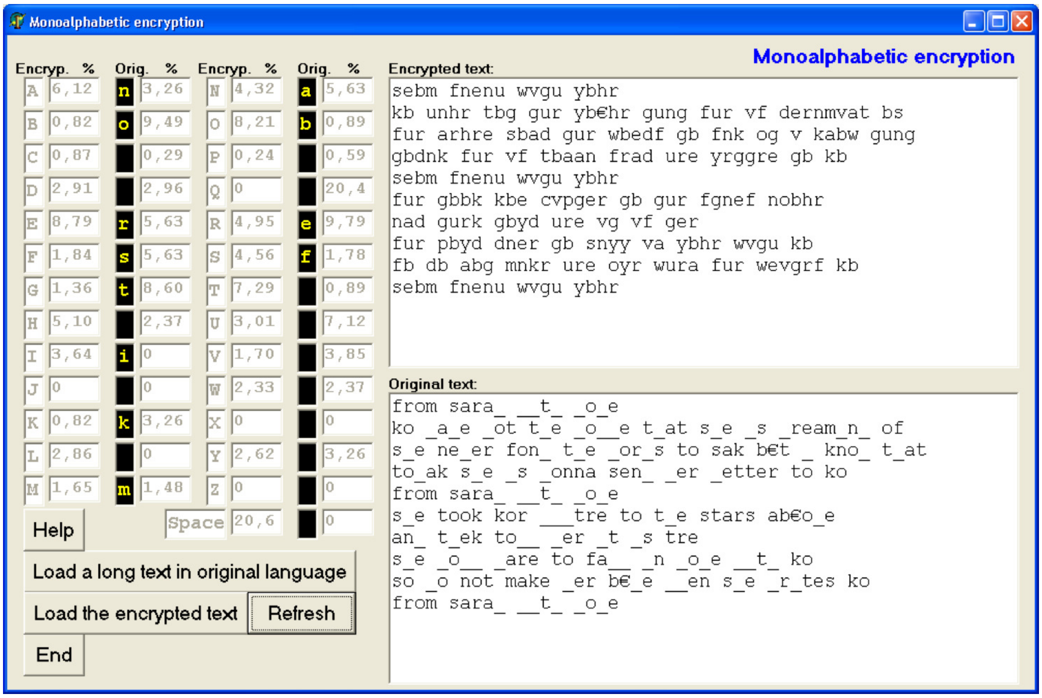

Figure 2. The Monoalphabetic Substitution.

For using the method of frequency analysis: we need to know which language the text was written in, and we need a long (cca. 3-4 pages) text in this language. From the long original text we can calculate the frequency of characters and this will be the typical attribute of language. Now we can start to brake the encrypted text. We need to know which character frequency is the highest in the encrypted text and we replace it with the highest one in the original language.

If the encrypted text has got no spaces between words, than the most frequent character will be the space, simply because this is true in all of the known languages. If it works, we inspect how long the words are, which is a good starting point. In the next step we are looking for the second most frequent character in the encrypted text and exchange it with the second most frequent in the original language, and so on. After having changed a few characters, with some luck we will recognize part of words and guess the absent characters (Figure 2.).

At the end we can determine which characters are exchanged for which.

This method of decryption was not known in Europe up to the 12-13th century, so up to 400-500 years arabs could easily read european letters.

With my software students load the original text, calculate the frequency of characters and load the encrypted text. Then they can change the characters and read the decrypted text. They can also easily enrcypt texts with this software too.

2.3. The Vigenère table

As we have seen earlier, the monoalphabetic substitution is not safe. Using always the same character in the encrypted text instead of the original can be easily braken with frequency analysis.

In Europe Blaise de Vigenère worked out a new encryption method. To use it, we need a Vigenère table with 26 rows. Each row holds the alphabet, but always moved by a character (Figure 3.).

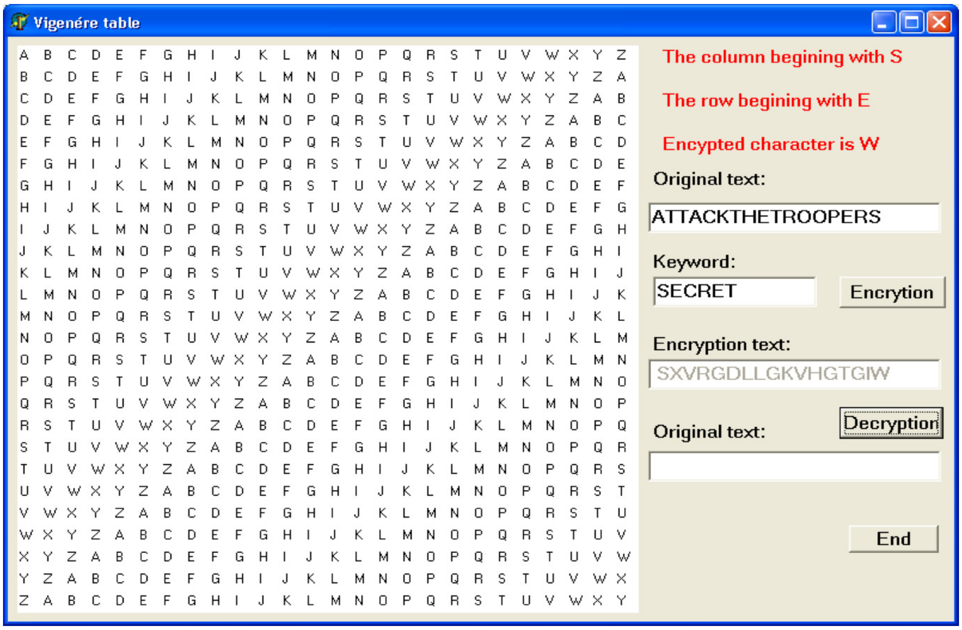

Figure 3. The Vigenère table.

If we want to encrypt a text, we need a few freely chosen rows from it. It's easier to remember a keyword constructed from the first characters of these rows (for example KEY stays for the 10th, 4th and the 24th rows). This keyword written over the original text we get which row encrypts which original character. The "D" will be encrypted with the row beginning with "K". The encrypted character is sitting at the intersection of this row and the column beginning with "D" which is giving the character "N". This will be the first character of our encrypted text. In the next step we take the column beginning with "E" and use the row beginning with "E". This will give us the encrypted character "I". Step by step we will get the encrypted word: NICORB.

Looking closer at this word we will notice the two "E" from "DEFEND" are replaced by different characters in the encrypted text so frequency analysis breaks down. In order to decrypt the text we need the keyword.

With this software students can encrypt and decrypt texts and see decryption with other keywords is impossible.

2.4. The Cardano grid

The Cardano grid is rotatable grid. It is possible to put the characters of the message to the appropriate place in the grid in order to conceal it. This technique is the part of geometric cryptography, because the characters of the original text will lose the original position and in the encrypted text we can find them in another position. We need to know first, how many characters we want to encrypt. In the second step we have to complement the original text with random characters, because we will use a square grid to encrypt the text so the length of the text must be squarenumber. After that we can mark some positions in the grid, where we can put the characters of the original text (Figure 4.).

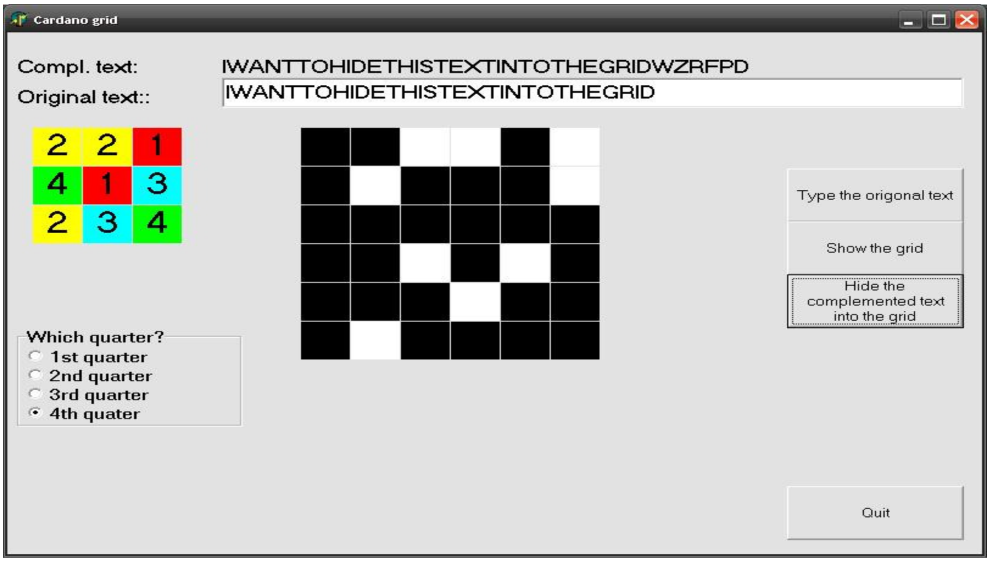

Figure 4. The Cardano grid.

If we have used all of the marked positions, we can rotate the grid with 90 degrees and we will see other free positions to write characters into. We can to rotate the grid again and again with 90 degrees to use all position of the grid and encrypt the original text (Figure 5.). We can decrypt the text, if we know the positions where we started to write the original text.

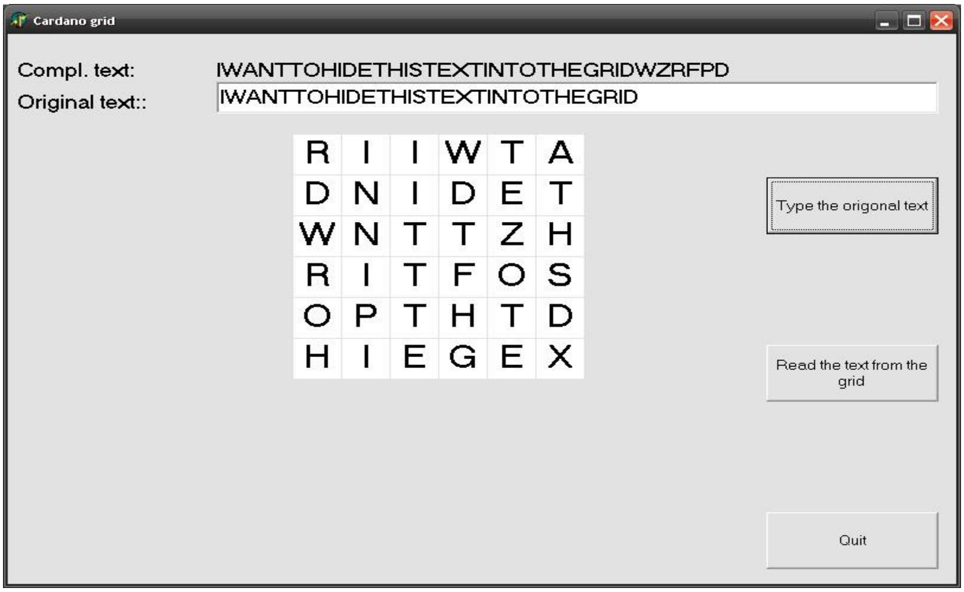

Figure 5. Cardano grid with the marked positions.

3. Steganography

Steganography means concealing information. For example we can mark some characters in the text of a newspaper with a little point, then reading the marked characters we get the secret information. Or we can write the important characters 1 point higher in a word processor and so on.

The LSB (least significant bit) technique is the base of the modern steganography. We can to conceal information with this method in a .WAV audio file or in a .BMP in picture file. This two file types are not compressed so it is easier to modify their contents. In a 24 bit BMP files all picture points have three bytes to hold the colour of these points (Red, Green, Blue). In WAV files we also find bytes to show the pitch in the left or right side. We can use the LSB technique to conceal a text using the last 1-2 bits of these bytes. This modification of the file is not visible or detectable for human eyes and ears. We can use 4 or 8 bits too, but in this case the file would change perceptible.

If we want to conceal a text in a picture or in an audio file, we need first the ASCII code of the characters in the text. After that we decide how many bits will we use to hide the text in the file. We can easily calculate how many characters can we conceal in a BMP file or in a WAV file. This depends on the size of the file used. If the resolution of a BMP picture is 640x480 and it uses 24 bits to store the colour (3 bytes for the RGB colour) of the picture points, the picture will have 640x480x3 bytes which we can use. If we use the last bit to write the secret information into the picture we need 8 bytes to conceal a character (Table 1). Which means we can to hide 115.200 characters in the picture.

Table 1. Using the last bit to conceal information

Original byte	**Modified byte**	**ASCII code of „A“**
01010100	01010100	0
11100110	1110011**1**	1
01101101	0110110**1**	0
11011010	11011010	0
01101000	01101000	0
11000101	1100010**0**	0
11001110	11001110	0
10010010	1001001**1**	1

According to the table generally about half of the bytes was changed on average. For example: if we want to save a 0 and the original bit is zero too, we would not make any changes.

If we use 2 bits from a byte to conceal the information we can “write” a text twice longer into a picture or the audio file. Of course we can use 4 bits to conceal a longer text, but in this case the change of the bytes’ value will be big enough to detect it with human eyes and/or ears. Though, in this case we can "write" a whole book in a picture if the resolution is high enough.

The developed applications are able to read the information hided in WAV or a BMP files, and show how many character can be "written" in (Figure 6).

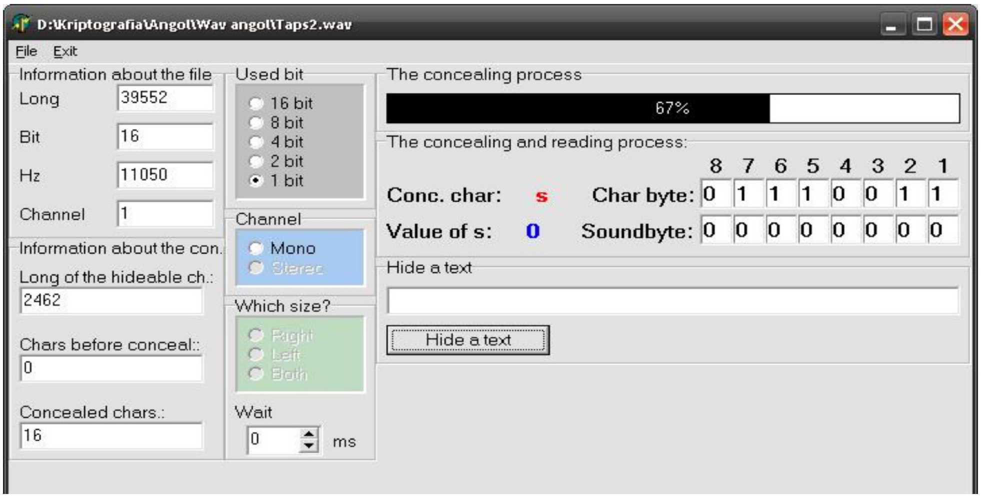

Figure 6. Concealing the information in a WAV file.

We can choose the channel (audio) or the colour (picture) in which we want to conceal the text and when modifying the files. After the process we can look at or listen to both of the original and the modified file trying to detect the changes. Of course we can also read out the text from the modified files.

4. Statistical analysis of the paper results in two groups

In the second group of lectures (group 2) I presented and used the programs described above while the lectures for the first group (group 1) were delivered without these materials. We needed some mathematical analyzing to decide if the use of these programs helpful or not in understanding the lectures.

The students had to write two papers in the semester. The learning material of the first one was the history of Computer Science and the second one based on the history of Cryptography and Steganography. According to the table (Table 2) the mean of the results of papers of group 2 is higher.

Table 2. Group statistics

Paper	Group	Mean	Std. deviation
1	1	1.97	0.90
1	2	2.16	0.85
2	1	2.03	0.99
2	2	2.62	1.01

My null hypothesis was that the group where we used the developed multimedia applications would achieve better results in the papers. We have two independent samples so we can apply the Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test for 2 samples (Mann, 1947).

So we used the Mann-Whitney independent sample U test of SPSS to tell if the means of these groups are differing or not. Monitoring was held on p=5 percent significancy level in the whole analyzing process.

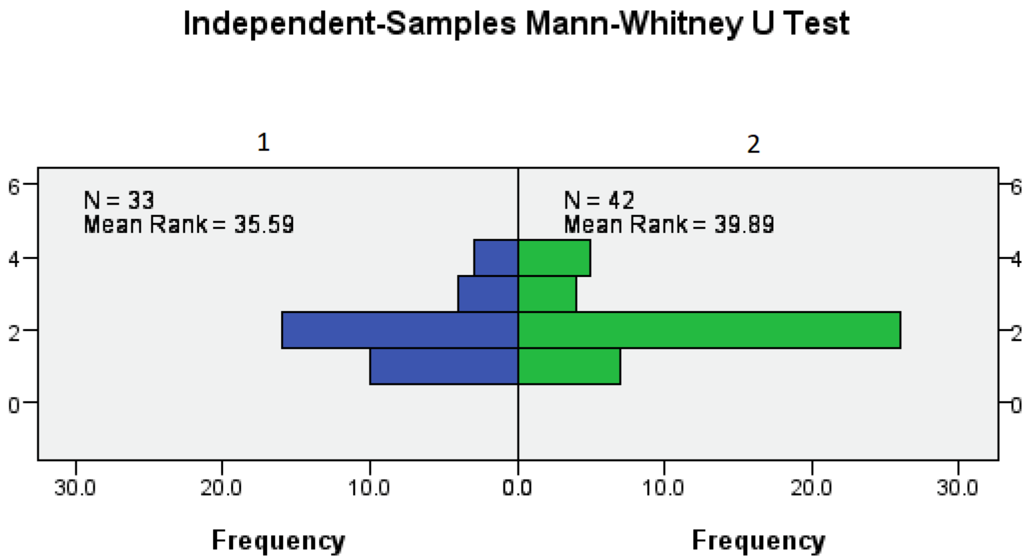

Figure 7. The frequency of the first paper results.

The result of the Mann-Whitney U test has not shown difference between the 2 groups by the first paper, p=0.346. This means the randomly built groups did not show any difference in knowledge level in topic history of Computer Science, the frequency of the paper results are the same (Figure 7).

The situation is different in topic history of Cryptography and Steganography. In this case the result of the Mann-Whitney U test has shown significant difference between the 2 groups by the second paper, p=0.007. This means the results of students attending the multimedia lectures were significant better by half mark than the results of the other group where lectures were delivered without multimedia presentations. The using of the self-developed programs had influence on the results of papers of the applied computer science engineer students (Figure 8).

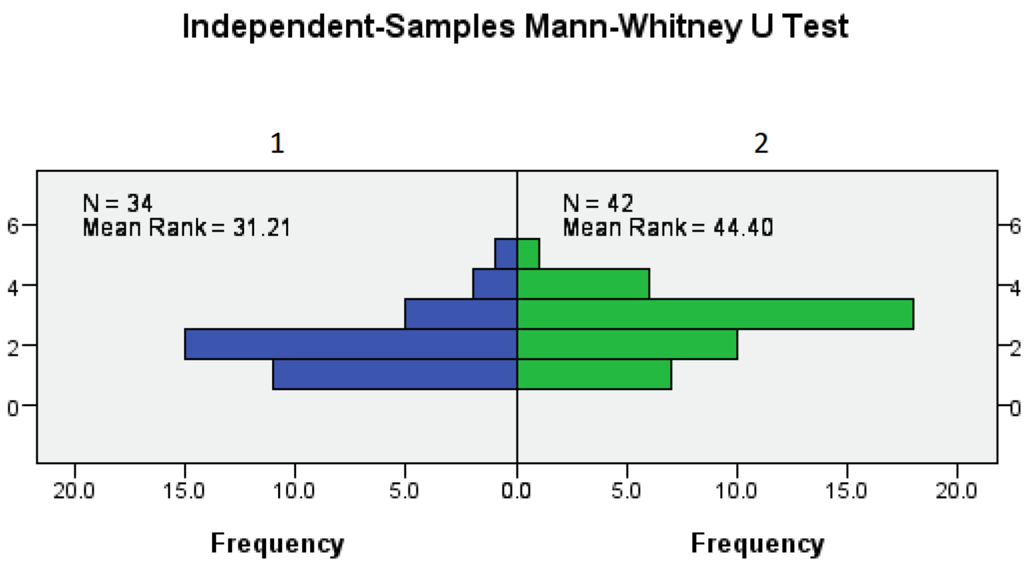

Figure 8. The frequency of the second paper results.

4. Conclusion

The hypothesis in the introduction was that a group where we used the developed multimedia applications got better marks in the papers written than the other. Now we know our hypothesis was correct.

We can say the using of the self-developed multimedia applications when teaching cryptography and steganography for the safety technology engineering students is productive, and the students understand the methods easier, and get better result when writing papers.

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FORMATIVE AND SELF-FORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES IN THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND MEDIA

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Abstract: Important at any age, but essential for adolescents, the discussions within membership groups represent an important way for personal development and for strengthening the relationships among their members. Research shows that in the family, the main topics of discussion are based on questions that school children and preadolescents have to answer to their parents. If we talk about the group of friends, the range of themes of discussion is much wider and they take into consideration different aspects of high school life: the personal life, the relationship with the family members, the leisure activities, the school events etc. Through the investigative approach presented in this paper we have tried to identify elements regarding the connection between high school students and media, especially films and their preferences for musical auditions, as well as the way they facilitate the communication with the family members and friends. The most important research data show that films and TV shows rank first in the students' preferences related to discussions with other family members. There are significant differences, with a decreasing tendency, between respondents aged 14, respectively 18 and those with good school results. As far as the gender analysis is concerned, there are no significant differences.

Key words: media; high school students; membership groups; self-education

Preliminaries

The discussions within the membership groups are an important way to develop and strengthen the relationships among their members. If in the family, the main topics of discussion are based on questions asked by parents of their school children (a situation encountered in all age groups): "What marks have you got today?", "What do you have to learn for tomorrow?", "Who are you going to walk with?" "Who are you talking to on the phone?", "Did you spend all the money I gave you?" when we talk about the group of friends, their range is much wider and they approach different aspects of their high school life: the personal life, the relationship with family members, the ways of spending leisure time or weekends (Opriş, 2017, pp. 176-178), the school events, etc.

In many cases, the source of the formative dialogues is represented by the films (Macondo, 2017, pp. 2-3) or the programs watched by friends or other family members. The fact of paying attention to these elements can have a fundamental role in formal education (Şebu, Opriş & Opriş, 2017, pp. 153-155).

This research was conducted in the period 2017-2018 on a sample of 364 high school students from the region of Transylvania, from different specializations, aged 14-18. In our research, we aimed to highlight, with the help of the questionnaire data, the profile of the high school student that is able to overcome the status of the observer of a movie or a TV program. The research aims to highlight both the extent and the ways in which these activities with a strong educational potential, which increasingly occupy the extra-school time of the students, can become formative and self-formative factors, as well as the elements that can favor or prevent them. The investigative approach has started from the hypothesis that there is a correlation between the students' preference for approaching discussion topics based on films or TV shows in their membership groups and their individual peculiarities and their communion with the members of the membership groups.

Discussion topics related to mass media

From the data provided by the high school students, we concluded that, in relation to the mass-media, the viewing of films / shows, the musical auditions and the computer games occupy an important place for them in setting priorities for spending their leisure time. In Table 1 we presented the data that highlight the extent to which the concerns mentioned above are found in the discussions that students have in the main membership groups (family, group of friends).

Table of the percentages of pupils that approach specific discussion themes within the membership groups *Table 1*

Discussion themes	Family	Friends
• about films/ TV shows	51.9	59.5
• about auditioned music	33.5	76.7
• about computer games	8.4	37.1

We notice that in the discussions with the family members, the most debated themes for half of the questioned pupils (51.9%) are the ones taken from the films / TV shows. Then there are talks about the music they listen to for about one-third of the respondents (33.5%) and computer games for less than 10% of them (8.4%). The hierarchy and the percentage change when the discussions are between friends. More than three quarters of the teenagers (76.7%) prefer the talks about the music they listen to, almost 60% prefer the ones about movies / TV shows, and slightly more than a third (37.1%) talk about computer games.

Research data also show that 35.1% of the total sample of subjects usually discuss about the movies they watch both within the family and with their friends. Therefore, about 20% of young high school students watch films whose content is not shared with family members or friends.

The young people's preference for music also results from the fact that more than three quarters of them not only listen to music but also talk with their friends about this fact. As a matter of fact, the percentage of those who talk about the music they listen to is very close to the percentage of those who participated in a festival (69%), according to the data published by IRES (Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy) in the research "Cultural Events in the Urban Environment. Perceptions, behaviors, notoriety "(IRES, 2016, p. 3).

If the discussions triggered by watching films have close percentages for the two types of membership groups, for the other two discussion themes, there are significant differences, over 30% in favor of friends.

The profile of the students who discuss within the family about films

In order to make the profile of the students who discuss about films within the family, we analysed different variables like: gender, age, class, specialization, residence, family extension and level of education.

Data analysis based on gender shows differences in favor of girls which are statistically insignificant: girls (53.69%) and boys (49.90%). The fact of addressing this topic within the family does not necessarily mean talks with parents, but with any of its members: mother, father, brother or sister. Even though our research did not focus on a detailed analysis of these responses, we consider such discussions to be of major importance for the strengthening of the relationships between family members and also a real support in the personal development of the adolescents.

The age of the students is another variable for which we analyzed the research data. In Figure 1, we have achieved a distribution curve of the results on five age ranges from 14 to 18 years.

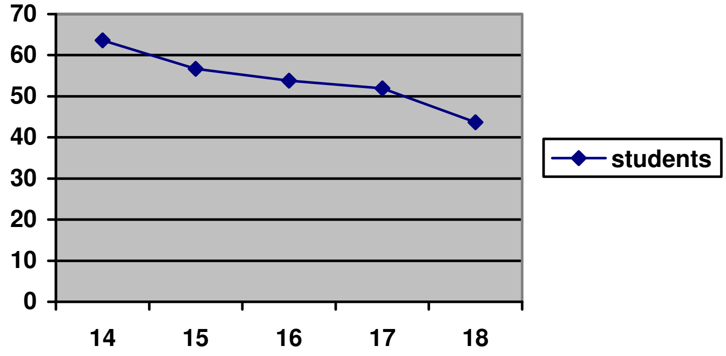

Fig.1. The distribution curve of the percentages of the students discussing within the family about films/ TV shows, depending on their age

The curve decreases almost linearly, from the first age range, 14 years (63.63%) to the last, namely 18 years (41.72%). This fact shows a decrease in the interest in such issues within the family, towards the end of adolescence. The same tendency is manifested in terms of preference for such topics in the conversations with friends, although in higher percentages (indeed, for the whole sample, the percentage is almost 8 points higher for friends, as could be seen and in Table 1). In this case, the data drop from 67.27% for 14-year-olds to 56.76% for 18-year-olds.

If we analyse the data according to the grade of the students, the tendency is the same as in the case of their age, only in this case the results are distributed on four levels.

The analysis according to the specialisation studied by students highlights significant differences. The data show a greater need for communication with parents on such topics of the high school students in vocational studies, sports program (63.33%). Very close proportions of the choices are found at the students in vocational studies, pedagogical program (56,24%), theoretical studies in sciences, (55,31%) and technological studies (53,30%). At a difference of approximately 15%, we have the students in theoretical studies, humanities (46.86%), regardless of the specialization. These data show that the specificity of the study program followed in high school not only leaves its mark on internalization, as a way of deepening the studied specific notions and as a fact of personal development, but it also manifests itself in the relationships within the family.

The students' place of residence proves to be an important factor in choosing the topics of discussion within the family. Research data show differences of approximately 7% in favor of the students from the rural areas

(55.10% in urban areas, respectively 48.41% in rural areas). Even though these data are not surprising, as they follow the general line of the investigations that process comparative rural-urban data, we cannot overlook the tendencies to equalize the differences between the adolescents' places of residence.

The analysis of the data based on the family extension is one of the key aspects of this research. As shown in Figure 2, the highest values are recorded in the students that have no siblings, the percentages decreasing almost linearly according to the increase of the family extension. The recorded differences represent more than 10 percentage points, so we can talk about the more acute need to communicate of the children with no siblings.

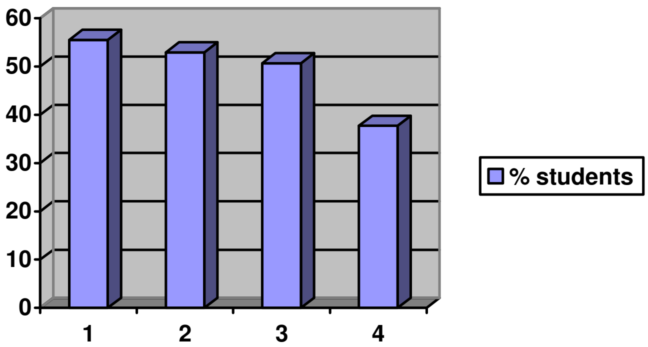

Fig.2. Comparison diagrams of the percentages of the students discussing within the family about movies / TV shows, according to the family extension (number of children in the family)

The level of education was established according to the average grade per school year that the students had at the end of the latest school year, on three intervals: 5-6.99; 7 to 8.99; 9 to10. The data were presented by us in Table 2, where the aspects related to the group of friends are also detailed, on the basis of which we have produced the distribution curves of the results (Figure 3).

Table of the percentages of the students who discuss about films within their membership groups, according to their school results *Table 2*

School results	**Family**	**Friends**

• low (5.00-6.99)	47.47	56.56
• medium (7.00-8.99)	51.35	57.23
• high (9.00-10)	57.70	67.36
Amplitude	10.23	10.8

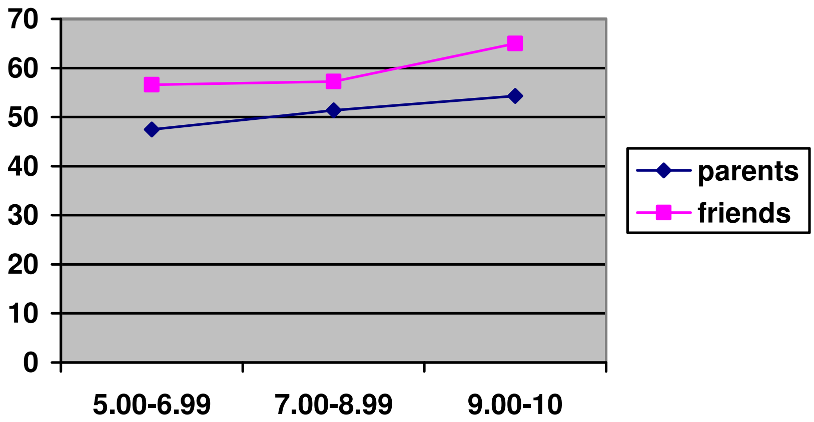

Fig.3. Distribution curve of the percentages of the students discussing within the family and the group of friends about movies / TV shows, according to their level of education

The differences recorded in both situations between the highest and the lowest value, corresponding to the high level of education or the low level of education, are higher than 10 percentage points. The percentage of the students with medium school results is very close in both cases to the values recorded for the whole sample of subjects in the present research (see Table 1). The research data show that the students with good school results consider the action of watching a particular film an important self-training method, which justifies the higher percentage of those who go beyond simply watching a movie - as a way of spending their free time - moving towards the significant personal valorisation of its formative features.

Discussions about watching a film and different aspects of student personality

One of the items of our suggested questionnaire asked the students to give grades from 1 to 10 (with the following meaning: 1 - the smallest grade, 10 - the highest grade) to some values, according to the importance they have in their lives. One of the items we suggested concerns collecting data to determine the level of self-esteem of the respondents.

The research data show that 65.56% of the students for whom self-control is not an important value, being evaluated by them with grades of less than 5, choose to discuss within the family about the films they watch. This high percentage value in relation to the average for the whole sample shows that high school students who generally communicate more easily with those around them feel the need to discuss about the topics related to the films they watch within membership groups.

At the same time, the data of this research show that high or low self-esteem does not influence the choice of discussing about the films or the programs viewed within the family, the differences are not statistically significant, the percentages of the pupils belonging to the two categories being very close to the average for the entire sample of subjects.

Relationships within the family and discussions about the viewed movies / shows

Another point of our research is represented by the highlighting of the relationship between the harmony within the family and the discussions about films / TV shows of its members. Table 3 includes the results of the valid data of the respondents who stated that they are talking in the family about movies / TV shows, relative to a series of values or relationships of the family members.

In addition, we calculated the differences between the percentage of the students who chose the statements about family as true in their case (P), in relation to the percentage obtained for the whole sample (Pe = 51.9%).

Table 3

Table of the choice percentages for some values or relationships of the family members made by the students who discuss within the family about films / TV shows

Statements about their own family	P	P-Pe
I often feel alone in my own family.	42.66	– 9.24
I don’t trust my parents completely, nor do they.	45.67	– 6.23
I always feel I am treated as a child by my parents.	49.46	– 2.44
My parents work a lot and that's why we do not spend much time together, but I know they love me.	51.53	– 0.37
I always feel safe in the family.	54.52	2.62
I am encouraged by my parents to give my own opinions.	54.84	2.94
I feel that, together with my family, I could go "to the end of the world" / I could overcome any obstacle.	56.93	5.03
My parents are my best friends.	59.30	8.4

The data in Table 3 show differences greater than 5% for four statements, two with negative connotations: “I often feel alone in my own family” and “I don’t trust my parents completely, nor do they.” two with positive connotations: “I feel that, together with my family, I could go “to the end of the world” / I could overcome any obstacle.” and "My parents are my best friends." The loneliness felt by the high school students in their own family and the lack of confidence represent two barriers to the dialogue on the topics that address the issues that go beyond the primary needs at this age. On the other hand, there are the results connected to the perfect trust and proximity to their parents. In the opinion of high school students, being friends with parents means having them as confidants.

Research data also show a correlation between the type of family relationships and the topic of discussions within the family. For all four statements with negative connotations on family relationships, negative differences were recorded, and for all four statements with positive connotations, the differences were positive.

Conclusions

The connection between high school students and media is an important part of their preferences, watching films, listening to music, or playing computer games often determine the priorities for spending leisure time. More than one-third of the respondents say that they usually talk about the films they watch with their family and friends. The discussions within the family on topics taken from the media are more present at the beginning of the high school, with the tendency to decrease significantly towards the end of this period of study. At the same time, the research data show that there is a strong correlation between the confidence that the teenagers have in their parents and the frequency of identifying common points of discussion, starting from different materials viewed in the media.

One of the factors that significantly influence the type of relationship between family members is the specificity of the profile followed by the high school students. Students at the sports profile feel the greatest need to communicate with their parents about the films / programs they watch on TV, in opposition to the students of the theoretical studies. Also, the children without any siblings often communicate with their parents on topics related to films and media shows. Concerning the communication with friends, the research data indicate high percentages for the students with very good school results. This shows that, at least for this category of adolescents, mass media represents an important support for overcoming age-related rivalries or pride.

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BOOKS, READERS AND READING MEDIATORSIS

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Abstract: *The aim of this communication is to reflect on the topic: Books, Readers and Reading Mediators, highlighting the importance of the latter, namely within the context of pre-school and primary school education. Our reflection will be theoretically grounded on researchers in contemporary children's literature such as: Pedro Cerrillo, Santiago Yubero, Gemma Llunch.Based on experiments carried out by interns that we monitor at the School of Education of Bragança, Portugal, within various contexts of pre-school and primary school education, we will show that the mediator's role is very important both in the promotion and in the dramatization of reading, especially when targeting children, and we will highlight their role as a bridge or link between books and pre-readers and early readers, promoting and facilitating the dialogue between them.*

Keywords: *reading mediators; reading promotion; pre-readers; early readers;*

Introduction

The growing complexity of the social apparatus in post-industrial modern societies has brought about the proliferation of institutions responsible for children and teenagers' education as well as their consequent integration into the adult world.

Since then, the family, considered as the primary institution, has been losing ground in training the human being as a whole to other institutions such as: nurseries, kindergartens, after-school centres, sports or recreation centres, and also school and training centres.

When promoting the dramatization of reading, especially when it is targeted at children or teenagers, the mediator plays a very important role, usually performed by adults with specific profiles (parents, educators, teachers, librarians). The mediator represents the bridge or link between books and pre or early readers by promoting and facilitating the dialogue between them (Cerrillo *et al.*2007).

The importance of Reading mediators

According to Cerrillo, Yubero and Larrañaga (2007), in order to perform their duty, mediators must meet a set of requirements, cited as follows:

a) Be a usual reader;
a) Share and transmit the joy of reading;
b) Be able to promote participation;
c) Have some imagination;
d) Have some literary, psychologic and didactic training (Cerrillo, *op. cit*, p.278)

Children currently spend few hours with their families and even during that short time, they are affected by interferences from other training sources, namely from the audio-visual means which are now part of any home.

However, we must not forget that parents are the ones who follow and monitor the child most closely before school age, thus giving them the chance to listen to tales and handle books, and making them perceive the beauty of the words and pictures contained in those "magical" objects.

Initially, the book may be just a toy, but the presence of parents at the moment when children start their contact with it will lead them to discover their real sense and multiple possibilities.

Such acquaintance with books must happen right from the first months as nowadays books appear in the market in different materials for "small readers": books made of fabric or plastic, books with sound stimuli, etc.

Later, children learn to flick the pages and that can be understood as a good motor development exercise. The child starts to understand that the speech held by the adult while flicking the illustrated pages gives them information and pleasure. It is important for the adult to guide and monitor the child through their interpretation of pictures, selecting the books according to their needs and expectations.

Pictures are the most appropriate form of language to reading pre-learning, thus the relevance of parents/adults in the selection of good illustration quality books.

The texts that appear in these first books work as guides to narrative and provide the child with the first contact with the written language, enabling them to discover that not only pictures but also written words constitute a source of information. It is from that moment that the child starts discovering, at an unconscious level, that speaking and writing constitute two different ways of expression. It is then the role of school, as a privileged space to develop their taste for reading, to provide that encounter between books and children, so that the latter can use literature in their understanding of themselves and of what surrounds them since children's literature is responsible for "shaping a new mentality" (Coelho, 2000,p. 18).

2- School and Reading Mediation

Indeed, school education has always been connected to written books for children. Since the origins of this produce, school has sheltered didactic books and organised anthologies of tales and narratives used for teaching reading as well as for moral development. We often forget that children are not "empty" of literary culture when they get to their first official contact with reading, that is, when they start school.

Before learning to read and write, children take part in many events of literary folklore expression, which is part of the spoken chain which intervenes in the reception and sometimes transmission of literary works of oral tradition, some of which are primarily or even solely targeted at children: fairy tales, miming games, prayers, never-ending tales, tongue twisters or riddles (Cerrillo, *op. cit*.,p. 82).

When children get to "official" culture, these are replaced by other texts, transmitted in different ways and which, more often than desirable, result from certain previous conditions which have nothing to do with the literary creation *per se*. We are here referring to the frequent "ordering" of books which tackle a certain topic from a certain point of view, considered to be adequate to the target reader, with such simplicity and plainness that they end up resulting in totally trivial texts.

Children's books have always found in school a safe haven both as compulsory reading material and as a complement to other pedagogical activities or even as a prize to the best students.

Translated into more sophisticated production means and a more effective promotion and dissemination, the economic modernisation has renewed the old ideological-economic alliance between school and the literary production for children. Considering the current concept of children's literature, we can state that its value has been increasing over the last decades. In Portugal, where a network of school libraries has existed for a relatively short time, school has played a particularly active role in this trend.

However, it was mainly from the eighties, when literature potentially targeted at children became generalised within the school context, that the books for children and teenagers became an indispensable element for their reading and literary training. Indeed, the appearance of the notion of "literary competence" (Colomer, 1998) led to the setting of goals for literary education for the training of a "competent reader" (Colomer, *op. cit*.,p.67) and many teachers adopted youth literature books in which the readers' competence seemed to build and grow spontaneously.

Nowadays, the promotion of colourful and appealing books for children is directly targeted at teachers since, as mediators, their choice of one or another title is fundamental because the adoption of the book they recommend will considerably increase its sales. Also, the significant increase of the student population has altered the book production and marketing means, favouring the professionalization of children's books writers. Moreover, the mobilisation of writers towards children and youth audiences is another indicator suggesting the renewal of the alliance between children's literature and school. Indeed, most writers take part in campaigns and events engaged in promoting reading, they participate in congresses, seminars and symposiums and above all, they visit schools and talk about their works in weeks dedicated to books and reading.

Undeniably, children's writing is now understood as something which must contribute to the development of the child by giving them pleasure. It is the education professionals' responsibility (educators and teachers) to select and provide children with literature which enhances their questioning and connects their world to a wider universe.

Currently, the main purpose of children's literature is to educate readers and contribute to make reading a common habit and practice. Therefore, with the ultimate goal of educating autonomous readers, the main goals of reading mediators are as follows:

- 1.- Create and promote steady reading habits;
- 2.- Help to read for reading;
- 3.- Guide extra-school reading;
- 4.- Coordinate and facilitate reading according to age;
- 5.- Prepare, develop and assess reading dramatizations.

(Adapted from Cerrillo *et al.* ,*op. cit*.,p.278)

Anchored in reading, learning becomes continuous as it provides answers, updating and also leisure, which are part of the basic human needs. Reading can make us laugh, cry, create empathy with some characters, follow the stories plot, transport us into other worlds and give life to our dreams.

Therefore, children's literature is nowadays considered simultaneously as an important study tool and a way of enjoyment. Through constant reading, we develop a habit which is healthy and above all, a source of knowledge and intellectuality. To some degree, the mediator should be able to legitimise the editorial offer that the market currently provides to early and young readers, making a clear distinction between the reading with and without academic goals, since the first is compulsory and aims to achieve something more: learning, studying, knowing; while the second is voluntary and aims to entertain and give joy and pleasure.

By developing a reading habit even before or during compulsory education, human beings gain the capacity of expressing, discussing and arguing their point of view since they learn how to interpret and form a line of logical reasoning.

The normative character usually associated with children's literature has now changed. At present, we talk about formative education. School, books and children's literature as well as the relationships and specificities between them are directed towards the individual's development, even when that means to conform to the existing thought.

Through self-strangeness, reflection and analysis, children's literature together with school enable the unbalance and consequent creation of new structures which lead the subject to think critically and elaborate personal opinions. What is written and printed prevails in humans' lives for much longer.

The children (who often first arrive at school without knowing any books or literature) have the opportunity to connect with other possibilities of growth. Therefore, school is the ideal space to establish a relationship between literature, books and children. The preservation of a relationship between literature and school or the use of books inside the classroom results from the fact that both share a common feature: their formative nature. Indeed, both fictional works and educational institutions are engaged in training and forming the individuals they target.

Since it provides a new outlook on reality, children's literature has been gaining ground and relevance within several official documents such as the *Curricular Guidelines for Pre-School Education*, the *National Programme for Basic Education*, namely regarding primary school, or the *Curricular Goals* defined for that education level.

From the restricted world of children, literature has been moving towards being considered to have a scientific status. Besides seeing books as a tool to perform a didactic duty, the academic world has come to see them as a means of enjoyment. The selection of the books to be read at school is made based on the child's perspective, thus enabling the development of readers who enjoy the activity while thinking critically about what they read. Inside the school, literature must have an educational function. However, it oftentimes acts on the individual by blocking personal initiatives. Therefore, the teacher must be able to establish a good relationship between school, literature and books by providing literary works which give children the chance to perceive the social changes taking place in the world, so that they become aware of what happens around them.

It is also very important that higher education, namely teacher training schools, provides opportunities for teachers to acknowledge and promote, near their students who are training to be future educators and teachers, the literary works with aesthetic and literary quality for youth, thus stimulating reading and literature as forms of leisure and enjoyment. In order to educate readers, there is no better way than choosing good books, selected for their ability to transmit messages expressed with accuracy and quality and to emotionally touch and thrill, to make us dream or share something.

Fairy tales, for example, perpetuate idealised formats and are moralising. However, they also develop imagination and fantasy, thus contributing to the development of children's creativity and enabling them to create parallel worlds, that is, to go beyond the concrete reality.

As pre-school and primary school teacher trainers, the message we try to get across is that as teachers, we cannot uniquely confine to this literary subgenre. It is necessary to diversify the literary works potentially targeted at children so that the child perceives the wide possibilities of growth. This way, books can contribute to children's personal and intellectual development.

Nowadays, we are aware that children create their own hypothesis about reading and writing, so proximity between the reader and the text is necessary. Also, the literary text opens several reading possibilities, providing the reader with conditions to perceive reality while interacting with reading. Therefore, teachers as mediators must know how to present a text to their students and acknowledge their ways or processes of understanding, always aware that their social or even academic experiences may highly influence their interpretation of the text.

Literature may not be treated as an educational activity only, but also as an activity which helps to disseminate knowledge so that individuals can reflect on their surrounding world, aiming to build knowledge and being. Reading enhances knowledge building and turns the reader subject into an autonomous and aware critic who does not accept everything ready-made.

In light of what has been said, it is paramount that the mediator makes a good choice of books.

(…) children's literature offers a field of work equally valuable by reproducing in the works transmitted to children the particularities of artistic creation aiming to interpret the existence which leads human beings towards a wider and more effective understanding of their universe, whatever their age or intellectual, emotional and social circumstances (Zilberman, 1991,p. 69).

This is possible if the educator/teacher uses books in a transformative way, accepting their various interpretations. Indeed, it is in the teacher's hands to provide the student with learning situations which enable knowledge building, and children's literature is a tool which contributes to the provision of such situations. Therefore, the teacher must be knowledgeable in this important element and also in how to use it in a way that preserves the real function of reading.

Thus, it is convenient that the teacher establishes criteria for the selection of the book to be worked on inside the classroom. Teachers must choose the text according to its adequacy to the reader and aesthetic quality rather than base their choice on the teaching of grammar or compliance rules. Furthermore, other activities must be implemented rather than filling in reading worksheets. Students must be given opportunities to verbalise and share with classmates the emotional and affective reasons why the text may be loved or hated, always respecting the principle that it is the readers themselves who "manage" their activities. Consequently, teachers must value activities which enable children to express: the emotions aroused by the reading; the sensations experienced when reading; the horizons the text opened or the aspects it clarified; the way, innovative or not, in which the topic was tackled, and the intertextual connections it provided.

Children need to read good texts in order to understand literature as a means of thinking about reality and not only as a means of seeing it as something immutable and full of rules to be obeyed. Also, they must perceive literature in a wider way and understand that its goal is not only teaching the language.

Therefore, besides its aesthetic quality, the book's innovative aspect must also be considered, highlighting what we live but do not know. It is relevant to analyse the plot, the characters and the moral values expressed. However, it is also crucial that the main goal when choosing a book is to give birth to a connection between the book and the child which will not easily be broken over time.

3-Some Important Text Typologies

Throughout our lifetime, reading sets the scene for our growth and maturation. When talking about children's literature, the question arises: which type of reading must we provide to the child?

The literary genres were determined in ancient times by Aristotle as: lyric, epic or narrative and dramatic. The lyric includes poems such as elegies, sonnets, odes or melic poetry. The narrative works on fiction, including: tales, fables, novels, myths, legends, among others. The dramatic includes: operas, tragedies, comedies, satyrs, etc.

There are several elements determining the uniqueness of each one of them, however, they are all based on the idea that reality needs to be analysed and questioned as well as discussed, praised and experienced. Therefore, we reiterate the principle that encompassing these various genres, reading must be seen, experienced, spoken, heard and told.

By selecting and providing children with texts from the different literary genres, we are giving them the opportunity to relate to those they have more affinity with. Consequently, it is the teacher's role to offer youngsters: fairy tales, fables, legends, poems and texts to be dramatized. Each one of these types of text provides children with different values which must be born in mind by the teacher. Moral values have changed over time according to the reality we live in and currently, they reflect the following aspects:

a) Solidarity spirit, which considers the subject as part of the whole;
b) Social system of transformation, giving priority to "being" over "having;
c) Prevalence of a moral of responsibility, in which the subject tries to act conscientiously towards the other;
d) Questioning of authority as absolute power;
e) Rediscovering the past and valuing the cultural traditions of one's country and region;
f) Continuous evolution of life, viewing death as a transformation rather than an ending;
g) Anti-racism, a way to acknowledge and harmonise racial differences;
h) Viewing the child as a developing being;
i) Valuing intuition, breaking down the barriers between concrete reality and imagination;

Unfortunately, many pre-school and primary teachers do not agree with regards to the importance of reading as they do not understand its value. This results in a concrete lack of incentive towards reading.
Fairy tales, for example, continue to be as they were in the past very important for the child's entertainment and development.

According to Bettelheim:

Fairy tales are unmatchable not only as a form of literature but also as works of art totally understandable for children like no other form of art. Similarly to real art, the deepest meaning of a fairy tale varies from person to person and it varies for the same person in different moments of their life (Bettelheim, 1999, p. 21).

These tales do not only represent a fantasy imaginary but they also inculcate moralising truths which children observe without questioning. For this reason, it is very important that the teacher perceives and understands the multiple visions of literature in order to discover how the story, candid at first sight, may contain relevant information for the child's holistic development.

4-The Role of Educators/Teachers as Reading Mediators

It is important to highlight the critical and reflective attitude that is necessary for the child's cognitive development. Teachers must stimulate students' reflective reading. Thus, critical thinking and reflection are present in the school activities but without the loss of fantasy and imagination present in fables and tales.

Literature must be present and be part of the child's cultural environment. Books must meet their tastes and curiosities, bringing author and readers closer and enabling the child to get acquainted with the marvellous world or literary creation. We must highlight that reading is a continuous learning process and school must operate in the sense of awaking children's interest in it. Therefore, teachers must help develop students' freedom of choice regarding their own readings.

The ideal of literature is to delight, entertain, instruct and educate children, and better when the four are achieved at once. Pleasure must involve the rest. If there is no art that produces pleasure, then it is not a literary work but a didactic one (Góes, 1991, p.22). School, educators and teachers must create a common path in order to reflect and build new hypothesis regarding the introduction of reading in the school environment, thus developing in children the ability to think, create and recreate their own readings.

In most pre-primary and primary schools, there is now a visible commitment to stimulating and encouraging children to get acquainted with diversified readings and express their ideas, enabling them to read and re-read pleasurably (either through a mediator or autonomously), constantly interact with the text and even become part of it.

Marisa Lajolo presents the following activities to awake and develop children's love of reading:

Transforming the text into a play script and subsequent staging; reproducing the book motif, plot or characters in posters or drawings; creating objects or collages related to the story from waste; researching in order to deepen some issue raised in the text; continuing the story or rewriting it from a different point of view; performing interviews (real or simulated) with the author or characters of the book; dramatizing or reciting poems individually or in group (…) (Lajolo, 2005, p. 70).

This author also reflects on the importance of the fact that teachers are readers themselves, adding that many of them are "little acquainted with books and do not question their own poor quantitative and qualitative reading" (*Idem, ibidem,* p. 72). Marisa Lajolo considers that the vast majority of governmental institutions worldwide have been implementing a reading policy anchored in a fast and shallow dissemination. According to the author, this not only disengages governments from their responsibilities regarding education quality, but also reinforces the reproductive character of school, as this releases teachers from the responsibility to choose and plan the readings they will develop in class based on their own readings and discussions held with students. As a solution to this problem, we corroborate her words:

Teachers may, *voluntarily*, select those in which they most believe and discard others, reformulate them all according to what they know about their students and their reading, to what they know about language and literature, to what they understand by education, reading and writing, and particularly, according to what they understand by teaching Portuguese (…) (Lajolo, *op.cit.*,p 7).

Libraries are learning laboratories and therefore, one of the most privileged spaces for the reading time or "Storytelling Time"[1], where two essential aspects are observed for the child's development regarding the habit of reading: listening to stories and playing. The interaction of the magical world of children's literature with playfulness transforms the storytelling time into a universe of fantasy, where imagination is the main passport to this trip. Teachers must be aware that by telling stories, they will influence the process of construction of reader students and critical students, who will be able to interpret the different views of the world and use their readings to understand their own inner world.

Nowadays, teachers must transform their working space in view to the creation of a stimulating and pleasant environment, thus enabling children to freely express their understanding and interrogations when reading literary texts. Educators and teachers must not only encourage children to enjoy being in contact with books but also tell them stories, thus creating an atmosphere of affection and closeness between children and books. It is the teacher's reading which leads to the students' active participation by asking questions, commenting and interpreting the stories orally. This magical moment of listening to stories is highly significant for the student.

Whenever possible, teachers must vary the themes of the stories they tell or give students to read, thus developing their logical thinking, imagination, vocabulary, syntax, etc. At the reading time, we feel that the children believe the author is someone very special, unattainable, with an unmatchable intelligence. Consequence? Distance and detachment. Solution? Give children opportunities to contact with book writers, thus leading them to see authors as common people living in the same society as them and to become more interested in the fantastic world of reading.

Another aspect of the "Storytelling Time" is that when we tell children a story, we use a structure that is specific to spoken language and

1 The "Storytelling Time" encourages the child to develop a love and habit of reading and widens the reading horizons, making the child aware of the multiplicity of books including a diversity of topics, genres and styles, capable of meeting their individual needs and tastes.

may include other elements besides the verbal components: gestures, intonation, pausing… When we read the story from the book, we use structures which are grammatically organised and are specific to written language. When reading, we can perceive children's reactions and correct, modify, re-read, explain and complement the story.

Final Considerations

The more contact children have with children's literature, the better prepared they will be to express their thoughts in a clear way. By listening to a story, children learn to put themselves in other people's shoes and consequently understand different points of view. They learn to know the power of words to generate actions and arouse feelings. They realise that through language, they can influence others' thoughts and assert their own point of view. Children develop an internal language that enables them to raise hypothesis and prepare to argue and counter-argue. Therefore, it is gratifying for teachers to feel and realise that their students were drawn to reading and that through their work, they helped develop potential creative and critical readers, capable of reading and re-reading, analysing and interpreting any type of text, be it a pedagogical or didactic text or a leisure one.

These are the moments of reading and/or narration which lead us to travel, transform, seek, build and rebuild our whole trajectory of life:

Reading contributes decisively to fill in the gap in the training and development of human beings. It develops reflection and critical thinking. It is an inexhaustible source of topics to better understand oneself and the world. It provides internal growth. It leads us to experience the most varied emotions, enabling the formation of individual parameters that measure and code our own feelings (Cagneti,1986, p. 25).

It is in light of this statement that teachers must reconsider the importance of reading, valuing the child as an eternal learner, capable of creating, recreating, interpreting and formulating hypothesis about what is read to them as well as well as what they read or write. School must have a proposal to raise not only good readers but also conscientious, autonomous and critical citizens. When reading a book, the teacher must analyse its content and make one or several interpretations. Another aspect that the teacher must bear in mind is that reading is an important means to attain knowledge and that what matters is not the amount read but the depth of the knowledge attained.

According to Coelho, children's literature has become "one of the fields in question where seeds are being sowed of values which will undoubtedly integrate a new future mentality" (Coelho, 2000, p.19).

In light of this statement, it is the teacher's duty to be alert towards the transformations occurring at the present time in order to recognise and permanently update their own knowledge, always targeting three points: "literature (as an attentive reader), the surrounding reality (as an aware citizen), and teaching (as a competent professional)" (Coelho, *op. cit*.,p.18).
In a nutshell, the pleasure of reading represents the first step towards a learning that may be arid or repetitive at times but that will give the child the power to conquer, alone and acutely, the meaning and sense of a text, and in this process, reading mediators play a central and essential role.

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CRITICAL ASPECTS IN THE BUILDING OF PROFESSIONAL AND TRANSVERSAL SKILLS IN THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS MAJORING IN SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract: *The present paper aims to present the results of a study that identified the critical aspects in building professional and transversal skills in the university environment for students in the field of social work. The objectives of the research are: analysis of the role of the course modules, seminar, laboratory and practice stages in the formation of skills in the university environment; identifying the participants' perception of the way in which professional and transversal skills are currently built; identifying difficulties in ensuring professional and transversal skills according to the qualification offered by the curriculum, as well as identifying measures for curriculum optimization at university level. The study was based on a qualitative methodological approach, using the focus group as a research method. The sample consisted of 166 participants, social work students from three universities in the West of Romania, and the research tool used was the moderator guide. The study's conclusions brought to the forefront the need to improve the curriculum, which should be more flexible, taking into account all the actors involved (students, teachers, employers), but mainly with regard to the beneficiaries, respectively the graduates' career interest. At the same time, curricular design of transversal and professional skills requires coherent, functional and flexible integration* of all types of content: cognitive, action and attitude.

Keywords: *professional skills; transversal skills; social work students;*

1. Introduction

Social work in Romania is continuously changing and following the new issues engendered by the evolution of social processes: this is why universities are bound to train specialists by developing proper professional skills. "The domain of the social work occupations is a quite recent one for Romania and this fact leads to a series of difficulties in correlating and harmonizing the university professional education with the labour market." (Neamțu, 2012) A study regarding the degree in which educational curricula train graduates according to their major, to related domains or to different domains (Isăilă, Miron & Andrei, 2011) shows that social work is part of curricula training for related domains. Future social workers need to be trained both theoretically and practically to be able to resolve current problems and to apply the knowledge and competencies acquired depending on everyday practical requirements. "The social work profession is considered complex because of the multiple skills required in the interventions made and the diversity of the situations that occur". (Costin & Bran, 2016) The validation of competencies is named among the most frequent used active measure of the employment policy (Sava & Crașovan, 2013). In social work practice the competences have to convey with the creativity in order to find solutions for new and complex problems (Rădulescu, 2010) The ACPART study (Voicu, Tufiș, & Voicu, 2010) carried out in Romania in 2010 shows that, for both graduates and recruiters, specific skills acquired after graduating from social science programme are important, but they come second after transversal one, because employers are interested in wider domains rather than employers in the technical field who pay more attention to specific competencies. Transversal, teamwork, and communication competencies are decisive only when there is a certain level of professional competencies (Isăilă, Miron & Andrei, 2011). According to the *Declaration of Bologna* (1999), the role of higher education is to arm students with competencies and skills (knowledge, attitude and behaviours) that employees need to do their job and that employers seeks when hiring. The general goal of the Strategy of education and professional training in Romania for 2016-2020 focusses on adapting educational and professional training programmes to the competencies and trends on the labour market: this is why we need to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process by correlating higher education graduates' educational offer, aptitudes, competencies and skills with employers' needs. Likewise, the European Commission initiative "*New skills for new jobs: anticipating and meeting competency requirements of the labour market*" underlines the necessity of consolidating human capital and the ability of integrating professionally through higher competency levels. Through transversal skills people can more easily adapt to the complex and diverse reality. After Mureșan (2015), "a lack of transversal competences has been noticed, and consequently the higher education should be more focused on the development of the transversal skills and the adequate improvement of the educational process". One of the most important trends noticed by the European Commission

(2008) in the field of future necessary competencies is the considerable growth of social work services by 2020. The field of social work tries to respond through the content of the curriculum and, in particular, through practice to social work imperatives of disadvantaged categories that require support. In this regard, a disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach is envisaged, because only such an integrative approach can successfully face to the complexity of the problems that exist in social work. Validation of prior learning is permanently mentioned as a solution to address the skills matching, the skills demand and supply, the needed skills for the new jobs (Sava, Borca & Danciu, 2014). The goal for university management is the introduction of competency-based approach in identifying and defining learning results to improve the employability of graduates (Pârvu, Ipate & Mitran, 2014). In the context of the necessity of continuously developing competencies to meet fluctuating circumstances on the labour market to achieve a quick, successful transition to a job (and a career), this study relies on the need for developing academic programmes, on the complexity and implications of training and on the learning opportunities for the students majoring in social work. In Romania, the levels of competence in social work educations are: university, postgraduate and research. The social work education in Romania is provided in 17 state university and 4 private universities at the license level. The areas where social workers in Romania can work are described by Trancă (2015a). Changing the curriculum is justified by the evolution of both scientific and technical knowledge and by the changes of practical social needs. The tools for the assessment of transversal skills should be relevant to different contexts (Tam & Trzmiel, 2017). Baciu (2015) describes the skills used by social workers in the intervention process. Transversal and professional competences, i.e. what students are able to do professionally, the skills and behaviours that allow them to face the complexity of this working environment, have a significant importance in increasing the chances for professionalism and performance of the future professionals in the field of social work (Trancă, 2016, 2015b).

2. Methodology

2.1. Objectives

The goal of this research was to identify critical aspects of building up professional and transversal competencies in the academic environment for the students majoring in social work. The objectives of the research are analysing the role of course, seminar, laboratory, and practice modules in the development of competencies in higher education; identifying the perception of the respondents of the way in which professional and transversal competencies are being built; identifying the difficulty of ensuring professional and transversal competencies according to the study programme; and identifying measures regarding the optimisation of curricula in higher education.

2.2. Method and procedure

To reach the objectives of this qualitative-exploratory study, we have chosen as a research method the focus group because it provides the participants the opportunity of participating in a dialogue allowing access to the inner coherence of the topic by building up a constructive framework with a diversity of points of view or opinions, of experience stories, of perceptions or attitudes that point out their perspective on critical aspects of building up professional and transversal competencies within study programmes. 10 focus groups were organized. Focus group moderators managed the debates allowing everybody to state his/her position based on one's own experience, perceptions or aptitudes regarding the topic. The focus group had three phases. In the first one, the expert explained the participants the objectives of the project, supplied information regarding the recording of the meeting and its use, and got verbal approval on participation to the focus group and on recording the focus group (the interviews were audio recorded and the audio material content was analysed). In the second phase, the expert moderated the debates based on a moderating guide; in the third phase, the moderator briefed the information, asked for completions, and asked for and supplied feedback for the participants. The mean duration of a focus group was 60-80 minutes. Participation was associated with no physical, psychic, social or legal damage. No name, address, or identity was used in the study thus observing the right to privacy and personal life of the participants to the focus group.

2.3. Instrument

The research instrument used was a moderation guide containing as topic the relevance of disciplines in the curriculum (evaluation of the most/least relevant disciplines); structuration of curriculum discipline content; value of course, seminar, laboratory and practice modules for competency development (structure and duration of teaching-learning activities); role of actors involved in competency development; building up of professional and transversal competencies; satisfaction with the quality of activities and results; responsibilities in developing competencies; difficulties/hindrances/issues in ensuring competency development; most appreciated teaching and activity management methods; correlation between overall credits and number of classes – teaching-learning interaction proper, projects, editing specific materials, tutoring, individual preparation for evaluation; optimisation of the curriculum; suggestions for building up professional and transversal competencies in agreement with complex, unique, and varied situations of the future job.

2.4. Participants

The sample consisted in 166 participants. Each focus group had a maximum of 20 participants: 125 students majoring in social work in three universities of Western Romania, undergraduates in day course and distance learning in the 3rd year and MSc students in the 1st year having majored in social work; 35 representatives of social work services, public and private institutions that are also partners (for the practice courses) of the universities participating in the research; 6 staff involved in the development of academic programmes (tenure teaching staff from the three universities involved in the research).

The methodological approach of this study consisted in developing research methodology; collecting data through the focus group method; analysing results; and editing the study report.

3. Results and discussion

The main aspects aimed at in this investigative approach were the relevance of disciplines in the curricula and the structuring of discipline content; the role of the actors involved in the development of competencies; the actual building up of professional and transversal competencies; the difficulties identified in ensuring competencies; suggestions for the academic curricula.

3.1. Relevance of disciplines in the curricula and the structuring of discipline content

The most relevant disciplines in the curricula are those introducing specialty disciplines, partial specialty disciplines, disciplines developing communication and IT competencies; the least relevant disciplines are those with no practical relevance for current society. In a socio-cultural and technological context in continuous change because of progress or new scientific approaches and of new realities, we need to harmonise curricula contents with current needs. A discipline that is very relevant for the participants is practice since it aims at completing in the most proper way the basic theoretical knowledge acquired by the students through the teaching-learning process and contributing to the perfection of professional competencies and skills necessary to a social worker according to current occupational standards and to the national training framework. Participants opined that practice should benefit from more attention, i.e. share 50% of the total classes of a curriculum. At present, practice shares only about 10% of a curriculum. The participants argued that practice is the main field of work experience and of uniqueness in applying knowledge; that it provides the possibility of acting independently to take professional responsibilities; that it allows improving and correcting theoretical knowledge and based on observation; that it allows consolidation of long-term theoretical knowledge; that it allows students to experience a real working environment and, thus, get better self-knowledge, explore one's potential and test one's own limits (self-evaluation), and see if he/she is fit for a social worker job; and that it allows students to operate with the instruments specific to a social worker, to develop ethical behaviour and to observe professional deontology rules. Though the role of students is not vital for the practice institution, they are challenged to work together with experienced social workers and to improve their work routine to prove they can become social workers. As for the proportional structure of the curricula, participants opined seminars and laboratories should share 30% of the curriculum and courses 20% of the curriculum. Currently, courses share about 50% and seminars share about 40% of the curriculum.

3.2. Role of the actors involved in the development of competencies

Teaching-learning activities through courses, seminars, laboratories or practice support the student's participative role in developing professional and transversal competencies. Participants to the focus group consider that they are the main actors in the development of competencies, followed by the teachers and, last but not least, the practice supervisors in practice institutions. Students believe that the student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which the teacher facilitates student's active learning, guides the student in the process of knowledge, provides the opportunity of experiencing through learning situations, encourage and prepares for self-information and self-education, thus developing a set of competencies necessary for optimal socio-professional insertion. The student is an active participant in one's own knowledge and development, being concerned with exploring, advancing new ideas or original solutions, developing arguing abilities, valorising one's own competencies, and being able to use knowledge in new situations. The practice supervisor's role is to provide consulting and supervision in the acquisition of knowledge and the development of professional skills, to guide and make students accountable for their work duties, to stimulate student's interest in the profession of social worker, to mould professional conduct, and to harmonise academic requirements with practical life.

3.3. Actual building up of professional and transversal competencies

The system of professional and transversal competencies is a reference elements of curricula; therefore, it has been included in their grounding note. Curricula aim directly at balanced development of competencies in the study programme by providing the necessary knowledge and developing proper skills and attitudes. Current diagnosis of building up competencies shows we need teamwork to update the educational offer. Participants mentioned they need at least one annual meeting with employers or social partners and with academic staff to debate aspects related to the adjustment of curricula to the demands of the labour market. Occasionally, students in the last year are questioned about the usefulness of the disciplines in the curriculum and each semester they test students' satisfaction with faculty activities. The relevance of disciplines in the curriculum and their content, as well as the way knowledge is conveyed is aimed at occasionally within working meetings with social work department members.

Acquiring competencies specific to the domain is also facilitated by a proper material basis (self-service shelf access and borrowing library, electronic data bases) allowing student individual study.

At present, curricula observe national standards specific to the field. Thus, disciplines belong to three distinct categories: fundamental disciplines, that aim at developing basic competencies, abilities and attitudes; specialty discipline, that aim at thoroughgoing studying specific operational contents; and complementary or interdisciplinary support disciplines that expand the intellectual and professional horizon by developing communication and transfer abilities. As for their curriculum status, disciplines are compulsory and optional.

The competency profile for the field of social work developed depending on the National Registrar of Qualifications in Higher Education in agreement with the needs on the labour market and with the national qualification framework is presented below.

Professional competencies: 1. Identifying, collecting information, documenting, evaluating and recording information, analysing, evaluating and operating specific interventions to reduce social risks at individual, family, group, community, and societal levels. 2. Developing, implementing and evaluating projects, programmes and policies of social work for different vulnerability categories. 3. Developing services and activities of prevention as well as support activities for the beneficiaries of the social work system. 4. Providing consulting in accessing community resources for people or social groups excluded or with social exclusion risk (institutions, services, benefits). 5. Counselling and other specialised intervention methods used in family or institution environments (hospitals, schools, penitentiaries, anti-drug centres, social work specialise institutions, etc.) observing the values and principles specific to social work. 6. Communicating and professionally bounding with beneficiaries and other actors involved.

Transversal competencies: 1. Approaching objectively and theoretically and practically argued problem-situations to effectively solve them while observing the values and principles specific to social work. 2. Applying effective working techniques in trans-disciplinary teams at different intra- and inter-organisational hierarchy levels. 3. Self-evaluating objectively one's own need for professional training and identifying resources and ways of developing personally and professionally in order to insert and adapt to the current requirements of the labour market.

To develop these competencies, study programmes in social work need 3 years (6 semesters); the average number of teaching-learning activities is 22-28 h/week and specialty practice take a minimum of 90 h.

Professional ad transversal competencies specific to each discipline are detailed in syllabi.

3.4. Difficulties identified in ensuring competencies

Difficulties identified by the participants to the focus group in ensuring competencies are listed below:

– Differences between theoretical information and information from professional activities during practice. Information not updated provided by some disciplines.

– The teaching of too theoretical courses detrimental to the supply of practical skills, and seminars with no teacher-student interaction. Exaggerated similarity of teaching methods in both courses and seminars in some teachers.

– Low involvement of practice supervisors in the building-up of students' practical skills.

– Overlapping of information, repetitions or gaps in certain disciplines; similar content of discipline with different names.

– Lack of flexibility of curricula, which limits students' choice of optional subjects (very few choices or no choice at all).

– Lack of disciplines that study current social phenomena in the field occurred lately because of the social dynamics, or of disciplines aiming at individual strategies when looking for a job or a career.

– Too permissive or too flexible rules regarding the compulsoriness of attending courses and seminars and of taking exams, which results in low attendance rate in terminal years and difficulties in building up discipline-specific competencies.
– Unbalance between the numbers of disciplines per semester.
– Similarity between exam and viva voce in certain disciplines; in some cases, seminar activities are not taken into account in the calculus of the final grade.
– The employers' requirement that recent graduates (below one year after graduation) have a work experience upon employment.

3.5. Suggestions for the academic curricula

The participants' suggestions regarding the optimisation of curricula in higher education are as follows:
– Harmonising curricula at national levels per study programmes, as well as discipline topics.
– Higher flexibility in choosing courses equivalent from a credit perspective and in developing specialised competencies: universities should be challenging the students that wish to improve through individual study and under the guidance of a teacher in a particular discipline. Providing sets of optional disciplines could be a solution to match curricula and students' interests. Introducing several transversal disciplines (knowledge, abilities and attitudes that transcend a certain study programme and/or a certain profession) useful to the practice of several professions and for life, in general.
– Introducing specialisations for a certain field of interest in the 3rd year such as social work for disabled people, social work for the elderly; social work for child and family protection; social work for substance-addicted people, etc.
– Favouring individual work and increasing students' responsibility for one's own career.
– Reducing the number of theoretical classes particular in the 3rd ye and increasing the number of practice hours or reorganising practice. Turning the entire 3rd year or at least the entire 6th semester into a practice semester (with no theoretical disciplines) or with disciplines that prepare students for their future jobs (professional guidance disciplines). Cumulating the visits to institutions per semester in maximum 3 weeks (the first three ones in the first semester of the 1st year), followed by practice stages proper for longer periods.
– Introducing a maximum of 5-6 disciplines per semester and moving some disciplines from one year to another for better coherence between competencies. Removing some disciplines that are no longer current,

correcting the time allotted to some disciplines or adding new disciplines to the curricula to compatibilise study programmes, broadening students' competencies and harmonising the process of knowledge with practice in accordance with the dynamics of science and social reality. Avoiding content overlapping of related disciplines.

– Developing more visit programmes and more national and international exchange programmes to benefit from other students' and teachers' experience in the field.

– Course disciplines should share 20% of the curriculum, seminars, 30%, and practice, 50% of the total number of hours. Redistributing the number of hours to allot several seminar classes to practical disciplines and more course classes to more theoretical ones.

– Alternating periods of theory, practice and theory per week to allow practice to be concentrated and more effective (currently, practice goes on successively, for about 4-6 h/week).

– Developing more functional tutoring programmes to support the students methodologically to improve educational performance, to support the students organise individual study, and using learning resources to develop students' potential for the future profession.

– Correlating the number of credits with the number of real hours of activity per discipline.

– Diversifying teaching styles and teaching classes in a more interactive ay to make teaching-learning more attractive and to capture students' attention, to stir their curiosity and to arouse their interest. Giving up supplying information already in hard copy textbook and alternating teaching methods (making them interactive) with emphasis on exercises and role play, and using video and other teaching aids particularly during seminars. It is necessary to point out practical experience of the teaching staff in teaching.

– Introducing intermediary (mid-semester) evaluations to motivate students to learn and get involved during the entire semester, not only during exam session.

– Using online platforms to facilitate communication and interaction with the students and between the students, teaching staff and practice supervisors. This could contribute to actuate the teaching – learning – evaluating process.

4. Conclusions

Improving the curriculum to build up transversal and professional competencies should be designed flexibly taking into account all the actors involved and, most of all, the main beneficiaries, i.e. the students' career interest. In designing transversal and professional competencies, we need to integrate coherently, functionally and flexibly all content types: cognitive, actionally and attitudinally. This study presents several critical aspects regarding the building up of professional and transversal competencies, while putting into practice an improved curriculum is still a challenge. This article can contribute to the improvement of academic instruments and methodologies to extend learning opportunities; it can also have an essential instrumental value in the improvement of curricula in the field of social work in social work. The study could be extended to all 21 universities in Romania that develop social work programs, by comparing the development of professional and transversal skills offered by state and private universities.

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FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECLINE OF MALE ENROLMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract: *The study investigated the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary school in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and the descriptive survey research design was adopted. The simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 120 respondents (60 teachers and 60 parents) from the population of 641 teachers and 5,435 parents of the 18 secondary schools in Awka South. A 25-itemed questionnaire designed for the study was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using mean. Findings revealed among others that parental background, the quest for money on the part of the child and inability of the student to cope with school subjects leading to school dropout are factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary school. Based on this finding of the study, it was recommended among others that parents must be conscious of the importance of educating their male children in view of future benefits.*

Keywords: *Male Enrolment; Secondary school;*

Introduction

Enrolment is referred to as registration for membership (Roget's 21st century Thesaurus, 2011). Schultz (2012) noted that enrolment in schools represents the largest component of investment in human capital in most societies. The human resources of a nation are considered to be the engine of growth of that country. These must however be adequately developed and efficiently utilized. According to Aliu (2011), education bestows on its recipients a disposition of a life long acquisition of knowledge and skills. Hence rapid social-economic development of a nation has been observed to depend on the caliber of human capital in that country. Education is thus central to the development process.

The pivot of educational policy throughout the Federal Government of Nigeria is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme launched in 1999 (Rahji & Fakayode, 2011). This is meant as a strategy to reduce illiteracy in the country and to enable the poor to be educated out of their poverty. The decision to extend the scheme to the junior secondary school is a welcome development. Ralji and Fakayode (2011) submitted that the extension is in the line with international standard.

Enrolment in secondary schools is of policy significance and relevance in Nigeria. Secondary education is the education children receive after primary and before tertiary stage (NPE, 2013:18) and parents due to the knowledge of the aforementioned invest in their children this natural endowment. Under such situations children are valued by their parents for different reasons and girls and boys are not exact substitutes. For this reason, enrolment of males and females in secondary schools in Nigeria differs. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2018), reports that the gross enrolment value of females and males in secondary schools in Nigeria in 2016, 2017, 2018 was 41.51%, and 46.78% respectively. The enrolment of males in the report is higher than that of the females implying that education of males in secondary schools is more preferred than the females in most states in Nigeria.

There is a common belief in the African culture and in Nigeria as well as Anambra State in particular, that a male child would later in life attain a higher social and economic status, and turn to assist his parents when they get old. In the case of the females as Halima (2012:312) noted, they are perceived as marital commodities that can be taken by someone else. The general feeling is that females belong to outsiders and contribute absolutely little or nothing to the economic well being of their parents. The male is therefore given more priority than the females in terms of education.

On the contrary, it has been observed that in Anambra State, especially Awka South LGA, the numbers of girls in schools are far higher compared to the number of boys in schools. The ratio of girls to boys is 3:2 as sited by Okoye (2017). However the office of research and statistics, post Primary schools service commission (2018) reports that the enrolment value of females and males in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State as at 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 academic session is (6,818, 6,627 and 6,849) females, and (4,893, 4,636, and 4,854) males. This is indicating that female enrolment is higher

than that at male, thus showing a decline in male enrolment. The observed decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State Justifies the study.
The problem of the study is thus: What is responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State as perceived by principals and teachers?

Finding from the study will hopefully reveal to the leadership (Principals, Vice – principals, Deans, Head of Departments and Teachers) of secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra States the reasons for the decline of male enrolment as well as salient corrective measures to adopt in solving the problem. Parents, guardians among other members of the general public will hopefully be encouraged to make amends to the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools as the decision to enroll their children and wards in these schools rest on their shoulders.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local government Area of Anambra State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary school in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.
2. Identify the remedies to the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?
2. What are the remedies to the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. It is made up of Awka, Umuokpu, Okpuno, Nibo, Mbaukwu, Nise, Agulu-Awka, Amawbia and Isiagu towns. Awka South Local Government Area presently contains eighteen secondary schools (Post Primary Schools Service Commission, 2018). The population used for the study includes 641 teachers and 5,435 parents of the 18 secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State (Post Primary

Schools Service Commission, 2018). Note that number of parents is the same with the number of students since every student has a parent.

A sample of 120 respondents (60 teachers and 60 parents) was used for the study. The simple random sampling technique specifically balloting was employed in the selection of 6 secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. Simple random sampling technique again was used to select 10 teachers and 10 parents from each of the sampled schools.

The instrument used in the process of data collection was a structured questionnaire named Factors Responsible for Decline of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (FRDMESSQ). It contained 25 items organized in section 1 and 2 according to each of the research questions. The questionnaire (FRDMESSQ) was validated by 3 experts, while the reliability of the instrument was obtained using split – half method administered to 20 respondents for which 0.72 was obtained with the help of Spearman–Brown's prophecy formula. The value was considered high enough for the study.

The questionnaire was distributed to the teachers and parents during the PTA meetings in the sampled secondary schools by the researchers through the help of 6 teachers (research assistant). The data were analyzed using frequency and mean to answer the research questions. The cut off point regarding an item as "agree" or disagree" was determined thus:

$4 + 3 + 2 + 1 \quad \frac{\varepsilon f X}{N} \quad \frac{10}{4} \quad \bar{X} = 2.50$. The mean score of 2.50 and above indicated positive response to the research questions where as the mean score below 2.50 indicated negative response to the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka South LGA of Anambra State?

Due to little difference in the views of the respondents, the result of this research question is presented thus;

a) Table 1: As perceived by teachers
b) Table 2: As perceived by parents.

Table 1: Teachers' Perception of the Factors Responsible for the Decline of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools.

S/N	Factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in your school are:	$\bar{X}$	Decision

1.	Poor economic status of the parents of the child	3.00	Agree
2.	Lack of interest of the parents of the child in his education	2.56	Agree
3.	Parental background of the child (broken home)	3.00	Agree
4.	Lack of interest on the part of the child	2.91	Agree
5.	Inability of teachers to bear with male students	2.65	Agree
6.	Government failure to provide free education	2.29	Disagree
7.	The quest for money on the part of the child	2.01	Agree
8.	Parents view that the educated are usually unemployed	3.05	Agree
9.	High population of female children than male children	2.09	Disagree
10.	Parents preference to other works of life (e.g trading) other than education	2.71	Agree
11.	Fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment administered in the school to male students	2.21	Disagree
12.	Inability of the students to cope with school subjects leading to school dropout	2.49	Disagree
13.	Poor performance of the student leading to school dropout	2.85	Agree
14.	Lack of focus on the part of the students leading to school dropout	1.98	Disagree
15.	The decisions of the student and that of the parents to join the business world	2.76	Agree
	Grand Mean	**2.57**	

Data presented in table 1 reveal that all the items except 6, 9, 11, 12 and 14 have mean ratings above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that the agreed items are perceived as factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools and the Grand mean of 2.57 supports the perception of the respondents as the factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in the school.

Table 2: Parents' Perception of the Factors Responsible for the Decline of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools.

S/N	Factors responsible for the decline of male		Decision

	enrolment in your school are:	$\bar{X}$	
1.	Poor economic status of the parents of the child	3.00	Agree
2.	Lack of interest of the parents of the child in his education	2.56	Agree
3.	Parental background of the child (broken home)	3.00	Agree
4.	Lack of interest on the part of the child	2.91	Agree
5.	Inability of teachers to bear with male students	2.65	Agree
6.	Government failure to provide free education	2.59	Agree
7.	The quest for money on the part of the child	2.01	Agree
8.	Parents view that the educated are usually unemployed	3.05	Disagree
9.	High population of female children than male children	2.09	Disagree
10.	Parents preference to other works of life (e.g trading) other than education	2.71	Agree
11.	Fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment administered in the school to male students	2.21	Disagree
12.	Inability of male students to cope with school subjects leading to school dropout	2.71	Agree
13.	Poor performance of male student leading to school dropout	2.85	Agree
14.	Lack of focus on the part of male students leading to school dropout	1.98	Disagree
15.	The decision of male student or the parents of the student to join the business world	2.76	Agree
	Grand Mean	**2.60**	

Table 2: reveals that most of the items scored above the mean cut off point of 2.50, indicating that the items are perceived as factors causing decline in male enrolment in secondary, whereas items 8, 9, 11, and 14 which fall below the 2.50 are not perceived as factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment in the schools. However the grand mean of 2.60 indicates agreement to parents' perception of the decline of male enrolment in the schools.

Research Question 2

What are the remedies to the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools?

The result of this research question is presented together in table 3 below, since both respondents (teachers and parents) gave thesame answer to the question.

Table 3: Remedies to the Decline of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools

S/N	The remedies of the decline of male enrollment in your school are:	$\bar{X}$	Decision
16.	Introducing free education	2.83	Agree
17.	Career guidance to encourage focus in the student	2.71	Agree
18.	Counseling the students confirmed exhibiting lack of interest at school work	2.85	Agree
19.	Awareness campaign around the school communities to educate parents on the importance of educating male children	2.61	Agree
20.	Sensitizing parents on the importance of boy child education through P.T.A. meetings	2.51	Agree
21.	Use of scholarship and bursary awards for male entrants to encourage male enrolment	3.22	Agree
22.	Introducing civic education in school where the students understands his right to education	3.45	Agree
23.	Deployment of more male teachers into the teaching profession to improve and encourage male enrolment	3.14	Agree
24.	Provision of facilities that are male friendly in the schools to help retain male students and encourage male enrolment	3.45	Agree
25.	Subsidizing tuition fee or granting free education to indigents male students to discourage the intention to dropout	2.96	Agree
	Grand Mean	**2.96**	

The data in table 3 confirms that items 16 to 25 were rated positive by both teachers and parents, with a grand mean of 2.96 scores above the 2.50 cut-off point. This reveals the capability, of the items to remedy the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the study, the major finding was shown that:

1. The teachers agreed with all items identified as factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment, except the following; Government failure to provide free education, High population of female children than male children, Fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment administered in the school to male students, Inability of male students to cope with school subjects leading to school dropout, Lack of focus on the part of male students leading to school dropout.
2. The parents agreed with all items identified as factors responsible for the decline of male enrolment, except thus; Parents view that the educated are usually unemployed, High population of female children than male children, Fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment administered in the school to male students, Lack of focus on the part of male students leading to school dropout.
3. The remedies to the decline of male enrolment are: Provision of facilities that are male friendly in the schools to help retain male students and encourage male enrolment, introducing Civic Education in schools where the students understands his right to education and use of scholarship and bursary awards for male entrants to encourage male enrolment.

Discussion of Results

Findings of the study in table 1 with a grand mean of 2.57 reveals that both the parents of the child and the child himself are responsible for the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools. On the part of the parents, their poor economic status, background, illiteracy, their views that the educated are usually unemployed and their preference for trading rather than education shows that they are detrimental to the benefits of education despite civilization. These parents have failed to understand that "education fosters the worth and development of an individual for the individuals sake and for the general development of the society" (NPE, 2013:7) supposedly, the parents do not know the advantages of educating a male child. The common belief in the African Culture that a male child would later in life attain a higher social and economic status and in turn assist his parents when, they get old which is a major reason for educating the male child (Halima, 2012) is yet unknown to these parents.

The result of the study in table 2 from the previous chapter which showed a grand mean of 2.60 also revealed that the decline of male enrolment in secondary schools is not caused by the male students' fear of going to school as a result of corporal punishment frequently administered on them or lack of focus. The decline is rather caused by the inability of the student to cope with school subjects, poor performance of the student leading to dropping out of the school and the decision of the student or the parents of the students to join the world of business at school age. The male students inability to cope and their poor performance can be traced to the teachers inability to bear (have patience) with male students, the parental background of the child or the parents lack of interest on the child or the parents' decision or the students' decision to be in business such as trading at school age. This may deprive him from living usefully within the society which is the broad goals of secondary education as stated by the National policy on education (2013:18).

Another finding from table 3 is that the serious problem of decline of male enrolment in secondary schools can be remedied by introducing free education, sensitizing parents on the importance of educating male children through P.T.A meetings, the use of scholarship and bursary award for male entrants to encourage male enrolment, provision of facilities that are male friendly to help retain male students and encourage male enrolment, introducing civic education in the school where the students understand his right to education, deployment of more male teachers into the teaching profession to improve and encourage male enrolment, awareness campaign around the school communities to educate parents concerned on the importance of educating male children, counseling students confirmed exhibiting lack of interest at school work and subsidizing tuition fee or granting free education to indigent male students to discourage the intention to drop out. The stated remedies to the problems showing a grand mean of 2.96, bothers on the school authority and the governments of Nigeria, Anambra state in particular as well as other concerned organizations that the decline of male enrolment is solved.

Conclusion

The culture of the African society regards a male child as important. As a result, the male child is not deprived of life's greatest instrument of education for the dividend it offers in the future. This is not the case in Awka south. The study confirms that there is a serious decline in male enrolment in secondary schools in Awka south local government area of Anambra state and indicated several factors responsible which are majorly, parents view that the educated are usually unemployed, the quest for money on the part of the child and poor performance of the male student leading to school drop out. The remedies are that the students should be counseled and the parents, enlightened on the importance of educating a male child as well as free education, scholarship and bursary awards to male entrants and indigent male entrants into secondary schools.

If this factors bedeviling enrolment in secondary schools are not attended to and solved, in the future, men would be incapable of taking the society to its next level in terms of development which is an indication of a retarded society.

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EFFECTS OF GENDER AND INTERACTION OF GENDER AND PERSONALITY TRAITS ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

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Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to determine the effects of gender and personality traits on foreign language anxiety, and the effects of gender-personality traits interaction on the foreign language anxiety. The research conceived in this way has the potential to further clarify the existing inconsistent results of the studies when it comes to investigating gender differences in foreign language anxiety. The study was conducted on the sample of 296 engineering students who attended the English language course. The data were collected using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al. 1986) and the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP). The results show that females experience higher level of foreign language anxiety than males. Emotional Stability and Intellect as personality traits are predictors of foreign language anxiety, and the effect of Emotional stability on language anxiety is more evident in men in comparison with women, while the effect of Intellect is more evident in women in comparison with men. Accordingly, it can be said that, Emotional stability has a stronger effect on language anxiety for men, while Intellect displays a stronger effect on language anxiety for women. Pedagogical implications of the research indicate that teaching strategies and curriculum can correct certain psychological effects in foreign language learning.*

Keywords: *gender; personality traits; interaction; language anxiety; foreign language learning;*

1. Introduction

Foreign language anxiety is a subjective sense of tension, fear, nervousness and worry in the learning process. Since foreign language is a specific type of learning, foreign language anxiety makes an integral part of that process (Horwitz and Young, 1991: 28). MacIntyre and Gardner

(1991) define it as a fear that is experienced when we are required to use a foreign language which is insufficiently mastered. This type of anxiety affects the learning itself and represents a reaction that students perceive as a threat to their sense of security and self-confidence. The literature recognizes three types of anxiety: trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991: 89).

Trait anxiety refers to anxiety in any situation (Spielberger, 1983) and it is defined as a permanent predisposition. Unlike the relatively stable emotional condition that occurs when describing trait anxiety, *state anxiety* is an immediate feature that is not always present, and for example, occurs during an important exam (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991). Higher levels of trait anxiety lead to higher levels of state anxiety in stressful situations. *Situation-specific anxiety* is the third type of anxiety. It is defined as a sense of discomfort, and respondents experience it in specific moments as reaction to the given situation (Woodrow, 2006). This type of anxiety facilitates the exploration of language anxiety, since it allows a number of factors leading to this condition to be considered. There are many theories about the roots of language anxiety. Some researchers (Horwitz and Young, 1991) believe that it can be viewed as a symptom of other forms of anxiety, *oral communication apprehension, fear of negative social evaluation,* and *(language) test anxiety*.

1.1. Gender related effects on foreign language anxiety

Studies on the influence of gender on foreign language anxiety provide different, inconsistent results. Some studies (Campbell and Shaw, 1994; Kitano 2001) suggest that females are less susceptible to foreign language anxiety than males. Studies conducted among secondary school students in France (MacIntyre et al. 2002) have found that the degree of anxiety among male students is constant over the course of three years (7th to 9th grade, or 12-14 years old), while among female students there is a decrease in the transition period from 8th to 9th grade.

Contrary to these results, a series of researches suggest that girls have a greater fear of learning a foreign language (Abu-Rabia, 2004; Arnaiz and Guillen, 2012; Faber, 2012; Donovan and MacIntyre, 2004; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Furnham and Haeven, 1999; Machida, 2001; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2008).

The results of a study that explores Arabic as a foreign language (Elkhafaifi, 2005) indicate that the level of fear of learning is higher among girls. Similarly, in a study exploring Japanese as a foreign language (Machida 2001), the results suggest higher levels of anxiety among girls in comparison with the boys. A study conducted in Spain (Arnaiz and Guillen,

2012) also reports that girls show higher anxiety levels than boys in learning English as a foreign language, especially in oral communication and evaluation.

Contrary, there is a third series of studies that failed to find any significant gender-based difference in foreign language anxiety (Dewaele and Ip, 2013; Dewaele et al. 2008; Donovan and MacIntyre, 2005; Matsuda and Gobel, 2004; Onwuegbuzie et al. 1999). Dewaele and his associates (Dewaele et al. 2008) failed to find significant gender differences in language anxiety, but their data suggest that girls are more prone to the fear of public appearance while speaking a foreign language or debating with their peers. The results of another study (Dewaele and Ip, 2013) indicate that certain personality traits can mediate the relationship between gender and language anxiety. Evident inconsistencies in research results suggest the importance of further investigation of the interactive effects of gender and personality traits on language learning anxiety.

1.2. Big five personality traits

Studies aimed at examining the relationship between personality traits and language anxiety have shown that some personality traits have a significant effect on language anxiety. They were most often investigated in the framework of the Big Five model which includes *Extraversion*, *Neuroticism* (in some models called *Emotional Stability*), *Agreeableness*, *Conscientiousness* and *Openness to Experience* (instead of this factor, some studies isolate the factor called *Intellect*). In studies aimed at determining the predictive power of personality traits in language anxiety as a criterion, *Extraversion*, *Emotional Stability/Neuroticism* and *Conscientiousness* were most often highlighted as significant predictors.

Neuroticism is the inclination of individuals scoring high in this trait towards experiencing negative feelings, anxiety, tension, and general emotional responsiveness. Opposite to this dimension is *Emotional Stability* (Digman, 1990; Lee and Ashton, 2005). Previous studies suggest that there is a strong relation between *Emotional Stability/Neuroticism* and language anxiety (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996; Lynn and Martin, 1997; Dewaele, 2013). Dewaele (2013) also found a close relationship between *Neuroticism* and anxiety in learning a second, third or fourth foreign language in two groups of students. He reports that higher levels of *Emotional Stability* in students imply lower language anxiety and vice versa. However, the relation between *Neuroticism/Emotional Stability* and language anxiety is not as simple as it seems at first glance. Namely, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) failed to find any significant relation between *Neuroticism* and language anxiety.

Some previous studies point to the negative correlation between *Extraversion* and language anxiety (Brown et al. 2001; Dewaele, 2013; MacIntyre and Charos, 1996). People with higher levels of *Extraversion* generally have a positive opinion of themselves, they are energetic, and have an increased tendency towards external stimulation that they provide through interaction with other people. On the other hand, introvert individuals are prone to experiencing discomfort or they are indifferent to social interaction and thus, they are rather reserved than lively by nature. This result (Brown et al. 2001) is explained by the fact that extravert people generally feel more comfortable in situations that allow them to interact and converse with other people, and thus, demonstrating knowledge in foreign language can be characterized as such opportunity. Nevertheless, Dewaele (2013) reported a moderate relationship between *Extraversion* and language anxiety, and only in one subgroup.

Finally, the dimension of *Conscientiousness* refers to the tendency of being organized in terms of time and physical environment, accuracy and perfection, diligence as well as considering the facts carefully when making decisions (Smederevac and Mitrovic, 2009). Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) have reported that perfectionists show higher levels of language anxiety. Especially students in their pursuit of perfection are more concerned and experience high level of stress when dissatisfied with what they have shown in conversation in a foreign language. Due to the mistakes they have made they feel anxious in comparison with the individuals who are not pursuing perfection by nature. Students with higher levels of anxiety also set themselves higher standards in language communication and they are more afraid of being evaluated (Smederevac and Mitrović, 2009).

1.3. Gender differences across dimensions of personality

Previous research in psychology of personality traits has shown significant and time-stable gender differences across a number of personality traits - *Emotional stability/Neuroticism*, *Extraversion* and *Conscientiousness*, regardless of the cultural context. In their study covering 37 countries, Lynn and Martin (1997) suggest that in all of these countries women on average are scoring higher on *Neuroticism* than men, while in 34 out of 37 countries men on average are scoring higher on the dimension of *Extraversion*. In another study covering 26 countries, Costa et al. (2001) found that although gender differences were low compared to individual variations within a gender, the findings are the same in several different cultures across the sample of university students and adult individuals. Women had higher means on *Neuroticism* and *Agreeableness*, while men had higher values on *Extraversion*. These findings are in line with Feingold's results (1994), who found higher average values of anxiety on the sub-dimension of *Neuroticism* in the group of women.

A study of gender differences in personality traits in 49 countries (Schmitt et al. 2008) found a higher degree of *Neuroticism*, *Conscientiousness* and *Extraversion* in females. In addition, another study (Muller and Schwieren, 2012) indicates the presence of significantly higher values on the dimensions of *Neuroticism*, *Conscientiousness*, *Extraversion*, *Openness* and *Agreeableness* in females.

According to the author's knowledge, the predictive value of gender-personality traits interaction has not yet been explored in South-East Europe, and it is also very rare in general, and can be found in only two papers by Gargalianou et al. (2015; 2016). Earlier studies relating to language anxiety (MacIntyre, 1995; 2007) suggest that some personality traits have the status of a predictor of inter-individual differences in language anxiety, but a lot of unexplained variances remain, leaving room for examining the effects of a number of other variables. Therefore, it can only be concluded that studying the interaction of variables is significant both from the prognostic and the cognitive side. Analyzing the interactions provides a clearer insight into the nature of the relationship between the two phenomena, as two or more variables often have combined effects on the third variable. The analytical framework for studying the interactions usually implies that one variable changes the relationship between the other two variables. A moderating variable can alleviate, amplify, or represent some type of suppressor when considering the relationship between the two other variables (Međedović, 2013).

The results of recent study (Gargalianou et al. 2016) have shown that gender is a moderator of relationship between some personality traits in relation to language anxiety, in particular *Emotional Stability*, *Conscientiousness* and *Extraversion*. The results suggest that people who achieve high scores on *Emotionality* (*Neuroticism*) and *Conscientiousness*, and low scores on *Extraversion* display higher levels of language anxiety (Dewaele, 2013; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002), and this effect is more pronounced in women. Thus, in the study conducted by Gargalianou et al. (2016), almost all gender differences in relation to language anxiety can be explained based on differences in personality traits.

1.4. The aim and purpose of the research

Bearing in mind that results of previous research suggest that personality traits have a significant predictive role in relation to language anxiety, and that some studies suggest the existence of gender differences in the manifestation of language anxiety, *the subject of this study* is the influence of personality traits on the gender-dependent manifestation of language anxiety.

From the above, *the basic aims of this research* are derived. First the influence of gender will be explored on the level of appearance of language anxiety, then the effects of personality traits on language anxiety and, finally, the effects of gender-personality traits interaction in the context of foreign language anxiety. In this way, the research has the potential to further clarify the existing inconsistent research results when it comes to exploring gender differences in language anxiety.

2. Method

2.1. Sample

The research was conducted on a sample of 296 students from the Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, who attended the *English language course for specific purposes*. The percentage of respondents per department is shown in Table 1. The average age of students in the sample is 20.16 years (SD = 1.4), and the gender sample structure is relatively uniform (48% of male respondents). When it comes to the length of English language learning, it ranges from 2 to 18 years (AS = 12, SD = 2.37).

Table 1: Structure of the sample

Department	*N*	%
Power engineering	81	27.4
Civil engineering	14	4.7
Mechanical engineering	41	13.9
Industrial management	156	52.7

2.2. Instruments

English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale – FLCAS: Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) *translated in Serbian language*. FLCAS represents a self-describing measure of language anxiety, or anxiety in English language teaching composed of 33 questions. The answers to the questions are provided in the form of a five-point scale of Likert type (1 - completely disagree, 5 -

completely agree). The reliability of internal consistency of the scale as a whole in this study is α = .94.

IPIP-50 (IPIP Big Five Broad Domains: Goldberg, 1992). The *IPIP-50* questionnaire represents the operationalization of the Big Five model, which is publicly available within the IPIP pool. Each personality trait in the Big Five domain was estimated through 10 questions followed by a five-point Likert scale (1 - completely disagree, 5 - completely agree). The reliability of the scale expressed by the Kronbach alpha coefficient is as follows: *Extraversion* α = .75, *Conscientiousness* α = .73, *Agreeableness* α = .77, *Emotional Stability* α = .86 and *Intellect* α = .71.

2.3. Data analysis

All statistical procedures were realized in the SPSS 23 statistical environment (IBM Corp., 2015). A Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (HMRA) was conducted in order to test the effects of gender, personality traits and their interaction on language anxiety among students. The analysis of moderation in the statistical package PROCESS was conducted for the obtained significant effects of interaction (Hayes, 2012).

3.Results

3.1. Preliminary analyzes

The basic descriptive indicators for variables of importance in the research are shown in Table 2. Values of asymmetry in the distribution of results (skewness) and kurtosis in the distribution of results suggest that the distribution of scores on all the variables is approximately normal.

Table 2: Descriptive indicators for variables included in the research

	N	*Min*	*Max*	*AS*	*SD*	*Sk*	*Ku*
Extraversion	296	15	49	32.95	6.32	-0.07	0.04
Conscientiousness	296	15	50	35.74	6.03	0.00	-0.31
Agreeableness	296	20	50	37.83	5.92	-0.19	-0.44
Emotional stability	296	12	50	32.07	7.85	0.07	-0.30
Intellect	296	23	50	35.89	5.45	0.15	-0.39
Language anxiety	296	37	157	87.81	24.28	0.09	-0.13

Note: Min – Minimum. Max – Maximum. AS – Arithmetic mean. SD – Standard deviation. Sk – Skewness. Ku – Kurtosis.

A Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (HMRA) was conducted in order to test the effects of gender, personality traits and their interaction on the level of language anxiety among students. In the first HMRA, the variable of gender was introduced in the first step, the personality traits according to the Big Five model in the second step, and the gender-personality traits interaction in the third step. In this way, values of the VIF coefficient for all predictors exceeded the value of 10 (they ranged from 11.64 to 99.44), pointing to multicolinearity in the model (Field, 2013).

3.2. Basic results

Since the reliability of estimation of the parameters within the first model was distorted due to multicolinearity, two separate models were tested: one that tested the independent predictive contribution of gender and personality traits, and one in which only gender-personality traits interactions were defined as predictive variables. In both models, language anxiety was taken as a criterion.

Table 3 shows the results that suggest that both steps in the first tested model are statistically significant. The variable of gender explains 2% of the criterion variance, while the personality traits of the Big Five model explain an additional 17% of the criterion variance.

Table 3: Proportion of explanation of variance in language anxiety as a criterion variable for predictors of gender and Big Five personality traits

model	R^2	R^2	F	*df1*	*df2*	*p*
1	0.02	0.02	6.33	1	289	0.012
		ΔR^2	ΔF			
2	0.19	0.17	11.57	5	284	0.000

Partial contributions of predictors are shown in Table 4. The first step of the model where gender is the only predictor is statistically significant. The positive value of the regression coefficient suggests that female respondents are scoring slightly higher on language anxiety. However, with the introduction of personality traits, the predictive contribution of gender drops below the level of statistical significance, and *Emotional Stability* and *Intellect* appear as significant predictor. The values of beta coefficient suggest that lower *Emotional Stability* (or higher *Neuroticism*) and lower *Intellect* predict higher scores on language anxiety.

Table 4: Partial contributions of predictors in predicting language anxiety as a criterion

model	predictors	*β*	*t*	*p*	VIF
1	gender	0.15	2.52	0.012	1.00
2	gender	0.05	0.82	0.414	1.20
	Extraversion	0.06	0.91	0.361	1.29
	Conscientiousness	0.09	1.60	0.110	1.17
	Agreeableness	-0.01	-0.16	0.875	1.35
	Emotional stability	-0.30	-5.06	0.000	1.19
	Intellect	-0.30	-5.11	0.000	1.22

Note: β – standardized beta coeffcicient. Tol – Tolerance. VIF – Variance Inflation Factor.

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of multiple regression analysis in which only interactions between gender and personality traits are defined as predictive variables. The model as a whole explains 12% of the criterion variance of language anxiety and it is statistically significant (Table 5).

Table 5: Proportion of explanation of variance in language anxiety with gender-personality traits interaction as a predictor

model	R^2	*F*	*df1*	*df2*	*p*
1	0.12	7.98	5	285	0.000

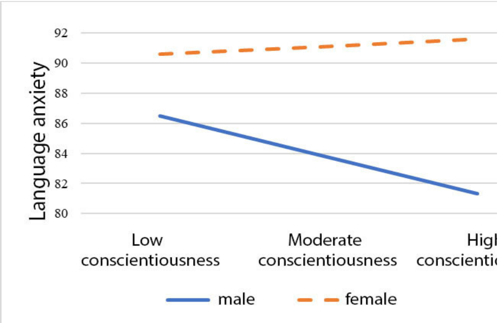
The results given in Table 6 indicate a significant predictive contribution in explaining language anxiety for the interaction between gender and the following personality traits: *Extraversion*, *Conscientiousness*, *Emotional Stability* and *Intellect*.

Table 6: Partial contributions of gender-personality traits interactions as predictors of language anxiety

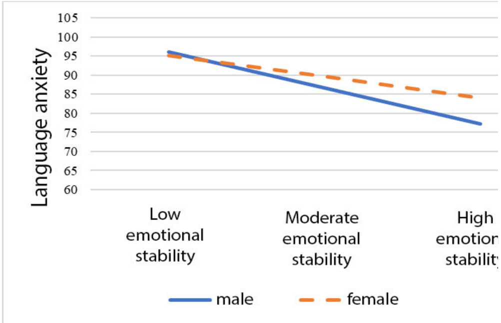
Predictors	*β*	*t*	*p*	Tol	VIF
gender x Extraversion	0.27	2.21	0.028	0.20	4.99
gender x Conscientiousness	0.49	4.01	0.000	0.21	4.86
gender x Agreeableness	0.21	1.44	0.151	0.14	7.02
gender x Emotional stability	-0.32	-3.82	0.000	0.43	2.34
gender x Intellect	-0.61	-4.33	0.000	0.16	6.41

Note: β – standardized beta coefficient. Tol – Tolerance. VIF – Variance Inflation Factor.

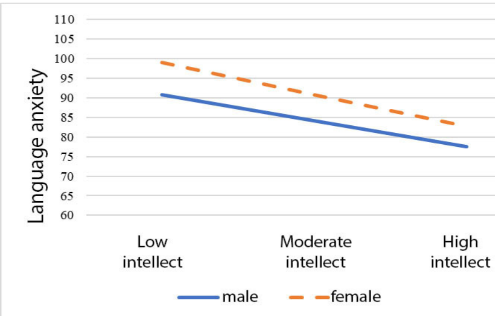
For the obtained significant interaction effects in the previously described model, a moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS statistical package (Hayes, 2012). The obtained results are graphically presented in Figure 1.



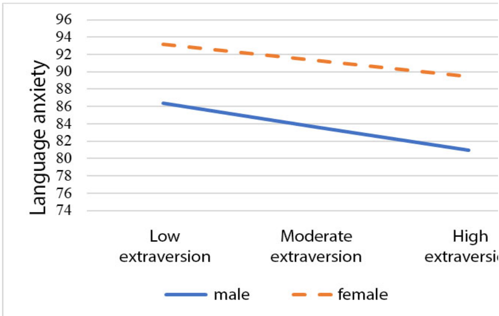
1a) Gender-Conscientiousness interaction



1b) Gender-Emotional stability interaction



1c) Gender-Intellect interaction



1d) Gender-Extraversion interaction

Figure 1: Graphic presentation of interactions that have been shown in the regression model as significant predictors of language anxiety

The obtained results of analysis of moderation suggest that *Conscientiousness* neither has significant effects on language anxiety in the group of male ($B = -0.43$, $p = 0.188$) nor in the group of female respondents ($B = 0.08$, $p = 0.808$) (Figure 1a).

Emotional stability has a significant negative effect on language anxiety in the group of male respondents ($B = -1.20$, $p = 0.000$) and a negative effect in the group of female respondents ($B = -0.70$, $p = 0.006$) (Figure 1b).

Intelligence has a significant negative effect on language anxiety in the group of male respondents ($B = -1.22$, $p = 0.001$) and negative effect in the group of female respondents ($B = -1.50$, $p = 0.000$) (Figure 1c).

Finally, *Extraversion* does not have a significant effect on language anxiety neither in the group of male respondents (B = -0.43, p = 0.190) nor in the group of female respondents (B = -0.29; 0.31, p = 0.340) (Figure 1d).

4. Discussion

This paper investigates the effects of gender, the Big Five personality traits and the gender-personality traits interaction on foreign language. First, the effects of gender were tested on the level of language anxiety, then the effects of personality traits, and finally the effects of gender-personality traits interaction. In this way, the study has clarified the existing inconsistent results of previous studies with regard to the examination of gender differences in language anxiety.

In the tested model that examined the independent predictor of gender and personality traits the gender variable explains 2% of criterion variable, while personality traits explain 17% of criterion variable in language anxiety.

The partial contribution of gender as a predictor is statistically significant, and the positive value of the regression coefficient indicates that female respondents score higher on language anxiety. These results are in line with the results of Gargalianou et al. (2015). With the introduction of personality traits in the regression model, the predictive contribution of *Emotional Stability* and *Intellect* reaches the level of statistical significance, while gender in this step of the model loses the status of a statistically significant predictor. These results are also significantly in line with previous researches (Cohen et al. 2003; Gargalianou et al. 2015). Finally, the obtained results suggest that lower levels of *Emotional Stability* and lower levels of *Intellect* indicate higher levels of language anxiety.

Interactions between gender and personality traits as predictive variables explain 12% of criterion variance of language anxiety, and this model as a whole is statistically significant. Significant predictive contribution has the interaction between gender and personality traits of *Extraversion*, *Conscientiousness*, *Emotional Stability* and *Intellect* in the context of language anxiety as a criterion. These results are somewhat in line with the results reported by Gargalianou et al. (2015), but in their research personality traits explain 65% of gender differences, primarily *Emotional stability* and *Conscientiousness*.

Finally, the obtained results indicate that gender moderation significantly affects the relationship between *Emotional Stability* and *Intellect* on one hand and language anxiety on the other. Thus, *Emotional Stability* and *Intellect* are consistently present as personality traits of relevance when considering language anxiety and its gender based manifestation - first in the model that contains gender and personality traits, then in the model that contains only gender-personality traits interactions (where gender interaction with *Extraversion* or *Conscientiousness* appears as an important predictor) also when testing the moderation. According to the presentation in Figure 1, it can be said that the significant effects of moderation have the same direction for both genders, with the values obtained suggesting a slightly greater (faster) change in levels of language anxiety with the change in levels of personality traits.

The effect of *Emotional Stability* is more pronounced in male respondents, while the effect of *Intellect* is more pronounced in females. Thus, it can be concluded that the increase of *Emotional Stability* leads to "faster" changes in scores on language anxiety in male than in female respondents, while for the personality trait of *Intellect* the score on language anxiety changes faster in women than in men. Bearing in mind that the previous researches have shown consistently that women exhibit lower scores on *Emotional Stability* than men (e.g. Schmitt et al. 2008; Weisberg et al, 2011), and that they are more likely to express anxious response (McLean et al. 2011), in the analysis of moderation in the context of language anxiety this result can mean that greater emotional stability is not sufficient to "amortize" the anxious response in females in the situation of foreign language learning. As *Intellect* does not particularly appear as a significant factor in the context of language anxiety in previous studies, and that usually no gender differences were recorded in the context of this trait (Schmitt et al. 2008), the obtained result in this study showed that *Intellect* is more important in the group of female than in the group of male respondents, that is, women scoring higher on the personality trait of *Intellect* achieve lower scores on language anxiety than men equally scoring on this personality trait. This result should be further examined.

5. Conclusion and pedagogical implications

It can be concluded that this research has made substantial contribution to the further clarification of the complex relationship between gender, personality traits and language anxiety among university students. Firstly, women have greater fear of learning a foreign language than men. Secondly, *Emotional Stability* and *Intellect* as personality traits are predictors of language anxiety, that is, students scoring higher on these traits tend to score lower on language anxiety. Thirdly, the effect of *Emotional stability* on language anxiety is more pronounced in men than in women, while the effect of *Intellect* is more pronounced in women. Accordingly, it can be said that in men, *Emotional stability* has a stronger effect on language anxiety than in women, while in women *Intellect* displays a stronger effect on language anxiety than in men.

This study has shown that this complex phenomenon is worth researching at university level. The obtained results confirmed that language anxiety affects students of both genders, reinforcing the fact that more attention should be paid to the immediate interaction between teachers and students. Pedagogical implications of the research indicate that there is a need for a wider consideration of impact of several related factors on language anxiety. Since *Emotional Stability* and *Intellect* significantly influence the effects of language anxiety, teaching strategies and curriculum can correct certain psychological effects in foreign language learning. Also, potential methods and techniques for alleviating anxiety should be explored, enabling students to realize their full potential and achieve maximum success in studying and future careers. During the teaching process, it is necessary to stimulate the atmosphere of relaxed dialogue with mutual respect, building awareness of empathy and tolerance in students. Students should be encouraged to engage in dialogue and active participation in the teaching process, and the language of teaching materials should be at appropriate level in order to stimulate the adoption of new material. Teachers, in cooperation with students, should find ways to overcome problems by sharing the sense of anxiety and discomfort with their peers. Thus, the teaching process needs to be approached with more knowledge and the desire to respond in timely and adequate manner.

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READING: BETWEEN COMPULSORY READING AND FREE CHOICE

– On the social and individual aspect of first literature classes –

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ABSTRACT: *Education is the most important activity for the development of a society, the identity and survival of a certain nation. Mother tongue and literature is, in pre-university education, in all education systems, the most important subject. This subject contributes to acquiring the reading habit, it fosters consistency, cultivates taste, develops empathy. Therefore, the organisation of the curriculum for this subject, apart from its narrow specialist meaning, has a wider social significance. The most important segment of teaching mother tongue and literature is reading, which highlights the importance of how much reading students do and what they read, as well as the possibility of their participation in selecting reading materials. This paper deals first with compulsory and optional (additional) literary texts – those which are prescribed curriculum and those which are part of the author's free choice in junior textbooks regarding their availability in the textbooks, and subsequently, it deals with the real use of optional texts in class, as well as the criteria applied when selecting these texts. In this paper, by conducting a survey involving 255 junior teachers, it was examined: a) to what extent teachers rely on the texts that the authors of junior textbooks select for optional reading; b) which criteria they consider to be the most important while they choose additional texts for reading in class; c) which are the main features of the texts they select in the first place. For the purpose of creating a questionnaire, the curriculum for junior classes was analysed, and so was the content of all the approved reading textbooks for this age in the school year 2017/2018. The results of the survey show that junior teachers use the offered additional texts in junior textbooks to a large degree, that the most important criteria when choosing the additional texts are the students' reception, their interests and sensibilities. The least important criteria are those related to the teacher's reading taste and interpretative skills, or his or her competence to present a text in an adequate way in class, which* *suggests that teachers erroneously exclude themselves as important factors in the selection of texts. When introducing texts independently, teachers have similar expectations to those regarding the texts which are the prescribed curriculum.*

KEY WORDS: *education*; *society*; *teacher*; *teaching of literature*; *school curriculum*; *the reading list*; *textbook*; *additional texts*; *free choice*;

Preliminary considerations

Native language and literature teaching has a wider social significance. It strengthens the national and cultural identity of students by providing knowledge of their own literature and culture, as well as the literature and culture of other nations. Native language and literature classes help students to develop love towards reading, to discern what is beautiful and valuable, to acquire taste. Reading requires time, consistency and dedication, and nurturing these characteristics is a basis for all further learning. Through reading of high literary value texts and through discussions about them in class, critical thinking is developed, because students need to have opinions regarding the actions and personal traits of the characters and different events in the text. It is of major importance that literature should develop a strong feeling of empathy in children by requiring readers to see things from another's point of view and understand those characters' most diverse personality traits and actions. "Art fosters judgement and sensibility, and these could and should be prominent in the choices that citizens make. This applies to a certain extent to all forms of art. Music, dance, painting, sculpture, architecture have all played their role in developing our ability to understand people that surround us. But in a curriculum that is supposed to foster citizenship 'of the world', literature especially provides immense contribution because it depicts specific circumstances and problems of different people" (Nussbaum 2012: 248).[2]

In teaching literature, namely, in reading high value literary texts in school, both teachers' and students' possibility to make free choices is very important. By selecting their reading material, students develop their personalities and, more importantly, increase the awareness of their own impact on the teaching process. The awareness of having a direct impact on one's own education enhances their sense of dignity and responsibility,

[2] On the social importance of literature and its role in strengthening a sense of sensitivity and empathy see more in: Nussbaum, Martha (2012). Cultivating humanity: A Classical Defence of
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which has an immeasurable social impact. One of the most important factors in cultivating young readers is, besides the compulsory reading list which is the prescribed curriculum, to provide students and their teachers with the possibility to read and analyse the works of their own choice. The possibility of making a free choice of reading material is of paramount importance, which the researches and opinions of many researchers confirm (Clark and Rumbold 2006; Gambrell 1996; Krashen 1993; Sanacore 1999). It has been demonstrated there is a positive link between a free choice and the affective aspects of reading, such as motivation (Moss and Hendershot 2002; Schrav et al. 1998) or the connection between accomplishment and interesting reading material (Hunt 1970/1997). The role of a teacher in a student's selection process could be crucial (Johns and VanLeirsburg 1994: 96), while a teacher's possibility to make a free choice depends largely on the freedom envisaged by the curriculum and the texts available in junior textbooks. According to some previous researches, junior teachers are inclined to use optional texts in class (Floverday and Schrav 2000), especially those already provided by the textbook authors, which our research will also confirm.

The primary school curriculum that is currently in use in the Republic of Serbia regarding the Serbian language for junior grades of primary school (NP 2004; NP 2005; NP 2006) does not disregard the possibility of a free choice of literature on the part of teachers and students alike.[3] The prescribed curriculum includes literature with two types of texts: compulsory (specifically named and divided into literary genres – lyrical, epic and drama) and optional texts comprising two types: guided optional and free choice optional texts. Guided optional texts are those prescribed in accordance with the curriculum and genre or authorship (e.g. " A selection of folk lyrical poems" or "Selected poetry of Duško Radović"), while there is no concrete guidance with regard to free choice texts (complementary or supplementary) in the curriculum, apart from the instructions to carry out the obligation to include a certain number of such texts: *a minimum of two, and a maximum of four* (third grade), i.e. *a minimum of three, a maximum of five* (fourth grade).

In the case of *a free choice*, teachers choose, but their *freedom* is conditioned: first by their knowledge and reading taste, the class composition and the students' reading experience, as well as the number of classes remaining after they finish with compulsory literature and all the other topics related to language teaching. From the students' perspective, this freedom is different: teachers may and should consult them, but after they make a

[3] New curricula, for first and second grade of primary school, as well as fifth and sixth, which are still being drafted, should reinforce such aspects of selection.

choice, the works they have chosen become compulsory. However, the possibility of the students choosing their reading material with their teachers should not be underestimated, because it gives them a sense of freedom and self-respect. Despite the abovementioned and other limitations, optional texts that are analysed in class serve as an incentive for searching for further reading material and gaining knowledge of new literary works. It provides a nice opportunity for some significant works which have not been included in the curriculum, but also for valuable, modern, still not canonised literature, for adjusting the offered works to the students' sensibility, and even for possible experiments.

Teachers should be encouraged through various strategies to deal with additional texts in class, first of all to cultivate the students' reading for pleasure. Educational strategies should raise the awareness of teachers as regards the reasons for reading and why reading is so vital for children (Hodges 2010). Through optional texts, teachers, as well as the authors of textbooks, complement or correct the prescribed curriculum, discover the students' interests and, in the most auspicious circumstances, show that classical and contemporary works shed a new light upon one another and give an added meaning. We could also use here the term "balanced literacy approach", which is also important in teaching, according to which a literary text is by no means at the centre of teaching, but also, during the course of selecting optional texts and concerning their connection with the compulsory ones, a great deal of attention is dedicated to the functional connection between all the segments of language and literature teaching (Krashen 1993; Purcell 2001): to a better connection between teaching literature and grammar, to establishing a connection between teaching literature and the students' in-class essay exams (there are many teachers who, during primary school education, never give a single task requiring the interpretation of a literary work or some of its characteristics), familiarising students with figures of speech, as well as phraseologisms which are very suitable for presenting a common denominator for everyday speech, grammar, stylistics and literature.

Applying proper criteria for selecting additional texts contributes to a more varied selection of texts in the syllabus. Diversity of genres and topics, as well as a balanced number of texts from different periods is very important from the earliest school age, ever since the period of literacy and formation of young readers, because they enable them to develop a better perspective of literature and react more adequately to both the form and content of a text (see: But and Svorc 2009: 24).

Adhering to the ratio between compulsory and optional texts, our curriculum suggests texts from the literary canon but, simultaneously, it gives the authors of textbooks and teachers freedom to select works that have not been canonised yet. That intersection of compulsory and optional texts raises several questions, which is the core subject of our research. It has to be pointed out that this seemingly irrelevant question proves to be very important, because it reflects, to a larger or smaller extent, all the questions related to the literature syllabus – ranging from the school curriculum, through the form and method of teaching practice, to fostering reading habits in the students.

In this paper we focused our attention on certain aspects of the availability of optional texts in the curriculum. The first aspect deals with the number of compulsory and optional texts in junior textbooks. Currently, the ratio is decidedly in favour of compulsory texts, but it is still inconclusive as to what would happen if the ratio were higher in favour of optional texts. The second aspect refers to the methods of choosing these texts for teaching practice and textbooks, as well as the reliance of junior teachers on the already existing selections provided by the authors of junior textbooks. The third aspect refers to the knowledge, willingness and determination of teachers themselves to research a wide field of literature and select specific texts.[4] If we take into account the inevitable variety and limitations of a junior teacher's knowledge (who teaches five, six or more subjects), then the importance of careful consideration and research regarding the prominence and type of optional texts in the curriculum and teaching practice is even more significant. This is reinforced by the researches (Cremin et al. 2008) conducted in some more developed education systems, in which strategies for improving teacher knowledge in this area were offered and implemented (O'Sullivan and McGonigle 2010).

The efforts aimed at increasing teacher knowledge and competence become even more valuable taking into consideration the increasing number of optional texts in junior textbooks, the textbooks which serve as a primary source of texts for language and literature teaching practice. Possible selection criteria and considerations concerning the functional purpose of

[4] The literature curriculum for children and youth at the Teacher Education Faculty in Belgrade was modernised eight years ago by the inclusion of numerous new works by national and foreign authors: Dragomir Đorđević, Vladimir Andrić, Vesna Aleksić, Cornelia Funke, Ian McEwan, Ray Bradbury…We believe that some of these works have been included in the prescribed curriculum for 5th to 8th grade of primary school due to this influence. Nevertheless, this was done by university professors and literature experts whose professional obligation requires following literature developments. Are teachers equally capable of doing it in the same manner, and are we not setting the requirements too high for them?

these texts were the starting point of our research. Subsequently, our focus shifted towards the considerations of the teachers themselves on these issues.

Research methodology

The subject of our research comprises teachers' attitudes to optional texts and their use in teaching practice. For this purpose, we have composed a questionnaire containing four questions which coincide with the research goals:

1) to establish the utility of optional texts from junior textbooks in teaching practice;

2) to observe the criteria the teachers apply when they select additional texts and the ranking criteria;

3) to determine the presence of a literary genre in the selection.

By applying the content analysis technique to textbooks for 1st to 4th grade of primary school, we came across the content lists of optional texts in them and the possible criteria applied during the selection process. Our source were the textbooks for the school year 2017/2018 approved by the Ministry of Education. We perused thirty-three textbooks by nine publishing houses: The Institute for Textbook Publishing, Epoha, Eduka, Klett, Kreativni centar, Novi Logos, Nova škola, BIGZ and Innovation Joksimović.[5]

To achieve the abovementioned goal (1) and in order to make the sample, as well as the entire research relevant, we opted for one publishing house and the optional texts in its junior textbooks. This was important so

[5] The results we obtained will be, on account of their scope, the subject of another paper, but here it is worth mentioning only two to three details. First, in several approved junior textbooks not all the curriculum prescribed texts are included. Furthermore, the number of optional texts and the ratio between optional and compulsory texts varies from one publishing house to another, from one grade to another, and to such an extent that it poses a difficulty to find any consistency in that fluctuation, or discern a clear concept on the part of the author of the textbook or the publisher, even in the case of the same author for different age groups. The number of additional texts in textbooks range from 28 (in one textbook for 3rd grade) to 1 (a textbook for 4th grade). In the case of one publishing house, the largest number of optional texts are in 1st grade, and then the numbers gradually diminish. In the case of another, the situation was reverse, and when it comes to all the others, out of eight of the approved ones, there are no discernible criteria. Not a single textbook contains specifically marked optional texts. The author is not obliged to do so, but it would be very useful for teachers, especially those that use the textbook as a substitute for the curriculum. The textbook by no means limits the teacher in choosing additional texts for teaching, but in practice, teachers do not tend to go beyond the given framework considerably, which will be confirmed by the results in this paper.

that we could be sure that the teachers-respondents were familiar with the concrete optional texts, i.e. that they distinguish them from those which are curriculum prescribed. We selected the textbooks published by Klett for 3rd and 4th grade because of the presence of a large number of optional texts in them and a widespread use of these textbooks in primary schools in the Republic of Serbia. The sample of respondents is limited to the teachers who use or used these junior textbooks in their teaching practice.

As a research instrument, a closed-ended type of survey questions was used, which was supposed to guide the teachers towards concrete optional texts, and then towards ranking the criteria for choosing texts and genres. The survey sample included teachers from primary schools in Serbia, i.e. 255 teachers from 28 primary schools from 12 administrative districts.

Descriptive and analytical statistics methods were used in this paper. Among the descriptive statistics measures for numerical data, the following were used: the central tendency measures (arithmetic mean, median, mode) and variability measures (standard deviation, interval variations), while absolute values and percentages were used for describing attribute data. As regards analytical statistics methods, the ones for investigating the importance of connectedness were used, namely, Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient. The probability value lower than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. The obtained data from the survey questionnaire were processed by the package IBM SPSS 24 Statistics.

Research results and discussion

The utility of optional texts from textbooks in teaching. In the first question, in the table with listed optional texts from the textbooks published by Klett for 3rd and 4th grade, the respondents marked the texts they used in the current school year or before. The table for 3rd grade contained twenty-eight text titles and the authors' names, while there were fourteen of them in the table for 4th grade.[6] The teachers who opted for these textbooks had the overall number of forty-two additional texts at their disposal in two grades. We notice that the number of texts in these grades is not equal and the principle of sequence is missing. The reasons for this discrepancy, which is

[6] All the texts which had a clearly marked author or which belonged to folk literature were listed. The extracts and shorter texts which were included in the textbook as parts of a methodological apparatus were not subject to analysis. Within the framework of the methodological apparatus of several textbooks, there are numerous texts without marked authorship, and it could be inferred on the basis of their nature that they are somewhat freer, but very successful stylistic endeavours carried out by the textbooks' authors themselves based on one or several sources. Some of these texts are little gems of encyclopaedic nature.

common in textbooks, may be found in the scope of the prescribed curriculum: “The textbooks’ authors *suffer* under the strain of so many compulsory texts. Some of those texts do not possess such value and significance for the national culture to be compulsory” [Mrkalj and Plut 2007: 56]. However, it may be justified to say that such a huge difference in the number of additional texts, not only in the abovementioned textbooks but in general, indicates there is a lack of reliable criteria or any other kind of proper guidance regarding their selection. Certainly, a lot depends on the very authors of the textbooks, but we cannot put the blame on them if the curriculum offers just general guidelines.

By marking the optional texts in the tables and a statistical analysis of the answers, a quantifiable result about their use in teaching was obtained.

Table 1. The most frequently and the least frequently analysed texts in the chosen grades

	Third grade			**Fourth grade**		
	text title	**frequency**	**percentage**	**text title**	**frequency**	**percentage**
most frequently selected	“Lion and Bull”, Dositej	207	86%	The Poetry of M. Danojlić	184	78%
	Short Folk Creations	195	81%	“Cat”, N.Tesla	180	77%
	“The Giant and the Tailor”, The Brothers Grimm	195	81%	Lyric folk songs	175	74%
	The Poetry of D. Radović	193	80%	*Sanja*, M. Kapor	165	70%
	Traditional Folk Lyric Songs	187	78%	“I Support Violeta”, N.Popadić	161	68%
	“Snow Is Falling”, V. Bunjac	164	68%	“Lullaby for D”, P. Zubac	156	66%
	“Trinkets”, V. Andrić	162	67%	“At the Request of the Audience”, M. Odalović	154	65%
	“Grey”, S. V. Janković	160	66%	“The Moon Story”, G. Vitez	149	63%
	“What Is the Heart Used for”, N. Popadić	150	62%	“A Goldfish”, D.Trifunović	147	62%
	“Pegasus”, old Greek story	147	61%	“When Grandpa Does Not Know How to Tell Stories” , Đ. Rodari	136	58%
Least frequently selected	*Agi and Ema,* I.Kolarov	70	29%	“Morning on the Moon” , H.G. Wells	125	53%
	“A Collection of Stamps”, K. Čapek	67	28%	“A Shining Example”, V. Stojiljković	123	52%
	“When I Come to the White World”, D. Brajković	57	24%	“A Legend about a Boy from New York”, D.	106	45%

The results analysis shows that the teachers are willing to use additional texts in teaching and that they often rely on the authors' selections in the textbooks, because it is evident that there is a high number of these texts used. This can be inferred after taking into consideration space for the analysis of additional texts which the annual teacher syllabus enables. After all these topics and teaching units from various language and literature aspects which, according to the curriculum, have to be included in monthly and annual programmes, as well as the exact number of lessons dedicated to them, there is little room left for additional selections of teachers and students. This is why the quantative instruction is provided for third and fourth grade: *from two to four*, or from *three to five*, which, of course, could be understood within this framework. From the previous table, we can see that the number of texts with a high percentage of usage surpass this instruction. Taking all this into account, it is completely justified to take teachers as respondents, because their role is crucial in determining the qualitative-quantitative attitude to optional texts: the teacher is the one who selects.

We can see that the so-called guided optional texts are most used (from 80% to 74%), regardless of genre characteristics and student interests. Actually, many criteria cease to apply when it comes to the guided programme requirement. This shows that a guided choice has a compulsory status, because freedom of choice is within the limited space of the guided programme instruction: traditional lyric poems, selected poems by Dušan Radović (3rd grade), as well as the selection of poems by Milovan Danojlić (4th grade) are guided by the basic school document. It is interesting that in 4th grade a selection of folk lyric poetry is made (the programme does not prescribe guided additional selection for this age, but is a completely free choice of the textbook's author, which is used in class to a great extent (as high as 74%).[7] Not denying the aesthetic value of folk lyric poetry, and taking into account the problems of the reception of this genre and (non) presence of some other genres at some junior school grades levels, it is illogical that certain texts similar in genre are repeated, whereas some are completely excluded from the textbooks. Given that short folk creations are frequently read and interpreted as optional texts (in third grade 81% of the interviewed teachers use them), we can conclude that the purpose of this choice is to establish the position of a genre within the system of a rich genre classification of folk literature.

[7] In this case, the selection of lyric poetry in fourth grade included new types of poems compared to those given in third grade.

At the very top of the most frequently used texts of free choice, there are some types of literature very close to the students' interests in terms of topics which also have a very prominent didactic-pedagogical function (the fable "The Lion and the Bull" and the fairy tale "The Giant and the Tailor" in third grade, the extract from The Stories about the Childhood of Nikola Tesla – "Cat", in fourth grade).[8] A well-known author and a school writer are frequently the reasons which are considered valid for the teaching purpose. Even though the presence of the author in optional texts may be only temporary and influenced by certain social circumstances, in this case it has to do with purely literary criteria and values of the texts themselves (e.g. "Grey" by Svetlana Velmar Janković, third grade; "Sanja" by Momo Kapor and "Cat" by Nikola Tesla, 4th grade). It is absolutely possible to assume that these works were selected on account of the authors' significance, but, on the other hand, also because of a wider cultural (literary and scientific) context they imply. That context requires that the teacher should make an additional effort for a proper interpretation, and it raises the question of whether the focus should be on the extract itself or the entire work.[9]

The interviewed teachers frequently opt for the texts which are age appropriate to the students in terms of topics, and especially for those which enable the identification of the students with the heroes when it comes to the first person narrative, as well as for texts which have a distinct pedagogical function or a humorous tone ("Trinkets" by Vladimir Andrić, "What Is the Heart Used for" and "I Support Violeta" by Nedeljko Popadić, "The Lullaby for D." by Pero Zubac). All the aforementioned works belong to lyrical poetry, which does not completely correspond to the likability of the lyrical

[8] It is easy to notice the correlation between the results in Table 1 and in Table 3 which is presented later in this paper, and in which genres are ranked, and where we see that teachers are most inclined to select fairy tales, fables and stories (short stories) as optional texts.

Furthermore, in the selection of these genres the influence of the prescribed curriculum is irrefutable, which is also reflected in the fact that, even with regard to optional texts, teachers are more inclined to select the genres which are most widespread in the curriculum such as fairy tales, fables, stories, and are considerably less inclined to opt for those that are *marginal* in the curriculum, irrespective of the students' familiarity with some features in them (the old Greek story "Pegasus" in third grade, "The Moon Story" by Grigor Vitez in fourth grade etc.).

[9] Here we can also note that it is unusual, and for a young reader unnecessary, to analyse one part of a story in one grade (entitled by the author of the textbook as "Grey") which is in the next grade a part of the compulsory curriculum (under the original title "Gold Lamb" by Svetlana Velmar Janković). This could briefly remind one of the concentric circle principle regarding the organization of teaching material, but in teaching literature it is completely impractical to make several small texts out of one literary text.

genre (see Table 3). However, it could be argued that some of the characteristics of this type of lyrical poetry (lexical familiarity, rhythm, regularity of the rhyme, transparent layers of ideas for the reception of a text) boost its presence. Such lyrical poems are generally more suitable for interpretation than poems written in free verse, with no rhyme, with a narrative tone and figurative meanings, rich with stylistic devices, poetic images and motifs.

Texts which could be instrumental in teaching as a complement to a certain theoretical literary notion are of particular value (Janićijević 2016). The text “Snow Is Falling” by Vladimir Bunjc (68% use) is a good example for teaching *description*. A similar function is fulfilled by texts whose titles and content concentrate on a genre and require that the knowledge of literary theory should be increased. Such texts in 4th grade are “The Lullaby for D.” by Pero Zubac (66%), which is not a typical lullaby, and the poem “The Moon Story” by Grigor Vitez (63%). It transpires that in both grades the least used are the extracts from novels and collections of stories (compare grades in Table 1). Moreover, popular contemporary children’s writers (*Agi and Ema*, by Igor Kolarov) do not have a clearly established place in reading classes in junior grades.

At the top of the optional texts which were most frequently used in 3rd grade, there are short artistic texts, but it is interesting that almost at the same level there are folk creations and works of modern (contemporary) poetry. Although it may be assumed that the texts were primarily selected according to their complexity, we are of the opinion that such a selection contributes to a large extent to the development of a child’s literary sensitivity. Similar results were obtained in 4th grade. The texts are shorter, but diverse in terms of themes: from the poetry of Milovan Danojlić (curriculum guided) and lyrical folk songs to extracts from the works by Nikola Tesla *A Childhood Story* and the novel *Sanja* by Momo Kapor. It is interesting that the percentage of the most frequently used texts in both grades ranges from 86 to 70. It can be assumed that this selection was influenced, apart from the teacher’s sensibility, by the experience from the previous school years, agreements with colleagues and professional seminars.

The selection criteria for additional texts. In the questionnaire, we offered to the teachers eight possible criteria for the selection of additional texts, to rank them in order of importance from 1 to 8, where 1 would be the most important and 8 the least important criterion in their opinion when selecting texts:

1) a thematic link between the text and the other curriculum prescribed texts;

2) a text as an illustrative example for introducing a theoretical-literary notion;
3) a text whose topic is close to the students' interests, age and ability to understand;
4) several texts by one author, which contributes to a better understanding of the poetic features of his or her work;
5) a teacher's personal affinities and knowledge about the selected text;
6) the availability of other sources related to the selected text (preparations, handbooks, scientific, critical and methodological literature);
7) a distinct pedagogical function, and
8) the fact that the text belongs to a specific genre.[10]

For criteria 2, 4 and 7, it may be said that they represent one of the functions of a text in teaching. The criteria 1 and 8 relate to the nature of the text, its content (thematic -1) and formal (related to a genre - 8) characteristics. Criterion 3 refers to the student and his or her characteristics, while criteria 5 and 6 imply that the teacher's role is demanding and specific. Each of the offered criteria is based on some element of the teaching process: the text, the student, the teacher, the compulsory curriculum.

Table 2. The selection criteria for optional texts

criterion	1. thematic link	2. theoretical-literary notion	3. interests and age of the students	4. texts by one author	5. teacher's affinities	6. availability of sources	7. pedagogical function	8. genre
number of respondents	243	243	244	245	243	243	243	246
missing data	12	12	11	10	12	12	12	9
arithmetic mean	2,81	4,21	2,61	5,98	5,88	6,05	3,19	5,10
median	2,00	4,00	2,00	6,00	6,00	7,00	3,00	5,00
mode	**1**	**3**	**1**	**7**	**8**	**8**	**2**	**5**
standard deviation	2,039	1,998	1,731	1,643	2,006	1,907	1,782	1,628
variance interval	1–8	1–8	1–8	1–8	1–8	1–8	1–8	1–8

In Table 2, descriptive statistical parametres were shown regarding the criteria the teachers are guided by when choosing optional texts. The

[10] This refers to the assumed most dominant and superimposed criteria which could be taken into consideration on the part of the person selecting a text for the purpose of teaching literature. Possible other criteria may be recognized as belonging to some of the aforementioned ones.

highest ranking ones are: 1) a thematic link between the given text and the other texts which are curriculum prescribed, 3) the text whose topic is close to the students' interests, their age and ability to understand and 7) a distinct pedagogical function of the text. These criteria clearly place the students at the centre and presuppose that the text corresponds to their assumed horizon of expectation. Even though we can rely to a large extent on the teachers' opinion about what kind of literary texts the students read and understand more easily, or rather to which texts they respond more actively while they are being analysed in class, if the stated criteria are dominant, there is a real possibility that those texts the students are only marginally interested in regarding their topics, ideas and style will almost never be chosen as additional texts.

Thus the students' reading experience remains within the boundaries of the teacher's preconceived ideas and convictions concerning what the students can relate to. It is the optional texts that can broaden the students' sensitivity towards various literary and non-literary texts which the students could not discover in the compulsory curriculum. Furthermore, additional selections of the authors of textbooks and teachers offer the possibility to include more texts from contemporary literature (*A Piknik za Irmu* 2017).

Criteria 2, a text as an illustration for introducing a literary-theoretical notion, and 8, the text belonging to a certain genre, were estimated as next in order of importance. These criteria are an inherent part of the text, while the function of a text (in teaching), which stems from the selection of texts, is related to educational, i.e. primary teaching tasks. By such a selection of texts, the teacher reinforces the knowledge of the notions prescribed in the curriculum or of the characteristics of a certain literary genre. Criteria 2 and 8 are still highly ranked, which justifies the research of a genre criterion whose results were presented in Table 3. A high-ranking position of the criteria dealing with the knowledge of literature suggests that the teachers, by these additional texts, make predictions regarding the texts of a compulsory curriculum, i.e. that they expect the texts they can introduce independently to fulfil requirements similar to the ones from the prescribed curriculum.

One of the possible interpretations may be that even the texts included in the compulsory curriculum do not illustrate sufficiently a certain literary-theoretical notion, or that it is necessary to demonstrate to the students, through a larger number of texts, how certain literary-theoretical notions function, either on an implicit level of adopting the notion or explicitly. The function affirmed by criteria 2 and 8 certainly does not have the primary role of additional texts in teaching. Neither would they have been expected to be so highly ranked, however, the result is interesting for several reasons: the teachers obviously have an awareness of a need for clearer examples for a certain notion which is being introduced or practiced, and they recognize the fact that compulsory literature often fails to recognize the terms which should be illustrated (Janićijević 2016).

Criterion 4, several texts by one author, which contributes to a better understanding of the poetic characteristics of his or her work – is ranked less favourably. This criterion is only partly close to the first one, it does not encompass it completely, and this is the reason why it is separated in this research. It is evident that in the current curriculum this criterion most frequently becomes the most prominent one in guided optional texts (e.g. a selection of the poetry of Ljubivoje Ršumović, Dušan Radović, a selection of Andersen's fairy tales).

The least important criteria, according to the respondents, are those which place the teacher at the centre and his or her reading taste and interpretative skills and competence to analyse a literary text properly in the classroom. These criteria are 5, personal affinities and the teacher's knowledge about the additional text, and 6, the availability of other sources concerning the selected text (preparations, handbooks, scientific, critical and methodological literature). It is obvious that the teachers do not consider such criteria very important for the interpretation of a literary text in class.[11] In our research results, the status of criterion 6 corresponds to the conclusions of the other researches: "The data obtained on a sample of primary school students of higher grades, suggest that the teachers rarely use additional sources of information such as books, magazines, encyclopaedia or the Internet. More precisely, only 10% of the students state that their teachers use additional sources in the classroom (Krnjajić et al. 2011: 268–269, according to: Pešić and Stepanović 2004).

Genre identification of optional texts. For the purpose of the realisation of the last goal of the research, in the formulation of the fourth question we singled out seven literary forms which the teachers ranked from 1 to 7 on the basis of their own choice, so that 1 represents the genre they most frequently chosen among the additional texts, whereas 7 stands for the ones most rarely chosen.[12]

[11] On the other hand, we dare say that this is the reason why the problems in teaching literature frequently arise due to the abovementioned being ranked among the two lowest criteria. A demanding literary text as regards interpretation is most frequently of high aesthetic and intellectual value. Prioritising students in teaching is not only carried out by the teacher paying attention to the criteria related to the students' characteristics, but is also done by the teacher paying attention to his or her own capabilities, guiding the students towards the goals arising from the inherent nature of the text.

[12] By compiling the questionnaire in this research, we included the genres which are part of the compulsory curriculum. In order for our research to be economical, we pointed out the current and dominant genres in the curriculum. It is certainly worth

As was the case regarding the previous question, the descriptive statistical parametres were shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Genre selection

genre	fairy tale	story/short story	fable	lyrical poem	epic poem	extract from a novel	science fiction work
number of respondents	244	244	244	245	244	244	245
missing data	11	11	11	10	11	11	10
arithmetic mean	2,69	2,54	3,20	4,24	5,32	4,24	5,67
median	2,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	6,00	5,00	7,00
mode	**1**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**6**	**6**	**7**
standard deviation	1,608	1,691	1,482	1,670	1,441	1,766	1,835
variance interval	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7	1-7

The most frequently chosen genres, unsurprisingly, were the fairy tale, the story (the short story) and the fable. Considerably less frequently chosen genres, whose frequency was described as *sometimes* or *very rarely*, are epic poems, lyrical poems and extracts from novels. Science fiction works were the most rarely chosen genre. Arguably, there is a cause for concern that the genres described as *very rarely* and *the most rarely* used may mean a complete absence of those genres from teaching literature in the optional corpus.

The most favoured genres – fairy tales and fables – in the compulsory curriculum, as well as in the independent choice of teachers, gain a privileged position. It is assumed that the students' familiarity with these genres facilitates their understanding, which is a very important initial motive for the teacher (see Table 2) to choose a text. Between these two genres, there is the story/ the short story, which supports the opinion that fabularity, narration and other characteristics of a narrative are more amenable to students. All three genres (the fairy tale, the fable, the short story), by their genesis, include folk and authorial literature, national and foreign literature, which all increase the corpus of texts to make a selection from. If we compare these results to some other researches (Kovačević Gavrilović and Stevović 2007: 134–147; Mikkonen and Vakkari 2016), there is a consensus regarding the teacher's ability to gauge the students' sensibility, which can certainly be a subject for further analysis.

The students' reception of a lyrical poem, i.e. its teaching interpretation, is made harder by the complexity and multi-layered meanings

considering, for example, whether ancient Greek myths, epic-lyrical forms etc. should find their place in the teaching practice.

of a poetic expression, the richness of thematic-motif layers, the variety of stylistic approaches and an indirect impact of the audio aspect of a poem. As regards an epic poem, it also requires an additional effort, first because of the length of its form, archaisms and less familiar words, the necessary literary and historical localization, the social and ethical image of the epic world, so that the students must wade through different cultural layers. The texts which belong to the most rarely chosen genres are also demanding in terms of the class time management. An extract is not considered to be an adequate substitute for a novel: the question is raised concerning which extract to choose, how to localize it and reach its aesthetic values. The results suggest that optional texts, according to the teachers, should not be extensive. Since there are no novels in the current compulsory literature, at least it is not compulsory to read whole works (which is essentially the consequence of doing away with extensive reading, Mrkalj 2017), it is understandable why an extract from a novel as an optional text has such a status from the teacher's perspective. A science fiction work is a novelty in the national curriculum and therefore it represents an insufficiently acknowledged genre.[13]

The results show that the teacher, when choosing genres, uses the criteria he or she ranked in the previous table, and according to the same or similar principle of importance. The selection of a fairy tale, a fable or a story corresponds to high value criteria such as a thematic link, a pedagogical function, genre characteristics and the introduction of a literary-theoretical notion, the suitability of a genre to the students' age (see Tables 2 and 3). These genres are, regardless of all differences, didactic, thematically linked with the already compulsory texts, and are essential when it comes to acquiring basic knowledge of theory of literature. The students discover these texts very early, so it is assumed that they are very good for students in junior grades. On the other hand, the results show that the bottom levels of both tables correspond to each other: as the teacher, while choosing the criteria for making a selection of additional texts, valued the criteria related to his or her role less, so did he or she value less the genres that require more engagement on the part of the teacher. For instance, in order to analyse an epic poem, an extract from a novel or a science fiction work, a wider knowledge of concrete literary or historical facts is needed, as well as referring the student to the context, which gives rise to a certain correlation.

[13] It is important to emphasise that we examined the suitability of a genre within the framework of additional texts in teaching. Some other research could show the interests, affinities, the horizon of expectations regarding certain genres, themes, motifs etc. in students nowadays.

Furthermore, during the course of the interpretation of a lyrical poem, the student is most frequently unable to grasp all its layers independently. That is why during text selection the genres which enable the students more independent reading and interpretation are more "amenable". Nevertheless, in our view in order to form a young reader it is important to know and understand a large number of genres.

While comparing the years of work experience (i.e. age) of the teacher to the selection of a genre, in certain places statistically relevant data were obtained.

Table 4. The ratio between the length of work experience and selection of a genre

genre	statistical parameter	years of work experience	age
fairy tale	correlation coefficient	.206	.179
	significance (p)	0.001	0.005
fable	correlation coefficient	.198	.179
	significance (p)	0.002	0.005
epic poem	correlation coefficient	.018	-.001
	significance (p)	0.779	0.987
lyrical poem	correlation coefficient	.068	.076
	significance (p)	0.289	0.236
extract from a novel	correlation coefficient	-.101	-.077
	significance (p)	0.114	0.234
Story	correlation coefficient	-.174	-.148
	significance (p)	0.007	0.021
science fiction work	correlation coefficient	-.089	-.094
	significance (p)	0.164	0.146

From the results we can see that there is a positive correlation between the length of work experience (i.e. age) of the teacher and the most frequent choice of traditional genres – fairy tales and fables, as additional texts. Also, there is a negative correlation between the length of work experience and the selection of a story. (It is important to emphasise that real comparisons between these categories can be made in genres which are dominant in the teachers' selections.) We can say that these results are expected because older teachers rely on the literature which was more prevalent in the curricula in previous years. Also, there is a firm belief that the students of junior grades are most likely to read fairy tales and fables, that they understand them well and interpret them more easily. On the other hand, the genre of a story entails various texts in terms of a genre, whose authors are frequently contemporary writers with thematic-motif novelties. All this influences the already difficult reception of this hybrid genre in students, and it requires an additional effort on the part of the teacher.

Conclusion

Our research showed a narrow professional and a wider social significance of the selection of texts in pre-university education, as well as some limitations of that selection. Our research showed that the teachers use to a large extent the already offered optional texts in the textbooks. Also, it shows that the most important criteria for the selection of additional texts are the teacher's focus on the student reception, their interests and sensibilities. The least important criteria refer to the reading habits and interpretative skills of the teacher, the competence to present a text to the students in an adequate way, which suggests that the teachers, without any need, exclude themselves to a great degree as an important factor in the selection of a text.

We conclude that the teachers approach additional texts almost in the same way they do when it comes to compulsory texts, more precisely, they expect the texts they introduce independently to meet similar requirements as those which are specifically prescribed in the curriculum. Within the framework of genre selection, the application of general criteria during the selection of additional texts is important. Based on these and similar findings, a reform of the curriculum should be carried out, and the teachers should change their practice when it comes to optional texts.

In order to achieve an additional selection of a better quality and a more meaningful link between additional and compulsory texts, it may be the best solution to offer a corpus of additionally specifically listed works (different in terms of genres, themes, time of creation, from Serbian and world literature) on the basis of which they could make a choice. That corpus should contain a considerably higher number of titles than the teacher can actually use in class during one school year. That means that the teachers should have at their disposal very good handbooks for optional texts, chrestomathies of texts with corresponding suggestions, comments and interpretations, as well as a certain number of professional seminars. But in order to realize all this, it is necessary that the most important educational institutions recognize both the professional and social significance of this issue, and include the solution to this problem in the education system.

It is important to support the teachers' efforts to cultivate, by combining optional and compulsory texts, the diversity of genres and chronology, suggesting in this way the richness and the complexity of literature. By means of optional texts, the students should be introduced to the world of literature more freely, and that world should become part of their experience. Most of all, optional texts should additionally boost reading in students, especially *reading for pleasure* (which is very important nowadays because of *the reading crisis*), as well as foster their curiosity. Of course, on no account should teachers be deprived of complete freedom, depending on their literary curiosity and their students' reading needs. Bearing in mind all that has been said, we think that neither a completely free choice of teachers, nor completely barring the possibility of a free choice is the best solution.

To be able to implement a curriculum which provides a completely free choice of literary texts, without any additional guidance or suggestions, the teacher should possess the necessary competence in the field of literature and an exceptional knowledge as regards contemporary and classical literature, to be able to choose the right texts for the students. Besides, the teacher should be an avid reader, and such a task is too formidable for any teacher, because the teacher has the role of five or six teachers who teach only one subject. The teacher needs *help to become creative*. That should be the primary obligation not only of educational, but also of the most important state institutions.

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MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES IN PRACTICE: HARMONIZING TEACHING MATERIALS AND STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL POTENTIALS

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Abstract: *The paper deals with multiple intelligences in adjusting teaching materials and students' individual potentials. The research study was designed as a quantitative study which involved applying descriptive methodology to both a sample of 100 students of engineering management and their coursebook. The intelligence profile of the coursebook, Market Leader (Intermediate) was determined by the Checklist of Activities for Each Intelligence (Safranj & Zivlak, 2018), which is categorized into seven modalities of intelligences. Then, the Multiple Intelligence Test (Chislett & Chapman, 2006) based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (MI) model was used to identify students' intelligence profiles. The results of the study revealed a ratio between the students and coursebook's MI profiles. Since the coursebook, as one of the main components of English foreign language curriculum, should meet the specific needs of learners in a given situation, the results obtained may help in the future design or adaptation of materials to better cater to students' multiple intelligences and improve the learning and teaching processes. According to the students' intelligence profiles, certain teaching activities and strategies could be applied to ensure that the balance of intelligences in students' language learning activities closely reflects their learning preferences and teaching materials become more accessible.*

Key words: *MI theory; English for engineering students; teaching materials; teaching strategies*

1. Introduction

Significant changes were initiated in the traditional view of intelligence by the founder of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory, Howard Gardner, in 1983. In Gardner's opinion, the traditional concept of intelligence has been defined and limited in logic and language. He claimed that his theory pluralized it. Unlike the conventional model, the theory of intelligence was placed into its social context by stating it as the ability to solve problems, or create the products that are valuable within one or more cultural settings. Thus, the new view of intelligence was balanced and culture-free. First, Gardner (1983) distinguished seven types of intelligence: linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily/kinaesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. He later added naturalistic and existential intelligences to this list (Gardner 2006). His preliminary definition for existential intelligence was that it referred to individuals who exhibit the proclivity to pose and ponder questions about life, death, and ultimate realities. However, he has never fully confirmed, endorsed, or described this intelligence.

All types of intelligence are independent of others to different degrees. Additionally, all people possess all types of intelligence in varying degrees, while each individual has a unique intelligence profile depending on the values existing in a particular society, available opportunities to be gained in the culture, and personal decisions influenced by individuals, their families, and the whole society. According to Gardner (2006), the seven intelligences can be defined as follows:

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence consists of the ability to manipulate words and use language to express and understand complex meanings. People with highly developed linguistic intelligence enjoy reading, writing, and speaking as well as poetry and word games.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence comprises mathematical and scientific abilities. Individuals who excel in this intelligence use numbers successfully and reason well.

Visual/Spatial Intelligence involves the ability of understanding visual world easily. Individuals who are good in this intelligence can smoothly correspond to spatial information graphically and have perfectly developed mental images.

Bodily/Kinaesthetic Intelligence is the ability to control one’s body movements, such as: coordination, flexibility, speed, and balance to use the body to express ideas and feelings and solve problems. Bodily-kinaesthetic individuals learn by doing.

Musical Intelligence is the capacity to recognize musical composition or performance as well as rhythm, pitch, and melody. Distinctive abilities indicating musical intelligence include the alteration in speed, tempo, and rhythm in simple melodies.

Interpersonal Intelligence is the ability to detect and respond appropriately to another person's feelings, motivations, and desires.

Intrapersonal Intelligence is the ability to be self-aware, recognizing one’s similarities and differences from others, and in harmony with inner feelings and values.

Understanding basic definitions of each intelligence is as important as understanding how the intelligences work with one another. Since different paths to learning always act in consort, all the intelligences in operation should be regarded together. They should be used concurrently to function efficiently, and it is common for several intelligences to be used simultaneously during a learning process. Therefore, all types of intelligence can be classified into three instructional domains (McKenzie, 2002) that empower teachers to target instruction by specific clusters of intelligences:

- The Analytic Domain is targeting application of information and its processing. It comprises *logical, musical and naturalistic intelligences* which are heuristic processes by their nature.
- The Interactive Domain is centering on interaction with both environment and other people. It comprises *linguistic, kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligences* which are social processes by their nature. They generally promote and foster interaction to achieve understanding.
- The Introspective Domain is promoting the affective components of learning. It comprises *visual/spatial, intrapersonal and existential* intelligences which are by nature introspective because they require looking inward by the learner, emotional connection to their own experiences and beliefs in order to make sense of new learning

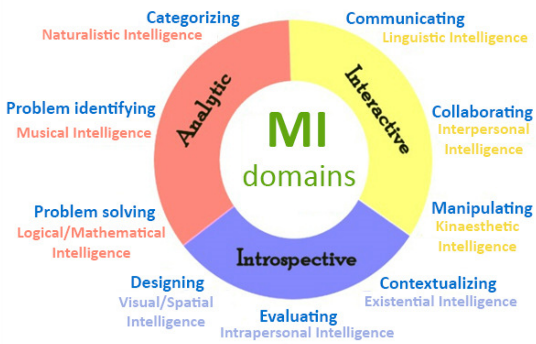

Figure 1. MI domains addressing the learning path

The Wheel of MI Domains serves as an organizer for understanding the fluid relationship of the intelligences. These three domains are meant to align the intelligences with familiar learner attributes recognized in the classroom. The MI framework offers a practical, empirical model for addressing all the paths to learning, regardless of the skills, content or desired end results. The well-defined track lines to learning are:

Logical: problem solving through reasoning.
Musical: identifying and extending patterns.
Naturalistic: classifying and categorizing data.

Linguistic: expression through the spoken and written word.
Interpersonal: interacting with others.
Bodily/Kinaesthetic: interacting with one's environment.

Visual/Spatial: having the ability to see, envision and imagine.
Intrapersonal: affective learning, values and attitudes.
Existential: using contexts and connections to prior understanding.

While considering three domains of MI one should bear in mind the fact that initially Gardner described seven aspects of human intelligence, but in 1994 he added two more types of intelligences: naturalistic and existential. Naturalistic intelligence was entirely explained and formally added to the primary inventory of seven intelligences in his 1999 book *Intelligence Reframed.* According to Gardner, individuals showing naturalistic intelligence are strongly conscious of the environment and changes in their settings, even when these alterations are minor. Thus, their advanced sensory perception results in a state of raised consciousness. Individuals who exceed in naturalistic intelligence are often engaged in biology, agriculture, botany, horticulture, ecology, zoology, ornithology, oceanography, archaeology, volcanology, geology, astronomy, meteorology, or paleontology.

Finally, the ninth, existential intelligence, is the ability to be responsive to and to contemplate fundamental and challenging questions about human existence. Gardner alluded to the existence of this intelligence in several of his works. He stated that existential intelligence might be recognized when an individual addresses and deals with crucial questions about existence, or examines and discusses the intricacies of existence, but he never fully described, approved, or confirmed this intelligence.

Due to this avoidance on Gardner's part to positively commit to existential intelligence as well as the fact that engineering students do not have much in common with professions that deal with these two intelligences, nor does the coursebook analyzed in this study, they were not included when defining MI profiles.

1.1. ***Application of Multiple Intelligences in Teaching English as a Foreign Language***

MI theory has significant implications for teaching English as a second language. Its application has been regarded as beneficial for both learners and teachers as well as for curriculum design, teaching materials, instructional strategies, and coursebook design. Thus, Akbari and Hossein (2008) investigated possible relations between multiple inteligences and language learning strategies. According to the findings of another study (Isisag, 2008) MI theory provides insight into students' individual differences for teachers of English as a foreign language, which allows teaching practices to be properly organized and performed. Moreover, instruction directed by MI theory can create a learner-centred setting in which students can demonstrate their strong points and potential (Isisag, 2008). He also emphasizes the need to identify and categorize activities in classes and defines four phases of how an MI-based lesson can be reinforced: stimulate intelligence, develop and support it, organize lessons according to different intelligence types, and integrate intelligences into solving problems. As Larsen (2002) noted, MI theory offers multiple ways to present valuable material and take into account students' differences in order to take full advantage of learning and understanding in language classes. The results obtained by Erozan and Shibliyev (2006) show that MI theory can contribute specifically to the effectiveness of teaching and learning in ELT courses and in general to designing tasks and activities that promote individualized learning situations. Haley (2001) aimed to analyze applications of MI theory to create and update teaching practices and instructional strategies. Bakić-Mirić (2010) investigated the outcomes of applying MI theory to English language instruction and found that the implementation of MI theory in English language teaching at the University of Nis Medical School facilitated teachers to better recognize and value students' abilities. The results also indicated that students showed higher interest and participation in the learning process. Furthermore, Sarıcaoğlu and Arıkan (2009) investigated three areas: the relationship between students' gender and intelligence types; the relationship between particular intelligence types and students' success in grammar, listening and writing in English as a foreign language; and parental education and students' intelligence types. They found positive and negative relationships among the variables.

1.2. *Application of Multiple Intelligences in Evaluating Teaching Materials*

As indicated by the review of literature, there are several research studies regarding the assessment of teaching materials in terms of MI theory. Palmberg (2001) analyzed a coursebook in order to identify the relative distribution of exercises catering to different intelligence types and found that the predominant intelligences were verbal/linguistic and intrapersonal. He suggested that language teachers assess the intelligence profile of the coursebook they use in their teaching practice to cater to the intelligence profiles of a special group of students. Botelho (2003) focused on applying MI theory to assessing a coursebook and teaching materials in a Brazilian ELT context. Her study dealt with analyzing six current English coursebooks to find out if the coursebook activities catered to learners' intelligence types. The study aimed to identify English language teachers' opinions about MI theory and its application in their classes, and it found that only four intelligence types (linguistic, spatial, intrapersonal, and interpersonal) were mainly addressed in the coursebook activities. Furthermore, the results indicated that teachers were in need of better guidance and insight into applying MI theory in their classes.

Kırkgöz, Y. (2010) examined five English coursebooks in relationship to different intelligences in terms of different activities and tasks in order to discover the extent to which English language coursebooks produced in Turkey cater to different intelligence types. The results determined the intelligence profiles of each coursebook, and the findings suggest that they predominantly cater to verbal/linguistic and visual/spatial intelligence. Although naturalistic intelligence was involved only in coursebooks for grades 4 and 5, no activities were found that catered to existentialist learners in any of the coursebooks. However, a fair percentage of distribution for the remaining intelligence types were identified. Ibragimova (2011) focused on the application of MI theory in language classes by evaluating textbooks and classroom activities. The results obtained revealed discrepancies between the students' and textbooks' MI profiles. Classroom observations also showed that classroom activities misaligned with the students' MI profiles. The analysis of the textbooks' MI profiles found a wide range of distribution of eight intelligences in the textbook activities, which means that there was no balanced distribution in the textbook activities in terms of the intelligence types being investigated. Although teachers reported that MI theory was important and positively affected their teaching and their students' learning, the classroom observations showed that eight intelligences were not catered for in balance with their classes. Ebadi and Ashtarian (2014) examined the extent to which MI were reflected in the Oxford University Press ESP textbook *Nursing*. An MI checklist was used to examine the textbook in relationship to different intelligences as reflected through various activities and tasks. The textbook was evaluated and frequencies and percentages of occurrence of each type of intelligences were calculated. Taase et.al. (2014) investigated EFL students and their textbooks using MI theory to identify the types of intelligence incorporated in ELT textbooks and whether or not students prefer these types of intelligences. While students' English language proficiency levels did not show any significant effect on their multiple intelligence inclinations, the level of proficiency in English textbooks proficiency seemed to have a significant effect on the frequency and application of types of intelligences within these textbooks. Al Seyabi and A'Zaabi (2016) focused on identifying the MI profiles of students in Oman as well as on analyzing the MI profiles of English textbooks to determine the extent to which they aligned. The results pointed to a misalignment between the students' intelligence profiles in comparison to the textbooks' dominant intelligences. The study also urged that future revisions of the EFL curriculum be done through the lens of MI theory in order to improve the quality of students' learning experiences. Wattanborwornwong and Klavinitchai (2016) analyzed different types of foreign language textbooks in light of MI theory by investigating locally-designed English and Chinese textbooks in Thailand and analyzed the distribution of multiple intelligence shown in the activity parts of textbooks. In the study of Safranj and Zivlak (2018) MI domains of students and their coursebook were analyzed to understand how the intelligences work with one another to facilitate teachers to plan lessons and curriculum.

Overall, there has been an increasing interest in the application of MI theory in language classes, so there seems to be a need for more research specifically in the area of materials evaluation in language classes, since the MI profiles of coursebooks vary in relation to the subject matter and age of the students for whom they are intended. Therefore, this paper deals with investigating the application of MI theory in Business English classes for engineers at the Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad by assessing the students' coursebook *Market Leader (Intermediate)* in terms of MI theory. The MI profiles of students and their Business English coursebook were identified and compared to evaluate to what extent they relate to one another. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the students' intellectual profiles?
2. What is the intellectual profile of the *Market Leader (Intermediate)* coursebook?
3. To what extent does the intellectual profile of the coursebook relate to the intellectual profiles of engineering management students?

The study suggests a framework for evaluating teaching materials and tasks regarding MI theory. The findings should provide a better understanding of the application of MI theory in the field of teaching materials assessment. In addition, they can show how MI theory is applied in language classes at the Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, and thus, raise awareness among foreign language teachers regarding the application of MI theory in bringing improvement in English language teaching activity.

2. Method

2.1. Sample

The sample included 100 students studying at the Department of Engineering Management, at the Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad. There were 63 (63%) male students, and 37 (37%) female students. Male students were overrepresented due to the structure of students at technical faculties. They were all in the second year of their studies with an average age of 19.

2.2. Instruments

Two instruments were used in the study: (1) *Student MI survey*, to determine the respondents' MI profiles, and (2) *Checklist of Activities for Each Intelligence* to determine the MI profile of coursebook activities.

1) *Multiple Intelligences Test* (Chislett and Chapman, 2006) based on Howard Gardner's MI Model was downloaded in order to identify students' MI profiles. This instrument has not been scientifically validated or normed. It is a simple directly reflective assessment tool and the results are produced directly from the inputs, i.e. the scored answers to the statement questions. Since there are no complex computations, it is less prone to distortion or confusion than a more complicated testing methodology. The instrument in its various versions has been downloaded and used tens of thousands of times by different users all around the world since 2006, and to the knowledge of its authors it has not generated any complaint or criticism about its reliability and suitability for purpose. It was first adapted to suit Serbian culture and then translated into Serbian by the author of this study and accompanied with an introduction and a personal section. In the introductory part of the survey the participants were given some information about the purpose of the study, and their rights as participants. The first section included demographic data (e.g., students' gender and age), and the second section consisted of seventy MI statements for surveying the seven intelligences. A Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 (mostly disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, and mostly agree) was applied to score students' preferences. A panel of three experts validated the survey. They were English language teachers with over 20 years' experience teaching in secondary and grammar schools who voluntarily contributed to the study.

2) The activities in the coursebook *Market Leader (Intermediate)* were categorized into seven modalities of intelligences by using the *Checklist of Activities for Each Intelligence* (Šafranj & Zivlak, 2018) which was created to analyze the activities in the coursebook and to determine which intelligence type(s) each activity addresses.

Market Leader (Intermediate) is a coursebook of Business English for business people and students. It was developed in association with the *Financial Times*, one of the leading sources of business information in the world. The third edition of the coursebook published in 2010 was analyzed. It consists of 12 units based on topics of great interest to everyone involved in international business. The coursebook comprises a range of authentic resource material, reflecting the latest trends in the business world, and thus, it facilitates and improves students' ability to communicate in English in a wide range of business situations. The coursebook teaching materials enables development of students' communication skills which they need to succeed in business and enlarge their knowledge of the business world. Thus, they will become more fluent and confident in using the language they need in their future career of engineering managers.

2.3. Procedure

The participants filled in the paper-and-pencil MI Test, which was distributed during an English language class by the author of this paper at the beginning of the 2018 summer semester, and the scores obtained were calculated.

The MI profile of the coursebook was calculated through the *Checklist of Activities for Each Intelligence.* The frequencies of intelligence types were counted, and the percentage of each intelligence type was calculated. A total amount of 886 activities was described in terms of the intelligences they cater for. A panel of three judges validated the coursebook analysis. This was done by providing them with a sample coursebook analysis and the *Checklist of Activities for Each Intelligence.* Inter rater reliability was employed to ensure the reliability and consistency of categorizing the coursebook activities into the seven MI types. Each expert validated every coursebook activity (886 activities) individually. Then they went through the activities once again and decided among themselves the MI type, since a number of activities cater for two or more intelligences depending on the context. They reached an agreement for each teaching activity.

3. Results

Descriptive statistics for students' scores achieved on the self-administered Multiple Intelligence Test are shown in table 1. Values of Skewness and Kurtosis are in the suggested range of ±1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), which indicates that all of the variables are normaly distributed.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for students' scores from MI Test

Intelligence	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Sk	Ku
Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence	100	16	44	26.89	5.212	.292	.442
Logical/Mathematical Intelligence.	100	13	40	29.66	4.928	-.544	.413
Musical Intelligence	100	12	44	29.88	4.939	-.314	1.205
Body/Kinaesthetic Intelligence	100	15	43	28.03	5.825	-.211	-.323
Visual/Spatial Intelligence	100	9	42	28.20	5.831	-.291	.477
Interpersonal Intelligence	100	15	43	30.74	4.769	-.450	1.238
Intrapersonal Intelligence	100	16	41	28.93	4.873	-.080	-.194
The Analytical domain	100	41.00	77.00	59.5400	7.66656	-.047	.066
The Interactive domain	100	58.00	112.00	85.6600	10.63368	-.179	.023
The Introspective domain	100	32.00	83.00	57.1300	9.41915	-.223	.148

Note: N – Sample size. Min – Minimum. Max – Maximum. M – Mean. SD – Standard deviation. Sk – Skewness. Ku – Kurtosis.

Before comparing the MI profiles of students and the MI profile of the English coursebook, each profile was analyzed separately. For the student profiles, an average score for each factor of intelligence was used, and then these seven single scores were divided by the sum of all average scores. In order to calculate percentage, the result obtained was multiplied by 100. This process provided information about the ratio of intelligences in this particular sample. These results are presented in figure 2.

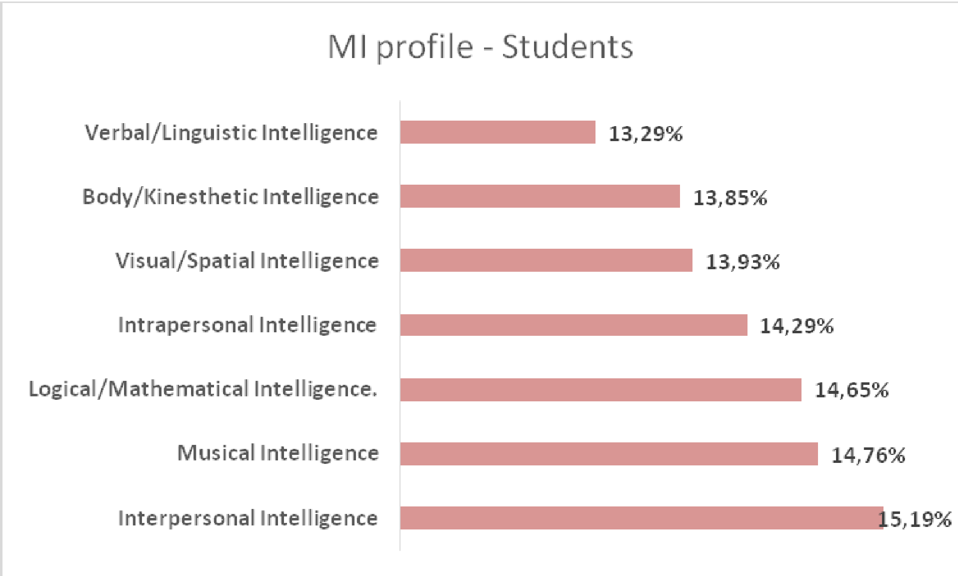

Figure 2. An averaged Multiple Intelligence profile of students (*N* = 100) with intelligence factors given in rank order

As depicted in the figure 2, the intelligence aspects in the student sample are ranked (from lowest percentage) in the following order: 1 – Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence, 2 – Body/Kinaesthetic Intelligence, 3 – Visual/Spatial Intelligence, 4 – Intrapersonal Intelligence, 5 – Logical/Mathematical Intelligence, 6 – Musical Intelligence, and 7 – Interpersonal Intelligence. Taking into account percentages, it could be suggested that all of the seven intelligences are similarly represented in the sample.

In order to create an MI profile for the coursebook, it was analyzed in the context of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) by checking the compatibility of each activity from the book with each factor from MIT. The number of activities for each intelligence is presented in table 2.

Table 2

Number of activities compatible with intelligence factor from MIT

Intelligence	Number of activities
Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence	280
Logical/Mathematical Intelligence	216
Visual/Spatial Intelligence	98
Body/Kinaesthetic Intelligence	4
Musical Intelligence	120
Interpersonal Intelligence	95
Intrapersonal Intelligence	73
Total number of activities	886

For data presented in table 2 percenteges were calculated and shown in figure 3

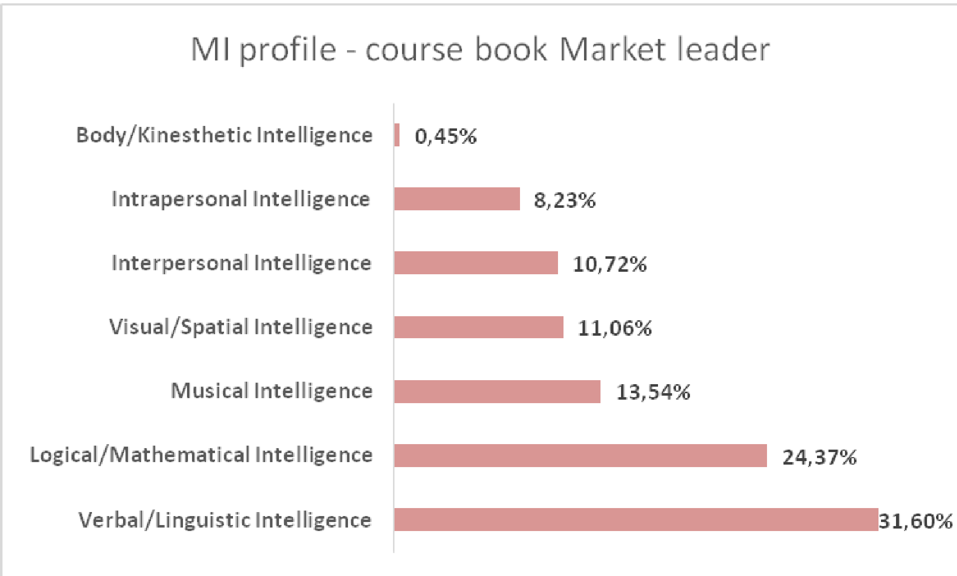

Figure 3. Multiple intelligence profile for the course book

The number of activities that correspond to different intelligences present in the coursebook are ranked (from lowest frequency) in the following order: 1 – Body/Kinaesthetic Intelligence, 2 - Intrapersonal Intelligence, 3 – Interpersonal Intelligence, 4 – Visual/Spatial Intelligence, 5 – Musical Intelligence, 6 – Logical/Mathematical Intelligence, 7 – Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence.

To answer the question of whether these profiles are compatible, or in other words whether activities in the book are organized in a way that they require the engagement of these intelligences identified as students' main strengths, the ranks of intelligences within each profile were correlated using Spearman's rho coefficient of correlation. The value obtained was $\rho = -.07$, $p = .88$, which means that the ranks of one variable (students' intelligences) do not significantly covary with the ranks of the other variable (intelligence related activities in the book).

In Figure 4. the two of these profiles were put together for better insight into this not significant result.

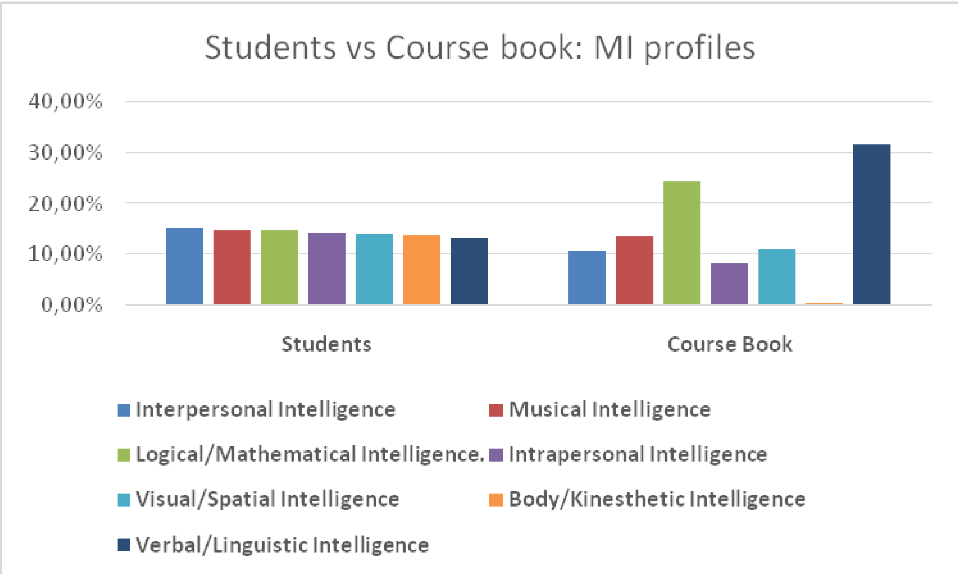

Figure 4. Comparison of Multiple Intelligences profiles of students and course book

According to figure 4, the representation of different intelligences in the student sample appear to be quite uniform, while the coursebook's MI profile is not. The largest discrepancy is apparent in verbal/linguistic intelligence in such a manner that this intelligence is represented almost 2.5

times more in the book than in the student sample. The situation is similar for the logical/mathematical aspect, which is almost two times more prominent in the coursebook. For body/kinaesthetic intelligence the situation is reversed, as it is almost completely neglected in the coursebook.

Students' scores in the analytical, interactive, and introspective domains were calculated as the sum of scores of the intelligence factors that belong to a particular domain. The score for the analytical domain was obtained by summing up scores for logical/mathematical intelligence and musical intelligence; for the interactive domain by summing up scores for verbal/linguistic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and body/kinaesthetic intelligence; and finally, the score for the introspective domain was obtained by summing up scores for intrapersonal intelligence and visual/spatial intelligence (see table 1 for descriptive statistics). Regarding the coursebook, the total number of activities for each domain was calculated following the same logic (table 3).

Table 3

Number of activities in course book classified by Multiple Intelligence domains suggested by Gardner

MI domain	Intelligences	Number of activities
The Analytical domain	Logical/Mathematical Intelligence	216
	Musical Intelligence	120
	Naturalistic	-
		Total: 336
The Interactive domain	Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence	280
	Interpersonal Intelligence	95
	Body/Kinaesthetic Intelligence	4
		Total: 379
The Introspective domain	Intrapersonal Intelligence	73
	Visual/Spatial Intelligence	98
	Existential	-
		Total: 171

Inspection of figure 5 points to a different conclusion when higher order intelligence domains are calculated in comparison with the seven domains. It seems that the representation of students' intelligences by domains is relatively evenly matched with the domains profile of the coursebook. In both cases, the domains were ranked (from the lowest frequency) in the following order: 1 – The Introspective Domain, 2 – The Analytical Domain, 3 – The Interactive Domain.

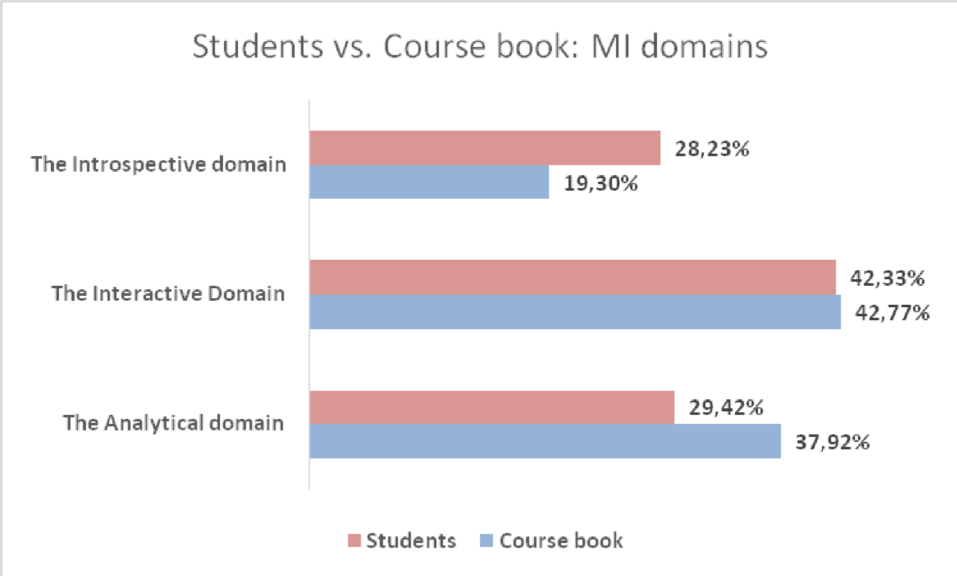

Figure 5. Comparison of an averaged students profile and course book profile based on Multiple Intelligence domains

4. Discussion

As figure 4 illustrates, there is a noticeable degree of misalignment between the students' MI profile and the coursebook's MI profile. When correlating the ranks in both profiles, i.e., whether activities in the book are organized in a way that they require the engagement of those intelligences which are the students' main strengths, ranks of intelligences within each profile were correlated using Spearman's rho coefficient of correlation. The value obtained was $\rho = -.07$, $p = .88$, which means that the ranks of one variable (students' intelligences) do not covary with the ranks of the other variable (intelligences in the coursebook). This indicates that the increase of one intelligence in one profile is accompanied by the decrease of the same intelligence in the other profile.

To shed more light on the negative correlation between the students' MI profile and the coursebook's MI profile, verbal-linguistic, and logical/mathematical intelligences first should be considered first. Verbal/linguistic intelligence is the primary intelligence in the coursebook with a 31.60 % prevalence, whereas it ranks last in the students' MI profile with a mean percentage of 13.29%. Logical/mathematical intelligence ranks second in the coursebook's MI profile, but it occupies the third position in the students' MI profile. Visual/spatial intelligence ranks fifth in the students' MI profiles with a mean percentage of 13.93% while it ranks the fourth with 11.06% in the coursebook's activities. Conversely, the musical intelligence ranks second in students' profile while it ranks third in the coursebook MI profile, since there is 13.54% for music in the coursebook activities. As for the bodily/kinaesthetic intelligence, there is relatively less misalignment: it ranks sixth (13.85%) in the students' profile and seventh (0.45%) in the coursebook's profile. Interpersonal intelligence ranks fifth (10.72%) in the coursebook profile, while it is first (15.19%) in the students' profile. Intrapersonal intelligence ranks sixth (8.23%) in the coursebook profile, while it is fourth (14.29%) in the students' profile. Linking students' preferences in terms of MI theory into the existing MI profile of the English coursebook sheds more light on the extent of the misalignment, the possible reasons for it, as well as possible solutions. Therefore, the nature of the misalignment is further highlighted.

There is a substantial disproportion in verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligences as the two predominant intelligences in coursebook activities (55.97% prevalence). Verbal/linguistic intelligence comprises 31.60% (280) and logical/mathematical intelligences 24.37% (216) of all intelligences in the coursebook. There is a sharp contradiction between the presentation of these two intelligences in the coursebook as the two predominant intelligences when compared to how they rank in the students' MI profile. Although logical/mathematical intelligence ranks third (14.65%), verbal/linguistic intelligence (13.29%) is the least dominant intelligence. The discrepancy in this setting may indicate that the quality of these activities needs to be upgraded and diversified to appeal to students' varied interests and to satisfy their intelligences. This disparity between English language coursebooks and students' MI profiles has also been noted in descriptive studies have also indicated a disparity, including Ibragimova (2011); Abbasian & Khajavi (2012); Taase et al. (2014); Kırkgöz (2010); Al Seyabi and A'Zaabi (2016); and Safranj and Zivlak (2018).

As mentioned earlier, all seven intelligences rank equally in the students' profile, while they rank with certain variations in the coursebook profile. Apart from logical/mathematical and linguistic intelligences, which are dominant in the coursebook and ranked almost the same, musical and visual/spatial intelligences are moderately present as well. On the other hand, there is less emphasis on interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, especially body/kinaesthetic intelligence, which is represented in less than 1% of the activities. It can be concluded that students are taught by *Market Leader (Intermediate)* coursebook without much attention to their dominant learning inputs.

However, students' scores on the analytical, interactive, and introspective domains, which were calculated according to the factors that are supposed to belong to a particular domain, proved to correlate almost completely with the MI domains profile of their coursebook. It should be noted that the results obtained of the same data provide nearly the opposite outcome in comparison with individual intelligences. The findings are almost similar with those in Safranj and Zivlak (2018). Therefore, this research confirmed the previous findings that it is better to apply the comparison performed at the level of MI domains. Some future research could also focus on this aspect of analysis and accordingly provide better insight into the fluid relationship of the intelligences and how the intelligences work with one another. It would clearly facilitate teachers planning of English foreign language lessons and units which effectively address all of the intelligences in teaching activities.

5. Conclusion and pedagogical implications

As indicated by the obvious mismatch between the coursebook and the students' MI profiles across most of the intelligences, there is a gap in terms of MI which separates students and their coursebook. It should also be noted that analyzing and reviewing MI domains as resources is also important and should be examined more thoroughly when considering an MI approach in English language teaching. Consequently, future reconsiderations of an English language teaching syllabus need to be conducted with MI theory in mind. This would enable advancements in the quality of students' learning, since there are three main stages in designing an MI setting: (a) establishing practical educational goals, (b) carrying out practices or strategies based on MI theory, and (c) evaluating the process and the product based on MI measurements. In this case, MI domains may contribute to stating more precise educational objectives when designing English foreign language syllabus. It is important to note, however, that the faculty coursebook is still just a part of the curriculum. In addition to the coursebook, there are other requirements that need to be met in order to provide support to students' most prevalent intelligences. To achieve this, there are a variety of methods at hand, such as focusing teachers' attention on the importance of taking into account students' MI profiles, altering teaching approaches in order to satisfy students' prevailing intelligences, and instituting a range of extracurricular activities for students that involve various types of intelligences. Studying teaching strategies and materials that can affect learning outcomes should be the task of future research.

The pedagogical implications of this study are manifold. In order to help learners to better develop and improve their English language skills and abilities, English foreign language teachers could take advantage of the data obtained in the present study to expand their awareness of students' multiple intelligence types as they relate to the MI profiles of the coursebooks and classroom activities used in teaching. By referring to the wheel of domains when planning for instruction, teachers can plan lessons and units which effectively address all of the intelligences in the classroom. There are two strategies for utilizing the MI wheel. The first is to *balance intelligences.* In planning a lesson, a teacher may select one intelligence from each domain in order to provide for a well-balanced accommodation of all types of intelligence. The second is to *target intelligences***.** In planning instruction for a learner or group of learners, a teacher may target all the intelligences of a specific domain to provide for experiences that strengthen that particular domain. Using this model mindfully, teachers can apply the principles of multiple intelligences theory in planning and implementing learning experiences that address the emerging demands of language learning, support learners in developing the skills, values and attitudes towards successful learning and provide the conditions for the necessary instructional shift that will enable learning to meet the needs of nowadays society.

Moreover, teachers can make some adaptations in terms of materials or syllabus design so that they address individual differences. Teachers can devise their lessons to promote individualized learning by addressing different intelligences in balance. In addition, MI theory could be taught in classes to raise students' awareness of their abilities. Primarily, it can help teachers in creating or adapting teaching materials in line with MI theory in order to support students' multiple intelligences, thereby improving the teaching and learning processes. When based on MI domains, the framework can additionally be utilized to analyze coursebooks in various cultural and educational settings. Ultimately, this study has the potential to contribute to an overall understanding of the general application of MI in language classes. Future studies may be focused on examining the differences among students in their motivation to learn from a coursebook adapted based on their needs and talents rather than with a coursebook that does not support their preferences. Moreover, future research needs to examine coursebooks' compliance with intelligence needs to determine the level of their ability to predict success in language learning as well as to investigate possible gender and study program-related differences (for example, liberal arts vs. technical education) in relation to this.

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THE STRUCTURE OF PARENTING SENSE OF COMPETENCY IN PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract: *The goal of this research was to determine the latent structure of the set of indicators of competencies of parents of preschool children on the sample of 105 respondents from the territory of the municipality of Novi Bečej. The instrument used in the research was the Questionnaire on Parenting Sense of Competency, which is a modification of the scale Parenting Sense of Competency Scale (Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978). The first extracted factor was defined as Parenting demands and parental stress. The second extracted factor points to Parental satisfaction, whereas the third indicates Subjective parenting competency. The extracted factors point to the parents' need for developing their parental competencies, but also to the fact that they have reached socio-emotional maturity needed for this role, and can therefore be" good role models "to future parents.*

Key words: *parenting sense of competency; Parenting demands and parental stress; Parental satisfaction; Subjective parenting competency;*

Introduction

Competencies and their significance for the successfulness of a modern man have become a topic analyzed in all spheres of life. Although the term competencies used to be most important in the area of training and education (Ivanković, n.d.), it is now being used more and more in everyday speech as well. Being competent now means much more than the sum of individual skills and knowledge.

The definition given by the psychologist Franz Weinert, according to whom competencies represent „the cognitive abilities and skills that are

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available to individuals or that can be acquired by them in order to solve certain problems as well as the associated motivational, volitional and social willingness and abilities to successfully and responsibly apply solutions to problems in variable situations“ (Weinert, 2001; as in: Pavkov and Živčić, 2013: 63), was used as the basis for numerous competency models (Pavkov and Živčić, 2013). By the definition of John Erpenbeck and Lutz von Rosenstiel, competence is a self-organizing disposition directed towards action in novel situations and depends on the context (Zürcher, 2010; Pavkov and Živčić, 2013). For Nenad Suzić (2005), competencies represent a continuum. The triad of know, do and be, should be integrated in a single coherent whole so as to enable an individual to combine different knowledge and skills when responding to situations and challenges in accordance with the basic underlying values (Pavlović Breneselović, 2014). According to Boyatzis, competency can be a „motive, trait, skill, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge“ (Whiddett & Hollyforde, 2007; as in: Ivanković, n.d.) which he or she uses. Differentiating between education and competencies, Erpenbeck emphasizes that whereas education is described as a process and a normative goal, self-development and self-realization of an individual, competencies are understood as the development of potential for independent action in various social areas (Erpenbeck, 2004; as in: Pavkov and Živčić, 2013).

Competencies represent our knowledge, skills and attitudes that create our behaviour and their basic characteristic is precisely their application in real situations (Ivanković, n.d.).

Competencies cannot be measured directly (Pavkov and Živčić, 2013). Observation of a person's behaviour is the key to evaluate whether a person has the motives, traits, knowledge and such (Whiddett & Hollyforde, 2007; as in: Ivanković, n.d.). For collecting information on an individual's competencies, different qualitative and quantitative approaches can be used – observation, interview, survey, discussion, product analysis and such (Pavkov and Živčić, 2013).

Parenting and parenting competencies

Parenting is a very important role in the life of an individual. Partners become parents by the very birth of a child and being a parent is often taken for granted. Thomas Gordon notes that parents are often blamed for all the problems related to children and those created by children and adolescents. Parents are blamed but never assisted (Gordon, 1998). Parenting is a beautiful responsibility, but it is also a very big responsibility.

The term *parenting* comprises several different notions. *Parenting sense* consists of making the decision to have children, assuming and accepting the role of a parent, setting the educational goals (consciously or intuitively), the sense of one's own worth because of the effort made, emotional relationship and the child's success. *Parental care* includes giving birth to children and taking care of them. *Parental conduct and activities* include all the things a parent does in order to achieve the parenting goals and fulfil their role and the *parenting style* is the emotional climate within which parents raise their children. Most often, parenting was explored in the function of determining both the beneficial and the harmful influences on the child's development and their developmental results (Čudina Obradović and Obradović, 2002). Because of the significance of the parents' influence on the child's development, modern society demands a competent parent.

Marija Pavkov and Mile Živčić claim that acquiring competencies and their practical use is a subjective process in which an adult uses their own potential with the intention to reach their goals. Competencies change in time and they depend on the cognitive, physical and psychological potential of an individual, which can also change in time, but they also depend on the experience, genetic predispositions and their cultural environment (Pavkov and Živčić, 2013).

Parenting competencies are a multidimensional construct which includes a behavioural, an emotional and a cognitive component (Coleman and Hildebrandt Karraker; 2000; as in: Delale, 2011). Parenting competency most often includes self-efficiency, the central cognitive element that represents the parent's self-evaluation of their competency in the role of a parent or their ability to positively influence their child' behaviour and development (Coleman and Hildebrandt Karraker, 2000; as in: Delale, 2011).

The subjective sense of parenting represents a significant change in the overall identity of an individual and is most often described by three dimensions: parental satisfaction, parenting demands and parental stress and the sense of competency (Sabatelli and Waldron, 1995; as in: Čudina Obradović and Obradović, 2003). The term parental satisfaction indicates the satisfaction with the support of the spouse or civil partner – the other parent, with the parent-child relationship and one's own success as a parent. Mladen Havelka defines stress as a condition in which the inner – physiological, psychological and social balance of an individual is disrupted and demands an extra effort to be made towards adjustment. The condition of stress occurs when an individual fails to fulfil excessive tasks which are put before them by their environment or themselves (Havelka, 1995). Parenting demands are the external pressures put on an individual who needs to fulfil their parenting role in accordance with the expectations of their environment and the established norms of their society, whereas stress represents an individual's feeling of being unable to fulfil those demands. The demands arise from the child's characteristics as well – their inadaptability, unacceptable behaviour, negative mood, distractedness or hyperactivity. Parental stress also includes depression of a parent, being overly attached to the child, feeling of parental incompetency, loneliness, disturbed marital interaction and endangered physical health (Čudina Obradović and Obradović, 2003). Parental stress indicates unpleasant feelings related to the demands of the parenting role due to the demands of the environment and the parents themselves.

Subjective parenting competency is a measure of how successful and capable as a parent an individual feels. It is defined as a sense of difficulty in raising a child in the different phases of the child's development, as a self-evaluation of the knowledge, skills, self-efficiency and self-respect or as a sense that a parent is not in control of the process of their child's upbringing (Čudina Obradović and Obradović, 2003).

A competent parent feels good in their role and experiences themselves as a person that is in control of parenting and the child (Milanović and associates, 2000; as in: Jurčević Lozančić and Kunert, 2015). Pedagogical competencies of parents include family interactions, especially the relationship between the parent and the child. Parent's satisfaction and confidence, as well as the child's success, depend primarily upon the quality of the relationship between the parent and the child (Golombok, 2000; Ljubetić, 2007; Pećnik and Starc, 2010; as in: Jurčević Lozančić and Kunert, 2015). However, as Mira Čudina Obradović and Josip Obradović have stressed, parents constantly question where and when they had made mistakes, what they should do to avoid more mistakes, as well as what a good parent is like and what quality parenting actually means (Čudina Obradović and Obradović, 2003).

Anka Jurčević Lozančić and Anabela Kunert claim that possessing basic pedagogical and psychological knowledge and skills well-adjusted to the child's age and abilities is one of the basic competencies seen in a pedagogically competent parent. A pedagogically incompetent parent does not have the knowledge, is uncertain, fails to establish a satisfactory relation with the child, and finds that parenting is a burden (Jurčević Lozančić and Kunert, 2015). European academic community agrees that it is most important to meet the basic developmental needs of the child – to satisfy the child's basic life needs, provide safety and offer emotional warmth, support and motivating conditions for learning and development, give the child guidance and limits and ensure stability (Cleaver, 2006, Pećnik, 2007; as in: Pećnik and Tokić, 2011). We believe that a competent parent knows and acts in order to fulfil these needs. A competent parent never stops learning, constantly acquires new knowledge and develops skills related to children and their upbringing and feels confident and satisfied in the role of a parent.

Grusec and Ungerer stress that a number of parents, due to being self-absorbed and having unpleasant emotions, develop an unrealistic image of their own efficiency as parents (Grusec and Ungerer, 2002; as in: Delale, 2011).

Competent parents get involved in different behaviours of their child and expect their influence to have positive outcomes despite the fact that this is a slow process or that their actions are based on trial and error method (Delale, 2011).

Previous researches

Linda Gilmore and Monica Cuskelly used *Parenting Sense of Competence Scale* in their research. Factor analysis produced three acceptable factors – Satisfaction, Efficiency and Expression of Interest which was 47, 3% and 50,1% of variance for mothers and fathers. Mothers showed higher efficiency than fathers, whereas fathers showed greater satisfaction with the parenting role (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2008). Jones and Printz identified this scale as the most often applied scale for evaluating parental self-confidence (Johnston & Mash 1989; as in: Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2008).

Research methodology

The main problem of this research is given in the form of the research question: Which factors influence the parenting sense in parents of preschool children? Accordingly, the goal of the research is to determine the latent structure of the set of indicators of competencies of parents of preschool children.

After the research, we expect to get a precise structure of competencies of parents of preschool children.

The sample

Research sample consisted of 105 respondents – parents of preschool children from the territory of the municipality of Novi Bečej, 75 (71,43 %) female and 30 (28,57 %) male. The observed Chi-Square statistic $\chi^2 = 19{,}286$ with significance level of $p = 0{,}001$ shows that the sample is not gender balanced. Within the sample, there were 33 (31,40 %) parents from villages and 72 (68,60 %) from the city. The observed Chi-Square statistic $\chi^2 = 14{,}486$ with significance level of $p = 0{,}001$ shows that the sample is not place of residence balanced. Of the total number of respondents, 72 (68,60 %) are employed, and 33 (31,40 %) are unemployed. The observed Chi-Square statistic $\chi^2 = 14{,}486$ with significance level of $p = 0{,}001$ shows that the sample is not balanced in relation to the category of employment. Also, 9 (8,6 %) respondents have finished elementary school, 59 (56,2 %) high school, 14 (13,3 %) have graduated from college, i.e. have bachelor's degree (first level vocational or academic studies) and 23 (21,9 %) have completed second level of studies. The calculated Chi-Square statistic $\chi^2 = 58{,}314$ with significance level of $p = 0{,}001$ shows that the sample is not balanced in relation to the level of education. The sample consisted of 26 (24,76 %) parents of one child and 79 (75,24 %) parents of two or more children. Chi-

Square statistic χ^2 = 26,752 with significance level of p = 0,001 shows that the sample was not balanced in relation to the number of children in the family. Twenty one (20 %) single parents participated in the research, and 84 (80 %) parents who live in matrimony. Chi-Square statistic χ^2 = 37,800 with significance level of p = 0,001 shows that the sample was not balanced in relation to this indicator.

The Instrument

For the research, the author used the instrument *Questionnaire on Parenting Sense of Competency*. In the introductory part of the instrument, information on the research is given, together with the anonymity guarantee and the explanation of what is expected from the respondents. The first part of the questionnaire is design to obtain basic socio-demographic information – place of residence (village/city), gender, education, parent's employment status, the number of children in the family and whether the respondent is a single parent. The second part of the questionnaire is the scalar consisting of 17 items related to the parenting sense (*Parenting Sense of Competence Scale* (Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978)). The respondents graded the items using the following scale: I strongly disagree, I disagree, I am indecisive, I agree and I strongly agree. The scalar has 9 items which needed to be recoded.

The instrument's reliability was determined by Cronbach alpha test, which on the sample from this research resulted in α = 0,831.

Research process and statistical data analysis

The research involved parents of preschoolers from the territory of the municipality of Novi Bečej. The survey was administered voluntarily and anonymously, and was closed-ended. The statistical analysis was performed using *SPSS 23.0 for Windows*.

Research results with discussion

The answer to the question of what the structure of parenting sense is was sought through the factorization of the instrument. The goal was to use the larger number of interconnected variables to determine a smaller number of basic, i.e. latent variables that explain the interconnectedness.

The principal components retained were rotated by oblimin rotation. These results are shown in Table 1. Using factor analysis, we tried to determine the interdependence between our variables and explain them by a smaller number of shared factors. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic – (KMO measure of sampling adequacy) shows the adequacy of the correlation matrix for factorization and amounts to KMO = 0,782, and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is also significant (p = 0,000) which confirms that the application of factor analysis is justified.

Cattell's Scree plot shows a "break" between the third and the fourth component, which is why we have excluded three components (Graph 1).

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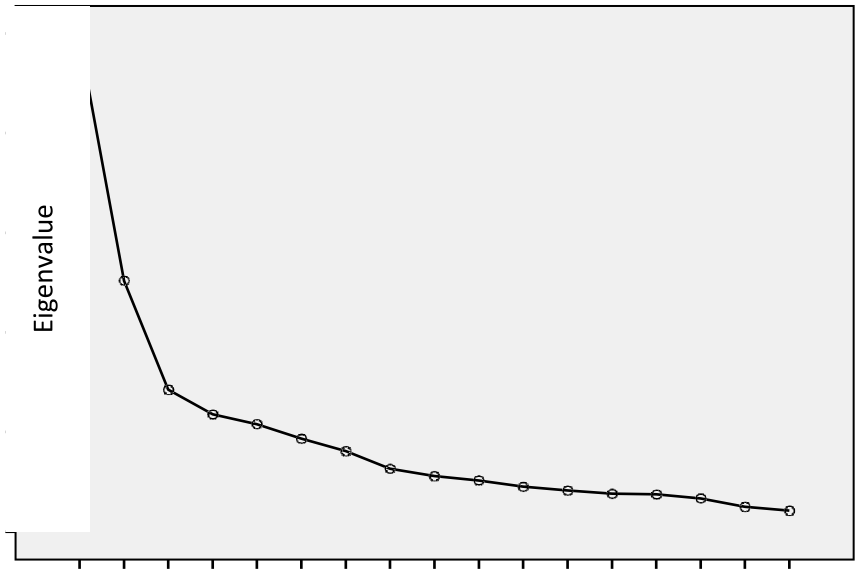

Components – factors

Graph 1: Number of factors - Cattell's scree plot

The extracted factors of parenting sense were defined as: Parental satisfaction; Parenting demands and parental stress; and Sense of competency (Sabatelli and Waldron, 1995; as in: Čudina Obradović and Obradović, 2003).

The latent structure of the first factor consists of 9 items (Table 1). The structure of the first factor *Parenting demands and parental stress* consists of the following items: *My parents were better prepared to be parents than I am* (R); *Being a parent makes me tense and anxious* (R); *I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning, feeling I have not accomplished a whole lot* (R); *If being a parent were only more interesting, I would be motivated to do a better job as a parent* (R); *Even though being a parent could be rewarding, I am frustrated now while my child is at his / her present age* (R); *My talents and interests are in other areas, not being a parent* (R); *Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done* (R); *I do not know why it is, but sometimes when I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated* (R) and *A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing whether you're doing a good job or a bad one* (R). Parenting stress is an aversive psychological reaction to the demands of parenting which connects the demands of parenting, parents' behavior and psychological state, the quality of the parent-child relationship and the parent's psycho-social adjustment (Profaca, 2002; Profaca and Arambašić, 2004; as in: Delale, 2011). Kirby Deater–Deckard stresses that the individual differences in parenting stress have proven to be an important aspect of the functioning of the parent, the child and the family (Deater–Deckard, 1998). Parents tend to replicate the upbringing methods of their parents, as well as the method of "dealing" with family issues. Through different forms of training, parents can get familiar with the pedagogical, psychological and other scientific findings – on children and their development and behaviour, on parents, interpersonal communication and constructive problem solving and in this way develop their parenting competencies. Modern society asks for a modern, competent parent who will meet the demands put before them by parenting, and as such, they would not be exposed to parenting stress.

Table 1: The structure of parenting sense of competency

Factors	Components after rotation		
	1	2	3
Parenting demands and parental stress	0,793		
	0.768		
	0,757		
	0,712		
	0,712		
	0,686		
	0,660		
	0,625		
	0,488		
Parental satisfaction		0,664	
		0,654	
		0,590	
		0,570	
		0,443	
Subjective parenting competency			0,783
			0,740
			0,652

Extraction method: Analysis of principal components
Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization

The second-ranked factor consists of 5 items and is related to *Parental satisfaction* (Table 1). The structure of this item consists of the following items: *If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one*; *Considering how long I've been a parent, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role*; *The problems of taking care of a child are easy to* *solve once you know how your actions affect your child, an understanding I have acquired*; *Being a parent is manageable, and any problems are easily solved* and *Being a parent is a reward in itself.* Expectations from the parenting role related to one's own expertise in raising a child are very important for parental satisfaction. Parenting competency and the subjective sense of parenting are considerably dependant on the preparedness of the marital partners, their anxiety or indifference to the birth of a child (Delmore-Ko et.al.,2000; as in: Čudina Obradović and Obradović, 2003). Self-satisfaction with fulfilling one's own expectations, belief in one's own strengths and skills for "good parenting" and "being immersed" into the role of a parent are all related to the positive sense of parenting.

The third factor is Subjective parenting competency which consists of 3 items (Table 1): *I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my child; I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good parent to my child* and *I would make a fine model for a new parent to follow in order to learn what he or she would need to know in order to be a good parent.* Self-efficiency is a parent's belief in their own abilities to efficiently realize different tasks and meet the demands of parenting (Sanders and Woolley, 2005; as in: Delale, 2011). Parental sense of competency (Gibaud-Walston and Wandersman, 1978; Sanders and Woolley, 2005; as in: Delale, 2011) comprises parent's assessment of their efficacy (self-efficacy) in the role of a parent and their assessment of satisfaction with fulfilling their parenting roles. Being satisfied with fulfilling the parenting role is in a way a consequence of the sense of efficacy which encourages handling multiple simultaneous tasks but also the enjoyment in the parenting process (Delale, 2011). (Self)efficacy in a parent means that the parent is empowered in their parenting role.

Conclusion

This research was done with the aim to determine the latent structure of the set of indicators of competencies of preschoolers' parents. The first extracted factor *Parenting demands and parental stress* indicates that parents need counselling and pedagogical training to empower them in their parenting roles and help them develop their parenting competencies. The second extracted factor *Parental satisfaction* proves the parents' psychosocial wellbeing and that parenting, with all its responsibilities, proves their social-emotional maturity needed for this role. In the order of priority, the third factor was *Subjective parenting competency*. The subjective sense of competent parenting, based on positive self-assessments of parents, creates a positive emotional climate and affects the efficacy of parent's actions (Čudina Obradović and Obradović, 2003). Cooperation of the preschool institution and parents has the tendency to engage parents in all the aspects of kindergarten activities. This trend enables the parents to be involved in counselling teams and parenting trainings organized by the preschool institutions. Often a parent can understand another parent better and help them overcome difficulties by offering advice.

It is the society's responsibility to offer support and strengthen parenting and parental competencies and recognize the parents' key role in raising responsible children (Spasojević, 2011). Parenting competencies need to be developed and this process involves acquiring knowledge and skills needed to face the challenges of parenting, but also to deal with the stress this role brings (Mandarić Vukušić, 2016). Today's parents should keep up with the trends and educate themselves through all the channels available – workshops for parents, parenting schools, round tables, with the help of research literature and electronic media, because this is one of the conditions of being competent to be a parent. The society should offer support in developing and strengthening parenting competencies through different courses, trainings and parenting schools, but it should provide economic support as well. One of the most common feelings of competence is the satisfaction with the job done – and a competent parent is satisfied by themselves and their role as a parent.

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PURPOSE AS AN ASPECT OF INTRAPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE OF ACADEMICALLY GIFTED STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The paper gives an outline of an explorative research whose topic was purposefulness as an aspect of intrapersonal intelligence, searching for an answer to the following question: in what a way can academic giftedness (success during studies) be a determinant of purpose, sense of life and an indicator of intrapersonal intelligence of students? The research aim was to consider the existence of connectedness between academic achievement and conceptualization of purpose. Systematic non-experimental observation was used. Research sample is a convenience sample, consisting of students from the universities of Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš (N=724). Students with average grade above 9,00 are taken as potentially gifted (Renzulli, 1978; Callahan & Miller, 2005), a category which was established through academic achievement (N=128; 17,7%). The basic findings refer to the following: (1) Academic achievement is an important factor influencing the way the students understand purpose; (2) Conceptualization of purpose varies depending on gender, age, type of faculty and study program, indicating that there is a need for new studies dealing with the observed phenomenon.*

Key words: *purpose of life; intrapersonal intelligence of academically gifted students; moral self-regulation*;

Introduction

Recent research in the field of giftedness have increasingly more often focused on the field of morality, encompassing purpose of life, as a phenomenon whose essence is in moral value underlying intrapersonal intelligence (Moran, 2009a). The notion of purpose is found in the literature as a special type of giftedness in intrapersonal intelligence (Moran, 2009a), an inner moral compass, stable and general intention to do something considered essential for the personality, having consequences which go beyond personal context (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). Some authors have also emphasized that purpose is to get to know oneself as well as one's own place in the world, which is very important as a regulator. In other words, the sense of purpose facilitates self-regulation of the way a person is engaged in cultural value activities, emphasizing that the value of this feature of intellectual maturity is above the personality itself (Gestottir & Lerner, 2007).

This is relevant for the undertaken research, having in mind that its starting point was the definition of purpose. Its main determinants imply that a purpose is an inner compass involving engagement in the activities influencing other people, as well as self-awareness, intention and readiness to continue on this road (Marken, 1990). What is also important refers to the viewpoints according to which purpose is seen as a form of psychological control system managing behaviour in the sense of control ranging from external stimulation to internal indications (Kerpelman, 2001). So, purpose is understood as an orienting point of individual's personal behaviour. It serves as a safe direction, i.e. clear orientation in directing one's own powers and strengths. Moran (2009a) views a purpose as an aspect of intrapersonal intelligence, one of Gardner's (1999) intelligences, processing data regarding one's own personality, identity and self-regulation. The same author states that purpose is an ideal whose appearance in the case of young people is expected at the age of final years of secondary school. However, her studies (Moran 2009a) have not confirmed that young people reach the mentioned personal quality at this age, at least not to great extent (26% of N-270 has expressed purpose). Nevertheless, it might be ascertained that relevant literature treats purpose as one form of giftedness in intrapersonal intelligence. This is one of possible ways to define purpose and it is accepted in the current paper. Erikson (as cited in Moran, 2009a, p. 145) considers that strong intrapersonal intelligence is significant for persons who have a need to give their moral support to the world. Viewed from this angle, it could be said that moral orientation of intrapersonal intelligence acknowledges the influence one person has on another. It is considered that these abilities are manifested as needs of an individual to be useful to others. In other words, one's own needs are surpassed (Kagan, 1989).

Empathy is another angle of moral orientation. It is a form of emotional component of moral giftedness expressed in such a way that young people can better than others understand themselves and their own abilities (Moran & Gardner, 2006); this is also true for their caring understanding of other persons, with highly expressed empathy. Numerous studies (Damon, 2008; Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003) emphasize their expressed abilities in setting themselves aims, in understanding intentions, in self-regulation and persistence (Parks, 1986), as well as in consistent self-understanding. It is considered that consistent self-understanding, as a pro-social facilitator, extends to its past and future personalities. Self-understanding is defined as understanding and giving sense to future development, i.e. as a purpose crystallizing and guiding individual development. Numerous authors (Damon, 2008; Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003) nowadays consider that young people should develop the abilities of self-understanding as early as possible, having in mind that the purpose, i.e. self-understanding explicates the direction of actions; there are also research outcomes claiming that this feature is crucial since a purpose crystallizes development by integrating a personality (Damon, 2008; Moran, 2009b; Quaglia & Cobb, 1996; Rathman, 2005).

All in all, findings of numerous studies have confirmed the thesis on importance of purpose, i.e. sense of life for psychological development and stability (Bundick, Damon, Yeager, & King, 2010); Eccles, 2008). This is important for pedagogic angle of considerations of the phenomenon. On the other hand, as it has already been stressed in the text above, a large number of persons do not manage to reach this intrapersonal integration. A special angle refers to individuals who are primarily oriented towards personal aims (personal benefit), rather than being aspired to overcome themselves. They are less oriented towards what they can offer to other people. It is considered that they did not actually reach purpose, in a way which could be classified within intrapersonal intelligence, i.e. moral self-regulation overcoming personal benefits. In other words, it could be said that majority of them who have a good self-understanding, with well-defined desires oriented towards their own needs, rather than the needs of others in order to give contribution to their own well-being (Gestottir & Lerner, 2007) do not fall in the group of individuals with emphasized intrapersonal abilities, i.e. moral giftedness.

Giftedness in morality domain has often focused on the way intellectually gifted are sensitive towards others or think about the issues of morality (Gojkov & Stojanovic, 2012; Moran, 2009a; Renzulli, 2002; Rest & Narvaey, 1995; Sisk, 1982; Tirri & Nokelainen, 2007, as cited in: Gojkov, 2008). Personal talent is considered to be "extraordinary ability to choose and reach difficult life aims which are in accordance with one's interests, abilities, value system and contexts" (Moon, 2003, p. 78). This also encompasses Torrence's understanding of "people without limits", who have great achievements. What they have in common is that they have a clear purpose/intention (Moon, 2003, p. 80). Renzulli (1978) distinguishes academic giftedness (high IQ, successful problem solving and knowledge reproduction). Therefore, we considered significant to examine the connection between the components of moral giftedness and high academic achievements.

It is also significant for the current paper to point out that many authors hold that a purpose is an aspect of intrapersonal intelligence, one of Gardner's (1999) intelligences. It could be said that it is also considered a bio-physiological potential of processing data in a way leading to successful problem solving, i.e. new solutions. As a form of intrapersonal intelligence, purpose is, as it is commonly considered for intrapersonal intelligence, in a sense, moral orientation. Purpose is an inner compass involving engagement in activities influencing other people. Erikson (1968) considered that intrapersonal intelligence is manifested in persons who have the need to give moral contribution to the word; from this standpoint, it might be claimed that the moral aspect of intrapersonal intelligence acknowledges one person's influence on others, implying that these abilities are manifested as individual's needs to be of help to other people. This is also seen as a special dimension of purpose within intrapersonal giftedness. One's own needs are thus pushed into the background (Kagan, 1989).

What makes theoretical framework refers to defining the notion of purpose. According to numerous authors, purpose is actually a special ability, equated, as other forms of giftedness, with reaching an expert level at much earlier stages of development (Bloom, 1985; Feldman, 1986; as cited in: Moran, 2009a, p.148). In the domain of morality, giftedness is often considered in regard to the way intellectually gifted are sensitive to others (Silverman, 1994.), or the way they think about or judge moral issues (Rest & Narvaey, 1995; Sisk, 1982; Tirri & Nokelainen, 2007, as cited in: Gojkov, 2008). These approaches emphasize the way individuals understand situations and their moral implications: how a person sees the sense of his/her environment and existence. Consequently, moral giftedness involves intention/purpose which is in the literature dealing with giftedness associated with talent and high achievement. Moral giftedness emphasizes one's power of will to give positive, prosocial contribution to society (Moran, 2009a; Renzulli, 2002).

Therefore, it is defined as extraordinary or premature achievement. An issue dealt with in the research refers to observation of a number of students who achieved purpose in the sense defined above, in regard to their year of study and their studies success, as an indicator of academic achievement and manifestation of their moral self-determination.

So, it can be concluded that many authors apply both of these features, common characteristics of the gifted, to purpose, as well, extending the area of giftedness beyond the field of academic achievements to extraordinary achievements in the field of leadership and morality (Moran & Gardner, 2006). This is an argument related to more recent theories of giftedness which, having taken into consideration abilities, emphasize the way in which individuals use their abilities, in constructive social purposes (Renzulli, 2002). This statement is also to point out that neither intellectual giftedness nor academic achievement go hand in hand with moral sense.

Method

Research topic of this explorative study is purpose as a form of intrapersonal giftedness. We were interested in the issue: what is it students care about and consider important and how they structure their efforts in order to harmonize them with the values they estimate as important. Our intention was to explore the extent to which they consider moral dimension of situations and actions significant and how this dimension influences their efforts to build their personalities.

Furthermore, an answer *to the following question* is searched for: in what way is purpose, as a form of intrapersonal intelligence, manifested in the observed students; is there a connection between academic achievements and conceptualization of purpose.

Aim of the research is to consider the existence of connectedness between academic achievement and conceptualization of purpose. We intended to explore the way students with high academic achievements (average grade during studies above 9,00) understand their purpose of life. We were also interested in how the rest of the students (average grade during studies below 9,00) conceptualize their life purpose.

Basic hypothesis is that there is a statistically significant connection between academic achievement and conceptualization of purpose, in the sense of identification of purpose of life and more emphasized prosocial contribution to society, as a significant indicator of moral self-regulation.

Working hypothesis refer to the following:

1. Academic achievement statistically significantly influences the way the students understand purpose and the presence of empathy derived from prosocial reasons.
2. Academic achievement (average grade during studies), gender, type of studies (program orientation) and the year of studies are

statistically significant variables connected with purpose as an aspect of intrapersonal intelligence.

Variables:

Predictive: gender, year of studies, faculty and department, success during studies;

Criterion: conceptualization of purpose (structure, shape, form) – what makes purpose / sense of life, elements of structuring of indicators of moral self-regulation – indicators of coherence of structure of intrapersonal intelligence and its manifestation.

Research instrument was a modified Likert type scale (SKS-1), construed according to Moran (2009a, p.158), in order to estimate how research subjects identify their life aims. The intention was to see whether and in what way they feel that they have found sense or identified a purpose they think is a good orienting point in their lives, as well as how they construed it. The same instrument covered the pieces of information referring to predictive variables (studies success, gender, year of studies, faculty and department).

The tasks to be undertaken in order to reach the research aim were:

- to establish the structure of purpose, i.e. to get to the essence of the structure of the sense of life and see how ethical sensibility can be the core of life sense;
- the relation between purpose and the variables, aiming at considering the reasons contributing to the found state and more clearly determining the intentions, i.e. sense of life.

The research was conducted according to an anonymous questionnaire including open type questions referring to a short description of their own life purpose, its explanation, i.e. why they consider it valuable to dedicate their lives to it. There was also a question referring to the field in which the subjects had most activities and success, in the sense of achievement and reaching their potential, followed by an explanation why they were engaged in these activities and the reasons for their success. The questionnaire was designed so that the responses can be used to identify purpose, sense and satisfaction in life.

Systematic non-experimental observation was used as a method. Categorizing of answers involved 3 independent evaluators (doctors of pedagogic and psychological sciences, university professors and researchers), familiar with the phenomenon and the subject issue, whose assessments were harmonized and categorized in the following categories:

1. Purpose of existence, i.e. life:

- Empathy for prosocial reasons;

- Self-oriented aims.

2. Important life aims:
   - What life aims are important;
   - Why are these aims important;
   - In what a way should aims be achieved.

Research sample is a convenience sample, consisting of students from the universities of Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš (N=724). Students with average grade above 9,00 are taken as potentially gifted, as a category which confirmed itself through academic achievement (N=128).

Statistic processing: descriptive statistics, Chi-quadrate independence test was used to confirm the existence of statistically significant correlation between the observed variables and conceptualization of purpose as a factor of moral self-regulation. Another question is also included: in what way purpose is manifested as self-regulation of students with high academic achievements; cluster analysis was used to identify structures within the collected data.

Results and discussion

The basic hypothesis is supported by the following finding: it was established according to Chi-square independence test that there is statistically significant correlation at the level 0,05 (χ^2= 14,552; p= 0,001) between the variable *average grade of the subjects* and the variable *understanding of the purpose of life.* The value established according to the Chi-quadrate test implies a low influence (V= 0,14) of average grade of students during studies on their understanding of purpose of life. In other words, in spite of the fact that the correlation is not high, it is statistically significant. It could be concluded that academic achievement is a significant factor influencing the way the students understand life purpose. The structure of purpose, especially in regard to prosocial aspect – empathy, can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1: Correlation between academic achievement and understanding of empathy (purpose of life)

	Empathy – prosocial contribution to society – sense, purpose of life	a l

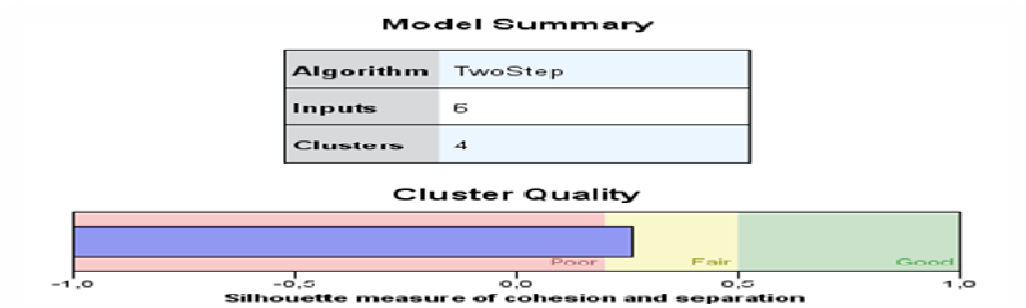
		Contribution to changes	*Fight for equality, freedom*	To do good deeds	To be a proper member of society	I am still searching	To move things in one's profession	To give love, to help others	Religion ethics	Hedonism	*Contribution to mankind*	Life itself as a purpose	
Average grade	above 9	*36*	*2*	17	14	6	14	5	1	30	*0*	3	128
		28,1%	*1,6%*	13,3 %	10,9 %	4,7%	10,9%	3,9%	0,8%	23,4 %	*0,0%*	2,3%	100,0%
	below 9	*86*	*10*	42	42	22	49	27	19	258	*9*	32	596
		14,4%	*1,7%*	7,0%	7,0%	3,7%	8,2%	4,5%	3,2%	43,3 %	*1,5%*	5,4%	100,0%
Total		*122*	*12*	59	56	28	63	32	20	288	*9*	35	724
		16,9%	*1,7%*	8,1%	7,7%	3,9%	8,7%	4,4%	2,8%	39,8 %	*1,2%*	4,8%	100,0%

The data in the Table 1 indicate that prosocial empathy in academically gifted is manifested in 29,7% of cases, which is close to findings of other research pointing out that purpose, integrated with all three dimensions, is not common; former studies have found that only 25% of young people have purpose as a form of intrapersonal giftedness (Damon, 2008). Slightly higher percentage was found in current research, which is not difficult to understand, having in mind that the finding refers to gifted students, i.e. selected population. On the other hand, it also seems important to point out here that the data have shown that a solid number of students not classified within academically gifted (26,2%) also manifested emphasized prosocial empathy. This finding imposes the need for further search for answers explaining the phenomenon, in the sense of factors influencing the formation of prosocial empathy. In other words, it might be concluded that academically gifted students more than others manifest the awareness of the need to get engaged in the change of social reality in immediate and broader environment, as a form of intrapersonal giftedness, i.e. moral self-regulation. If this is backed up by the aspects referring to fight for equality (1,6%) and moving things in one's profession, as a way of change of social awareness (10,9%), which might be understood as a broader context of prosocial empathy, it is an indicator that the number of the gifted who have emphasized prosocial empathy is higher than 50%.

Around 27% of students who did not fall under the group of academically gifted have also manifested emphasized prosocial empathy. Nevertheless, apart from the established statistically significant difference in favour of academically gifted, it is not such that its manifestation might be associated solely to giftedness; as a consequence, new questions are raised. What seems imposed here as important is the total value of manifested prosocial orientations in purpose, opening up a new question regarding the sample, i.e. examination of the factors underlying this finding. One of the possible causes might be cultural influence, which should be checked in a comparative research.

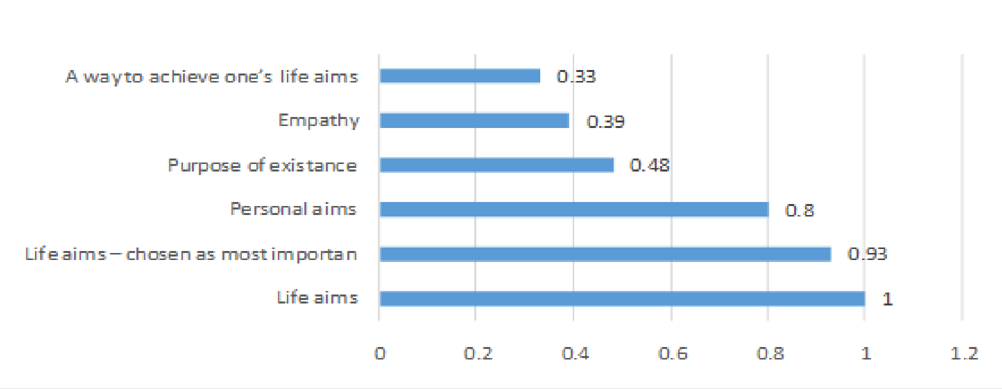
What is also important for the confirmation of the first hypothesis are the data derived from the cluster analysis showing a solid discriminatory value of clusters, i.e. classification of statistically significant differences between the formed clusters (groups), in regard to each variable individually (a way to achieve one's life aims, empathy, purpose of existence, personal aims, life aims – chosen as most important, life aims). This is only one of the indicators of the confirmation of the first hypothesis, i.e. a sign that there are significant correlations between the observed variables, which are to be seen in the Graph 1. Structure and values of these clusters are given in the Table 2 and Graph 3.

Graph 1. Clusters quality–a diagram of medium values of established clusters



The data given in the Graph 1 show that 6 predictor variables were included in the analysis, and that 4 clusters were identified. Chosen variables show solid quality (value is 0,3). In order to establish whether the clusters really differ, a technique of visual observation of graph showing line diagrams in the Graph 1 was used, indicating a good discriminatory value of clusters, i.e. classification of statistically significant differences between the formed clusters (groups) in regard to each individual variable.

Graph 2. Predictor value of the observed variables



The smallest cluster is made of 119 subjects, which is 16,5% of the sample, and the largest cluster consists of 227 subjects, i.e. 31,4%. The ratio of the size of clusters is 1,91, which is a significant difference. Criterion value of each of the variables is shown in the Graph 2. The following variable has the strongest criterion value: *Life aims – chosen as most important* and the weakest criterion value is found in the variable *a way to achieve one's life aims,* which might be explained as a lack of one of the components of purpose as a self-regulator, since it refers to the ability to conceive ways to overcome problems, ways to achieve aims. In other words, one element of purpose as moral regulator is weakly or insufficiently clearly expressed in the case of one part of the students; the essence of purpose/sense of life is not fully developed, and it cannot be considered a self-regulator, not even in the sense of moral behaviour; thus, it cannot be considered an aspect of intrapersonal intelligence, as it was defined in the theoretical part of the paper.

In cluster analysis carried out according to Chi-quadrate independence test it was found that there is statistically significant dependence at the level 0,01 (χ^2= 20,719; p< 0,001) between the clusters describing conceptualization of purpose, named as *structural conceptualization of purpose* and the variable *average grade of the subjects.* A small, but statistically significant influence between high academic achievements and conceptualization of purpose was established (V= 0,17).
So, it could be concluded that there is statistically significant dependence between academic achievement and purpose, i.e. its structural elements: *empathy derived from prosocial reasons, imagination of projection of oneself, purpose in the future* and *recognition of opportunities for*

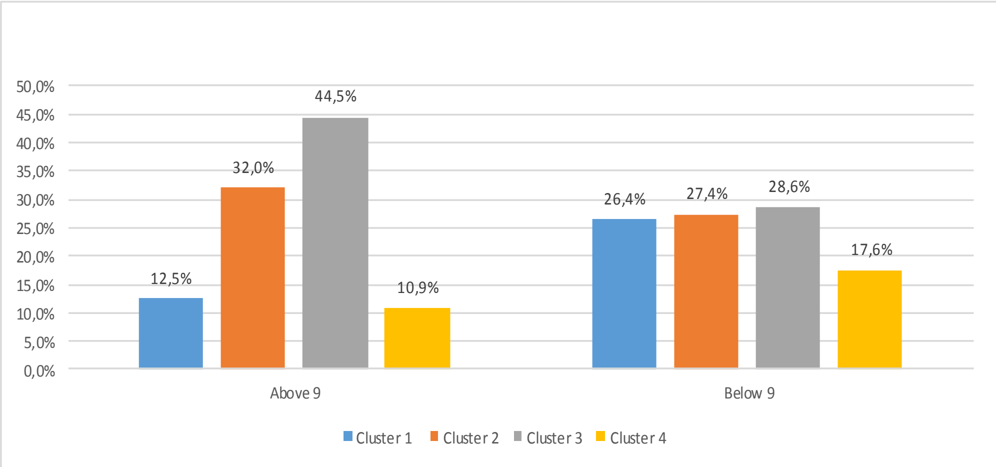
engagement, confirming the first hypothesis. In other words, gifted students with expressed empathy, as one of the aspects of moral orientation, have a specific viewpoint regarding understanding of themselves, their own abilities, as well as abilities of others in a caring way with emphasized empathy, which is in accordance with other research (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, Wagner, & Chapman, 1992). This is an indicator of their emphasized ability to set aims for themselves, to understand intentions, in self-regulation and in persistence (Parks, 1986), as well as consistent self-understanding. In other words, academically gifted students understand life well and give sense to their future development, in such a way that a purpose crystalizes and guides development of their personality. According to mentioned findings, purpose also integrates personality and contributes to psychological stability. This further might lead to a conclusion that purpose, as a self-regulator, is also important for academic achievement, which is clearly seen in the cluster analysis of the structure of criterion variables: *Table 2.* Thus, the first hypothesis is fully confirmed, but the question remains: what are the causes and what are the consequences? In other words, in what a way academic success crystalizes purpose, makes sense of life prosocial, progressive and full of contents, and vice versa – to what an extent is understanding of purpose actually a cause of academic success?

Table 2: Cluster composition in view of the subjects with the average grade above 9 and those below 9

		Clusters				Total
		1st cluster	2nd cluster	3rd cluster	4th cluster	
Average grade	above 9	16	41	57	14	128
		12,5%	32,0%	44,5%	10,9%	100,0%
	below 9	157	163	170	105	595
		26,4%	27,4%	28,6%	17,6%	100,0%
Total		173	204	227	119	723
		23,9%	28,2%	31,4%	16,5%	100,0%

Graph 3 also show that students with high academic achievements, i.e. average grade above 9,00 are mainly classified in 2nd and 3rd cluster, which shows that these clusters have high representation of the following values: *contribution to better world, justice, equality, empathy – prosocial; understand life – search for its sense, change oneself for the well-being of others, to give one's own contribution to changes, to preserve nation, contribution to mankind, preservation of species, fight for the return of the holy land to Christians, dedication to higher aims – independence, freedom* *and tolerance in the fight for reaching one's own aims and development of society,* all manifesting high prosocial purpose.

Graph 3. Differences between subjects in regard to average grade



Having in mind that the established statistical significance of dependence between purpose and achievement is not such that its occurrence could be associated solely with giftedness, the influence of the observed independent variables (gender, year of study, faculty, department) will further be observed, testing the second hypothesis based on the assumption that these predictor variables have significant influence on purpose.

Reflections on *life aims* and their representation in regard to the *year of studies* are observed through Chi-quadrate independence test. It was confirmed that there is statistically significant dependence at the level (χ^2= 67,287; p= 0,001) between the variable *year of studies* and the variable *life aims*. Significant but small influence (V= 0,15) was found of subjects' year of study and their understanding and formulation of life aims. In other words, students at different years of study think differently about their life aims and formulate them in different ways.

Table 3: Connections regarding years of studies and the way of thinking about life aims

	Life aims	

		Happy family life	Successful career	Meaningless of life	Secure future	Emancipation	Love for others	Fight for equality and justice	Suppose to others	Contribution to better life of others	Life as its own purpose	
Year of studies	First	31	34	1	15	46	14	2	3	14	6	166
		18,7%	20,5%	0,6%	9,0%	27,7%	8,4%	1,2%	1,8%	8,4%	3,6%	100,0%
	Second	49	36	3	19	49	25	4	4	10	5	204
		24,0%	17,6%	1,5%	9,3%	24,0%	12,3%	2,0%	2,0%	4,9%	2,5%	100,0%
	Third	57	29	8	18	32	22	4	7	7	11	195
		29,2%	14,9%	4,1%	9,2%	16,4%	11,3%	2,1%	3,6%	3,6%	5,6%	100,0%
	Fourth	31	37	6	14	32	13	1	3	8	12	157
		19,7%	23,6%	3,8%	8,9%	20,4%	8,3%	0,6%	1,9%	5,1%	7,6%	100,0%
	Fifth	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
		0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	***50,0%***	0,0%	***50,0%***	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Total		168	136	18	66	160	74	12	17	39	34	724
		23,2%	18,8%	2,5%	9,1%	22,1%	10,2%	1,7%	2,3%	5,4%	4,7%	100,0%

Emancipation and *fight for equality and justice* are most emphasized elements significantly influencing conceptualization of purpose (structure, shape, form) and make sense/purpose of life of the observed subjects. They are considered in the literature the essential elements of structuring indicators of moral self-regulation and coherence of structure of intrapersonal intelligence and their manifestation, i.e. strength. The finding might be understood as a confirmation of the findings of other research that a purpose, i.e. sense of life, expressed in empathy out of prosocial reasons, is developed through maturation. The data also show the prominence of consistent self-understanding, as prosocial facilitator, considered to integrate personality (Damon, 2008; Moran, 2009b; Quaglia & Cobb, 1996; Rathman, 2005). It is worth stating an argument in favour of previous conclusion that the found statistical significance of dependence between high academic achievement and purpose is not a sufficient indicator to associate manifestation of purpose solely with giftedness.

The same hypothesis involves *faculty and department* as a factor of self-regulation. The dependence between their choice of faculty and understanding of purpose of life is observed according to the Chi-quadrate independence test. It was found that there is statistically significant dependence at the level 0,01 (χ^2= 31,693; p= 0,000) between the variable *faculty* and the variable *structuring of purpose of life*. Low influence was found (V= 0,15) of educational institution of the subjects on their understanding of purpose of life. In other words, subjects from different educational institutions think differently about purpose of life, so that educational institution has also appeared as a significant factor of structuring a purpose. To what an extent have students with different views on purpose opted for different types of studies, i.e. educational profile, and what is the influence of the studies themselves on their understanding of sense of life and moral self-regulation remains an issue to be dealt with in another research. What can be pointed out here is the fact that students of Philosophical and Mathematical faculties mainly have clearly expressed will of power to give positive, prosocial contribution to society and have a clear intention/purpose in the sense of need to give contribution to well-being of others. The finding is not sufficient to make conclusions on the importance of educational institution on prosocial dimension of purpose/sense of life. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing here that there are most students at Mathematical and Philosophical faculty who have high average grade during studies, which might be in favour of importance of academic success, rather than the faculty students enrolled.

Table 4: Connections between the way of structuring of life purpose and the subjects coming from various educational institutions

		Purpose of life			
		Empathy – prosocial	Self-oriented	No purpose, vague purpose, nihilism	Total
Faculty	Philosophical Faculty in Novi Sad	124	198	52	374
		33,2%	52,9%	13,9%	100,0%
	Teacher Education Faculty in Belgrade	11	48	14	73
		15,1%	65,8%	19,2%	100,0%
	Preschool Teacher Training College in Vrsac	15	21	17	53
		28,3%	39,6%	32,1%	100,0%
	Philosophical Faculty in Nis	50	87	32	169
		29,6%	51,5%	18,9%	100,0%
	Mathematical Faculty in Novi Sad	26	27	2	55
		47,3%	49,1%	3,6%	100,0%
Total		226	381	117	724
		31,2%	52,6%	16,2%	100,0%

Connections between the understanding of purpose of life and *the subjects of various educational profiles* are related to previously mentioned dependence derived from chosen departments. The least number of students who have no purpose/sense of life are from science departments. This is a significant issue for further research, but it might be backed up by the common opinion that social and humanistic sciences give broader world views from the understanding of social reality. It could be expected that the students enrolled in these departments are more oriented towards conceiving aims and purpose of their own lives and life in general in a prosocial sense.

Table 5: Connections between understanding of life purpose and the subjects of different educational profiles

		Purpose of life			
		Empathy – prosocial	Self-oriented aims	No purpose, vague purpose, nihilism	Total
Educational profile	Humanistic sciences	31	76	11	118
		26,3%	64,4%	9,3%	100,0%
	Social sciences	32	51	15	98
		32,7%	52,0%	15,3%	100,0%
	Teachers and preschool teachers	27	69	32	128
		21,1%	53,9%	25,0%	100,0%
	Sciences	25	27	1	53
		47,2%	50,9%	1,9%	100,0%
	Language and communication	111	158	58	327
		33,9%	48,3%	17,7%	100,0%
Total		226	226	381	117
		31,2%	31,2%	52,6%	100,0%

Observation of *the structure of life aims according to the gender of subjects*, carried out according to Chi-quadrate independence test, showed that there is statistically significant correlation at the level of 0,05 (χ^2= 20,275; p= 0,016) between the variable *gender* and the variable *personal life aims.* Small influence (V= 0,17) of gender of the subjects on their understanding of life aims implies that subjects of different genders think differently about their personal aims and formulate them in different ways.

Age was also observed as a predictor variable, i.e. maturation as a factor of manifestation of purpose as moral self-regulator. Connections between the way of thinking about *life aims* and their formulation and *the year of studies* are observed according to Chi-quadrate independence test. It was found that there is statistically significant dependence at the level 0,05 (χ^2= 67,287; p= 0,001) between the variable *year of studies* and the variable *life aims.* Low influence (V= 0,15) of year of studies of the subjects was established on their understanding and formulation of life aims, confirming the findings of other researchers on the development of purpose throughout life (Damon, 2008).

Previous findings lead to a conclusion that all the involved predictor variables had low, yet statistically significant influence on criterion variables, i.e. understanding of sense/purpose of life, its structuring and formulation and the choice of ways to their achievement. Thus, the second hypothesis was confirmed, implying the need for further research. Having in mind relatively small influences of all the observed predictor variables, it would be necessary to, in a differently structured research framework, include other variables which might contribute to better understanding of the observed phenomenon. Potential subsequent research would give a significant contribution to pedagogic practice in making efforts to guide the development of purpose/sense of life as a self-regulator of one's own development in the sense of contribution to development of persons' autonomy. There is another methodological issue to be mentioned here: to what an extent would a classification of the variable *success* to more than two categories (above and below 9,00) give a different picture of the importance of success for the observed issue. The reaches of this explorative research refer to new questions for future hypotheses.

Summarizing and providing suggestions

The fact that the findings have confirmed the significance of the observed variables (success, faculty, department and year of studies), i.e. their connections with criterion variables, i.e. understanding of sense/purpose of life and its structuring, leads to a conclusion that the findings of this explorative research are in line with basic theoretical assumptions the research is based on, as well as with the findings of other researchers. Nevertheless, as it was pointed out in the discussion of the findings, certain questions were raised. One of them refers to the fact that success during studies, as an indicator of academic giftedness, is a significant variable in forming of purpose/sense of life, as a form of intrapersonal giftedness. On the other hand, there is also a significant number of students who do not fall within the group of academically gifted, who also have emphasized prosocial empathy and other aspects of manifestation of purpose/sense of life. The findings on the influence of faculty, department, year of studies, have raised another question: is it justifiable to associate purpose/sense of life defined in such a way solely with academic giftedness. Another disputable question is: how come that we have found such a prominence of the total manifestation value of the expressed prosocial orientations in case of the students who were not classified within academically gifted. There is another closely related issue and it refers to the causes, i.e. factors underlying them. So, the finding according to which other predictor variables turned out to be significant, together with the fact that their influences are of similar reaches, points to the need to observe the phenomenon from other standpoints through discriminative analyses. This also refers to a methodological issue:

to what an extent would a classification of the variable *success* to more than two categories (above and below 9,00) give a different picture of the importance of success for the observed phenomenon. This is important contribution for the reaches of the current explorative research, since it refers to new questions for future hypotheses, as well as for educational angle of understanding and development of the observed phenomenon.

It is important in education to make efforts and ensure that development leads towards competent, mature persons, towards abilities for moral orientation of personal and social life, with expressed empathy and clear intentions for self-regulation. Developed self-understanding, understanding and giving sense to future development should be encouraged, since these important features crystalize development through personality integration (Damon, 2008; Moran, 2009b; Quaglia & Cobb, 1996; Rathman, 2005) and as such they are significant for psychological development and stability (Colby & Damon, 1992; Hart & Fegley, 1995).

It is important that nowadays within emancipatory didactics increasingly more attention is paid to self-organized and self-determined learning, implying autonomy of learning, orientation towards self-development, for the ability of self-regulation not to be lost. This also involves development of critical thinking as the basis of developed purpose including integration and personal ability to find importance in personal experience.

There is another finding indicative for the educational angle of observation of this phenomenon and it is that majority of those who understand themselves well have defined self-oriented desires, rather than needs to give contribution to others (Gestdottir & Lerner, 2007). Some studies imply that in certain cultures it is considered that self-oriented aims are a norm; numerous cultural messages amplify the ultimate experience of personal happiness and life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1996; Gable & Haidt, 2005). Special attention should be paid in these situation to the ways of developing of critical sense and empathy, orienting moral self-determinations of individuals and overcoming one's own personal interests.

Generally speaking, it seems that moral orientation in education has been neglected, while the sphere of morality in postmodernism and emphasized plurality has been left to an individual and interest groups. These statements can be explained as a consequence of postmodern efforts to create more tolerant view of the way human knowledge is understood, mainly relying on Foucault's standpoints of inseparability between knowledge and power (Fuko, 1997). According to the stated author, common and prevailing ways of describing the world carry potential social practice to act in a certain way. Therefore, certain forms of behaviour have become marginalized, while others are subordinated to others. In others words, what is "normal" in one setting is based on the currently accepted knowledge prevailing in the given culture. Knowledge is understood here as an effect of discourse, i.e. one form of relations. This allows certain views and behaviours to be acceptable or desirable, depending on the culture. Comparative studies dealing with the issue might be significant for getting to know and understanding of purpose/sense of life as a phenomenon.

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MIDAS FACTOR STRUCTURE ANALYSIS FOR ROMANIAN 12-14 YEAR OLD STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Nowadays education plays more than ever a key role for the economical development of a country and also for its citizens` life quality, therefore teachers and policy makers become more and more essential actors at the social level. Due to the latest and quickest technological and informational advances, many voices claim that the teaching and learning process in schools should be changed from a traditional one to a different or multiple educational perspectives one. Teaching taking into account the multiple intelligences of the students might prove thus to be a winner approach, by enhancing students` academic performance and understanding, but also school motivation and self-esteem. The present paper analyzes for the first time in the Romanian literature Branton Shearer`s 93 items Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scale for Kids- All About Me for Romanian students of 6th grade (12-14 years old). A sample of 300 students was used for adaptation of the scale for my PhD research paper purpose and the main findings will be discussed.*

Keywords: *multiple intelligences; MIDAS; factor structure analysis;*

1. Introduction

Theory of Multiple Intelligences was formulated by Professor Howard Gardner in 1983 in his book called Frames of Mind. He defined intelligences as" a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" and demonstrated that each person has at least 8 different ways to process the information, having a clear distinct brain localization, which he called" intelligences" (Gardner, 2001,2006). Although these intelligences are relatively independent, they do not act isolated in the real life situations but are always found -several or all of them- involved together in daily activities, tasks, roles or products. Thus besides the" traditional" types of intelligences already described such as verbal, mathematical and spatial ones, Gardner also talks about musical, naturalistic, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. In this way he clearly rejects the monolithic conception about the intelligence and thinks of it as a pluralist notion in the line of other psychologists such as Guilford, Thurstone, Ceci and Sternberg (Prieto & Ferrándiz, 2001). He ran various studies carried out with different types of population, and founded his theory upon neurological, evolutionary and cross-cultural evidence (Gardner, 2001). Short time after it was released, the Theory of Multiple Intelligences has got a huge impact especially into the educational field.

Although Gardner has always supported the observation of the person in various contexts and tasks as the best method of identifying one´s strongest and weakest developed intelligences at a certain moment, rejecting firmly any kind of psychometrical approach for measuring one´ s cognitive development as being too limitative and artificial in the sense that is completely abstract and not rooted into the person´ life experience and context, he still supported Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS™) created by Branton Shearer Ph.D. in 1996 as a proper assessment for the multiple intelligences depending on age groups. And that because Shearer understood very well the MI philosophy and did not focus on labeling the respondent but instead he offers a broad cognitive profile as a starting point for exploration and insight (Shearer,2013).

The current study examined the psychometric properties of the Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scale for Kids- All About Me for Romanian students of 6th grades in order to check whether this could be used further on during the experimental phase of our PhD research which will test some of the advantages of using multiple intelligences in the classroom in the teaching and learning process in secondary school.

2. Participants

Participants were 300 pupils of 6th grade from 7 secondary schools from three counties in the NE part of Romania (Neamț, Bacău and Iași) plus Bucharest city, both from rural and urban areas. The schools were selected upon the results got at the end of the year 2013-2014 at the national evaluation exam (we took into account the mean of means of all the pupils of the 8th grade who took the exam and thus we selected the schools as follows: 2 schools with very good results– average mean of means between 10 and 8, 3 schools with good results, average mean of means between 7.99 and 6.50 and 2 schools with low results, average mean of means between 6.49 and 5,00.

The participants were between 10 and 14 y.o. (mean 11,79; SD=.663). Out of the 296 pupils included into the study, 0.7% were 10 years old, 31.4% were 11 years old, 57.8% were 12 years old, 8.8% were 13 years old and 1.4% were 14 years old.

As for the gender and living distribution, 50,30% were males and 49,70% were females, 24.30% lived in rural areas and 75.70% lived in urban areas. According to http://www.indexmundi.com/romania/demographics_profile.html, the population of the studied sample was representative for the national general population in terms of sex ratio , but was not in line regarding the urbanization . Altogether the sample reflected the main ethnic and social characteristics of the Romanian population of pupils. We had the acceptance of the school directors and official agreements were concluded in this respect. The questionnaire was administered by us to intact classes in 50 minutes sessions, following standardized procedures and the confidentiality and all the other ethical requirements were respected.

3. Instrument

MIDAS-KIDS as well as the other 4 MIDAS™ scales were built as an objective manner to assess the multiple intelligences. MIDAS-KIDS" All About Me" questionnaire consists of 93 items that are self-completed by children aged 10 to 14 years old if they are able to read at 5th grade level at least. When this is not the case, the help of a teacher or another person would be necessary (Shearer, 2013). The answers are of Likert scale type from A = not at all or slightly to E= very much, excellent or most of the time. There is also an F option of answering which says" I do not know" or" I have never had the occasion to do such an activity".

The MIDAS-KIDS profile has 3 pages and provides information about the child development level in each of the 8 intelligences (Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Spatial, Musical, Kinesthetic, Naturalist, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal), but also in 24 sub-scales plus two intellectual style scales (Innovation and Technical) and finally offers qualitative information that can be taken from each question, which is very contextualized in the daily life (Shearer,2013).

The MIDAS-KIDS intrascale reliabilities consistency of the original tool as explained in the manual were calculated on 2144 subjects and test-retest on n=93. The result was that Alpha΄ s ranged from a low .83 for Kinesthetic and Linguistic to a high of .91 for Intrapersonal, which indicates strong internal consistency for the eight scales. Similar results were obtained for the intellectual style scales: .82 for Innovation and .83 for Technical (Shearer, 2013).

MIDAS-KIDS was translated into Romanian and then independently back-translated (Sava,2011). The Romanian version quality was checked then on a sample of 54 pupils in September 2015 and we found a high internal consistency of the scales, alpha Cronbach values being from: .786 for Musical Intelligence to .892 for Intrapersonal Intelligence. The two scales of intellectual styles had also very good alpha Cronbach values: .800 Technical one and .847 the Innovative one.

When calculated for the sample of 296 children, the psychometric properties still remained very good in spite that there was a bit of lowering. Thus the alpha Cronbach values were from .740 for Linguistic Intelligence to.873 for Intrapersonal Intelligence, .789 for Technical and .788 for the Innovative scales.

4. Data Analysis

We entered the data into SPSS version 23 for Windows in which all the analysis were conducted. In the end our database kept only 296 cases out of 300 since one child could not finish his work and another three kids were aged 15. The number of participants (296) reported to the number of variables (78) is thus appropriate for running a factor analysis since Kline (1994) suggests a minimum ratio of 2:1. We took into account the Scoring Matrix provided by B. Shearer where actually **78 items** out of 93 were considered for the scales.

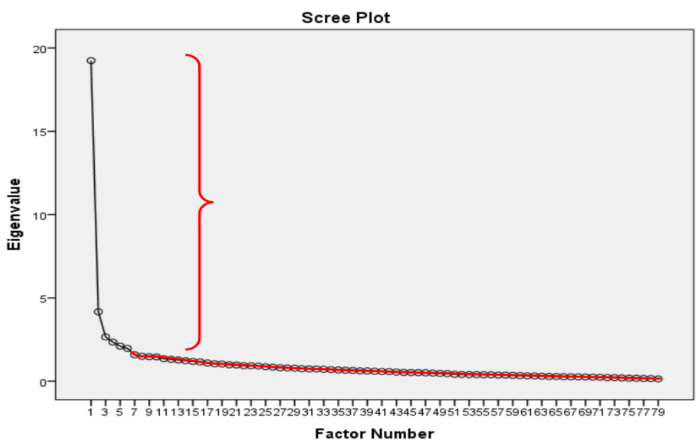
As Likert-type scales data are neither continuous nor normally distributed, a special program would be needed to conduct familiar factor analysis on the matrix of polychoric inter-item correlations rather than on the matrix of Pearson correlations.

However," as long as PCA and FA are used descriptively as convenient ways to summarize the relationships in a large set of observed variables, assumptions regarding the distributions of the variables are not in force" (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2001).

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted in order to investigate whether we could find among these variables an underlying structure of 8 dimensions corresponding to the 8 intelligences identified by Gardner. Our sample size also was enough to do this analysis as Kline (1994) suggests a minimum ratio of subjects-factors of 20:1. Anyway, a sample size of 200 is a sensible minimum target (Brace, Kemp, Snelgar, 2009).

We had a hard debate in order to establish what type of method of rotation would be the most suitable to usee. At first glance we would tend to use the Principal Components Analysis with Varimax rotation (orthogonal) as Gardner states that the eight intelligences are independent (Gardner, then we read in the MIDAS-Kids manual that the author used Maximum Likelihood with Promax rotation (kappa=4) as he based on Gardner´ s assumption that intelligences are" relatively" independent and took into account that in real world activities the MIs are never isolated but interacting to various degrees. So we decided to use the same method as Shearer did.

5. Results



When we ran Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett´ s Test of Sphericity, we got the following results: KMO=.910, Approx. Chi-Square= 10108,843, df.=3003, sig.=.000 which means that the sampling is adequate for the EFA.

The scree plot in Fig.1 shows six factors instead of eight as we were expecting, but when we take a closer look at the Pattern Matrix we realize that the first two factors are each composed mainly of items corresponding to two intelligences. Thus we identified a first factor composed of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences items and a second factor composed of logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences items. We could call the first factor the" Personal" intelligence and the second factor the" Academic" intelligence. The third factor is gathering items of Spatial Intelligence, the 4^{th} of Kinesthetic Intelligence, the 5^{th} of the Naturalist Intelligence and the 6^{th} of the Musical Intelligence. The eigenvalues of the six factors were: 19.042, 4.065, 2.648, 2.346, .106 and 1.970. Total variance explained by the six-factor oblique rotation solution was 41.253%.

Factor 1 has 10 items of Interpersonal Intelligence (46,54,55,56,58,60,63,65,66,75), 11 items of Intrapersonal Intelligence (59,68,69,70,71,72,73,76,77,78,79), 2 items of Linguistic Intelligence (51 and 57) and 1 of logical-mathematical Intelligence (27).

Factor 2 has 6 items of Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (24,25,26,30,34,41) and 4 items of Linguistic Intelligence (41,42,44,48) .

Factor 3 has 6 items of Spatial Intelligence (16,31,32,33,35,36,37,40) , one of Interpersonal Intelligence (43) and one of Linguistic Intelligence (53).

Factor 4 has 7 items of Kinesthetic Intelligence (12,13,14,15,19,20,38) and one of Spatial Intelligence (28).

Factor 5 has 13 items of Naturalistic Intelligence (81-93).

Factor 6 has 9 items of Musical Intelligence (2,3,5,6,8-11, 18).

The internal consistency for each factor remained high, the alpha Cronbach values being as follows: .921 for Factor 1, .828 for Factor 2, .831 for Factor 3, .796 for Factor 4, .854 for Factor 5 and .740 for Factor 6.

In Table 1 one can notice that several moderate to high correlations between some factors.

Table 1. Factor Correlation Matrix

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1					
2	.652	1				
3	.508	.418	1			
4	.504	.380	.317	1		
5	.560	.465	.476	.285	1	
6	.429	.303	.460	.260	.325	1

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Rotation Method:Promax with Kaiser Normalization

5. Discussion

The high internal consistency of the 6 factors we have found reflects very well the structure of multiple intelligences as presented by is author (Gardner,2001).The combination of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences grouped into a strong first factor of our EFA is in line with the theory which says that the acquirement of a mature sense of Self is strongly linked with relating to the others, as during childhood we build our inner emotional world and became persons only based on knowing and interacting with the others (Gardner, 2001). In fact Gardner talks about one personal intelligence and comments that" while all the other intelligences were easily studied independently, here we have two types of intelligences related…there are two types of one personal intelligence which cannot exist one without another" (Gardner,2001,pp.190-195). The combination of the logical-mathematical and verbal intelligences might be carefully checked with a large sample size. All the other factors fit the theory assumption about the different types of intelligences one possesses (Gardner,2001, 2006).

Being a self-reported questionnaire it must be taken into account with care and the best would be to use triangulation of data, that is to compare the profile given by MIDAS-KIDS with other sources of information about a child such as his teachers, parents or some knowledgeable person(s)′opinions about his/her strengths and weaknesses in various areas, in-depth interview with the child, observation while the child is performing various tasks in order to notice his/her preferences and also favorite activities and ways to do things

Since we noticed from practice that generally speaking teachers and pupils tend to confide much more in this kind of psychometric tools rather than in "mere" observation and since in Romania there is no MI tool with good psychometric properties developed so far, but there are used in schools some with unknown authors and properties, we recommend MIDAS-KIDS as a trustful tool for identifying the cognitive profile of a child with the only mention that its nature and purpose must be clearly understood before using it: namely that MIDAS-KIDS does not mean just another "label" for a child but that it shows the strengths and weaknesses of a child as he/she reports them at a certain moment and the profile is supposed to change so that all the intelligences might be at least medium level developed. As a matter of fact, we believe that MIDAS-KIDS might be a really helpful tool especially for those teachers who still keep an old traditional way of teaching, who tend to relate more only to the" most academically intelligent kids in the classroom" and almost neglect the others. It would be a great way for them to discover that all their pupils have strengths that could be used as" anchors" to build knowledge also in the areas less developed.

Overall we believe that MIDAS-KIDS scale can be used further in our research, always taking into account the use of other complementary sources of information about pupils′intellectual profile.

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Appendix A.

Table 2.Pattern Matrix (as recommended by Pelhazur&Schmelkin,1991)

Items/Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
IMU02						.556		
IMU03						.669		
IMU04	.254		.235					.269
IMU05						.363		
IMU06				.210		.383		
IMU08						.333		
IMU09			.221			.555		
IMU10			.299			.323		.234
IMULINGV11						.393		
IKI12	.228			.662				
IKI13				.521	.204			
IKI14				.398	.272			
IKI15				.316				
IKISP16			.271					
IMUKI18								
IKI19						.469		.210
IKI20				.532				
IMUKI21				.635	.231			
ILM22		.508		.289				
ILM23		.345				.295		
ILM24		.738					.569	
ILMNAT25		.580					.515	
ILM26		.499						
ILM27	.338		.282				.431	
ILMSP28			.274					
ILM30	-.225	1.049		.442				
ISP31			.563					
ISP33			.586					
IKILMSP34		.368						
ISP35			.590					
ISP36			.596	.270				
ISP37			.528					
ISP38	.219							
ISP39			.266					
ISP40		.216	.368					
ILMLINGV41	.340	.387		.269				
ILINGV42		.404					.418	
IINTER43			.342			. 229		
ILINGV44	.308	.456				.258		
IINTER46	.546				.-210			
ILINGV48		.371						

ILINGV51	.496						
ILINGV53			.246				
IINTER54	.362						
ILINGVINTER55	.758		-.211				
IINTER56	.433						
ILINGV57	.466						
IINTER58	.320	-.259		.225			
IINTRA59	.523			.265		.255	
IINTER60	.486				.232		
IINTER63	.331	.230					
IINTER65	.551					.249	
ILINGVINTER66	.752						
IINTRA68	.486						
IINTRA69	.497						
IINTRA70	.560				-.232		-.252
IINTRA71	.442	.330					-.202
IINTRA72	.441	.347					
IINTRA73	.490						
IINTER75	.747						
IINTRA76	.406						
IINTRA77	.701						
IINTRA78	.529						
IINTRA79	.417	.282					
INAT81					.387		
INAT82	.263				.280		.249
INAT83					.356		
INAT84				.281	.640		
INAT85				.210	.475		
INAT86				.218	.569		
INAT87					.307		-.206
INAT88					.391		
INAT89					.481		
INAT90					.307		
INAT91	.277				.283		.202
INAT92			.220		.315	.219	
INAT93					.384		
ISP32			.654				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 14 iterations.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ALIGNING WITH THE MODERN TREND IN EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Education in the future means reconstruction of its system. It means conducting reforms of the system as a whole, as well as the development of the idea of permanent education, coordinated with social needs and changes. The reform is not seen as a limited work but with a mission to create institutional frame for its constant improvements and perfecting. In European integration process educational system needs to be in coordination with criteria and recommendations of European Union, paying attention to indicators of this system, which is defined by EU standards. The model describes five strategic planning processes of strategic management: pre-planning, strategic planning, finalization, implementation, measurement and evaluation. This model can also be used for strategic planning and high school planning. An important feature of planning in this case should be its market orientation. Planning involves the preparation of decisions about what to do in the future, in fact, this means "making tomorrow's decisions today". Control is the process that ensures that the actions are carried out in accordance with the plan.*

Keywords: *strategic planning; market orientation; control;*

1. Introduction

Modern trends in education. The educational system and the objectives of learning and teaching have always been subjected to significant changes in order to improve the organization and the quality of the educational process and make them continuously beneficial to the social development and compatible with the level of scientific and technical-technological achievements. The creation of the educational policy of today aims both at amplifying the lifelong learning approach and the promotion of the possibilities for individuals to find approval for their personal values in all spheres of social life; the acquisition of competences will, thus, enable them to freely and actively participate in the overall social life and work, to be initiators of productive changes, and to live with the cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences in their environment. In line with the above said, the new trends in the education process at a global level are primarily directed to the establishment of a springboard equally applicable for the entire school population in the world; the creation of conditions for the optimal development of the individual's personality is to be gained via universal, quality and continuous access to learning. Therefore, the contemporary goals of education and upbringing actually correspond to the objectives of the integration processes of globalization: the EFA and the Millennium Development Goals[15], which promote equal access to education and an emphasized commitment to providing more equal positions for the vulnerable and marginalized groups and individuals, and to creation of conditions for strengthening the competences of youth and adults for their social, cultural, psychophysical, and intellectual wellbeing.

European standards and requirements, however, are generally grounded on four important moments: Learning to acquire knowledge, Learning to work, Learning about coexistence, and Learning about survival (Kamchevska, 2006: 31). More precisely, Learning to acquire knowledge implies the development of students' cognitive abilities, with particular emphasis on the development of critical and creative thinking; Learning to work mainly involves training students for the practical application of the acquired knowledge and implying a more precise prediction of the social and technical-technological development in order to timely planning and directing those professions and occupations that will, after finishing education, enable them find socially useful employment; with Learning about coexistence the educational work focuses on fostering and developing multicultural awareness for mutual respect for each other's needs, values, and interests arising from different national, religious, cultural, class and other entities' background in society; Learning about survival refers to the individual's activity for personal self-realization and and gaining approval for his/her values, here the school must enable the activation of the individual's potentials and expansion of each student's personal capacities in all domains of the person's development. The educational work in today's schools implies learning and teaching which should enable students' full expression of their creative and productive abilities as well as achievement of maximum

[15] *Education for All, Goals,* http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/efa-goals/.

developmental results in accordance with the personal potentials of each individual.

Bearing these guidelines in mind as a starting point, over the last two decades, the impetus has been to effectuate the educational process in order to provide optimal educational services for all users and to meet international standards so that the process of upbringing and education can be brought closer to the contemporary educational tendencies in the developed world. In this regard, when establishing the standards regarding the strategic objectives, the departing point were both our countries' domestic experiences and the international ones; they had served as the basis for the decisions made by the relevant competent institutions at the national level accompanied by experts' arguments on the interventions that have been undertaken in the following strategic areas: education and educational equity for all; promotion of intellectual growth and development; increase of the possibility for participation in education (social inclusion, participation, and cohesion); elevation of the educational, cultural, and economic competence of the state; strengthening and enhancing international cooperation; strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Education and Science, etc.

From the above said, we can summarize that the processes of economic, political and educational globalization, and our determination to be integrated in the world trends as well as in the European ones, means to accept those standards, to change the legislation, to restructure the educational system and the organizational setup of its segments, to innovate the realization and the evaluation of the educational process.

2. Categorization of our education structure

A learning process can be concisely described as the process of the confrontation of a motivated or unmotivated individual with certain obstacles which represent a difficulty for achieving his objectives (or educational objectives) and fulfilling his motives. In order to overcome those obstacles and eliminate the difficulties, the individual takes investigative steps (or they are often being recommended) until he overcomes the obstacle with those steps, that is, until he eliminates the difficulty towards the objective. The pressures aimed at modifications that would get the educational process in the position in which it would suit better the new needs are increasing with time. Pedagogical practice confirmed many times that some modifications not only don't lead towards the improvement of success within the education, but also become the source of regression in this area (advocating the so-called general socio-trend directions with the tendency of incorporating them into the educational process as well).

Our project with its conceptual approach, the reform within the structure of the education system, implies the strategy of modifications "from the bottom up", that is, the strategy in which the local initiatives of higher education institutions (faculties, institutes, vocational schools…) come to expression. This approach would suit the thesis which believes that less successful strategies of improving the educational process are the ones that operate from higher levels, where the politics is being created, and which are characteristic to rely on consultants that influence externally and have no connection with educational practice except intuitive assumptions. In which category would our redefinition of the education system structure be classified?

Depending on the principle of modifications (reforms), we can speak of four types of possible changes in the existing pedagogical practice: adaptive, external, regulatory and structural. Our reform in this general setting refers to the structural type of modification, which is aimed towards changes in the organizational structure of the education system, but it doesn't affect the realization of the educational process. Primarily, the structural systemic modifications are directed to economy, rationality, educational liberalization and acquisition of specific knowledge. Essentially, education is, with our structure, directed to results, that is, to defined knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that students should have after finishing a certain education cycle. Our modifications within the already existing structure can be categorized under the model of the so-called controlled expansion. This approach to reforms is the most appropriate for education systems which don't need radical changes, but the interventions of limited proportions – alterations, repairs, modifications, that is, the implementation of new details into the existing system, i.e. structure. Modifications of this kind have a character of conceptual modernization aimed towards better achievements of students in school. In the educational process, the main attention should be paid to knowledge structure, to the development of one idea from another, and to what age level can given algorithm (with its structural concretization) be applied. The structure is what enables to sort out and classify unfamiliar impressions and in that way what is learnt gets meaning and through meaning it initiates other motivators in the educational process. What should be emphasized in our approach is the idea that every content of teaching can be taught effectively at any level of student's development, provided that the given ideas and principles are adapted didactically in order for the student to use them. Our starting point in these evaluations, which differ from structural conceptions from 30 − 40 years ago, starts from the point that the development of a child is mostly conditioned by social factors. How far will a child get in the intellectual development and when we ourselves can influence the same, primarily depends on the cultural surrounding, that is, on the impact of the environment.

The development of consciousness of every individual, including children aged 7−18 years (our sample within the redefined structure of the education system), has had such a cognitive leap in the last 30 years (perception, reasoning, anticipation, the critical thinking process, the time consistency of attitudes, interests…), that everything that was true in perceptive age gradations of the children at the given age once, has now moved for at least one generation up. Many social psychologists that analyse the mental and manual skills of the children of different age and compare them with earlier similar studies share this view. Hence, in our system of education structure we start with perceptively cognitive and psycho-motor, manual skills of the children at the given age, with aims and tasks that have been placed upon them as well as with the relevance of the process of rationalization and economy of the educational process. Specifically our education structure, the model of controlled liberal education – is oriented towards a child, supports active teaching concretized on the example of the differentiated cycles at given educational levels, as well as the redefined curriculum according to it.

3. Model of strategic planning and analysis of the environment

Developed societies are societies that learn. We are talking about social organizations which are based on knowledge and in which education and learning have the status of basic instruments in the overall development of a society. Heinz concluded at the end of the twentieth century (Heinz, 1995): “What we think or believe in, after all, has little importance. The only valid thing is…what we do”. The notion of strategic management is based on the definition of “strategic planning”, where although “planning” is a prelude for strategic management, it is not itself enough unless it is followed by the preparation and implementation of the plan, as well as the evaluation of the plan in action. In our example, we are going to hypothetically present the model of the educational institution X, where the implementation of the strategic plan is developed as part of the project financed by UNESCO CEPES. This model established a level of quality in education which all the members that have joined or are planning to join the Bologna Process should reach.

The model describes five processes of strategic management: pre-planning, strategic planning, finalization, implementation, measurement and evaluation. This model can also be used for strategic planning within the model of the educational institution X. Namely, strategic management overcomes the development of a strategic plan that included processes of pre-planning and strategic planning. Strategic management is the finalization and implementation of the strategic plan, as well as the measurement and evaluation of the results. The finalization of the plan includes the completion of the plan and its disclosure to all employees. Implementation includes the identification of resources for the plan, putting it into practice and managing its realization. Measurement and evaluation consist not only of monitoring the measures of implementation, but also, more importantly, of the assessment of how the organization changes as a result of those measures, as well as the use of that information to update the plan - “communication is the transfer of experiential activities through signs, whether they are symbols, signals or their combination” (Kuka & Jovanović, 2011: 9). An important feature of planning in this case also should be its market orientation. This practically means that High school for brokers should have the right kind of service, in the right place at the right time and enable the customer to be aware of the existence of such a service.

In strategic planning especially important is consistent interaction of socio-social environment as an open system. In order to effectively perform the analysis, managers should know well the organizational structure of the environment. The three levels of environment are observed: 1. general environment; 2. operational environment; and 3. internal environment. Managers need to understand how each of these three levels influences the results, in this case the model of the educational institution X, and in accordance with that formulate strategies for the educational organization.

4. Vision, customers, mission and strategic priorities

The internal planning structure of the educational institution X should function on different levels within the institution X. It will permeate everything, acting on every area of activity and influencing every student and every employee. Just as in business, the planning structure in education can also be divided into three levels: 1. Strategic plan referring to the period from 5 – 20 years; 2. Business or commercial plan referring to the period from 3 – 5 years; and 3. Hoshin or operational plan referring to the period of one year. Planning involves the preparation of decisions about what to do in the future, in fact, this means “making tomorrow’s decisions today” (Kuka & Jovanović, 2011: 31).

Vision defines where the organization wants to be in ten or twenty years. It gives the answers to the following questions: What does the organization want to be? What are the future products? What are the future markets? How to satisfy the demands of interest groups? What is the role of top managers in defining the organization’s vision? Vision is actually the idealized view of where the organization wants to be and how it wishes to look in the future. Frequently asked question is: Who is our customer? It seems that the answer is simple. Unfortunately, that is not the case. This is easy to prove with the question: "Who is the customer of education in the fourth grade of elementary school?" – Pupils in that grade, the fifth grade, secondary school, faculty, parents, future employers, etc. That also applies to the question: "Who is the customer of services of the educational institution X?" – "The customer" is not the manufacturer of the product or service. The closest view is that the end user is the employer (customer) for which the immediate customer, namely the student, will work. An increasing number of educational profiles in the market supply and demand causes necessary sociological (in this case educational) decadence that is "the expression of needs for forms not established in the content" (Kuka & Jovanović, 2011: 23).

The mission needs to answer the question: "What should the organization do to justify the reason of its existence?" Three elements are mainly included, which are usually marked as a "thought triad": what we do (products, services, functions), for who we do it (customers, end users) and how we do it (processes). There are several sources that can help us determine our mission, starting from the particular missions of organizational parts, current demands, to our strategy or long-term plan. Effective strategic planning is a continuous process that requires constant re-evaluation of needs, resources and operational environment. If there is no strategic plan, the educational institution X should make an assessment through self-assessment. A detailed self-assessment can identify strategic priorities.

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VET$_{MH}$ TUTO+: TRAINING OF TUTORS AND IMMERSION IN EUROPE OF YOUNG MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract: *The major changes in mental health epidemiology and the new therapeutic approaches, including information and computer technology are major challenges for the organisations involved but also for a political public health strategy. Mental health care is based on the interpersonal competences of the professionals. Research shows early retirement of the staff and a decrease of motivation after some years of everyday work. The quality of work life balance is of the most importance for the professionals dealing with mental health patients and users. The academic cursus does not correspond to the fast moving changes. So it is compulsory that all professionals can benefit from practical and lifelong training.*

The shortage of qualified professionals is obvious for any mental health employer. A high level of stress and career burnout is extensively documented in researches and the early retirement of professionals causes a difficulty for the transmission of knowledge. Due to the gap between competencies of the young professionals and new trends in mental health, this project was of huge interest in the public health sector. This gap was the starting point for the consortium for building the TuTo project in 2013.

Keywords: *mental health; psychiatry; vocational educational training; vet; Europe; labour market; tutoring; mentoring; training; certification; public mental health;*

Context

On various levels (local, national, international, European), mental health is considered as a major issue; it is a growing sector, undergoing major changes and reforms. Data shows that depression is the biggest cause of disability worldwide and suicide is the second highest cause of death for young people.

The European Commission and the European Parliament are highly concerned by mental health problems. Projects discussed in this paper were co-funded by Erasmus+, strategic partnership programmes.

The TuTo project in a nutshell

The main purpose of the former TuTo project (2014-2017 co-funded by Erasmus+ strategic partnership), was to organise traineeships that linked young professional trainees to experienced tutors on an European scale. The trainees were nurses, educators, social workers, doctors, occupational therapists, etc. They subscribed, left 3 times,1 week per year to a selected partner project, where they could train and learn more abilities in an informal way which is the strength of our programme, as this cannot be learned at an academic level. The tutor's tasks are to support the trainees during the process with a focus on the transmission of knowledge, the choices of hosting institutions and a reflection on actions.

The Steering Committee (SC) of the TuTo project organised 5 international scientific conference in Belgium, France, Greece and Spain. The SC was also invited at 16 representations in training sessions and scientific meeting.

The TuTo project involved 10 partners and more than 30 organisations in 10 European countries. During several immersion periods spread over 3 years, Belgian, Luxembourg, French, Spanish, Swiss, German, Icelandic, Romanian, Greek and Swedish participants were enriched by the know-how of their counterparts, resulting in a consolidation of a European network of specialized centers in Psychiatry and Mental Health. More than 110 trips were planned for the trainees. Mental health organisations (hospital, support center, day center, etc.), research centers and educational partners were active in the partnership. Thanks to a close cooperation with universities and high schools we delivered more than 150 ECTS credits to the trainees. ECTS credits were assigned in a reception the 16 June 2017 in Berlin.

Main results of the TuTo project

The cooperation of a wide variety of multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary organisations, generated related activities and following results:

a. Consolidation of a European multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary network of organisations experienced in mental health.
b. Manage a close cooperation between the educational system and the mental health sector.
c. Building several tools: traineeship agreement, portfolio for trainees, inquiry form for trainees, list of hosting institutions, excel sheets for managing the time slots, etc.
d. Construction of deliverables e.g.: two published books one in French, another in English in a famous academic worldwide publishing company located in Paris, some scientific and professional articles, a practical guide for tutoring, etc.
e. Organisation of 6 scientific and professional conferences in famous places around Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Spain) reviewing the innovations in mental health through European projects.

Impacts of the TuTo project

The impact on young professionals (trainees) is obvious with a better adequacy to the new mental health trends and further more a better employability. The impact on the tutors is impressive, motivation is reinforced and the transfer of competencies to the newest generation confirms their self-esteem. The impact on the organisation is mainly to fight the shortage of working force and avoid absenteeism. Obviously organisations gained also transcultural competencies. The impact on the educational system is to have a better match with current requirements in the mental health area. The educational system will benefit from several results of the programme and will tailor the training programme. With the TuTo programme, we developed individualised tutoring and an assistance-programme for young professionals, active in psychiatry and mental health care in general. To benefit from as much expertise and competences as possible, we opened up the programme to Europeans. Competencies are not concentrated in one country or region, which is why we need to upgrade this project from a regional level to a European one.

Necessity of going further: VET_{mh} TuTo+ project

After having developed a tutoring programme in the mental health sector in a previous project (TuTo 2014-2017 co-funded by Erasmus+ strategic partnership), with focus on the young professionals in the mental health field, the new project VET_{mh} TuTo+ submitted for a European funding in March 2018, has the ambition to develop the support to tutors and proposes a training of trainers combined with the activation of a network of exchanges of European professionals. The newly founded partnership involves 6 European countries (Belgium, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Romania, and Spain), and a variety of complementary organisations: mental health facilities, higher education institutions, research centers and small or large associations. It aims to support strong institutional partnerships for the implementation of an internationalization strategy for Vocational Educational Training - VET learners in the mental health field. In Europe, the training of the professionals of the Mental Health field is of multiple levels and often heterogeneous. The academic achievements do not always prove to be adequate enough for the expectations of the professionals and the current evolutions of the sector. Young professionals in this field need additional training in the basic clinical curriculum. Indeed, academic achievements are not always in line with the professional world of mental health and changes in the field. It is therefore necessary to develop closer ties between the two, in order to complete and perfect the training of young professionals. The shortage in some mental health professions is important, it is therefore necessary to continue to develop their attractiveness by strengthening our tutoring program allowing the transmission of skills between young workers and the most experienced, allowing a transgenerational transmission.

That's why it's important to develop tools and practices for the Tutors in charge of that coaching, and to develop a more precise framework fully beneficial for everyone: professionals of the Mental Health field but also weakest populations: mental health concerns the general population as a whole but also some specific groups like migrants, people with less opportunities, etc. We pay a special attention to this issue during the implementation of the project.The project will run the training of Tutors in Mental Health over three academic years. This training consists of theoretical seminars, practical workshops and visit of mental health settings to simulate and provide feedback on field experiences. The Tutors will therefore supervise trainees in their professional immersions, in their reflexive and editorial activities but also with their feedback to the teams.This training aims at the acquisition by Tutors of transversal skills. The focus will be on the transnational and pedagogical skills needed to monitor trainees. The strategy is to build a set of educational tools and implement them for volunteer Tutors. Evaluation and certification of Tutors and trainees will be carried out with the obtainment of ECTS credits.

Roughly these projects aims to:

a. Increase the level of expertise of the employees in the mental health sector.

b. Increase the level of skills of monitors trainees by training based on scenarios and feedback's experience.

c. Creation and distribution of tools allowing future Tutors to accompany young professionals.

d. Enhance the attractiveness of the professions linked to mental health.

e. Positive impact on the motivation of the professionals both young and old and reduce absenteeism.

f. Create a link between the generations via a formal and non formal transmission of knowledge.

g. Make the socio-professional integration of the young employees easier.

h. Propose numerous, flexible and quality job openings to the young persons in training in the mental health field.

i. Consolidation a European network of centers specialized in psychiatry and mental health in close cooperation with the research and academic fields.

j. Destigmatisate of the mental health field by media and communications events and also with a reinforcement of the link between the academic world and mental health.

The intellectual outputs created, taught and distributed during the VET_{mh} TuTo+ project are concrete and transferable advances in the field of tutoring and include a recruitment strategy manual, the designing of a training session and its material, a booklet for tutors, a scientific article and a collaborative book.

VET_{mh} TuTo+ in short

The new VET_{mh} TuTo+ project has a twofold contribution: on one hand a training of tutors specialized in Mental Health in 6 European countries (and 6 countries with associated partners), and on the other hand a cycle of exchanges for young professionals of psychiatry, mental health and the psychosocial sector. The project will begin in September 2018. It is therefore a training of trainers combined with the activation of a network of exchanges of European professionals.

We expect a European consensus on the training of Tutors in mental health and an official certification of it. This training aims at the acquisition by Tutors transversal skills. The focus will be on the transnational skills and pedagogical skills needed to monitor trainees.The development of the tutoring programme was the main focus of the TuTo project completed in 2017, which helped develop a tutoring program adapted to the needs of our sector and aimed at young professionals integrating into the mental health sector (Deloyer & Fond-Harmant, 2017). However, this project, which focuses on young professionals, has revealed an important need to develop tools and practices in order to supervise the tutors in charge of these young people, in order to develop a more precise framework fully beneficial for everyone. The strategy will be to build a set of educational tools and implement them for volunteer Tutors. Then these tutors will put these contributions into practice in the concrete accompaniment of the trainees. An evaluation and certification of Tutors and trainees will be carried out with the obtainment of ECTS credits. Although the local network is dense, it is imperative to have a European dimension to investigate different practices in the Mental Health field. In addition, the actors are confronted with migratory phenomena and cross-border transfers of mental health users. Certification must also be recognized at a European level in order to facilitate professional mobility. The young generation will be more mobile in their careers, the VET_{mh} TuTo+ project is part of this new trend open to Europe and the construction of a more homogeneous mental health if possible on this great territory, so that the employees Tutors and trainees (young professional beneficiaries) take this training as a multi-sectoral and multi-geographical opportunity for continuing education. Indeed, the project's actors come from 6 European countries with different geographies, North, West, South and East. These countries have particular contexts as well as various public policies of psychiatry and mental health that have a proven impact on the conception of care or support but also on the transmission of knowledge. We also know that community or family solidarity is manifested differently according to the historical and cultural contexts. The trained Tutors must benefit from an exchange of good practices from one end of Europe to another by considering the specific environments of each partner configuration in order to enrich the support of young people trained with a plural view. Without the support of the Erasmus+ programme, it would be very difficult to carry out this ambitious programme whose goals are in line with the societal shifts, the legislative developments and the transformation of care facilities.

Conceptualisation and modelling of the monitoring

These inter-European internships in mental health aim to implement the discovery of different conceptual models of care, assisted learning, contextualised share and the spreading of new knowledge and innovating practices. The plan established by Vanpée, Frenay, Godin and Bédard (2010) helps working on these objectives on the basis of contextualized and authentic learning and teaching (AECA, from the French acronym, ndlr.). This learning depends on various conditions. An immersion is not necessarily educative. Immersion becomes educative when treated and integrated in a structured process of professional development. This process is eased by regulation and shoring given by a third party who intervene (hosts and tutors). The AECA model is focusing at the same time on the Tutor's role (position of support) and on the intern's role (position of learning) in the contextualization of the learnings. It holds on two major principles: authenticity of context and cognitive mentoring (Frenay & Bédart, 2004). The first principle invites the student to live real situations in another culture in order to train the student to transfer his knowledge. The second principle is focusing on the quality of mentoring and on the will to guide the intern to the appropriation and mobilisation of professional skills to refresh according to the available contexts and resources. The aforementioned two principles are divided into 7 conditions to develop (Vierset and others, 2015):

a. The respect of the rallying context.
b. The development of skills.
c. The experience of complete and complex situations.
d. The use of multidisciplinary content.
e. The use of multidimensional situations.
f. The use of various situations.
g. Multiple developments and conclusions.

The cognitive mentoring, second principle of the AECA, highlights the importance of the bond between the Tutor and the intern. It is divided into 7 conditions. The first three conditions represent the intern's learning positions and the four other conditions define the mentoring position to be adopted by the Tutor (Vierset and others, 2015).

a. The knowledge structuring.
b. The reflection on action.
c. The generalisation and discrimination of the learning situations.
d. The coaching.
e. The scaffolding.
f. The modelization.
g. The fading.

Conceptualisation and modelling of mentorship (Gallagher, 2011).
The functions of tutoral supervision can be distinguished from the functions ensured during the immersion in the host institution and from the functions within the sending institution.

There exist different educative functions for the hosts (helps and guides the intern in the developing of his capacities intra muros, immersion and modelling, in real time, Gallagher, 2011) and for the tutors (management function : plan, organize, coordinate the interns and hosts, establish a framework of learning – rhythm, place and time – and a framework of educative support – actions of mentoring, help through reflexive process, setting of a sphere suitable for learning: CARE (Théorêt et St-Pierre, 2007, quoted by Gallagher, 2011). Throughout the interviews preparing the project,

the tutors of the previous Erasmus+ project have globally shown a stronger ease in the role of hosts for interns than in the role of tutors. One of the concerns of the tutors' training is to give them the tools in this role less oriented on support during the immersion than on the support for the metacognitive activity and the establishment of a professional identity acquired by the intern during the periods between the internships.
Think of the tutoral mentoring from the educative paradigms:

a. Constructivism and socioconstructivism: learning and accommodation.

b. From constructivism to socioconstructivism: regulation and shoring.

c. Reflexivity: the double traject interiority-exteriority or socialisation of the experience.

Engineering of and mentorship, skills «tools box» helping the tutors (Baudrit, 2011), (Menart, 2013), (Daele, 2011). This tools box proposes techniques of mentorship systematically documented on his educative bases. This reference "tools box" is available for the tutors and helps to build a corpus of common and lasting professional references. The tutors' feedbacks about experience will be likely to help this tools box to ameliorate.Reflexive approach Schön, 1994, Perrenoud, 2011, Lafortune and others, 2012 & Gallagher, 2011.The portfolio is the chosen material for the structuring of the tutee's reflexive processes with the mentoring Tutor. Its creation of allows the intern to think about his experience and comes up with occasions to interact in a training way with the Tutor on questions the tutee could have. Furthermore, it consists in a manner of organizing the coherence of experiences, to build the thought process between the different steps of the project.

The consortium

The selection of partners was based on project objectives, and on one side their experience acquired in very specific areas of psychiatry and mental care, and on the other side, their activities in the area of education and pedagogy.

Finally, partners active in research and internationally recognized research centers were also invited to ensure the scientific rigor to the project and the ability to publish in scientific journals.

We have selected partners of trust with whom we already had common projects in the past and with who we wanted to continue developing a close collaboration.

The consortium is voluntarily designed as trans-sectorial as the mental health sector is in need of the dialogue between professional health organisations (small and large), research centers and academic world (higher education establishment and university).

This selection of partners has also been conducted looking at a holistic view of mental care and its various dimensions applied in the field for patient care but also possibly used for research and analysis.
We looked at keeping a balance between the educational part, hospital and ambulatory care and research, insourcing in the project a diversity and a complementarity in the various expertise areas.

Our strengths to successfully deliver the project are:

A partnership strong and reliable: The collaboration history started in 2009 and the outcome of several projects witnesses our ability to work together. The new partners will be integrated into this solid core team. Supporting and helping each others with integrity will allow to reach project objectives.

Openness - Research - Innovation - Culture: our partners have a well established culture of sharing practices and knowledge. To address this challenge successfully, specific and complementary knowledge are required to be able to have a multidisciplinary overview.
The dynamic created by these four categories of partners (mental health facilities small and large, research centres and academic) will uplift this ambitious project.

We will organise during the three following years, three training sessions for the Tutors. The added value of these activities is essential to the project as they constitute an important part of the research-action we plan to conduct. This face-to-face trainings, unlike a distance learning device, has the advantage of "personifying" the tutor’s network in order to create a form of "college".
The objectives of these activities are:

a. Professionalization of the coaching skills of Tutors. These skills can be mobilized in the long term, in the many situations of accompaniment of student trainees or novice colleagues that the caregivers of the institutions are brought to coach.

b. Networking of tutors, potentially supporting long-term exchange of practices (in the field of peer coaching, beneficiary care or any other professionally relevant field).

c. Acquisitions and/ or consolidation of new professional knowledge and skills (including in the field of documentary research, writing skills, etc.) in the trainee's head and transfer of these to their professional practices and within the team.

d. Softskills development in the trainees and tutors heads, such as increased reflexive skills, a better understanding of cultural diversity, greater capacity for initiative in professional networking, reasoned creativity and innovation embedded in care.

The 3 activities organised in Belgium will be delivered in French and the 3 activities organised in Romania will be delivered in English. This organisation of the training activities allows the partners and their staff to choose the language they master the most to follow the trainings. The participants will be staff from the partners and special attention will be given to give the opportunity of participating in the sessions to different people.
VET_{mh} TuTo+ project will focus besides regular mental health professionals target groups, on who intend to work in the Psychiatric and Mental Health field, with people suffering from certain mental disorders, with people at risk of being marginalized, stressing on the strategies of preventing stigmatization, best practices and promoting mental health according to each partner's competence profile and country context. This project is to be carried out internationally because each partner country (Romania, Greece, Belgium, France and Spain) has its own specificities and priorities in terms of addressing people with mental problems, with less opportunities, and all together output results will offer stakeholders a larger perspective on how people with mental problems should be effectively addressed, also aims for the consolidation of a European network of centers specialized in psychiatry and mental health.

Related to the added value of the training activity with regards to the achievement of projects' objectives, specifically, VET_{mh} TuTo+ project will focus on: promoting positive ways of using technology for social interaction, raising the new professionals who intend to work in the Psychiatric and Mental Health field awareness that they have the responsibilities to seek professional development opportunities through academic training but also by placing the person in professional situations in different workplaces around Europe, the professional will acquire better skills and knowledge.

Besides these general objectives, this learning activity will prepare network specialists for organizing disseminations events. During workshops, the staff of each partner will have an active role in organizing, elaborating dissemination activities and offering counselling to transnational meetings professionals in mental health participants. VET_{mh} TuTo+ project training curricula will represent the basis of developing new collaborations in the field of mental health professional development, combing professional capabilities; tutoring processes, but also teaching and university courses with a practical background; personal contact with the professionals and the users.

We target professionals with a medical, social, psychosocial, psycho pedagogical, psychotherapeutic and other functions. In this sense, the professions mainly concerned with intellectual production are: the psychiatrist, the child psychiatrist, the psychologist, the psychoanalyst, the psychotherapist, the nurse, the caregiver, the educator, the speech therapist, the psychomotor therapist, the occupational therapist, the psychopedagogist, etc. The daily work of these specialists is carried out within institutions belonging to the sector of psychiatry and mental health, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and in accordance with the current reforms. the sector (residential services, private foundations, day centers, ambulatory services, mobile teams of continuing and emergency care, training organizations, cultural centers, university faculties, etc.).

The Tutors team will be selected on the basis of a recruitment guide presenting different tools and techniques for recruitment managers in each organization. This will be elaborated from the beginning of the project, on 01-09-2018, so that partners can relate project activities to the desired profile.

The monitoring and coaching method provided by the trainers will contribute to the involvement of the participants, in particular thanks to a system of alternating training sessions and practice time in the field that will allow the tutors to acquire a certain professional experience. In addition, several moments of exchanges and practices will be organized between Tutors during their experience to take a step back from their activities. All the courses will take place face-to-face, which will increase the authenticity of the exchanges.

We will ease the workload of Tutors (while optimizing their actions) thanks to the preparation for pre-training trainees, through a portfolio. The latter will allow tutors to discharge part of their tasks, because it aims to increase the level of autonomy of trainees. We will insist on the contribution of the experience and its added value at the European level (ECTS credits) by informing the Tutors and referring them to the credits during the presentation of each training module.

Finally, several Tutors' briefings will be organized over the project period so that they can exchange as much as possible amongst themselves, and thus establish a support system for the rest of their career.

The Tutors are motivated professionals with huge experience in the mental health field and with dedicated competencies. Nevertheless, they need some technical and methodological support as to spread their knowledge and to be more comfortable with their role.

Obviously, for the trainees the whole process is under control with a fine reporting. But for the Tutors, as experienced professionals we conclude that they need more formal training as to uplift their training competencies. This project is complementary to the previous one as it will focus on the development of tools to better trained and reinforce the Tutors’ skills in the process, where the TuTo project focused on the development of a tutoring scheme for trainees. Local or national tutoring initiatives exist but are very disparate, we evaluated the necessity, by interviews and encounters, of a common model founded on a research-action. Exchanges of good practices are based on the involvement of host sites and volunteer professionals to support this welcoming. During the previous project we experienced this welcome position and it is necessary otherwise to standardize at least to reflect the reception and strengthen the skills of volunteer Tutors. The previous project allowed us to build a database of welcoming sites. This base will continue to grow and give rise to practical exchanges outside of any support within the framework of Erasmus+. We have the will to "fly on our own" by continuing the European immersions via our own funds. However, this implies that the reception is provided in a framework developed, validated and mastered by the institutions and with employees who have been trained in the specificity of hosting trainees. This requirement, apart from the need for structuring the immersions of which we are accustomed to doing, must be able to reinforce the acquisition of knowledge and know-how with regard to the units of value used in the universities and professional schools and "facilitate" and access trainee professionals to the acquisition of value units allowing the implementation of VAE (validation of prior learning) and their expression in the "portfolio" proposed in the previous project.

This project, through its cross-border characteristics with no less than ten countries concerned, will have, thanks to this systemic dynamic, a sustainable impact on the future physical and virtual mobility but also on a sustained inter-institutional cooperation. This project is a research-action process. That means that participants will learn during the whole cycle of the project. That also requires a soft evolution and adaptation of the process. The complementary characteristics with the WHO’s programs of the World Health Organisation but also with the Regional and Federal Health Policies, imply that this project fits into a set of mental health processes. The WHO comprehensive mental health action (World Health Organisation, 2014) plan 2013-2020 calls for change in the mental health care organisation and for a better training for the professionals with the empowerment of users. Our project will also be a driving force for the questioning about the official acknowledgement of the informal and non-formal learning processes in our establishments. An innovative characteristic is found in the intricacy of the informal and non-formal learning processes. Indeed, during the five-day internship, the new professionals will be invited to planned activities (goals, working time, teaching materials, etc.) that are not part of the formal training system. They will also have an active role in the informal learning process. Through their implications in the day-to-day work and leisure activities, unstructured knowledge will be observed. The innovative characteristic can also be found in the variety and diversity of the collaborators. The latter come from the medical-sanitary and learning processes through the individual mobility, a cross-border cooperation for the innovation and exchange of good practices, here linked to the human resources and will also be used as a test phase for a reform planned in the mental health voluntary sector. The universities and higher schools rub shoulders with the public services as well. This heterogeneity assures us outstanding skills and complementarities. We will be able to make the most of the skills, networks and infrastructures in order to grant the project an added value.

Other relevant impacts

The scope of the impact is large as it concerns partner institutions and associated institutions, staffs, tutors and other institutions of the mental health sector and related to the academic world.

A. Impact on the Tutors

a. To develop new skills.
b. To improve self-confidence.
c. To improve expertise in training.
d. To increase competences.
e. To increase motivation.
f. To deal better with logistic issues.
g. To experiment another culture and language.
h. To develop socio-cultural competences.
i. To improve their capacities to transmit to the younger generation.
j. To acquire a macro vision, in connection with other structures in other European contexts.
k. To establish an intergenerational relation and benefit from experience and expertise.
l. To be open minded and more flexible in a changing process.
m. Reduce the resistance to changes.

B. General impacts at an individual level

a. The professionals who participate enjoy better employability, expertise, knowledge theorisation.
b. Positive influence on the personal development through a more refined assertiveness.
c. An increase in employability through a promotion of newly acquired skills.
d. Increase in possibilities of mobility on the European labour market through a reduction of the initial apprehension.
e. Valuation function through the acquisition of new skills.

C. Impacts on patients and users

a. Better care.

b. More diversified treatment.

c. Access to innovations in mental health e.g.: new therapy, better diagnosis, use of communication technology, etc.

d. Developing self-expertise by the mental health users.

D. Impact on the mental health facilities

What will change thanks to better trained tutors?

a. Creating synergy between professionals from other institutions.

b. Gaining expertise on the transmission of information about the core activity.

c. Gaining expertise on the contact with media.

d. Gaining expertise on welcoming trainees and visitors in general.

e. Developing formal links between partner organizations in several European countries,

f. Creating a professional identity of European tutors in a developing field which reinforces the culture of trades and their evolution.

g. Maintaining a positive relationship that produces overall "added value" in everyday life, as shown by various studies of the impact of training.

E. General impact on the mental health facilities

a. Visibility, expertise spread, European referencing.

b. To strengthen the European linking and the international visibility.

c. To intensify and strengthen the exchanges between European partners in order to create a flexible and reliable network.

d. Increase the quality of services with the possibility of a European benchmarking.

F. Impact on the academic and training system

a. Education system with feedback and clarification about the training.

b. Assimilation of informal and formal skills.

c. Direct link with the situation on the ground and adaptability of the job descriptions.

d. The ultimate aim is the creation of a year of specialisation in Mental Health by standardizing the knowledge acquired during this pilot experiment.

G. Impact on local, at city level

This project is an opportunity to consolidate the mental health network at a very local level in each partner's context (city or region) and to increase the link with different type of organisations (academic world and institutions from the mental health field). Partners will communicate and intend to involve organisations dealing with mental health in their local community to cooperate in this project. Therefore we expect an impact on our communities beyond our institutions.

H. Impact on the regional level

Each region urges for more efficient network, for better professional training and for a better adequacy to the ICT technologies. This project can have a significant impact in our sector in these three major issues.

Partners underline a new partnership with the schools of social work and social welfare. As this project will contribute to make the theoretical aspects with the work inside the mental health facilities closer. It's perceived as a very well appreciated continuity of training. The impact of the training cursus is well documented with the awareness of schools to the new jobs necessities.

The Marschall 2022 plan stresses the need to create quality employment consistent with a changed environment in Wallonia. Our project meets this necessary adaptation of quality employment in the face of new challenges. This plan also enhances the necessity to invest in Research and Development and therefore to boost 'employment-oriented quality trainings, the personal and collective development'. Once again the tutoring project completely matches with these objectives. As a major employer, our mission is through the acquisition of innovative techniques to adapt our healthcare supply to the needs of the population.

I.Impact on national level

The impact at national level on the mental health sector in our different countries will be significant and is ensured by the diversity of our partnership, the quality of the products and the better communication between professional and academic worlds.

The dissemination plan, including dissemination events targeting national audience will be the way to ensure a wider impact of the project. It will be perceived on:

Qualifications

It will urge the organisations involved and the staff to get into a lifelong learning training process in order to increase their overall level of skills and improve services offered to people with mental disorder.

Labour market

The shortage of candidates for different positions in mental health facilities can be better addressed at national level with the tools the project provides allowing better welcoming and supervising of the new professionals. The impact on the economic life is also at the center of everyday action and this project with the possibility of more qualified human resources could be valuable for improving the general quality of life.

The sector

The transferability of the intellectual outputs to other facilities at national level can develop their staff skills and promote European mobility.

J. Impact on the European level

a. European integration: compiling of various expertise centers in the sector, better perception of the global challenges.

b. Cross-border mobility of the workers, thanks to international knowhow acquired or knowledge.

c. Knowledge of the opportunities proposed by the European Commission in terms of training and mobility. We will launch our project during the official Erasmus+ mobility days 12 & 13 October 2018.

d. Development of the European citizenship through an active participation to the exchange programmes and through contact with the European counterparts.

e. Destigmatisation of audience through a promotion of actions concerning mental health users.

f. Open-mindedness and reduction of stereotypes through cross-border meetings.

g. Deliver ECTS (European standard and approved pointing system) points.

h. To contribute to the promotion of the acquired knowledge out of the academic frame.

i. To bring together different types of organisations and companies in order to improve educational training systems.

j. To promote European initiatives and to share European values.

In the Europe 2020 strategy, a more accurate match between the labor market and the business demand is required. The tutoring project tries, in this perspective, to establish a clever balance between the needs of the mental health employers and the abilities of their workers.

This project is also a political statement because we will promote some fundamental European values as freedom of speech, democracy, non-discrimination policy, coherence policy, etc.

Finally we have to say that the impact is not necessarily geographical or territory but the impact is transversal and it brings an added value on these dimensions: training - employment - qualification.

Measure of the mentioned impacts

The impact at individual and institutional levels are the more important, this is why we will mainly focus the measurement of these aspects.

Short-term assessment impact on an individual level

Quantitative indicators:

a. Number of tutors benefitting from the training mobilities.

b. Number of tutors being awarded a Europass Mobility.

c. Number of professionals being awarded ECTS.

d. Number of tutors benefitting from the handbook guide at the end of the project.

Qualitative indicators:

a. Anonymous questionnaire presented to tutors at the end of the project including questions about their development of new skills (professional skills, tutoring skills and personal skills), level of the motivation to participate in the tutoring programme, level of motivation to participate in transnational mobility and valuation of their position within the institution.

b. Round-table of tutors ad mid-term project treating the aforementioned indicators in order to have a first view of the impact of the project on them.

c. Anonymous questionnaire to trainees at the end of the project including questions about the tutoring skills (professional and personal), framework of the tutoring programme.

d. Degree of satisfaction of the participants.

e. Diversity of the participants (professional background, activity sector, etc.).

f. Genuine participation at certain times of the project.

g. Writing and communiqué production.

h. Participant database (completion, validity, etc.).

Short-term assessment impact on the mental health facilities

Quantitative indicators:

a. Number of partners involved in the project, including associated partners.

b. Increase in the number and diversity (small, medium and large entreprise, residential and ambulatory devices, higher education institutions and universities, etc.) of partners involved.

Qualitative indicators:

a. Satisfaction survey for the management of the partners and associated partners.

b. Identification of the communication dynamic between the participants outside the framework of the project. Network creation (formal or non-formal).
c. Long-term assessment impact on patients and mental health users.
d. Link with the OMS's general survey with mental health indicators in close cooperation with the CCOMS from Lille.
e. Impact study in close cooperation between CCOMS from Lille and LIH from Luxembourg.
f. Link with the AVIQ (Agence wallonne pour une vie de qualité - Wallon Agency for a Quality of Life) study about the mental health indicators in Wallonia and cooperation with the IWEPS (Institut wallon de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la statistique - Wallon Institute for evaluation, prospective and statistics).
g. Link with the local satisfaction surveys usually running up in mental health facilities.

Long-term assessment impact on the academic and training system

This impact will be better measured in a long-term perspective but here are the following qualitative indicators we can measure at the end of the project:
a. Feedback and satisfaction of the academic and training system in mental health.
b. Adaptability of the job descriptions.
c. Creation of the year of specialisation in Mental Health.

Long-term assessment impact on a European level

Several of these impacts will be better measured in a long-term perspective but some quantitative indicators can be measured.
Quantitative indicators:
a. Number of other expertise centres benefitting from the products.
b. Increasing of the mobility of the workers.
c. Number of partners developing other Erasmus+ projects and mobilities.
d. Number of Europass Mobility delivered.
e. Inventory among the participants of the perceived and/or effective evolutions from the policy-makers and/or institutional decision-makers.
f. Number of Europass Mobility delivered.
g. Inventory among the participants of the perceived and/or effective evolutions from the policy-makers and/or institutional decision-makers.

Intellectual outputs

Recruitment strategy manual.The recruitment strategy is a recruitment procedure manual applicable to all organizations participating in the project to recruit tutors. For each step, it will define a tool that will guarantee the recruitment of professionals who are diligent and motivated by the transmission of knowledge and the optimization of their professional development, provided that they are experts in their field and are willing to follow the training provided under the project. This manual is aimed at professionals with a medical, social, psychosocial, psycho pedagogical, psychotherapeutic and other functions. In this sense, the professions mainly concerned with intellectual production are: the psychiatrist, the child psychiatrist, the psychologist, the psychoanalyst, the psychotherapist, the nurse, the caregiver, the educator, the speech therapist, the speech therapist, the psychomotor therapist, the occupational therapist, the psychopedagogist, etc.

The recruitment strategy manual will tackle the following aspects:

- Job description.
- Application procedure.
- Pre-selection process and selection criteria.
- Assessment of each criteria.
- Internal communication and seeking for applications.

Training session: design and development of material

This output is the development of a training session for tutors with specific tools of learning to develop their competencies and skills. As the sessions aims to support the development of a harmonized framework of theoretical references and practice in training, we will give special care in drafting structured and explicit documents that can be mobilized by the team of tutors teachers. Such documented supports can be used beyond the project as inspiration for all trainers in charge of tutoring programs.

As the sessions aims to support the development of a harmonized framework of theoretical references and practice in training, we will give special care in drafting structured and explicit documents that can be mobilized by the team of tutors teachers. Such documented supports can be used beyond the project as inspiration for all trainers in charge of tutoring programs.

The final version of these productions will include comments and improvements collected from the performed sessions and the satisfaction surveys.

Booklet for tutors and networking

This collective booklet will contain different questions arranged by topic and will allow the Arad University to synthesize the work techniques used by the tutors across Europe. Different themes will be approached. The objective is giving pedagogic materials and tools to share and mobilize capacities (skills) of transmission and also dissemination.

Scientific article: Mental health users evaluating the training process (provisional title)

This kind of scientific article to be published in a Journal or Review aims at sharing our researches and findings on this specific subject of the project: "in what the TuTo+ program improves the relation between professionals and users of psychiatry? How does the training of professionals produce effects on the professional / user relationship?"

A study will allow the measurement of the effects of the Tuto program on users during its realization. The objective is to enrich our knowledge about the effect of the tutorial programme for the final target-group of the project – the users – and have solid arguments to disseminate the project results.

Collaborative book

Having in the mind the success of the collaborative book published at the end of the Tuto project (Employment, training and research in psychiatry and mental health: an innovative tutoring project in Europe, 2017, ed. L'Harmattan), we consider important to develop a second one with the aim of pursuing the research work on the training issue of our staff and to disseminate our findings and solutions. It will help us situating the TuTo+ program in the European challenges of qualifying staff in the psychiatry and mental health sectors. It will show how to promote mental health throughout Europe by involving users, care professionals and the psycho-social sector alongside multidisciplinary teachers and researchers and taking into account scientific progresses. This book is meant to be collaborative gathering the contributions of different partner's experts. By this scientific book we will reach an academic audience. Mainly universities and higher education institutes. This book will be available in any library and by reference in all the major scientific documentary platforms.

Public events

We will organise several dissemination events open to a large audience.

Tutoring programme for professionals in Mental Health: certification process for an optimized skills handover

Opening event of the project with media impact, press conference and press release.

This event is open to a large audience mainly targeted at associated partners (national and international) and other stakeholders at local and national level. Even if not covered by the budget, it will also be open to our colleagues inside the partners organisation. Outside communication aims to reach professional bodies, public bodies, job-seekers, the world of education and the general population. We have a will to gather stakeholders from different perspective (academic, politics, research centers, and associations, health centers) in order to reinforce the link between them.

We will be very careful about the extensive use of the official Erasmus+ logo and European flag. Invitations, posters, flyers, agendas and all promotional papers will be stamped with the mention of co-funding by the Erasmus+ programme.

Beyond the classical channels of communication (website, facebook, press release, goodies, etc.), it's necessary to organise events on-site to reach a larger audience and to allow face-to-face exchanges with professionals and partners.

In a concrete way, the event will be the opportunity to present the objectives of the project and the European network we are involved in, the development of 1 output (the recruitment strategy manual), to organise a discussion (round-table) with different stakeholders on the subject and to reinforce networking between us and them.
This event will be organising under the official Erasmus 2018 days programme. #ErasmusDays 2018 in Europe.

VETmh TuTo+, good practices in developing professional competences

This ambitious TuTo project reached far more than the initial objectives. With a great involvement in all participants and partners, the partnership gained an international reputation with European visibility. Organisations involved acquired a real expertise thanks to this healthy emulation.

Considering this institutional enhancement, the consortium decide to continue the project and we already set the steps further. A practical guide is available and the connection with high schools and universities is confirmed. The consortium will be very pleased to launch in 2018 this continuing adventure.

The new VET_{mh} TuTo+ project will begin September 2018 with a focus on the training of the Tutors. The training will combine formal and informal exercises. Training sessions will be held in high schools and universities. Several periods of job shadowing and workshop with trainees will be scheduling over 3 years. At the end of the process, Tutors will receive a certificate of capacity in the transmission of innovative knowledge with ECTS credits.

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INTRODUCING NEW EDUCATION TYPES: TEACHERS` OPINIONS ON OUTDOOR EDUCATION

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Abstract: *In our modern society, there is a continuous development. This development requires new approach in the educational field. In order to fulfill the progressive need that society is bringing towards the formal and non-formal educational fields, teachers have to be ready to continuously learn and develop themselves. The ideal situation would be that educational institutes overcome this need, before these even appear. This mean that teachers have to always be a step before society and to prepare competent individuals, ready to integrate in the society and develop and change, mostly adapt in every situation, completing its needs efficiently. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to permanently develop, learn and participate to classes where they can learn about new methods and even new education types, so that ultimately they can apply them in their classes. In this work, we would like to present a study on the situation of one new education type, or educational method as it is used by the group of analysis, which is outdoor education, and also to present the perceptions and actual knowledge of a number of teachers from Arad. The main method used was the questionnaire and there were 117 preschool and primary school teachers that responded, also a smaller number of sociologists, psychologists and teachers that work in the field of special education.*

Key words: *outdoor education; new education types; new learning methods; perceptions of teachers;*

Introduction

The society we live in is constantly changing. Generations of people come and go, and society's demands are becoming more and more numerous. A modern educational system is therefore under the pressure to meet these social requirements, and to prepare young, competent, autonomous, capable people to make decisions and adapt easily to society. New times demand new people, and they must be trained in an open educational system to be one step ahead of its demands.

Rapid social development, technology, speed, and increased lifestyle add to the need for quality, pupil-centered education based on their needs and interests. This implies the more rigorous training of teachers, the use of new learning methods and to approach things differently to develop competences that go beyond the barriers known to date. Learning to learn, learning to be, competence to make decisions for oneself and others, communication, sharing, independence, collaboration, autonomy, innovation, initiative, creativity have become a 21st century must-haves. Starting from these needs, and from the constant interest of future teachers in the development of their knowledge on new education types, the idea of this brief research has started.

Theoretical foundation

We would like to start this work, by presenting a few explanations on the main topics that we are going to discuss during this research. First of all, there is the situation of modern learning approaches. If in the past, there was only the single discipline scheme, today teaching and learning activities have developed significantly into what we call interdisciplinary and integrated learning. The interdisciplinary approach appeared as a reaction to the disintegration of the modern intellectual space with the aim of preserving the global character of the intellect. Interdisciplinary approach, identifies an environmental component for the organization of knowledge and involves the development of a knowledge system that is at the intersection of several areas of knowledge and skills to use this knowledge for new acquisitions to solve complex situations. (Pletea, 2009)

Integrated knowledge delivery refers to an ideal or an integrator of principle that crosses the boundaries between scientific discipline and knowledge pooling according to the new perspective. For example, the principle of encoding information can group knowledge of genetics, physics, chemistry, computer science, linguistics, sociology, etc. to analyze information, codes, communication or information processing in the biological, physical, social and technological fields. Integrated content delivery presents concepts and principles so as to highlight the unity of scientific thinking. The current pedagogical literature describes curricular integration as an innovative way of designing a curriculum that involves the synthesis and didactic organization of content in different fields of knowledge so as to ensure that pupils acquire a coherent, unified picture of the real world. The term “integrated curriculum” suggests the correlation of content where the starting point is most often the end, according to which all the other components of the educational process are chosen. From a curricular point of view, integration means organizing and linking school subjects in order to avoid their traditional isolation. Integration also means the process and outcome it, by which the student interprets the content being transmitted from his life experience and from the knowledge he has already mastered. (Herlo, 2004)

The levels of curricular integration are as it follows:

Monodisciplinaryity is centered on independent study subjects, promoting the supremacy of formal disciplines.

Multidisciplinarity refers to the situation where a theme belonging to a certain field is subject to analysis from the perspective of several disciplines, the latter retaining its structure unaltered and remaining independent of one another.

Interdisciplinarity implies an intersection of the different disciplinary areas, as a result of this intersection, new objects of study may be born. (Nicolescu, 1996)

Transdisciplinarity is described as a form of intertwining more disciplines and coordinating research so that it can lead, through specialization, to the emergence of a new area of knowledge. In the context of school learning, the transdisciplinary approach is most often from the perspective of a new topic of study. (Bocoș, 2007)

Directions

One specific direction in this case, could be the introduction in schools of new education types. This is proper and benefic because not just that respects the curricular integration levels, but also prepares the students in practical ways for the life and society that is ahead of them. The idea of new educations aims to build on principles of a unique pedagogical society and an educational environment. Being aware of the problems and values of today's society, humanity know how to formulate problem-solving strategies by training the values within which it exists. The most important type it is the strategy that makes the change of mentality. The most important type of strategy is the one that realizes the change of mentality. And it is known that any change in mentality occurs effectively and globally through the transformative action of education, although the influence is not excluded either on the mentality exerted by the economic, political and social, etc. Understood in the most developed sense of this notion, education is omnipresent (so it affects the economic, political, social, etc.), universal, imminent to any individual and social group, as it influences any change in economic, political and social terms by changing the mentality of those who cause change in these areas. And it is knew that any change in mentality occurs effectively and globally through the transformative action of education. In this sense, we believe the model new education, called New Education, is of overwhelming importance. (Butnari, 2017)

New education type is the approach of today's educational society, a suite of strategies and general objectives responding to the imperatives indicated by the problems of today's society, and not educational concepts or theories about educational content. There are several kinds of educational subjects that can be introduced in schools, some of them are listed as it follows:

- Environmental education;
- Education for Change and Development;
- Education for technology and progress;
- Education towards the media;
- Demographic education;
- Education for Peace and Cooperation;
- Education for Democracy;
- Modern health education;
- Outdoor education;
- Economic education;
- Education for family;
- Education for tolerance;
- Intercultural education.

The list can continue, with other types that teachers can use in their classrooms for personal and social development of the students, these subjects being introduced in the National Curriculum or even in the school's curriculum, as optional subjects. Knowing the benefits of introducing these subject into the weekly routine of children of all ages can be even more motivating.

Recent perspectives

We wanted to analyze, during this study, only one aspect of those enumerated above. We have chosen one that had brought lots of attention lately in the educational area: outdoor education.

Although there are a multitude of activities through which the educational process can take place, too few teachers choose to use and adapt outdoor activities to their daily routine. Outdoor games as well as learning in the natural environment have ancestral origins around the globe. In educational units of the fundamental procurement cycle, nature was seen as a ”raison d`être” and kindergartens and schools always had a secured outer space (Bilton, 2010). Nature has always been an environment conducive to learning, addressing all children's needs: social, emotional, psychic, linguistic and cognitive. This environment should be available daily through activities, not just in small ages, but throughout the years of study. This does not necessarily mean adapting the whole curriculum so that it can only be done in the form of outdoor activities, but rather the introduction of such hours as a complement to classroom activities. The external environment is the space that offers freedom and time to work on the students' current interests. After long-term observation of the activity of young children, it has been shown that they are not limited in their activity by the weather conditions. Regardless of outside weather, they have a strong desire to spend time in nature even in poorly equipped areas, having a natural predisposition to find outdoor activities. Whether children are rebellious or instinctively aware of the following: the outdoor environment is indeed a natural area of teaching-learning, one in which most children feel strong and able to learn by discovery. Those children who have been involved at least once in outdoor activities are telling their experience with many smiles and joy. Outdoor learning activities most often involved using the resources available at that time, so if nothing was available, the children used leaves, trees and other materials in nature. The creativity of those involved is a great inspiration because most games are universal, involving so many aspects of development.

Education outside the classroom describes school learning through curriculum, other than that of a class of students sitting in a room with a teacher and using only books. It includes field biology research, insect searches in the school garden as well as indoor activities such as observing stock management from a local store or visiting a museum. It is a concept that is currently enjoying a renewal due to the awareness of its benefits in terms of a more active lifestyle. He has been recognized as bringing history and art to life, developing social skills, and clearly enhancing geography and science.

Outdoor education is not time spent outside, as it was once thought, and no relaxation or play, nor does it refer to leisure activities as it is still believed. As its name implies, it is about learning and involves learning activities, it is a way of education, it can often involve residential or travel experiences in which students participate in a variety of adventurous challenges but must have as their primary goal: learning. The purpose of outdoor education is therefore not external activity but multilateral learning. For example, an educator can learn how to overcome adversity, work with others, and develop a deeper relationship with nature, with peers and with himself. Some specialists say education for adventures is outdoor education. I would say that it is just a component of outdoor education as well as ecological education. Indeed, it helps to develop interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, but they do not represent outdoor education, but it complements it. To end all the definitions discussed here, outdoor education is a cultural construction that addresses and applies differently from one system to another. It is a type of education for social, personal and environmental development. (Higgins, 2002)

Outdoor learning is based on the involvement of all senses: seeing, hearing, taste, smell, intuition and touch as well as the involvement of the three areas of learning: cognitive, affective and motoric (Lewis, 1975), outdoor education calls for the use of senses for observation and perception. The abstract approach of the disciplines is completely replaced by the sensory, the children will use their ears, eyes, and nose and muscles externally, and will learn through this process (Mand, 1967). Science, skills and attitudes are requirements that will be developed in outdoor programs (Ford, 1980)

From the point of view of the contemporary approach, it can be said that public schools make great efforts to introduce in the curriculum dimensions of learning with strong student accents, and its involvement in decision-making and changing the school and community environment. There are clear links between the local community and outdoor learning, so the key steps of the concept of active citizenship include the requirement for students to use their imagination, to consider, besides their own experiences and the experiences of others, to think, express, explain and critically assess the opinions of others and, above all, develop and learn freely in a space as close to nature as possible to discovering and experimenting. It is precisely because of these factors that contemporary school is the mirroring of the school of the future, and schools centered in the future are of interest in content tailored to pupils' needs and curiosities, the introduction of new learning methods and the increased potential of school spaces to turn into true outdoor learning sites classrooms of the future. Contemporary education must have as its main concern the search for new ways to create inspired buildings that can easily adapt to the educational and technological changes that emerge (DfES, 2003f, p. Iii). More and more indoor sports schools are also used outside sports classes, and more and more outdoor areas of the school are refurbished and rethought in the spirit of their use as an educational environment, and the yards of schools are the second most used space to run educational activities.

Research

Recent research highlights the great benefits of outdoor education, with all its components. For example, various outdoor activities can be combined with adventures or excursions, even with camping. The relationship between students engaged in outdoor learning activities and their teachers is improving, and as a result, many cultural links are suddenly available. Various health benefits have been observed, highlighted by many physicians, physical and mental benefits. During these activities, children develop managerial skills and competences, find positive models, and learn to develop leadership opportunities, search for individual methods of personal development and, especially from a social point of view, develop friendship relationships, connect with each other and learn from each other. Through these activities, there is great opportunity to learn responsibility and independence, to enhance inter and intra-personal skills, to be actively involved, to solve problems and to develop decision-making abilities.

During this study, we wanted to see the actual knowledge and mostly the openness of preschool and primary school teachers about outdoor education and its practical implementation as a category of new education in everyday routine of children. The analysis of the real and objective situation of the knowledge and application of the outdoor education method at the pre-school and school level was made in Arad County, in different educational fields. At this stage, a teacher's questionnaire was applied to show the level of knowledge on the given method, the degree of use, the way of use, the teachers' opinions on some aspects of knowledge and application of outdoor education, enthusiasm, effectiveness, participation, introduction of the method in the curriculum and daily routine of students.

Analysis of the results

Therefore, following the processing of collected statistical data, the following were observed:

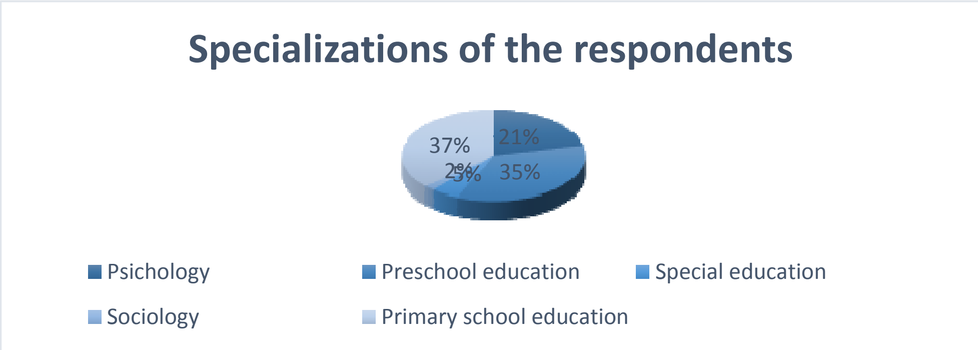
1. 117 people responded to the questionnaire. Of these, gender distribution was: 16 males and 101 females.

2. The average age of the respondents is 37 years, the minimum age being 20 years and the maximum age of the respondents is 66 years. Most respondents are between the ages of 25 and 30.

3. The age of the respondents is an important element in the analysis, as it can be a real indicator compared to other variables. There are, therefore, 57 people who are under ten years of age in education, and another 38 of the respondents have an average age of between 10 and 20 years. Only 18 percent of respondents are in high age, over 20 years in education. Of the respondents, there are only 2 under the age of one and four people over the age of 40 in education.

4. As regards the specialization of the teachers who answered the questionnaire, it can be said that it is varied. We consider this positive because at this stage of the preliminary study, we are interested in the real situation in which outdoor education is practiced in the educational units from Arad, at any level, radiographing the whole system, then we can get closer to what is interested in private. This is necessary because good practices may or may not have continuity with the evolution towards higher cycles. At the same time, it is important to know whether the use of outdoor

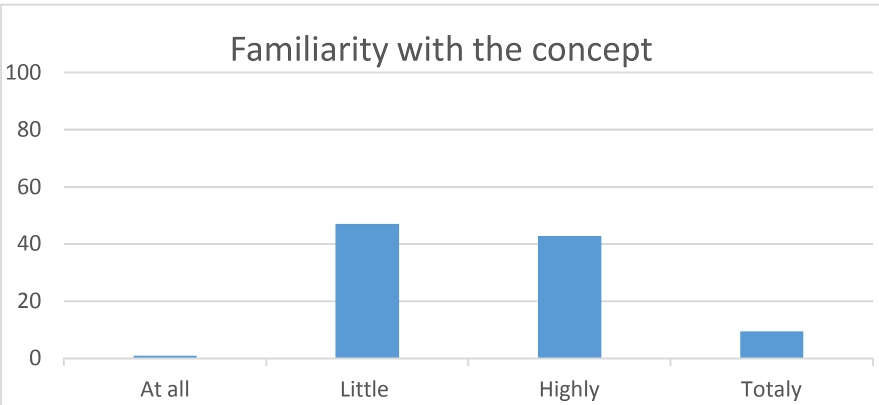
education is easier or not at the same time as advancing to higher classes, facilitated by the approach used, the style of the teaching staff, their collaboration or even their lack of cooperation at higher levels. The situation of specializations appears in the following chart:



It can be seen from the chart that the percentage of respondents in the area of interest is the highest. More than half of respondents belong to the environment most interested in the study. We will not neglect the answers of those in areas such as sociology, psychology or even special education.

5. The next variable to be analyzed is the environment in which the respondents are working. During the analysis, the correlation of this variable with others is of great interest to the study. We want to find out if there is any link between the teaching environment and the time spent on outdoor activities or whether this variable affects in some way the other educational routines. Teacher environments were of two types, urban and rural, and no significant differences in this variable could be observed. Of the 117 respondents, 64 work in the urban area and 53 in the rural area.

6. He was very interested in the level of familiarity with the concept of education outside the classroom and the answers appear in the following diagram:



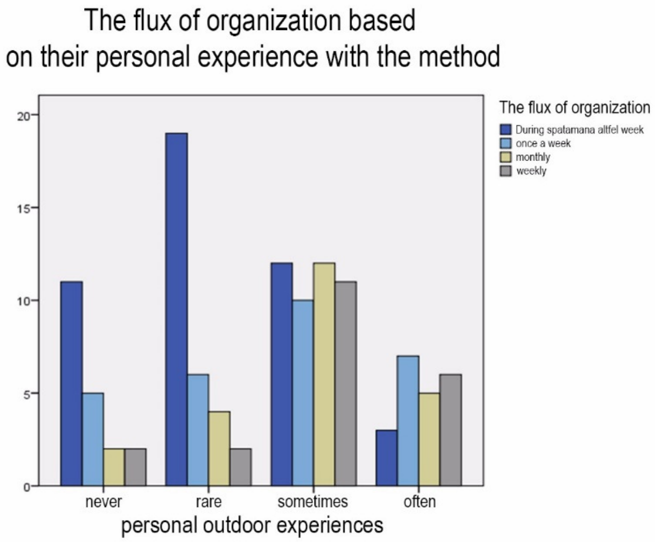
After analyzing these results, it can be said that most respondents believe that they know the concept of outdoor education to some extent. Following the training of teachers in this respect, the respondents admitted that they had erroneous information and knowledge about the concept and what this type of education implies. One person considered that they did not know the concept at all, and only 11 people felt they were fully familiar with it.

7. Another variable to be analyzed would be the way it came into contact with this concept. The results of the preliminary study show that most respondents came to know the concept through the Internet or through training courses or pedagogical circles. This results reveals the leadership's concern regarding the introduction of new concepts in formal education systems in Romania, and especially the willingness of teachers to evolve and modernize personal activity in the classroom, providing new opportunities for students to develop. A smaller number of teachers claim to have come into contact with the concept through a specialist book or journal, which reveals the need for research in this area. Only 3 people said that the television would have provided information on the subject.

8. The next variable was considered important because it reveals information about where Arad teachers place, as a concept, outdoor education. The importance attached to this concept also shows the level of accountability that they feel they have regarding the topic. The largest percentage of respondents believe that outdoor education is a new learning method. This could mean that it could easily adapt to classroom activities by introducing outdoor activities into the classroom's daily routine. The methods are easily accessible and can be used at any time of activity or day. A similar percentage considers outdoor education as a type of non-formal education. It can be inferred, therefore, that these respondents are not concerned with introducing outdoor activities into daily routines because they place it in an educational area that relieves them of responsibility, being responsible only for the activities carried out in formal education. One interesting thing could be the rigidity of the school curriculum, which would make the use of the method inaccessible during class hours. a small number of respondents place outdoor education in extracurricular activities or just the time spent in nature. This reveals that they attach little importance to the concept and place it in the sphere of choice or relaxation.

9. When asked about outdoor education experiences, an equal number of respondents checked that they had such experiences, being personally involved, never or often. The vast majority of respondents checked the option rarely or sometimes. This reveals that a teacher who is not involved in a personal experience with this concept cannot in turn show interest in organizing or involving the class with whom he works. This also results from

the comparison of the variable with the one in which they are asked about how often they organize or involve students in such activities.

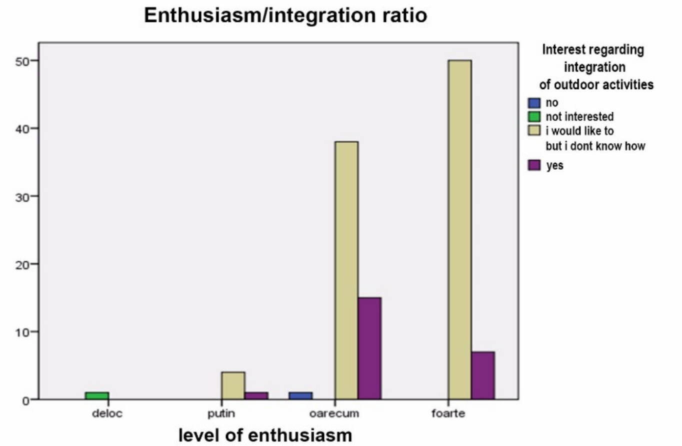


The chart shows that those teachers who have experienced outdoor activities on a regular stream are also those who use this type of activity most often. The other week is the most common time when this method is practiced. Most often, outdoor education with related activities is used in all its forms by teachers who have been continuously exposed to this type of activity. This may mean giving a high importance and due to the beneficial effects observed by the teachers by their personal participation in outdoor activities.

10. The following variable analyzes the permissiveness of teachers related to the time spent on children in kind. This variable measures their openness to extend the classroom in nature, the external environment or even the school yard. This is important because if there is no open time for students to spend outside, there will be no openness to organizing outdoor activities. The teacher may observe the behavior of the students while they are exposed to the outside environment, even during breaks or play. Interactions that develop between them can be valuable indicators of the level, communication, strengths or weaknesses of the group. These indices provide new ways for group management that will lead to better group homogeneity and better school results. Teachers who maintain that the whole activity is carried out only indoors, showing inflexibility in the organization of the premises, usually prohibiting and using breaks in the outer space, invoking health reasons or even the inadmissibility of the parents. According to this study, the results are shocking: the highest percentage of teachers allow less than 30 minutes for students to spend in the open. This figure is

far too low in primary and preschool education, where learning should be mobile, interactive, experimental, and immediate interaction with the environment. An equal number of teachers give 1, 2 or 3 hours a week in the outdoor environment. This may represent that educational systems are based on theory and less on experiential education.

11. Another variable underlying the analysis was the integration of outdoor activities into our own educational routine, which we analyzed in accordance with the enthusiasm in organizing such activities. The results are presented as follows in the following graph:



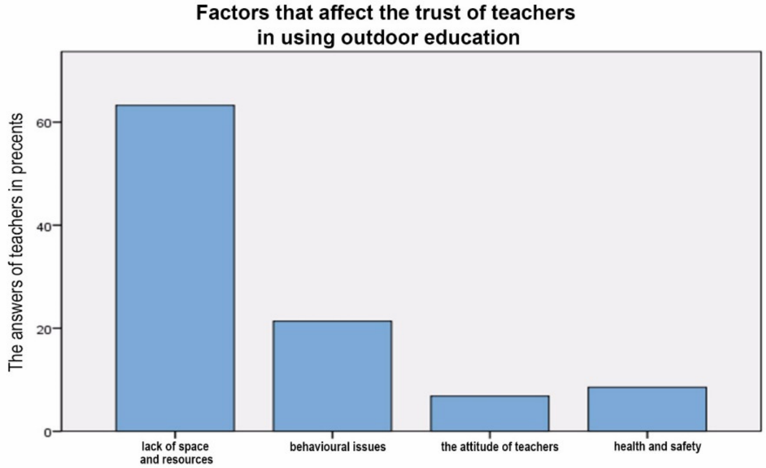
The results show that there are no enthusiastic or disinterested teachers in integrating outdoor activities into the activities they organize. At the same time, it appears that the majority of teachers who are enthusiastic about the method would like to integrate it, but they do not know how to do it. The same is the percentage for those who are somewhat or very interested, want to integrate it into daily activities. This result could mean that there is openness among respondents about more method-related information and especially about how to put into practice or adapt formal education, but there are no courses to support this initiative.

12. The next variable measures the interest in attending activities, personal training courses. More than half of respondents say they are interested in outdoor education. These are closely followed by almost 40% of people who are very interested in developing in this direction. This must be a motive for the inspectorate, who can use the handiest way to address the outdoor theme, under the pedagogical circles. This result also denotes the fact that teachers really want to develop and bring something new to classroom work.

13. The following two variables test the confidence level of the method following two distinct criteria: the level of knowledge assimilation and the level of cross-curricular skills and life skills. On average, teachers

are more confident that the outdoor method develops transversal skills and life skills, rather than helping to assimilate content and theoretical information. This may mean that the method is given the presumption of a modern method of experiential learning that develops the individual from a multilateral perspective and not only from the point of view of assimilation of information that may or may not be practiced in the course of time. In both cases, teachers give great confidence to the method in both senses.

14. In the following, we will analyze the responses to the variable that puts in the foreground the factors that affect the respondents' trust in outdoor use. Among those listed are health and safety issues, their own attitude related to the method, behavioral problems of the group that could jeopardize the normal or optimal performance of the activity and, last but not least, the lack of space and resources. Analyzing the results, the following facts are shown in the following diagram, as follows:



The level of trust is strongly affected by the lack of spaces or resources. It is true that the outdoor method mainly uses resources that are found in nature or in the external environment, whether natural elements or even buildings and different areas that become learning tools. The natural elements can be combined with the elements in the class, complementing each other to make the results as truthful as possible. Even though these facts are known, and together make the method available anytime, anywhere, teacher concerns are grounded in space and accessibility to spaces, as well as the flexibility to leave the classroom to provide useful learning experiences and without danger. Responding to this variable alerts the need to modernize educational spaces by making them more efficient, and outer spaces become overlays in the classroom, with the two spaces easily interchanging. Secondly among the factors affecting teachers' confidence are the group's behavioral problems. Here we can say that this is due to the lack of control of the teaching staff on the group, or even the management problems of the group of students. It is absurd to say that a teacher who does not trust that he can control the group of students in the external environment can do it internally. Research shows that in the external environment there are fewer pressure factors on students than just learning faster and more efficiently, but they connect with self, with nature and with the group, and so most negative or aggressive behavior behaves solve by itself. Indeed, it is necessary to establish clear rules and limits in which each student must fit, but these are certainly not as limited or restricted as those in the classroom. Health and safety are the elements of the disruptive factors and the personal attitude of the teachers or, more precisely, the prejudices, the availability or the values that guide them are also the criteria for using the method.

15. Another interesting discussion starts from another factor that often arises in educational systems, which is concerned both with pedagogues, academics, teachers, specialists and parents alike, namely the media impact on learning and the extent to which exposure to these media would influence spending leisure time or even time spent on education in the external environment. The results are as follows: most respondents consider that exposure to media products negatively affects participation in outdoor education activities. Research shows that students are finding themselves harder in the reality of the palpable world than in the virtual world, and are increasingly moving away from everything that is nature, experiential learning, fresh air, problem situations that the external environment and where decision-making and cooperation are key elements. Studies show that media can be incorporated into outdoor activities, which would motivate students to participate in these activities. For example, the camera or smart phones, outdoor education applications clearly enhance outdoor activities and the satisfaction of the participants.

16. The last two variables analyzed are directly related to the perception of respondents about the staff who should conduct outdoor activities in formal education. The answer to the question that outdoor learning can be organized by the class teacher or not, the answers were: over 80% think that the time teacher can organize outdoor activities, around 15% claim that a teacher can organize outdoor learning activities are not necessarily responsible for this, and a number of two respondents believe that the time teacher cannot organize such activities. The last analyzed variable tests whether the outdoor education activities should only be done by specialists in extracurricular education or teachers who have been formed or not. The answers were as follows: over half of respondents believe that these activities should not be carried out exclusively by qualified staff, and an almost equal number of respondents believe that these activities should be done by specialized teachers in this respect. This result may suggest the need for teachers to improve in this area to be sure of the qualifications gained in

this field and to remove any doubts or questions. The vast majority of teachers believe, however, that at the method level, any teacher should be able to adapt the method to their own class, according to the curriculum and curriculum given.

Intervention

The intervention consisted in a training, which lasted three days, it took place in an outdoor area, close to the city of Arad, and it had grouped a number of 18 teachers. There, the participants could get involved directly in outdoor education activities and participate at creating new ones based on the curriculum of different levels and classes. At the end, there was a discussion forum, where they could ask further questions and information on the topic. It was a fruitful experience, which led to the implementation and integration of outdoor activities as new education type in different classes belonging to the city of Arad.

Conclusions

Outdoor education is often given too little, even insignificant value. As such, we believe it deserves to criticize the field and focus more closely on its value and importance. The question is critically whether open-air education is a discipline or not, and if the answer is positive then how it can be treated as a discipline in education. Outdoor education is seen and treated as a method, rather than a totally independent discipline, and used in education by transforming and adapting curricular content so that they can meet the same procurement goals and achieve the same goals, but achieving to differ: to be more interactive, easier to assimilate, more fun, more efficient, faster and why not, to represent real learning experiences. Outdoor learning contributes to formal education and is compatible with school practice and objectives.

The findings and ideas that emerged during the research are related to the recent literature on educational reform, which encourages teachers to collaborate in curriculum review, work environment improvement, teaching professionalization, and local education policy development. It is expected that the idea of using nature as a context of learning and developing environmental consciousness will be increasingly important in the future challenges of education, and that outdoor education can be included in the curriculum as a pedagogical and didactic, holistic method that maintains motivation and welfare in the educational environment. It has already been proven that especially for pupils with special needs, it can be implemented as a rehabilitation method without cost or massive resources. (Potter, Dyment, 2016)

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FRIENDSHIP IN ADOLESCENCE AND ITS PITFALLS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RELATIONAL DIALECTICS

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Abstract: *This study is based on a descriptive research on a sample of 80 teenagers, built on three fundamental questions: What qualities do adolescents value in a friendship? Are there significant differences between the two genders when it comes to these qualities? What are the main relational dialectics to be solved in the case of friendship in adolescence, starting from the main qualities valued? The investigated teenagers mention the following qualities as relevant: sincerity, help, trust, loyalty, respect, honesty etc. The study also reveals that there are significant differences in terms of gender, in the sense that boys appreciate sincerity more in friendship, while girls appreciate stability more than boys. In terms of the pitfalls of relational dialectics associated with these qualities, they are at the level: expressiveness – protection (sincerity, trust), and independence – dependence (help, stability), respectively, according to W.K. Rawlins. According to Baxter & Montgomery's theory, there are tensions between the following opposite values regarding in friendship in adolescence: expression – nonexpression, integration – separation (help), stability – change (in the case of girls), expression – nonexpression in the case of boys).*

Keywords: *adolescence; qualities of friendship; relational dialectics; opposite values;*

1. Introduction

Does the relationship of friendship differ from other types of relationships? Common sense shows that people interact differently with friends and non-friends. Therefore, it is natural to ask: *What are the defining aspects of friendship? What is specific to friendship in adolescence, in terms of valued qualities?*

William K. Rawlins (1992, 2008, p.12) in *Friendship Matters: Communication, Dialectics, and the Life Course* points out that friendship is a relationship that has five special features: it is a voluntary relationship, it is a personal relationship (by virtue of the individual qualities of the person), it is an affective relationship based on an emotional attachment, it is a mutual relationship based on common elements, and is a relationship built on equality. In adolescence, friendship gains stability (Bradford & Klute, 2009, p. 373), reciprocity and equality, similarity, these being its fundamental criteria.

In adolescence there are a number of explicit or implicit expectations in a friendship, often mentioned as qualities valued in friendship. Thus, the study by Roberts-Griffin (2011, pp. 7, 15-16) mentions the following qualities appreciated in friendship by the 15 to 30 age group: *trust* (44%), *honesty*, *support*, common interests, loyalty, humour, kindness, acceptance, communication, etc. For the 31 to 45 age group, the order of valued qualities is different: *trust* (36%), honesty, humour, kindness, support, common interests. These qualities with small inversions are mentioned as important in a friendship for the 46 to 60 age group as well: *honesty* (40%), *trust*, *support*, common interests, humour, kindness, communication. In the 60+ group, the qualities invoked are somewhat different: *communication* (29%), honesty, humour, loyalty, trust, etc. In terms of gender differentiation, women mention the following qualities as relevant: trust, honesty, fun, support, humour, common interests and loyalty, while men mention: honesty, support, common interests, loyalty, humour, communication.

Do these qualities influence a good friendship relationship? In the dyad of friendship, there is a chance of equally or unequally benefiting from these qualities or, on the contrary, of being caught in a toxic friendship relationship with a partner who does not share these values at all. Friendship relationships, especially in adolescence (as extra-familial relationships), can have both positive and negative effects on physical, psychological, emotional health, and may influence the start of risky or problem-causing behaviour (Bradford & Klute, 2009), raising the issue of the importance of managing friendship relationships in the educational sphere.

Social life is a process of contradictory discourse, whose central theme is relational dialectics (Baxter, 2004, p. 182). **Relational dialectics** is a theory of interpersonal communication about opposite trends. Therefore, according to the author, tensions exist between opposite values such as: expression – nonexpression, integration – separation, stability – change. According to Baxter & Montgomery (1996), each of the three relational dialectics has its characteristics:

- the *expression-nonexpression* dialectics can be internally present through the tension that arises between *openness-closeness* (how much information about myself do I tell my partner), while externally tension appears between *revelation-concealment* (how much of our common information do I share in the social network).

- the *integration-separation* or *me-we* dialectics (how independent or dependent should I be) can be experienced internally as a contradiction between *autonomy-connection* (how much should I rely on my partner), and externally refers to *inclusion-seclusion* (how much we should be connected with others).
- the *stability-change* dialectics targets internally the tension between *predictability-novelty* (how monotonous or dynamic is the relationship), *certainty-uncertainty* (how certain or uncertain is the relationship), and externally between *uniqueness-conventionality* (how different is the relationship from the others, from existing conventions).

We note that *internal dialectics* addresses the tensions existing in the relationship between relational partners, while *external dialectics* refers to the tensions that exist between the relationship and the outside world (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996).

It is difficult to find a balance, to integrate aspects that are so different. In contrast to the first-generation relational dialectics that wanted to integrate two voices, the effort now focuses on the formation of a "multi-voiced story in centripetal and centrifugal flow" (Baxter, 2004, p. 189), social life being an "open dialogue" characterised by the fusion and simultaneous differentiation of voices. The central concept of *social-dialectics theories* is contradiction. Contradiction is the dynamic interaction between opposing units (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 8, Dialectical Theory).

William K. Rawlins (1992, 2008, pp. 15-23) in chapter *A Dialectical Perspective on Communication in Friendship* refers to the tensions that arise between contradictory elements in friendships. Rawlins's friendship dialectics theory shows that the following dialectics appear at *contextual* level:

A. *Public - Private* – the difference/tension between how society sees the friendship and how friends see the friendship.

B. *Ideal - Real* – the difference/tension between how friendship should be (the cultural, social ideal) and how it is actually lived in relation to these standards.

In terms of *interactive dialectics* (communication), it includes all the conflicts that friends endure to maintain the friendship relationship (Sivertsen, 2003, pp. 5-9). They appear as tensions between (Rawlis & Rawlis, 2005, pp. 12-18):

1. *Independence - Dependence* – the difference/tension between the desire for freedom in individual activities and the desire to receive support, to be helped.
2. *Expressiveness - Protectiveness* – the difference/tension between the desire to reveal personal information and the desire not to reveal too much to avoid being hurt.
3. *Acceptance - Judgement* – the difference/tension between the desire to accept a friend as he or she is and the desire to feel free to criticise and give advice.
4. *Affection - Instrumentality/Utility* – the difference/tension between the desire to focus on affection in the relationship of friendship and the desire to base the relationship on concrete tasks in achieving a goal.

It can be argued that friendship is a social construct based on the subjective experiences of members, its evolution being influenced by the resolution of these dialectics at the contextual and interactive level. The dialectical approach based on the ***and/both*** contradiction is a challenge in that a variety of contradictions must be managed. Friendship relationships thus appear in a dynamic that can generate positive effects by strengthening the relationship, or negative/destructive effects for both partners or one of them. The ability of both partners to resolve this relational dialectic is essential for the proper functioning of the relationship, all based on each person's concept of friendship.

2. Methods and Discussions

The sample consists of 80 teenagers (40 boys, 40 girls), first year students in technical faculties at the Politehnica University Timișoara. The study is based on a descriptive research, having a referential-informational function on the qualities that ensure the functionality of friendship relations. The generic question is: What qualities matter in a positive friendship relationship from your point of view? The students have mentioned three important qualities in a friendship. Of course, we excluded the naming of ideal qualities that give identity to friendship, but the relationship between the qualities that define me as a good friend or the qualities expected of a good friend remains unclear, as sometimes there may be a contradiction between giving and receiving, while friendship itself presupposes this transaction based on reciprocity between receiving and giving. The questions on which the study is based are: What qualities do adolescents value in a friendship? Are there significant differences between the two genders when it comes to these qualities? What are the main relational dialectics to be solved in the case of friendship in adolescence, starting from the main qualities valued?

The statistical processing was based on the inventory of all mentioned qualities, and the following statistical indices were then calculated using SPSS17: the frequency tables for the correlations between the identified qualities (for the entire sample, and for boys and girls, respectively), the Chi-Square test for the association or independence between qualities identified depending on gender.

The data identified (Table no. 1) reveal that sincerity is the quality most valued by adolescents (87.5%), followed by help (36.3%), trust (27.5%), loyalty (26.3%), respect (26.3%), honesty (23.8%), understanding (16.3%), communication (13.8%), stability (12.5%), resemblance (11.3%), humour (8.8%), sacrifice (6.3%) and different (3.8%).

As regards the qualities mentioned by boys, the following order is noted: sincerity (95%), help (40%), loyalty (32.5%), trust (27.5%), respect (30%), honesty and understanding (20%), communication, similarity and humour (7.5%), stability and differences (5%) and sacrifice (2.5%). In terms of the qualities mentioned by girls, the following order is noted: sincerity (80%), support (32.5%), trust and honesty (27.5%), respect (22.5%), communication and stability (20%), understanding (12.5%), humour and sacrifice (10%), differences (2.5%).

Table no. 1. The main qualities valued in a friendship by adolescents, and by boys and girls, respectively significant sex differences

Qualities	sincerity	help /support	trust	loyalty	respect	honesty	understanding	communication	stability	similarity	humour	sacrifice	differences
All %	87.5 (1)	36.3 (2)	27.5 (3)	26.3	26.3	23.8	16.3	13.8	12.5	11.3	8.8	6.3	3.8
Boys %	95 (1)	40 (2)	27.5	32.5 (3)	30	20	20	7.5	5	7.5	7.5	2.5	5
Girls %	80 (1)	32.5 (2)	27.5 (3)	20	22.	27.5	12.5	20	20	15	10	10	2.5
Chi-Square	$p<0.05$								$p<0.05$				

Below, we will analyse the first three qualities identified as important from the perspective of relational dialectics: *sincerity, help and trust (for girls), and sincerity, help and loyalty (for boys), respectively.*

Sincerity as an attribute that signifies confession, disclosure, saying what you think, without lying or deceiving, involves solving conflicts on the dimension of *expressiveness – protection* (Rawlins) and on the *expression – nonexpression* dialectics (Baxter), because there are many risks assumed by the two contradictory poles: to be an open book (maximum self-disclosure) and to be an enigma (closeness, hypocrisy, duplicity, pretence, pharisaism).

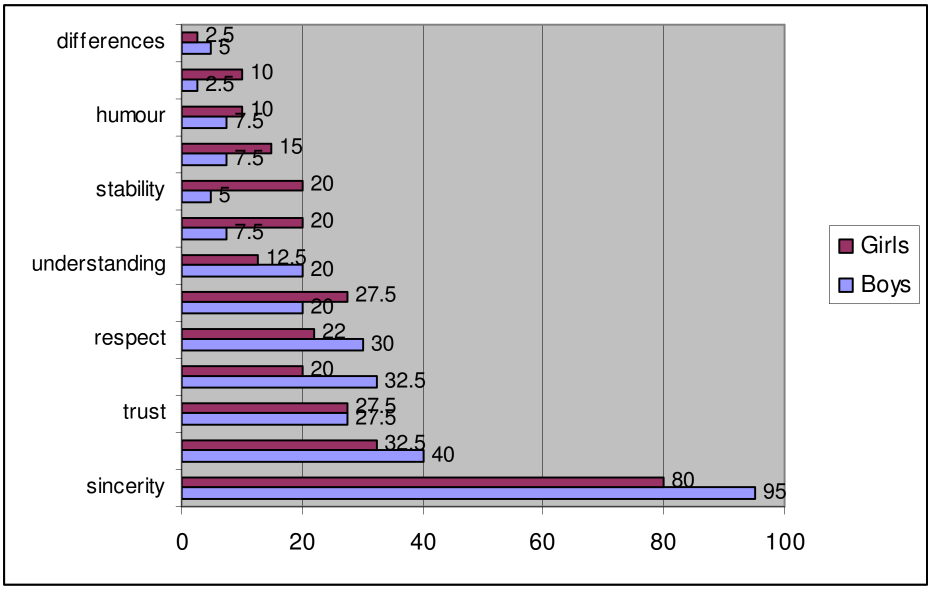
Help involves participating in the effort of the other, helping someone, protecting, supporting, protecting the other. The conflicts that appear here are on the *independence – dependence* dimension (Rawlins), the *integration-separation* dialectics (Baxter), and aim to negotiate the following: involvement vs. non-involvement, interference vs. abandonment, asking for/accepting help up to becoming dependant on the other vs. rejecting/not accepting help to maintain independence.

In terms of trust, ranked third by girls, it is part of the process of resolving the expressivity – protection dialectics (Rawlins), *expression – nonexpression* (Baxter), because it is aimed at feeling safe, mattering, being able to rely on the other, on his or her good faith, without any doubt or suspicion. Friendship involves mutual trust (Pahl, 2000, p. 54, cited by Albu, 2005)

Loyalty, ranked third by boys, means to be steadfast, devoted, loyal, trustworthy, and stable, to be there for each other, and is part of the *independence – dependence* dialectics (Rawlins), *stability – change* dialectics (Baxter). A problem in this respect would be to find a balance between certainty vs. uncertainty, discretion vs. public exposure etc.

The Chi-Square Test, and ANOVA analysis, respectively, reveals significant sex differences for the following qualities (Figure no. 1.): *sincerity and stability* at a threshold of $p<0.05$ ($p = 0.043$), in the sense that boys appreciate *sincerity* more than girls, while girls appreciate *stability* more than boys. Stability is part of the independence – dependence dialectics (Rawlins), stability and change (Baxter). Friendship is a lasting relationship (Albu, 2005).

Figure no. 1. Qualities valued in a friendship differentiated by sex



Regarding the possible correlations between the qualities mentioned by adolescents, a positive correlation was found at a threshold of <0.01 between *communication and similarity*, both at group level and in the case of girls. Similarity can be a prerequisite, but also a result of good communication. In the case of boys, however, there is a significant positive correlation at a threshold of $p<0.05$ between *communication and differences*, which may indicate the boys' openness to what is different, to new learning experiences, in which case communication would aim to capture the common elements in spite of the differences, of the novelty elements, of the different elements that require solving conflicts. The correlation between *honesty and sacrifice* can indicate the active involvement of boys in relationships perceived as honest.

Table no. 2 Significant correlations between the qualities mentioned

Variables 1	Variables 2	Pearson Correlation	Significance	
communication	similarity	.317	.004**	(group)
communication	similarity	.490	. 001**	(girls)
communication	differences	.370	.019 *	(boys)
honesty	sacrifice	.320	.044 *	(boys)
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level				

How stimulating for communication are similarity and differences between friends must be established by other studies, in our study the data capturing only the perception of the investigated subjects.

3. Conclusions

Sincerity, help and trust are the three main qualities valued in a friendship by the adolescents surveyed. In the real-life supply-offer transaction, will adolescents find a balance?

From the perspective of relational dialectics, these qualities can generate contradictions that require resolution:

- sincerity (ranked 1st) and trust (ranked 3rd) are in a relation with resolving the expression-protection (Rawlins), expression - nonexpression (Baxter) dialectics;
- help (ranked 2nd) is in a relation with resolving the independence-dependence (Rawlins), integration-separation (Baxter) dialectics;

The study also reveals that boys value sincerity more than girls, while girls appreciate stability more than boys. We can say that, from the point of view of relational dialectics, in the friendship relationship, boys lay emphasis on the successful resolution of the *expressiveness – protectiveness* dialectics (Rawlins), *expression - nonexpression* dialectics (Baxter), while girls lay emphasis on the successful resolution of the *independence – dependence* (Rawlins), *stability-change* (Baxter) dialectics.

According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), the most inappropriate strategies to deal with contradictions would be: (a) denial, i.e., focusing on one of the poles and ignoring the other, and (b) disorientation, i.e., a sense of helplessness which leads to giving up on any action. There are also the following dominant communication practices in the negotiation of contradictions, synthesised after *Dialectical Theory*:

- *Spiralling inversion* – focusing on one of the poles and then the other, that is, alternate.
- *Segmentation* – negotiating and establishing that pole A is dominated in the field of activity X, and that pole B is dominated in the field of activity Y.
- *Balance* – finding compromise solutions where both dialectical poles are met, but only partially.
- *Integration* – looking for a complete answer instead of a partial one to both dialectical poles at the same time without causing suffering.
- *Recalibration* – refocusing the situation so that a contradiction is symbolically rebuilt, therefore leading to the dialectical requirements no

longer being regarded as opposite. Transforming contradictions so that they no longer oppose each other.

- *Reaffirmation* – both partners recognising that dialectical tensions will never disappear, recalling successes had and celebrating them.

The study reveals that adolescents value qualities such as sincerity, help, trust, loyalty, qualities that are in the register of character traits that will be confirmed and reconfirmed in the interpersonal relationships of friendship, contributing to the moral, cognitive, emotional and social development of each person included in this dyad of friendship. We could argue that the moral values of those who make up the dyad are at the forefront.

Studies on social influence support the fact that adolescents are influenced by the characteristics of their friends, both positively and negatively, at the level of psychological and behavioural development, depending on the quality of the friendship (Berndt, 2002). Therefore, the characteristics of a friend are becoming relevant to a good friendship, but also the quality of a friendship can cause changes in the characteristics of both persons included in the friendship dyad. Relationships evolve according to how partners react to these tensions (relational dialectics), but it can be argued that these reactions are also influenced by the characteristics of the partners. In conclusion, the only way to have a friend is to be his friend (Emerson, 1968) and finding solutions to these relational dialectics.

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THEMATIC DESIGN IN THE STEP BY STEP EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE

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Abstract: *The study presents the specifics of didactic design in the Step by Step alternative, focusing on the idea that this procedure allows the students to develop from a relational point of view, leading to the development of their communication skills and ensuring an educational success. The study focuses on the design and realization of interdisciplinary activities in the Step by Step alternative, with emphasis on the development of communicational/relational/ collaboration skills in 4th graders.*

Keywords: *Step by Step educational alternative; autonomy; communication skills; interdisciplinary activities design;*

Introduction

The projection of activities in the Step by Step educational alternative is based on the development theories. The development of the design is based on the premise that the particular features of the children, the conflicts they have experienced, are starting points in constructing the instructive and educational approach. The projected activities should support the child's developmental needs so that the student in such a class can set up a behavior based on entrepreneurship, initiative and leadership, confidence in their capacities, autonomy. The student is able to collaborate with others, children or adults, and cooperates in accomplishing tasks, is willing to cultivate friends, respects colleagues and collaborators.

Designing activities in the classes that operates in the Step by Step educational alternative has the mission to develop in each participant in the educational act the ability to be inventive / creative, to use their own resources, to promote critical thinking. The student becomes able to choose, has initiative in what he does. The activities are designed in such a way as to stimulate the courage to discover and self-discover and to promote friendship, helpfulness. There is a lower focus on competition between educational partners. This is because, at this age, the child is not yet mature enough to understand the competition between him and the others.

The design of activities, viewed from the perspective of the school curricula for preparatory classes and grades I to IV, has the same competencies and objectives as in traditional education.

What is different is that the methods and tools used to explore and deepen the child's knowledge are individualized according to his specificity. The tools that this alternative uses in designing activities, in the spirit of individualizing the teaching/learning process, are diverse. We can mention: the individualized tasks, according to the specifics of each child; activities carried out on centers, when students can choose by themselves on which centers they want to participate; the materials used are always made available to students to be handled, consulted; the evaluation of each student, based on his own creations and the full display of all papers.

Methodology

In this study we started from the following objective: the recognition of the influence of the interdisciplinary activities design in the requirements of the Step by Step alternative on the pupils' results of the fourth grade, with emphasis on the development of communicational/ relational skills, as well as on the development of cognitive, affective and social skills of children.

The investigation was conducted on a number of 32 students. They attend IV grade classes and are aged between 9-10 years.

The hypothesis from which it started was: if the didactic activities are designed in the formula specific to the Step by Step alternative, then the necessary framework is created for the development of the communicational/relational/collaboration abilities in the students aged between 9 and 10 years and good results at learning are obtained.

To accomplish the thematic design for a course day, it is necessary to go through some stages:

STAGE I

a) Establishing the theme of the study, which can be done by the pupils, in the case of the thematic study, by analyzing collectively their proposals on what they are interested in. Students will discuss the themes they propose, bringing pros and cons. Then the vote will set the theme for the thematic study.

b) Development directions: consist of free discussions with children, making a chart of the program, networking, then conducting discussions with people who can be involved in successfully completing the activity.

c) Setting the timeframe during which the thematic study will be conducted. Under the alternative, this is determined by the complexity of the chosen themes or the content of the curriculum, or their diversity.

d) Planning and designing the actual activity consists in the activity of assessing the existing materials and the creation of a list with the necessary materials, with the students being involved. Some of these can be brought or can be made by students. It is necessary to note the human resources that can help us to conduct the study properly. Among the human resources we can mention: parents, members of the students' families, specialists, etc.

STAGE II

a) Establishing roles and responsibilities

b)Conduct: explorations, data recordings, word lists and alphabetical ordering, classifications, sorting, chronological ordering, description of objects, dramatization, creation of clothes for them (Roman sandals), but also for mini dummies from the center, the realization of some models with architectural elements specific to the studied historical age.

STAGE III

a)Adding details

b)Assigning product finality: students presenting the created posters; building from Lego pieces ancient amphitheater cubes, temples, using the specific architectural elements; realizing, from plastilin, mini-sculptures; making Roman sandals, which they will take home; performing an exhibition of clothing made by them.

c) Evaluating the thematic study

In order to be able to specifically observe the role of the thematic design, using interdisciplinary pedagogical activities, the method of pedagogical experiment was used, applying the content approach from the perspective of designing a day in the Step by Step specific.

The following contents of the curriculum for the 4th grade were approached at the educational disciplines:

- *Romanian Language and Literature - "Extracting information from a scientific text"*
- *History - "People of yesterday and today - the Roman Empire"*
- *Visual arts and practical skills - "Techniques for using processed materials"*

The content sample was from the school curriculum in the History discipline. The premise theme, as a representative sample, was evaluated: "*People of yesterday and today: the Dacians*."

The initial test we applied to the entire sample of students does not represent a strict assessment of pupils' knowledge but aims at a brief recapitulation of the knowledge of the fourth grade pupils in the respective samples. After the initial tests, the children in the class where the experimental activity took place were presented with the message of the day and the themes they will learn at the centers.

The actual activity was done according to the specificity of the alternative. After *the morning meeting*, the message was read and the centerwork topics were announced, followed by the mini-lesson. At the mini-lesson the students were shown on the physical and historical map the geographical location of the Roman Empire, where the city-state of Rome appeared. They were told about the myths surrounding the founding of ancient Rome, connected with the great legends of the world, represented by the Iliad, the Odyssey and Eneida, and the link between Greek and Trojan civilization. Students were informed of social categories that were similar to those in the Greek world. The expansionist policy, the organization and functioning of the army enables Rome to conquer the Mediterranean basin, and Latin becomes a European language. The way of life, the occupations and the customs of this fabulous people stirred the imagination of the students.

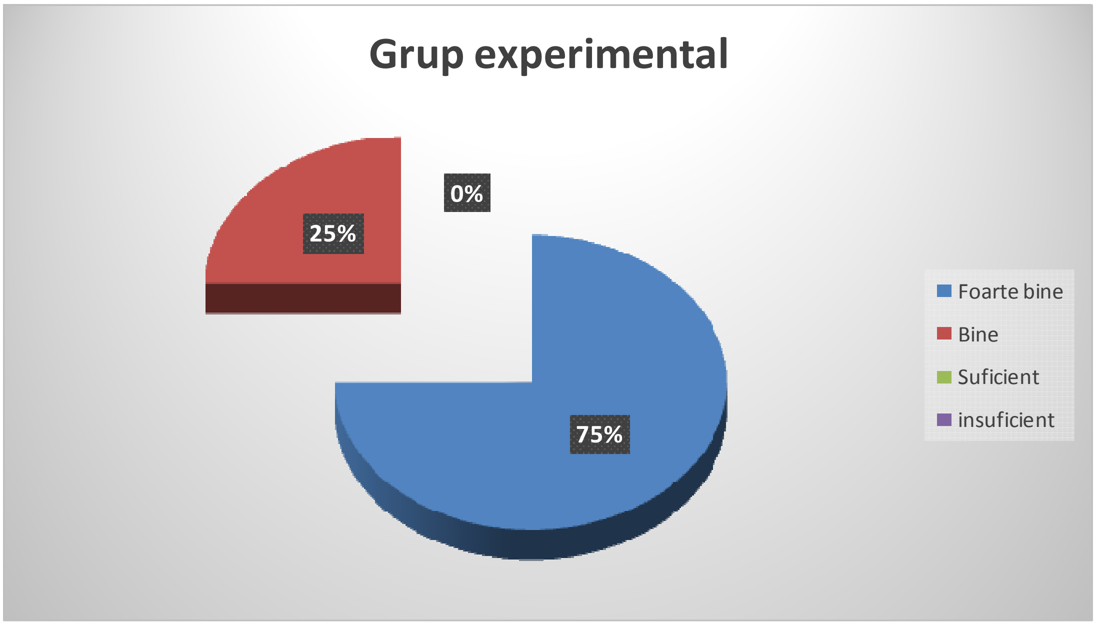
Next there was a rotation at the centers of interest: (*Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Arts and Construction*). The rotation of the centers gave students the opportunity to deepen the information received at the mini-lesson. Students worked on each center for about 15-20 minutes. The evaluation was usually conducted on the *Author's Chair* for each student, in the case of individual papers.

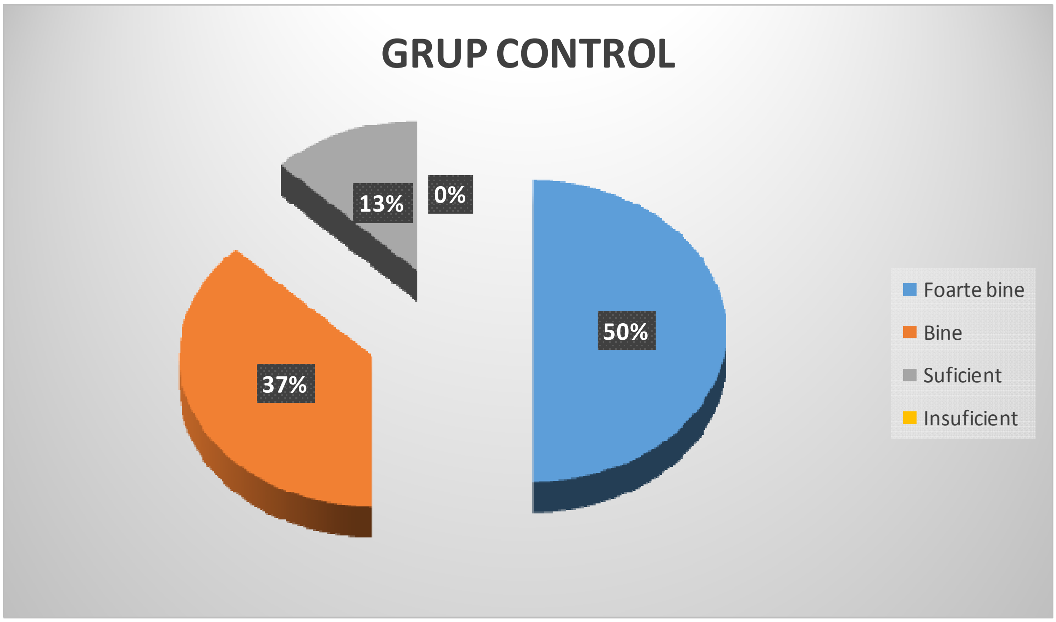
In the case of joint tasks where students had to make posters with conceptual maps, they presented the posters in front of the class and each student spoke about his contribution to solving the task he had received. These were displayed on the special panel in the classroom. Works from the Arts and Construction Centers were presented and then exhibited. The children proudly exhibited the way they fashioned their clothing, ornaments, how they shared their tasks, what indications they had in making the amphitheatres and temples.

The reflection stage took place the next day. During this stage, discussions took place, impressions were shared, opinions were expressed, and children concluded that they enjoyed this form of activity more because they did not get bored. A poster was created with the impressions and conclusions of the children about the form of the course day. The moments that were representative of them, those that attracted and impressed them were noted.

Interpretation of results

By comparing the results obtained by the two groups of students, we can conclude that the experimental group obtained better results at the final test, which confirms the hypothesis that by involving the students through the thematic study method the pupils' results considerably improve. After the applied questionnaires, we found that all the students in the experimental group participated with interest in the activities carried out, and at the end of the course they all felt happy. Not the same thing happened in the control group, where some of the students felt indifferent and two felt unhappy. This proves that it is necessary for the pupil, with his aspirations, to remain at the center of the teaching.





It has been found that, as a result of the activities carried out, the pupils gained self-confidence, they were accustomed to debating what was unclear, had the opportunity to communicate and understood that there was a dialogue between them and the teachers/experts. It has also been noted that after the activity, the relationships between the children has improved, and they continue to discuss what has happened and what they have done, even during the pause. Even less communicative, less sociable students have participated in these discussions. Through debates initiated by the teacher they develop respect for each other's opinions, a sense of responsibility, involvement, and it is noticed that social integration issues are improving.

By debating the theme, through the discussions that students carry between themselves and the teacher in networking, placing children in unprecedented situations or in a position to decide for themselves what they want to learn, they are all encouraged to engage in dialogues, to express their opinion, but also to support it, to formulate arguments. They are also in a position to interact with adults, use formulas, address questions directly, spontaneously, from their desire to know more. Their curiosity, properly exploited by the teacher, becomes an absolute motivator. I think this is the most relevant way to develop the real communication skills, stemming from a directed spontaneity, not those imposed by the rigidity of the traditional system.

The thematic study gives students another perspective on teaching-learning, more attractive and, at the same time, more motivating. The implementation of the thematic study method improves the nature of the student-to-student relationship and the result is classroom cohesion.

Conclusions

From a cognitive perspective, the unitary vision in which the contents of the program are taught and learned, can be observed. Students are in a position to search for information from multiple sources to follow the subject. They operate involuntarily and in the form of play of responsibility, thinking operations as analysis and synthesis, heuristic thinking, etc., these being determined by the composition of the thematic map and the ways of realizing it.

From the emotional / affective perspective, we can assert that students have confidence in their strengths, their abilities, self-esteem, sense of dignity and self-appreciation. Through their relationship to the other students, they develop the sense of belonging to the group, and through their activities they are enjoying themselves with their colleagues.

From a social point of view, the children are in a position to collaborate and communicate with each other, but also with adults, parents or experts, some of whom are unknown to them. Children are "forced" to ask questions, to participate in discussions, to engage in constructive dialogues, and to answer questions when needed. Only in this way they socialize, develop the spirit of cooperation and belonging to the group. By working with adults, pupils develop their sense of belonging to the group.

Through the thematic study, the Step by Step educational alternative contributes significantly to the development of children's harmonious education.

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THE GOALS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL ASSESSMENT OF NIGERIA'S NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

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Abstract: *This paper gives a cursory history of Tertiary Education in Nigeria and attempts a philosophical analysis of the concepts of quality and access to education; two major concepts that featured prominently in the goals of Nigeria's Tertiary Education as stated in Nigeria's National Policy on Education (2013). Subsequently, a philosophical assessment of the goals of Tertiary Education as stated in the National Policy document and the implementation is undertaken. Based on this philosophical assessment, it is shown among other things, that the concepts of quality and access to education as reflected in the goals of Tertiary Education are better used with clarifications. In addition, it is argued that the history of Tertiary Education in Nigeria is not totally that of woe because Tertiary Education has made some remarkable impact in the nation's developmental strides. It is however emphasized that there are still enormous challenges facing Nigeria's Tertiary Education especially when compared with global best practices. Furthermore it is argued that there is still a wide gap between the policy statements on Tertiary Education and their implementation. Suggestions are made towards addressing the challenges pointed out. These suggestions include: government redoubled commitment towards the funding of Tertiary Education, the enforcement of ethics education that has its foundation in the traditional values of Africa in order to address the prevailing laxity in the moral tone of many of the Tertiary Institutions*

Key words: Access; Quality; Pedagogy; Education; National policy; Nigeria;

Introduction

Nigeria referred to officially as the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is located in the West African sub-region, bordering Benin to the west, Cameroon and Chad to the east and Niger to the north. The United

Nations Department of Economic Affairs (2017) in its world population prospects put the total population of Nigeria at 190,886,000, comprising 96,729,000 males and 94,157,000 females. Nigeria has a federal system of government with 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja. Within the states, there are 744 local governments in total (FGN, 2017b). In Nigeria, higher education is provided by universities, polytechnics/monotechnics, colleges of education, as well as institutes that prepare candidates for professional courses such as accounting, law, architecture, mass communication, etc.

The first Tertiary Institution in Nigeria was the Yaba Higher College, established in 1934. This became the nucleus of the first University College established in 1948 in Ibadan. Shortly before independence in 1960 the need to have more tertiary institutions became obvious. This led to the establishment of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Lagos and the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University); all in 1962. The University of Benin was established in 1970. These group of Universities became popularly known as the first generation Universities.. With the creation of additional States in 1975 coupled with the agitation for more Universities, the Federal Government established seven additional Universities namely; Universities of Jos, Maiduguri, Kano, Sokoto, Ilorin, Calabar and Port Harcourt and Ado Bayero University Kano – all known as second generation Universities. The third generation Universities were established between 1980 and 1990. They are the Federal University of Technology in Owerri, Markurdi, Yola, Akure, and Bauchi. At the same time several States established their own Universities. The fourth generation Universities are those established between 1991 and the present date. These include several private Universities, Nigerian Open University and other State universities As at August 2012, Nigeria's tertiary education system comprised of 122 Universities (36 Federal, 36 State, and 50 Private), 71 Polytechnics, 47 Momotechnics and 79 Colleges of Education (Bamiro 2012). Taking cognizance of the fact that the Universities were only two at independence in 1960, one opined that the growth in number is relatively a very rapid one. This is a welcome development going by the fact that non-governmental organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and Economic Commission for Africa have all argued for the necessity to expand higher education which must promote development of the whole person and train responsible, informed citizens, committed to working for a better society in the future (UNDP 1999 Human Development Report cited in Eggins 2010). This phenomenal numerical growth of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is commendable going by the observation of Eggins (2010) that it is now accepted that tertiary education has important implications for the economic, political, and socio-cultural development, sustainability and global competitiveness of nations. However, despite the fact that the expansion of tertiary education is in line with the recommendations of international organizations and the situation in developed nations, with the sporadic numerical growth of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria in recent times, it is only reasonable to be inquisitive about the goals that the Federal Government has in mind for tertiary institutions in the country and to make a realistic assessment of these goals and their implementation. It is this trend of thought that occasioned this work. This is more so because functional tertiary education is the bedrock of any society that has made remarkable development over the years and is equally the secret of the success of nations that are fast developing, as its quality determines the quality of human resources and development.

Goals of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013a) section 5 subsection 80 - 85 specifies that the goals of tertiary education shall be to:

- contributetonationaldevelopmentthroughhigh-levelmanpowertraining;
- provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interest of Nigerians;
- provide high-quality career counselling and lifelong learning opportunity that prepare students with knowledge and skills for self-reliance;
- reduce skills shortages through the production of relevant skilled workers;
- promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service
- forge and cement national unity; and
- promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Tertiary educational institutions pursue these goals through:

- quality student intake;
- quality teaching and learning;
- research and development;

- quality facilities, services and resources;
- the generation and dissemination of knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national goals and enable students to succeed in a knowledge-based economy;
- access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund(TETFund);
- the maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate regulatory agencies; and ban all-inclusive, credible admission policy for national unity (FGN,2013a).

Concepts of Access and quality in Education: The Challenge of Meaning

Access to Education

According to Yang (2011), in response to corresponding expansion of higher education worldwide, comparative studies on access to higher education have also taken on increased importance. *Access*, however, has not been clearly defined in existing studies.

Du Plooy and Zilindile (2014) affirmed that in the literature that they studied, they found that the meaning of the concept access to education is not as clear cut as it at first would seem. They observed that for some authors, it is defined in terms of physical access, or in terms of entry(enrolment) into schools (Gamede, 2005; Chandani, Balan, Smith and Donahue, 2007; Alexander, 2008). For others, it is more than mere physical access, since it is reflected in educational outcomes or in what Samoff (2001: 25) calls "expanded access" (post enrolment experiences). Furthermore, the concept of access to education has been addressed (Ziderman, 2013) from four perspectives: the broadening of access (growth of the number of potential students entering Higher Education), the deepening of access(ensuring significant proportions of students from non-traditional social classes – the working class, ethnic minorities), retention and successful completion of studies(analyzing the factors that would lead to drop out, such as the increase of tuition fees or downturns in the economy) and maintaining freshman enrolment levels(need to provide loans to students).

Prodan et al (2015) point out that a definition of the term access to higher education is necessary due to its complexity and multidimensionality. They argued that one of the most widely accepted views is that access to higher education is the result of a complex set of relationships involving not only financial factors such as the cost of schooling and student aid but also students' attitude to higher education, their preparation, their aspirations, and other factors rooted in family background that start early in an individual's life (Finnie et al, 2008, p3 cited in Prodan et al (2015). Prodan et al emphasise that access to education from higher education perspective can be understood not only as entry/admission to higher education but also as retention and successful completion of studies.

Harvey 2004:13 cited in Ziderman (2013) argues that while an acceptable generic definition of access is a process of enabling entry into higher education, access as a concept can still be looked at from four other different perspectives:

Broadening of access

This aspect of access relates to policies facilitating the entry of larger numbers of potential students into higher education. Underlying this trend is the recognition of the importance of larger higher education population for economic and social development particularly in the context of a more competitive global environment. The focus is not so much on the socio-economic composition of the student population but rather on the relative size of this enrolment.

Deepening of access

This has to do with ensuring that significant proportions of students from non-traditional areas (such as working class, ethnic minorities) enter higher education (Harvey 2004 cited in Ziderman 2013). Here the emphasis shifts from the need to increase the number of students in higher education to that of changing their composition in order to achieve a more socially acceptable balance amongst the various socio economic groups. This is achieved through reaching out to those usually disadvantaged groups who do not customarily pursue higher education studies. The central motivation here is clearly social, and aimed at improving the life chances of these groups.

Furthermore, the concept of access is understood to encompass not only entry into higher education but also retention and successful completion(National office of Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008 cited in Ziderman 2013). Drop out from learning is not only(or perhaps mainly) the result of academic weakness. Unforeseen financial difficulties may play a role in many cases particularly when brought on by such factors as tuition fee increase or a downturn in the economy (with less student employment opportunities). Similarly, the advent of tuition fee increase or economic slowdown may persuade many potential students to decide against enrolling in higher education.

According to The technical report of the National Household Survey (2009), the barriers to education literature review also highlighted the fact that access to education has been interpreted in different ways by different researchers, education practitioners and government officials, both locally and internationally. Based on the findings of the literature review, the research team settled on a relatively broad understanding of access which is defined as the ability to participate (CALS& Social Surveys, Baseline

Literature Review Report 2006:9 cited in Ziderman 2013).It was however emphasized that getting through the school gate was an important but insufficient measure of access. For example, a student has not gained meaningful access to education if he or she is too hungry to concentrate in class, or if his or her educator does not arrive to teach. Access as the ability to participate has therefore been conceptualized as having a number of dimensions.

These dimensions are:

Basic Access

This refers to learners getting through the school gates. Its components include initial enrolment, regular attendance on the part of the students and Schools adherence to the regulations pertaining to access to education i.e. whether schools are adhering to fees exemption regulations

Meaningful Access (Enabling Access). This has to do with the availability of basic resources and an enabling environment that can enable learning to take place e.g. a safe and dignified environment.

Quality

According to Alexander (2015), first, there was – and still is – a conspicuous lack of precision in the use of the keyword 'quality' itself. Though 'quality 'is often used quasi-adjectively, as in 'quality healthcare', 'quality teaching', 'quality learning' and so on, it is actually a noun. The adjectival use of 'quality', as in 'quality education', is no more than a slogan, offering limited purchase on what quality actually entails. But even when used as a noun, 'quality' is multi-faceted, for it can mean an attribute – as in 'the qualities we look for in a teacher' – or a degree of excellence, as when we say teaching is of outstanding quality, in which case 'outstanding' needs to be defined. So 'quality' – as in *Teaching and Learning: quality for all* – can describe, prescribe or evaluate. Alexander observes further that in the debate about quality in EFA this basic distinction has too often been blurred. That is to say, some have been happy to use supposed indicators of quality in teaching and learning – quality in the sense of a standard to aim for – without adequately exploring and describing those qualities or attributes of which teaching and learning are actually constituted. Alexander argued that when one favours prescription over description, there is the risk of producing a prospectus for quality which is arbitrary or biased. In 1985, Ball asked, "what the hell is quality?" Thirty years later, those in higher education are still trying to answer this question (Schindler, Plus-Elvidge, Welzant and Crawford 2015). Undoubtedly, defining quality continues to be difficult, with some asserting that quality can neither be defined nor quantified and others asserting that quality is subjective and dependent upon individual perspectives (American Society for Quality cited in Schindler et al, Bobby 2014)

In the same vein, Scindler et al show that there are many significant challenges to defining quality; among which is the fact that quality is an elusive term for which there is a wide variety of interpretations depending upon the views of different stake holders.In addition, there are four groups of stakeholders that must be considered when defining quality: providers (e.g. funding bodies and the community, tax payers); users of products (e.g students); users of outputs (e.g. employers); and employees of the sector (e.g. academics and administrators; Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2003). Each group has a different perspective on quality. Therefore, in order to define quality and attempt to establish a culture of quality in higher education, all stakeholders should be involved in the discussion to ensure that different perspectives and needs are incorporated (Bobby 2014). A second challenge is that quality is a multidimensional concept (Westerheijden, et al., 2007). Therefore, reducing the concept to a one –sentence definition is problematic. In some cases, such definitions are one- dimensional, lack meaning and specificity, or are too general to be operationalized (Eagle & Brennan, 2007). A third challenge is that quality is not a static but rather a dynamic, ever –changing pursuit of excellence that must be considered in the context of the larger educational, economic, political and social landscape (Bobby 2014).

Again, Sifuna and Sawamura (2010) emphasis that in studies of quality and equality issues in education in third world countries, it is pointed out that there is as yet no consensus on the definition of the term “quality”. Motola (2001) in a similar submission points out that “debates in the international literature faces the difficulty in finding a definition of quality that would apply to all situations.” There are for example, educators whose conceptualization of quality is grounded in a competency approach, where quality is the effectiveness of the degree to which objectives are met or described levels of competence are achieved. The literature on the definition of education quality is quite massive and hold different and contradictory positions. What seems however, clear is that while it has become increasingly popular in the discourse of education, especially in the less industrialized countries, there is little consensus on what it means and a universal valid way of measuring it (Lowe and Instance, 1989; Smith, 1997).

According to Telli (2013), quality of education is a complex concept. To substantiate his submission, he cites the example of UNESCO (2005) that contends that while all over the world there is a growing agreement about the need to provide access to education of good quality, there is much less agreement about what the term quality actually means in practice. UNESCO (2005) points out that the term “quality education” varies dramatically from country to country depending on cultural and economic priorities. In the light of this, Telli (2013) argued that the concept and implementation of quality of education can be rightly considered as one of the contemporary challenges facing education policy makers across nations.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees-UNHCR(2011) emphasizes that while there is no universal definition of quality education, there are two common components; (a). an emphasis on the cognitive development of the learner. (b). the role of education in promoting the values of responsible citizenship(UNESCO 2005 cited in UNHCR 2011). The UNHCR interprets the first component as referring to the classroom environment and the second component as the wider context of the school system and social context in which learning is embedded. According to UNESCO(2004), the concept of quality is divided into four different approaches called humanist approach, behaviourist approach, critical approach and indigenous approach. In the humanist approach, quality is interpreted as the extent to which students translate learning into social action (Mutemeri 2010). Students should be seen ploughing back to the society after going through training. Behaviourist approach aims to control learners’ behavior to specific ends with quality measured in precise, incremental learning terms (Mutemeri 2010). Whereas quality education in which social change is prompted, critical analysis of social power relation is encouraged and active participation of students in the design of their learning are ensured is critical approach (Mutemeri 2010).

As a multi-faceted concept, most definitions highlight the different elements of the basic input-process-output model that commonly underpins education research and policy analysis (UNESCO, 2002). Here quality is associated with the view that efficiency in the school system refers to a ratio between inputs and outputs. In this regard, a more efficient system obtains more output for a given set of resource inputs, or achieves comparable levels of output for fewer inputs, other things being equal. The output of education refers to that portion of student growth or development that can be reasonably attributed to specific educational experiences (Lockheed and Hanushek, 1988; Stephens, 1997).

In the light of the elusive nature of the concepts of access and quality of education as shown in the preceding paragraphs, for any meaningful communication, the use of any of the concepts must be with sufficient clarification. This will make it possible for the stakeholders to be on the same page and will also make realistic evaluation of the goals that has to do with these concepts and their implementation possible. Incidentally this is not the case in section – subsection – of Nigeria’s National Policy on

Education which enunciates the goals of Tertiary Education.

The goals of Nigeria's Tertiary Education and their Implementation: A Philosophical Assessment

One of the goals of tertiary education in Nigeria as stated in the National policy on Education (2013) is to contribute to national development through high level manpower training. In pursuance of this goal, tertiary institutions in Nigeria mount courses both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in agriculture, arts, physical and social sciences, engineering, medicine, pharmacy, education, law etc from which high level and specialist manpower are produced for agriculture and food production, housing, drugs, chemical and textile industries, transport, communication, water, energy , gas, drinks, mining, and quarrying. Other areas where the graduates of Nigeria's tertiary institutions are useful are the civil service, bank, insurance, health, religion, journalism, judiciary, army, estate management, engineering and the tertiary education system itself. It gives courses in non degree areas for certificates and diplomas in various fields. The tertiary institutions diploma and certificate holders are employed in different sectors of the economy. It absorbs its own graduates into the tertiary service- the Vice Chancellors, the Rectors of Polytechnics, Provosts of Colleges of Education, Deans, Directors, Professors, Lecturers, Registrars, Bursars, Librarians, Administrative Officers are all products of Nigeria's tertiary institutions therefore helping to solve the problem of unemployment. As a result of this, Nigeria's tertiary institutions are by implication also reducing skills shortages through the production of relevant skilled workers which is one of the stated goals of tertiary education in Nigeria. Nigeria's tertiary institutions are actively contributing to the work of national development in diverse ways; graduates of these institutions serve as State Governors, Federal Ministers, State Commissioners, Chairmen, Directors, Members of Statutory corporations and several essential bodies in public and private sectors. The very best of the brains have left the country in search of greener pastures while many who are equally good and are still in the country are without jobs because of the dwindling economy caused by mismanagement, corruption and other factors. Those who would have employed themselves because of their skills do not have the necessary capital to start. However in some cases graduates of Nigeria tertiary education only have their certificate to show but cannot defend the certificate nor perform on the job. In this category are those that cannot even write nor speak correct English. The Nigerian public and private sectors that are being serviced by graduates of the nation's tertiary institutions are however endemic with corruption; an indication that most of this graduates are either corrupted by the system.

Another goal of tertiary education in Nigeria is to forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction. Nigeria's tertiary institutions bring students from varying socio-cultural, political and economic backgrounds and lecturers of different political and ideological orientations together in a single academic community thereby contributing to national consciousness unity and interaction. The National Youth Service Corps, compulsory for all fresh graduates of Nigeria's tertiary institutions are also an outstanding contribution to national unity and interaction. Oyedeji (2016) however correctly points out that Nigeria's tertiary institutions are considered "less international" in terms of academic and student diversity. He observes further that many do not have a single foreign teacher. Some have a few students from neighboring countries to Nigeria. There is also insignificant cooperation among Nigeria's tertiary institutions internally and externally even intradepartmental thus making cooperative and collective research effort a far cry impossibility within Nigeria's tertiary institutions.. Internationalization activity is minimal yet crucial for quality upswing. Abinbola (2018) emphasizes this in his assertion that a university is not a good one if it does not have linkages; both national and international. He explains further that if one enters a university and there is nobody from the Republic of Kenya, Senegal, South or North America, nobody from Europe as students or teachers then the university setting is very local and it doesn't help anybody.

Nigeria's tertiary institutions also undertakes the production of textbooks, learned journals, occasional publications, monographs and others to disseminate knowledge. It also engages in research studies in all fields of human endeavor including agriculture, arts, science, social science, education for the purpose of solving human problems. Most of the significant breakthroughs are done by the tertiary institutions or tertiary institution trainedindividuals. It gives short term courses, workshops and conferences to update workers skills in their jobs and to educate the general public. By so doing Nigeria's tertiary institutions are fulfilling yet another goal of tertiary institution as stated in the National Policy on Education which is to promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service.

It is one of the goals of higher education in Nigeria to provide high quality career counseling to students. Relevant as the goal is, Omoniyi (2016) reveals that professionally trained counselors are in short supply in the country. The ratio of students to counselors is abnormally high and there is no sufficient funding for guidance activities in the tertiary institutions. This being the situation, nothing very significant has been achieved in this area.

The provision of accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interest of Nigerians is yet another goal of higher education in Nigeria. The fact that the working definition or meaning of “access” and “quality” is not given in the National Policy document is a major omission taking into cognizance the nebulous nature of these terms. The absence of a working definition in the National Policy document makes a meaningful and realistic assessment of the implementation of this particular goal very difficult. The best that one can do is to make a general assessment based on a general meaning of the terms involved.

Bogoro (2015) points out that with the large proliferation of students in the educational institutions, it becomes difficult to control the quality of the educational system especially given Nigeria’s low level income and daunting economic challenges. This is because fewer resources are being deployed for an unprecedented number of students. Lewin (1985:12) enunciates that quality is likely to be grossly affected if:

- few modern jobs are available each year for increasing number of school leavers
- the rewards for access to these jobs are relatively much
- the infrastructure of education are poorly developed
- the labour market depends heavily on academic qualifications
- the system of examination and assessment is heavily biased towards testing cognition are heavily dependent on the recall of information Bogoro argued correctly that there is no gain saying the fact that the conditions that Lewin listed above are all prevalent in Nigeria.

Furthermore ,in recent times ,as shown in Table 4 below, the amount being expended on education has been on the decrease both in real terms and in percentages. The figures in Table 4 indicate that the percentage annual budget allocated to the education sector has continually decreased from 10% to 6.24% from 2015 to 2017.Needless to say that this has profound effect on quality of education.

Table 4: Nigerian Education Budget (2013-2017)

Year	Allocation to education sector	National Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget allocated to education Sector
2017	455,407,788,565	7,298,507,709,937	6.24
2016	480,278,214,688	6,077,680,000,000	7.90

2015	483,183,784,654	4,493,363,957,158	10.75
2014	495,283,130,268	4,642,960,000,000	10.67
2013	427,515,707,889	4,987,220,425,601	8.57

Source: http://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/

According to Adeniran (2011)"*while some of the private universities are administered admirably, with a clear vision, process, pattern and future promise which justify their establishment, many are being run purely as commercial ventures, with desperation for quick returns. The government universities, for their part, have for sometime been suffering from regularly disrupted academic activities, structural and moral decay, and obsolete curriculum structure that has not fully risen to the challenge of the twenty-first century knowledge economy, campus terrorism, inadequate strategic planning and funding. A n unprecedented level of brain drain through them movement of the well-trained academic in quest of better facilities and remuneration and a calamitous decline i n the quality of university education"*

As a result of the above, our universities are retrogressing into being obsolete in pursuit of knowledge and becoming irrelevant (Jegede 2017). A combination of dwindling funds, dilapidating infrastructure, ageing professoriate, outdated curricula, absence of high tech research, lack of foresight and the absence of strategic planning have combined to erode our universities of their high reputation and international respect they had in the 60's through the 80's.

Paradoxically while the establishments of more universities continue to be directed at opening up access to higher education, the quality of education offered culminate in products that by world standard can barely compare with an excellent secondary school graduate in other parts of the world. No wonder, no Nigerian university is ranked within the top 2000 universities in the world, none is ranked in the best 50 universities in Africa and of the highest ranked 100 universities in Africa, less than 10 are Nigerian.

According to Jegede (2017), a recent UNESCO survey indicated that there are five main factors contributing to the low quality in higher education in Africa. These include:

- depreciating quality of teachers
- research capacity deficit
- inadequacies in facilities for teaching, learning and research
- lack of a regional quality assurance framework and accreditation system and

- slow adoption of ICT for delivering quality higher education

Jegede points out correctly that Nigeria suffers from all of most UNESCO indices of low quality university education as listed above. The total student enrolment in all Nigerian universities grew from over 200 in 1962 to about 1.9 million in October 2017. The stress put on the universities in terms of demand and the limited expansion in physical facilities and academic staff to cater for this demand has taken a great toll on the quality of programmes in the institutions.

Jegede (2017) also reveals that the catalysts for education reform, which include massification, equity and social justice, inclusiveness, expansion, employability, globalization, skills and competencies shortage and national development have continued to multiply. At the same time, issues of demography, funding, physical infrastructure, levels of academic support, qualified academic staff, and local challenges have continued to increase rather steeply. Needless to say that all the above would have significant impact on universities' local and international agendas, including their responsiveness to the demand of delivering quality university education in Nigeria. Similarly, the relevant authorities are not doing enough to arrest the increasing profile of poverty and corruption that is more or less a culture in the country. Incidentally when a substantial proportion of a country's population is poor, it makes little sense to detach poverty from the dynamics of development and tertiary education(UNRISD 2010). In the same vein it is only reasonable to expect low quality in the nation's tertiary education system when corruption and mismanagement are already endemic in the nation.

The Ministerial Strategic Plan 2016–2019 shows that yearly, only about 17 per cent of those seeking placement in higher institutions in Nigeria are admitted(SOURCE!). This is viewed as a significant crisis in the system that requires creative methods of resolution. As a way of attending to this problem, additional federal, state and private higher institutions were established.

Table 1: Ownership of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Type of Institution	Federal	State	Private	Total
Universities	40	44	69	153
Colleges of Education	21	49	68	138
Polytechnics	28	41	44	113
Monotechnics	22	2	2	26
Federal Colleges of Agriculture	17	19	-	36
Colleges of Health Technicians &Allied Institutions	19	11	6	36

Vocational Education Institutes and Innovative Enterprise Institutes	-	-	140	140
Totals	147	126	146	642

Sources: http://www.nuc.edu.ng; http://www.ncceonline.edu.ng/colleges.php; http://www.nbte.gov.ng/- *Cited in The Commonwealth of Learning (2017).*

Yet even with more than 153 universities as at the year 2018, there is still upsurge of applicants into university education. According to National Universities Commission(The National Universities Commission is the superintending and regulatory authority for universities in Nigeria) cited in The Commonwealth of Learning (2017), in terms of ownership, the Ministry of Education owns and funds 40 universities, the state governments own 44 universities, and 69 universities are privately owned. In the same vein, the federal government owns and funds 28 polytechnics; the state governments own 41, and there are currently 44 private polytechnics. The federal government owns and funds 17 federal colleges of agriculture, and the states own 19 (see Table1 above).The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is the entrance examination board for tertiary-level institutions in Nigeria. The board conducts the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination for prospective undergraduates into Nigerian universities, monotechnics, polytechnics and colleges of education.

The admission statistics from JAMB for 2010 to 2016 indicate that a total of 11,703,709 applications were received, and a total of 2,674,485 students were admitted across the 36 states and the FCT between 2010 and 2015, meaning that on average, 28 per cent of students who applied for admission were admitted across the 36 states and the FCT in a given year (Table2).

Table 2. JAMB Admission Statistics 2010–2016

Year	Number of applications	Number admitted	% admitted
2010	1,513,940	423,531	28
2011	1,636,356	417,341	26
2012	1,632, 835	447,176	27
2013	1,924,393	463,395	24
2014	1,785,608	437,704	25
2015	1,612,247	485,338	30
2016	1,598,330	–	–
TOTAL	11,703,709	2,674,485	28

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria

By implication, every year over a million qualified college-aged young Nigerians are left without a post-secondary education. A further implication of this is that the goal of providing accessible quality learning opportunities in response to the needs and interest of Nigerians is very far from being realized. The phenomenal stress put on universities with regard to access to university education can be appreciated from the figures in Table 2 that shows JAMB Admission statistics from 2010 to 2016. The table indicated that for 2010 to 2016 a total of 11,703,709 applications were received and a total of 2, 674,485 students were admitted across the 36 states and the FCT between 2010 and 2015. This means that a miserable average of 28% of students who applied for admission was admitted across the 36 states and the FCT in a given year. This has created a thousand and one issues which of course has implication for quality.

As can be seen from Figures 1, 2 and 3below, over 70 percent of those who apply to Nigeria's institutions of higher learning cannot be accommodated, not necessarily because t they are not qualified but due to gross inadequacies in resources and facilities. There is a limit which any one classroom or lecture

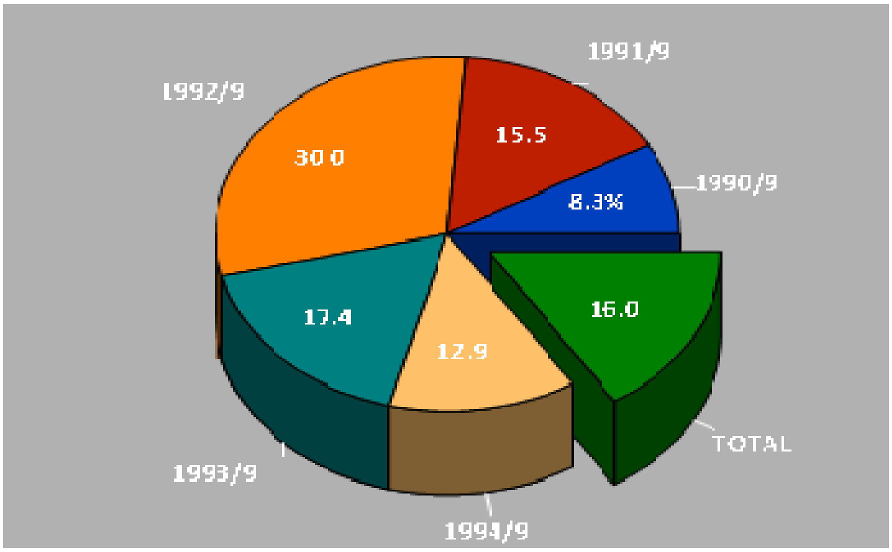


Figure 1: Provisional admissions as percentage of total applications into Universities (source: Jegede 2017)

Figure 2: Provisional admissions as percentage of total applications into Polytechnics (Source: Jegede 2017)

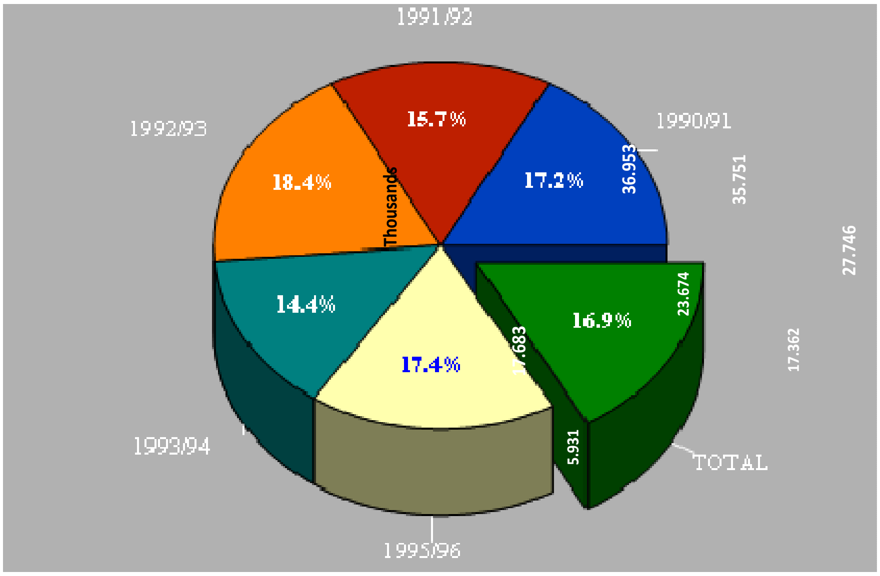
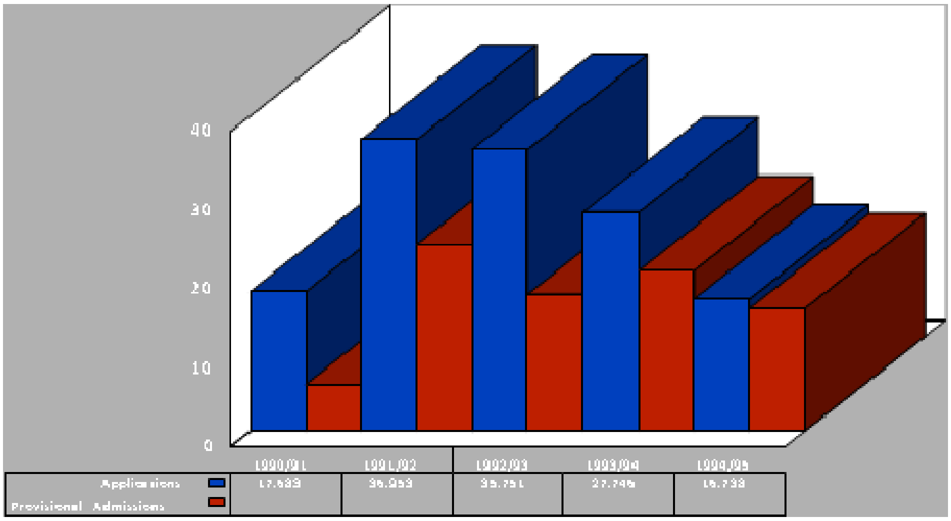


Figure 3: Provisional admissions as percentage of total applications into Colleges of Education (Source: Jegede 2017)



From Figures 1, 2, and 3 above, on the average, out of 1.5 million Nigerians seeking admission (access) to tertiary institutions, only about 26.5 % are successful

One of the factors responsible for this is carrying capacity of the institutions. The National Universities Commission (NUC); the regulatory authority for universities in Nigeria, came up with the policy of carrying capacity having realized that many of the public universities were overpopulated and the facilities were overstretched. The essence of the carrying capacity policy therefore is to ensure that students are admitted based on the facilities available. According to Divine (2011) cited in Nwogu (2015) these facilities include adequate lecture rooms, well stocked libraries, reasonable staff /student ratio, office accommodation for staff etc He rightly points out that this policy was to enhance quality but has become an impediment to access to university education. According to Adesulu (2014) cited in Nwogu (2015), in 2010/2011 academic year, Nigeria had 112 universities with carrying capacity of 450,000 and 1,493,611 applicants. The admitting capacity was 30.13 per cent of the total number of the applicants. He further states that in 2011/2012 academic year, five additional universities were established and licensed, bringing the number of universities to 117 with 500,000 carrying capacity, amounts to 33.25 per cent and 1,503,933 applied that year. Ironically in 2012/2013 academic session when 11 universities, the total number of universities became 128 and the carrying capacity was 520,000 (29.96%) when a total of 1,735,729 applied for university spaces. As a result of the carrying capacity policy therefore, a good percentage of students who meet the UTME cut off mark cannot access the tertiary institutions in the country.

Saheed (2013) rightly points out that quota system is another means through which some qualified Nigerian youths are being denied access to tertiary education. Quota system of admission into public universities in Nigeria is geared towards assisting the Educationally Disadvantaged States (ELDS) in the country; most of which are in the northern part of the country (Moti 2010 cited in Saheed (2013). Candidates from the ELDS are given special consideration during admission process in such a way that the tertiary institutions assign lower cut off marks to this category of candidates so that they can be given opportunity to close the educational gap between the states classified as educationally advantaged and those categorized as educationally disadvantaged. By this system, it means that a candidate whose state of origin is one of the southern states (considered to be educationally advantaged) who scores 280 out of 400 may not be given admission into the public university while his counterpart whose state of origin happen to be one of the states in the northern part of the country who scores less would be admitted. The obvious contradiction involved in quota system of admission is that some candidates who are nationals of Nigeria are being denied access to public tertiary institutions (even when they are qualified to be given access and despite the fact that it is one of the stated goals of Nigeria's tertiary education to provide accessible learning opportunity in response to the needs and interest of Nigerians---Section-

Sub Section – of the National policy document) in order to give some other Nigerians access to the same public tertiary institutions. With the quota system of admission in place, it is also obvious that the goal of providing accessible quality learning in response to the needs and interest of Nigerians is not being achieved and it follows logically too that this goal cannot be achieved while the system remains in place. Open and distance learning (ODL) is seen as an excellent solution to tackle this problem of access. The goals of ODL in Nigeria among other things are to:

- provide more access to quality education and equity in educational opportunities;
- meet the special needs of employers and employees by mounting special courses for employees in the workplace; (FGN,2013a)

In pursuit of these goals, the federal government established the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in 1983. It was suspended in 1984 because the government perceived a lack of infrastructure, but it was subsequently reopened in2002.

NOUN provides functional, flexible, accessible, cost-effective education to the citizens of Nigeria. NOUN's mandate is to deliver university education to the doorstep of every interested Nigerian. It is worth noting that meeting the educational needs of citizens in this highly populous country was beyond the capacity of Nigeria's conventional higher education institutions.

NOUN currently has 78 study centres across 36 states of the federation, with as many as five centres in the mega-states of Abuja and Lagos. NOUN has increased student enrolment from about 16,000 in 2010 to over 400,000 as of July 2017 (Adamu, 2017).

To further strengthen the impact of ODL, the NUC granted permission for the opening of eight distance learning centres in eight conventional universities in Nigeria: University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Obafemi Awolowo University of Ile-Ife; University of Lagos, Akoka; University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri; Modibo Adama University of Technology, Yola; University of Abuja, Abuja; Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso; and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaira (NUC,2017). However, the impact of ODL in Nigeria with respect to solving the challenge of access to tertiary institutions by willing and qualified youths has been like a drop of water in the ocean. This is in line with the observation of Oko (2011) who highlights the fact that more universities are emerging, many colleges and other educational institutions are springing up but admission to government own tertiary institutions are becoming more complicated.

Heller 2001 cited in Prodan et al (2015) explains that an integrated view on barriers to getting Higher Education identifies the following types of barriers:

- financial: tuition fees and living costs, the scarcity or lack of funding opportunities through part time jobs, loans, scholarships and grants, student finance policy;
- geographical: involving factors related to accessibility from remote areas, leaving home, the necessity and discomfort of accommodation and travelling.
- educational: refers to candidates initial preparation;
- organizational: to which extent the curriculum and academic resources are available to students and applicants

Each of the types of barriers to tertiary education listed above is not only prevalent in Nigeria but pronounced. The implication of this is that the goal of providing accessibility learning opportunities to interested Nigerians as contained in the National Policy document is still very far from being realized.

Table 3: Nigerian Education Budget (2013-2017)

Year	Allocation to education sector	National Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget allocated to education sector
2017	455,407,788,565	7,298,507,709,937	6.24
2016	480,278,214,688	6,077,680,000,000	7.90
2015	483,183,784,654	4,493,363,957,158	10.75
2014	495,283,130,268	4,642,960,000,000	10.67
2013	427,515,707,889	4,987,220,425,601	8.57

Source: http://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/

The figures in Table 3 indicate that the percentage annual budget allocated to education sector has continually decreased from 10% to 6.24% from 2015 to 2017. Needless to say that this has profound effect on the quality of education. (Jegede 2017).

It was recently reported that 38 universities in Nigeria increased their tuition fees as a result of poor funding by the federal and state governments (Omole, 2017). Annual tuition fees at Nigerian universities range from approximately NGN 50,000 to as high as NGN 3,000,000 in some private universities. Such costs have further exacerbated the problem of access to higher education.

In term of cost in higher education, especially as it concerns students, more emphasis is on tuition fees with less focus on other indirect costs, such as textbooks, study aids and daily living expenses. The cost of textbooks in Nigerian higher education ranges between NGN 5,000 and 40,000 per year.

Students express dissatisfaction about the large-scale practice of being forced to buy textbooks and lecture notes prepared by teachers. The cost of a textbook is NGN 1,200– 1,700 (Youdeowei, Uwandu, & Iruoma, 2016).

Conclusion and Suggestions

Tertiary Education plays an indispensable role in the development of any society. The lesson from the developed countries and the news from the emerging economies of China, India and Brazil are very instructive on this issue. The foregoing assessment of the goals of tertiary education in Nigeria and their implementation shows that tertiary education system in Nigeria is not where it ought to be; and that is to put it in a very mild and modest way. Some other scholars have not been that modest. For Example, Adebayo (2005) quoted the Dean of the School of Agric and Agric Technology of the Federal University of Technology Owerri as saying that Nigerian tertiary institutions are under the siege of decay. Jegede (2017) lamented that Nigeria must declare her entire education system a disaster area needing emergency rescuing strategy.

In order to get Nigeria's tertiary education system to where it ought to be the relevant authorities should consider the following:

Demystify the ambiguous concepts of access and quality that featured prominently in the goals of tertiary institutions as stated in section 5 sub section 80 - 85.of the National Policy document so that realistic evaluation can be possible and to afford stakeholders the opportunity to know what is actually going on .There is also need for a new agenda for tertiary institutions which would address the paradox that exist presently on one hand in which the establishment of more tertiary institutions geared towards increasing access to these institutions is resulting into increasing number of the products of these institutions failing to compete favorably with international standards. On the other hand there is the paradox that exists where the bid to ensure quality by introducing measures such as carrying capacity is resulting into increasing number of candidates who are qualified and are interested gaining access to tertiary institutions being denied such access.

- Internalizing of the nations tertiary institutions by encouraging very active collaboration with other tertiary institution across the continent and across the globe
- Tertiary institutions should be encouraged to operate a dual mode; regular and open distance learning with very strict moderation by the

regulatory bodies; National Universities Commission and Nation Commission for Colleges of Education.

- .Distance Learning Education as practiced by National Open University of Nigeria should be further encouraged with the NUC constantly regulating the operations to ensure that standard is not compromised while the Universities of Lagos and Ibadan which operate regular and Open Distance Learning should be encouraged to have their virtual learning facilities expanded. This will take care of students who are unable to get admission into regular universities provided that the standard is known both nationally and internationally not to be compromised.
- Since the public tertiary institutions are oversubscribed because they are heavily subsidized by the Federal or State government as they case may be and they are therefore relatively cheaper than the private tertiary institutions which in most cases are undersubscribed to by students seeking access to tertiary institutions, it will go a long way solving the admission to tertiary institution crisis if government at the State and Federal levels can set up special scholarship scheme for brilliant but poor students go into the public universities with government sponsorship. Well to do and well meaning individuals, religious organizations, non religious organizations, industries etc can be encouraged by the government to sponsor brilliant students who otherwise would not be able to afford the cost of attending private tertiary institutions in the country to do so. Similarly, government at the State and Federal levels should establish students loan scheme that brilliant and qualified students can utilize for their tertiary education in private universities where they can be double sure of gaining access. The government can put in place measure to ensure that the loans are paid back within reasonable number of years after the completion of studies. This however must go with a commitment on the part of government to address the present challenge of unemployment caused among other things by the economy that has shrinked over the years as result of many industries and foreign investors that have folded up or relocated from the country as a result of the challenge of insecurity lack of stable power supply etc. A situation that has resulted into massive unemployment in the country which is quite unlike the 70's, the 80's and the mid 90's when the acquisition of a mere first degree is regarded as a "meal ticket" in the sense of getting employed or self employed immediately after graduation.
- There is need for government to demonstrate her sincere commitment to the education sector by meeting up the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's bench mark with

respect to funding. This if done will bring a new lease of life to the sector as the challenge of incessant strikes by tertiary institution lecturers when they are supposed to be carrying our researches like their counterparts in other parts of the world will become a thing of the past. In a situation where there is no power supply with which lecturer can work in the library, laboratory or at home, the drive to meet up with the rest of the world will continue to elude the nation. Government should also give TETFund grant to private institutions since the taxes are from the generality of the people and the private tertiary institutions are not just producing graduates for themselves.

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THE AFFECTIVE DISTRESS AND THE FAMILY OF A CHILD WITH DEFICIENCIES

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Abstract*: Few researches have focused on the degree of family affection, so the present research aims to study the affective impact that a child with TSA has on the parents. The present research is a comparative study that seeks to investigate the differences that arise between parents who have children with autistic spectrum disorders and children with age-specific development of anxiety, depression, and affective disorder. Questionnaires were provided to parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (N = 40) and to parents with age-specific children (N = 40). Questionnaires were used to investigate depression, anxiety as a condition and a trait, emotional distress. For collecting socio-demographic data, parents completed a structured interview. Research results show that parents of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder have a much higher level of depression, anxiety, affective distress compared to parents with age-specific children.*

Key words: *authistic disturbances; anxiety; depression; affective distress;*

Introduction

Autism is a neurobiological disorder that includes classic autism, Asperger syndrome and atypical autism, disorders that are found under the generic umbrella of autistic spectrum disorders (TSA). It is a lifelong disorder that affects the way a person communicates, relates to others or the world around them (www.autismnsw.com.au). Autism is characterized by affecting the three domains, considered a triad of deficiencies or the "autistic triad" that includes social interaction, communication and repetitive patterns and behavioral stereotypes or interests (Gray and Tonge, 2001). The features of the autistic child may include repetitive and ritual behaviors, palpitations, spinning or twisting in circles, excessive fears, self-aggression, hysteria, eating or sleeping disorders (Gillberg and Wing, 1999, Australian Brain Foundation, www.brainaustralia. org.au). Autism is a disorder that affects not only the functioning of the diagnosed child, but also the family of the child. Both parents and brothers with autistic spectrum disorders can experience various feelings such as shock, denial, anger, depression, guilt, disappointment. The birth of a child in a family is an event of great importance. The child in the family system is usually a source of joy and sometimes a way for parents to fulfill their own dreams. But children who are less perfect or have some developmental delays can be very frustrating for the family.Families experiencing autistic spectrum disorders are looking for answers to causes, diagnosis and treatment. Despite the increasing involvement of parents in recovery therapy as co-hepatitis, most research has focused on children and fewer effects on the whole family (Williams and Wishart, 2003).Among the families caring for a disabled child, the parents of autistic children have the highest stress level (Boyd, 2002), and the high level of stress increases the risk of depression (Boyd, 2002). Mums of children with autism have higher scores for stress, depression, social isolation than mothers of children without disabilities. Some psychiatric disorders and anxiety traits observed in the parents of children with TSA have been associated with the difficult task of caring for a child with TSA (Murphy, Bolton, Pickels, Fombonne, Piven and Rutter, 2000). Because of the high levels of stress, parents are in a position to refuse to fight together, ending with the crisis and traumatic events that cause the exhaustion of family members (Figley, 1998). Persistent tensions lead to lowering the energy and motivation of parents, and they may experience feelings of self-righteousness and anger. The objective difficulty in caring for a child with pervasive disorders occurs in two ways: controlling the undesirable or unforeseen behaviors of the child and assisting in daily activities, as the child often has not the necessary skills.

With the increase in the number of cases of children diagnosed with autism, the focus has been largely on early diagnosis, on early intervention, on therapies and recovery programs, on school and social inclusion. Efforts to implement the most effective childcare services have been attempted, but little has been taken into account as the child's family as an important factor in recovering it. Research has reported high rates of depressive symptoms among mothers with children diagnosed with autism compared to mothers with children without developmental disorder (Hasting & Johnson, 2001; Montes & Halterman, 2007). The child who suffers from autism does not live in a vacuum. At the time of receiving such a diagnosis, the child's family receives a heavy blow. Parents have a real need to help the family remain united and to have a healthy environment within it. Parents must first take care of them so that they can then take care of the child effectively.

1. Research objectives

2. Determining the differences between parents with a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and those with age-specific children on the level of anxiety and depression.

3. Determining the differences between parents having a child with autistic spectrum disorders and those with age-specific children with affective distress.

2. Research assumptions

1. Parents with autistic spectrum disorders have a higher level of anxiety than those with age-specific children.

2. Parents who have a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorders have a higher level of depression than those with age-specific children.

3. Parents with autistic spectrum disorders have a higher level of affective distress than those with age-specific children.

3. Description of subjects

The sample consists of 40 parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders and 40 parents with age-specific children.

In the case of subjects who are in the situation of parents having a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, 28 are female (70%) and 12 are male (30%) (Table 3). 36 of them are married, 2 divorced, and 2 live in concubinage. Children with autism are between 3 and 11 years of age.

4. Instruments used

Anxiety Inventory - State Trait Anxiety Inventory (S.T.A.I.)

Beck Depression Scale (21 items)

Affective Distress Profile (PDA)

Structured interview

For the collection of socio-demographic data, we have structured interviews with general questions about subjects included in this research: data about parents (sex, age, civil status, education, profession), data on children (age, diagnosis data, therapy, grouping), data on subjective perception of subjects over the last 3 months and the issues that are most disturbing to them at the moment.

Check hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

Parents with autistic spectrum disorders have a higher level of anxiety than those with age-specific children.

To verify this hypothesis, the t test for independent samples was used. Comparisons were made between the two groups (parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders and parents with age-specific children) for S.T.A.I. X1 (anxiety as a condition) and S.T.A.I. X2 (trait anxiety). The obtained results support Hypothesis 1. For the dependent variable S.T.A.I. X1 a t coefficient of comparison = 5.434 was obtained at a significance threshold $p = .000$, $p <.000$.

There is a statistically significant difference between anxiety status in parents with a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (mean = 43.27) and anxiety status in parents with age-specific children (mean = 32.45).

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
staix1	Equal variances assumed	13,529	,000	5,434	78	,000	10,82500	1,99195	6,85933	14,79067
	Equal variances not assumed			5,434	62,052	,000	10,82500	1,99195	6,84321	14,80679

Table no.16 - t test for the state anxiety variable, S.T.A.I. X1

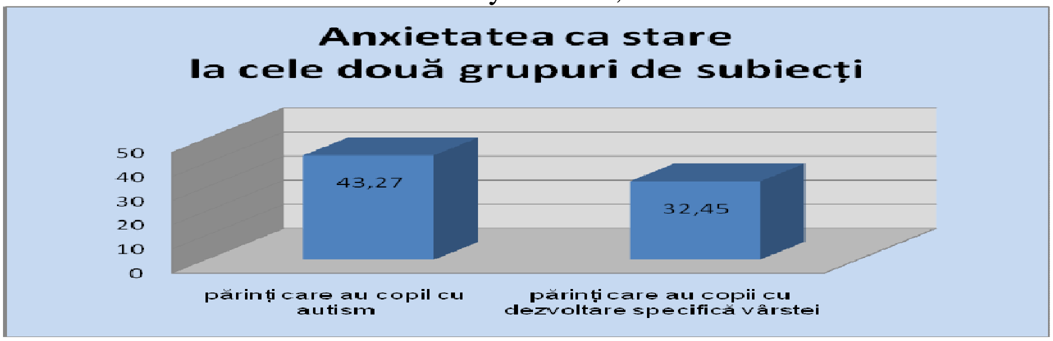

Figure no. 1: Comparative chart of anxiety as a condition in the two groups of subjects

For the dependent variable S.T.A.I. X2 a t coefficient of comparison = 3,901 was obtained at a significance threshold p = .000, p <.000. There is a statistically significant difference between the level of anxiety as a trait in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (mean = 41.95) and the anxiety trait in parents with age-specific children (mean = 34.72).

The results obtained support Hypothesis 1.

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
staix2	Equal variances assumed	2,359	,129	3,901	78	,000	7,22500	1,85221	3,53753	10,91247
	Equal variances not assumed			3,901	71,660	,000	7,22500	1,85221	3,53238	10,91762

Table 18 - t test for the state anxiety variable, S.T.A.I. X2

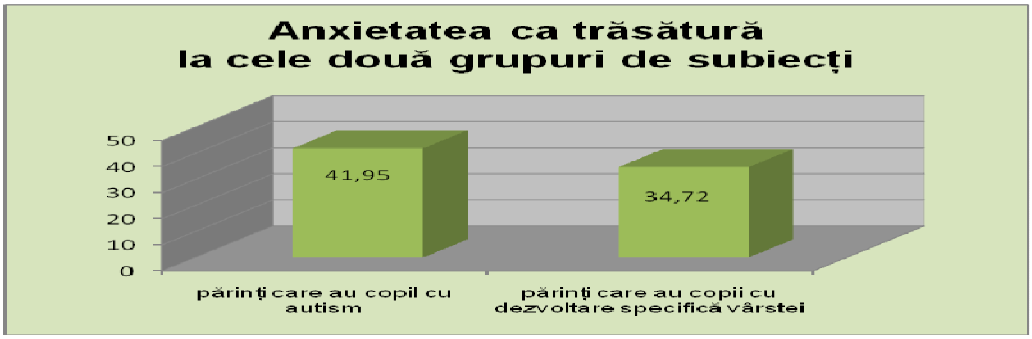

Figure no. 2: Comparative chart of anxiety as a trait in the two groups of subjects

Hypothesis 2

Parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders have a higher level of depression than those with age-specific children.

To verify this hypothesis, the t test for independent samples was used. Comparisons were made between the two groups (parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders and parents with age-specific children) for the depression variable.

The results obtained support Hypothesis 2.

For the depression dependent variable, a comparator t coefficient = 3,253 was obtained at a significance threshold p = .002, p <.01. There is a statistically significant difference between the level of depression in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (mean = 8.55) and the level of depression in parents with age-specific children (mean = 4.22). This result is shown graphically in Figure 3.

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
beck	Equal variances assumed	12,460	,001	3,253	78	,002	4,32500	1,32937	1,67843	6,97157
	Equal variances not assumed			3,253	62,753	,002	4,32500	1,32937	1,66826	6,98174

Table no.20 - the t test for the depression variable

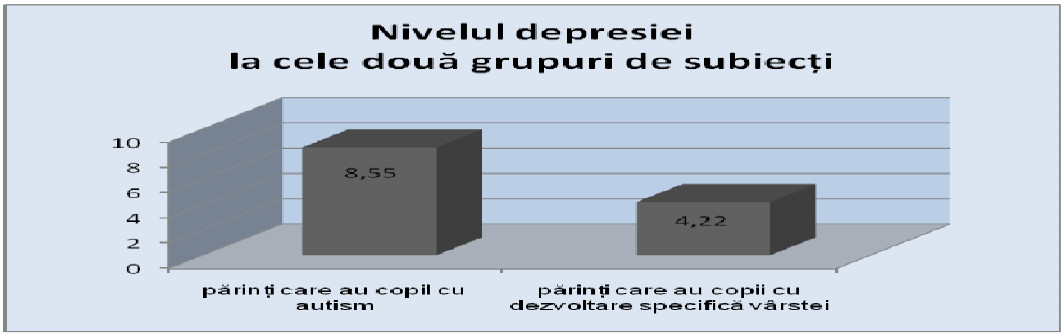

Figure no. 3: Comparative chart of depression in the two groups of subjects

Hypothesis 3

Parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders have a higher level of affective distress than those with age-specific children.

The results obtained support Hypothesis 3.

For the dependent functional negative emotions in the sadness / depression category, a t coefficient of comparison = 4,057 was obtained at a significance threshold p = .000, p <.000. There is a statistically significant difference between the level of functional negative emotions in the category of sadness / depression in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (mean = 13.72) and the level of functional emotions in the category of sadness / depression in parents with children with specific development age (mean = 10.12).

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ENFTD	Equal variances assumed	6,429	,013	4,057	78	,000	3,60000	,88736	1,83341	5,36659
	Equal variances not assumed			4,057	64,594	,000	3,60000	,88736	1,82761	5,37239

Table no.22 - t test for the functional negative variable in the sadness / depression category

For the dependent dysfunctional negative emotions in the sadness / depression category, a comparison factor t = 4,195 was obtained at a significance threshold p = .000, p <.000. There is a statistically significant difference between dysfunctional negative emotions in the category of sadness / depression in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (mean = 13.55) and dysfunctional negative emotions in the category of sadness / depression in parents with children with specific development age (mean = 9.45).

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ENDTD	Equal variances assumed	31,830	,000	4,195	78	,000	4,10000	,97724	2,15446	6,04554
	Equal variances not assumed			4,195	45,775	,000	4,10000	,97724	2,13265	6,06735

Table no.24 - t test for the dysfunctional negative emotions variable in the sadness / depression category

For the dependent functional negative emotions in the worry / anxiety category, a t coefficient of comparison = 4.913 was obtained at a significance threshold p = .000, p <.000. There is a statistically significant difference between the level of worry-related negative emotions in the category of anxiety / anxiety in parents with a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (mean = 16.90) and the level of worse emotions in the category of anxiety / anxiety in parents with children with specific development age (mean = 12.62).

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ENFIA	Equal variances assumed	18,165	,000	4,913	78	,000	4,27500	,87008	2,54281	6,00719
	Equal variances not assumed			4,913	57,626	,000	4,27500	,87008	2,53311	6,01689

Table no.26 - The t test for negative emotions negative functional emotions in the worry / anxiety category

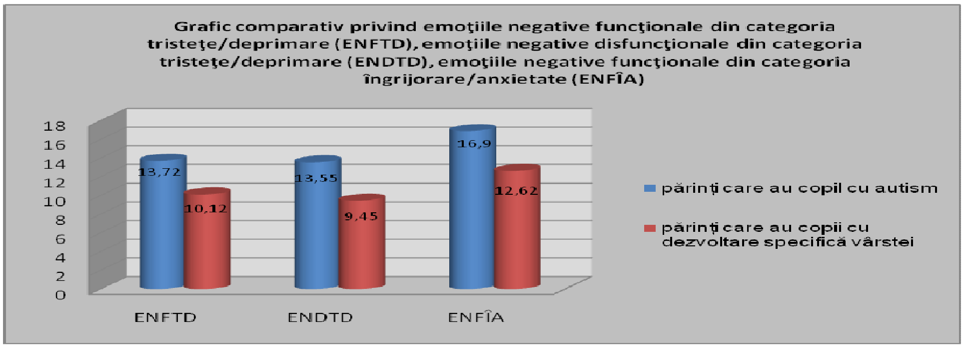

Figure no. 4: Comparative graph on functional negative emotions in the category of sadness / depression, dysfunctional negative emotions in the category of sadness / depression, functional negative emotions in the category of worry / anxiety in the two groups of subjects

For the dependent dysfunctional negative dysfunctional variable in the worry / anxiety category, a comparator t = 1.638 was obtained at a significance threshold p = .105, p> .05. This result is not statistically significant.

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ENDIA	Equal variances assumed	,226	,635	1,638	78	,105	1,62500	,99191	-,34975	3,59975
	Equal variances not assumed			1,638	68,368	,106	1,62500	,99191	-,35414	3,60414

Table no.28 - t test for negative emotions negative dysfunctional emotions in the worry / anxiety category

The 6 items representing the dysfunctional negative emotions in the PDA questionnaire (anxiety distress profile) are expressed by the adjectives: anxious, horrified, panicky, frightened, scary, nervous.

An explanation for the fact that this result is not statistically significant may be the perception of parents with a child diagnosed with autism. Although having such a child is a huge challenge, despite the difficulties they face, they can be real fighters not considering the situation they find themselves terrifying, terrifying. These parents can not afford to be defeated, destroyed, and the very idea of being responsible for their own deficient children can mobilize them to be as useful as possible to their children.

For the dependent functional negative emotional variable, a t-factor of comparison = 4.752 was obtained, at a significance threshold p = .000, p <.000. There is a statistically significant difference between the level of functional negative emotions in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (mean = 30.62) and the level of functional negative emotions in parents with age-specific children (mean = 22.75).

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ENF	Equal variances assumed	12,418	,001	4,752	78	,000	7,87500	1,65732	4,57553	11,17447
	Equal variances not assumed			4,752	60,107	,000	7,87500	1,65732	4,55998	11,19002

Table no. 30 - t test for negative functional emotions negative emotions

For the dependent dysfunctional negative emotional variable a t coefficient of comparison = 3.371 was obtained at a significance threshold p = .001, p <.01. There is a statistically significant difference between the level of dysfunctional negative emotions in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (mean = 23.92) and the level of dysfunctional negative emotions in parents with age-specific children (mean = 18.20).

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
END	Equal variances assumed	11,039	,001	3,371	78	,001	5,72500	1,69826	2,34402	9,10598
	Equal variances not assumed			3,371	65,789	,001	5,72500	1,69826	2,33411	9,11589

Table no. 32 - t test for the negative emotional dysfunctional dysfunctional dysfunction variable

For the positive emotional-dependent variable, a t coefficient of comparison = 3,763 was obtained, at a significance threshold p = .000, p <.000. There is a statistically significant difference between the level of positive emotions in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (mean = 40.57) and the level of positive emotions in parents with age-specific children (mean = 34.47). A high score on this subscale shows the experience of fewer positive emotions (in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders), and a low score means experiencing positive emotions (in parents with children with age-specific development).

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
EP	Equal variances assumed	,460	,500	3,763	78	,000	6,10000	1,62112	2,87259	9,32741
	Equal variances not assumed			3,763	74,801	,000	6,10000	1,62112	2,87041	9,32959

Table no. 34 - the t test for the negative emotions positive emotions variable

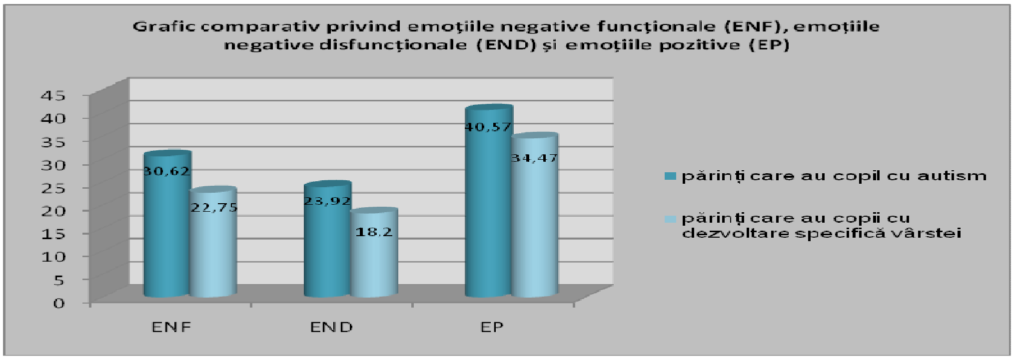

Figure no. 5: Comparative graph on functional negative emotions, dysfunctional negative emotions, positiv

For the affective distress dependent variable we obtained a comparator t = 4,674, at a significance threshold p = .000, p <.000. There is a statistically significant difference between affective distress in parents with a child with autistic spectrum disorders (mean = 95.12) and affective distress in parents with age-specific children (mean = 75.42).e emotions, to the two groups of subjects

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
PDA	Equal variances assumed	12,967	,001	4,674	78	,000	19,70000	4,21491	11,30876	28,09124
	Equal variances not assumed			4,674	57,634	,000	19,70000	4,21491	11,26180	28,13820

Table 36 - test t for affective distress variable

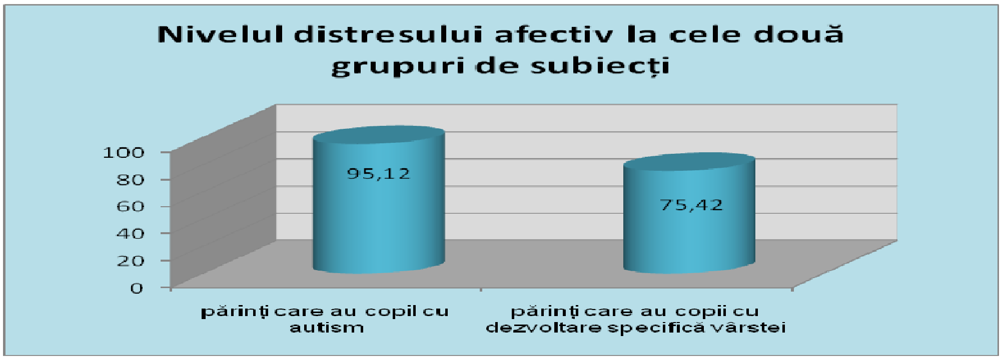

Figure no. 6: Comparative graph on emotional distress in the two groups of subjects

CONCLUSIONS

Responding to the diagnosis of autism varies from family to family, with mistrust, anger, blame, helplessness, devastation, astonishment, or even kidnapping, until understanding and relief that parents finally explain their child's behavior. Many parents have the sense of loss, in the sense of the loss of life as it was, to a certain point, of loneliness in the existential plane.

When talking about children with disabilities, we can not ignore the problems faced by their family members. Chronic suffering from child disability has implications for the functioning of the family in general. As a system, the family can experience intense stressful periods, learn from these experiences, and become stronger (Singer and Powers, 1993). The theory of family systems describes how emotional distress of each person has an impact on the other, and vice versa. Providing support to a member of the system helps others. In other words, by improving the child's behavior, parents will be less stressed and able to cope with the situation. By reducing the depression and stress of their parents, they will be able to cope with the behavior of the child much more calmly and firmly, which will change their behavior.

Research results show that parents of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder have a much higher level of depression, anxiety, affective distress compared to parents with age-specific children. They are more concerned about the future of their children in terms of social and school adaptation.

Higher values obtained by applying tests to parents of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder are an underlining of their need for support from specialists and beyond. Due to the high emphasis on early intervention on the child, the importance of the family system where the child comes from is often lost. A healthy family environment where parents are optimistic and emotionally equipped will better meet their child's complex needs.

Local communities, through the medical, educational and social services offered, by conducting public awareness activities on the issues /

needs of families with a disabled member can contribute to improving the quality of their lives. Parents need support for adapting to the news, long-term adaptation to the changes that child's disorder brings to the family as a whole, help with children's behavioral issues, couple relationship counseling, specialist therapy. It is desirable that they come into contact with social support networks such as support groups made up of other parents with children in the autistic spectrum. Parent groups tend to be more valuable in terms of efficiency than support given by specialists.

In this context, social support, how individuals relate to their own person, to others, and how they interact in certain situations are factors that can mediate the parents' reaction to childhood stress, factors that can lead to increased self-efficacy family, adopting effective coping strategies, all of which lead to an increase in the adaptability and functioning of the family.

Parents need to be informed about the implications of their child's diagnosis, be trained, molded to be able to respond appropriately to the needs of the child, understand and understand them. Parents should be an integral part of the recovery, treatment, not mere observers of this treatment. Without the family's involvement in treatment, the various rehabilitation programs offered by specialists only impact on disparate segments of the child's life.

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KINDERGARTEN AND FAMILY TOGETHER FOR THE EDUCATION OF AUTHONOMY OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract: *The research we have conducted, approaches the collaboration between kindergarten and family to increase the child's autonomy. The first contact the child has with the kindergarten is very important. In the context of his or her previous age and experiences, it may be more important than the start of school. Now is the time to acquire skills, knowledge, and set the skills that will ensure a good development throughout his/her school life.*

Key words: *kindergarten; skills; knowledge; child;*

1.Argument

The novelty that the current reform of education promotes is the creation of optimal conditions for collaboration between family and teachers in education, but this collaboration should be regarded as a means to develop the children's autonomy.

As a result of this, it is useful to fill in the parents' knowledge about the particularities of child development and the education received in an organized environment, reflected in an effective partnership between the kindergarten and the family.

It is well known that parents are the first to influence their children through education, but the kindergarten also contributes to a great extent because it provides an adequate environment for pre-schoolers, makes it possible for children to socialize, facilitating an age-appropriate education. At pre-school age, the child becomes aware of the physical and mental changes that influence him directly and socially. These changes are acquired in relationship with the others, while the child gradually integrates into a group or in an environment different than the family.

This collaboration between the two factors is analysed by the current research that reflects the fact that the attendance of the kindergarten, the collaboration between the family and the educators, the family`s and the educators` will result in children who have acquired certain competencies. Children will use these skills in the activities they conduct autonomously, becoming values for themselves but also for the others.

2. Research Methodology

The pre-schoolers` collaboration with the people around them, whether adults or colleagues, is beneficial by manifesting autonomy in various situations and activities. After a certain period of time, the activity they conduct with other people becomes self-conscious, motivated, rational, they begin to see the intention and give arguments. The child complies with certain rules that become common for cohabitation in a particular group because he observes that those around him have certain interests. It inevitably begins to participate in negotiations, talks, but also compromises, if necessary. We have tried to:

- identify the importance of a collaboration between family and kindergarten;
- study the extent to which the autonomous manifestations of pre-school children increase after attending kindergarten;
- the parents` and teachers` degree of involvement in the development of autonomy at pre-school children.

Thus, we have implied that:

- If the family and kindergarten provide support and assistance when children ask for it, their achievements will increase as well as their self-esteem and autonomy.
- If children constantly attend kindergarten, they will begin to understand the need to follow common rules.

Consistent use of verbal encouragement, discussions and activities in partnership with parents (sessions, individual meetings, participation in activities), the initiation of games involving all children to stimulate communication and cooperation between them ("We decide together!"), activities carried out in smaller or larger groups (role games, field activities), encouraging the exposition of their own opinions (morning meeting), performing repetitive activities (routines).

Safety and comfort skills; balance between attachment and exploration; developing autonomy and emotional balance; finding independently solutions to the problems encountered; increasing self-esteem; intrinsic motivation.

The research sample consisted of: the parents of the children attending the small group at the Peciu Nou Kindergarten, Timiş County. The number of the parents from the two groups under investigation is 53, of which 2 are single-parent families, one child is raised by maternal grandparents. The subjects investigated come from rural areas. The number of children is 28, of which 11 girls and 17 boys aged 3 to 4 years. We have chosen ways to support research, to eliminate any mistakes in interpreting and processing the results. To confirm the previously formulated hypotheses, we used the survey method and systemic observation method.

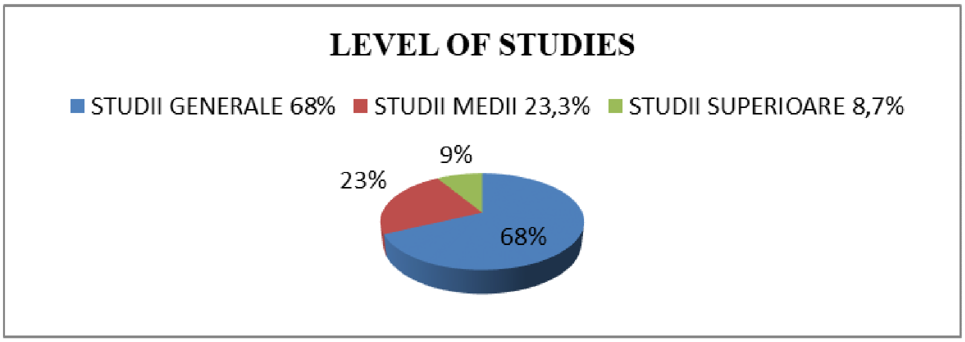
We used the questionnaire to collect data on the importance of family-kindergarten collaboration, on how kindergarten attendance increases the autonomy of pre-school children, how parental styles influence the development of self-esteem, how the daily routine helps the child to increase the comfort and safety.

First, we applied the first questionnaire (appendix 1) to the parents after the first 2 weeks of kindergarten and after the children got used to this environment.

Some theoretical prerequisites of the research are confirmed after analysing the answers. We have drawn the following conclusions:

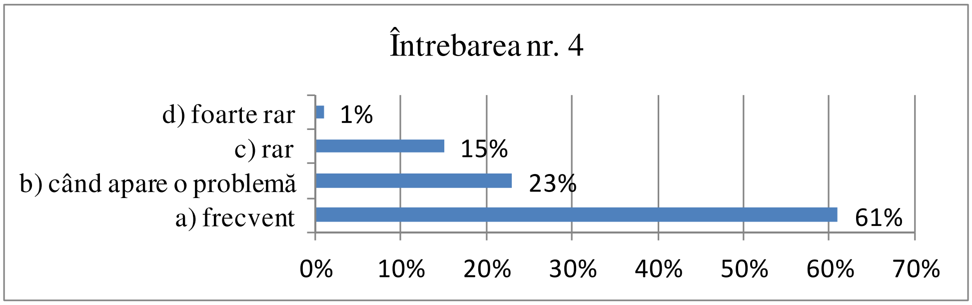
- the questionnaire was largely completed by mothers, which shows that mothers are more involved in educating their own children, i.e. 80% and only in 20% of cases both parents are involved.
- most parents are aware of their role in educating their own children, so they are very involved and spend enough time doing various activities with them; 80% are single-child families.

The concern for child education is influenced by the parents\` education level, so parents with higher education are more aware of their role as educators, while parents with general and secondary education are less interested in education. They regard it as a thing that does not require too much preparation, they often take over the educational model of their own parents. The percentage of their level of studies is as follows:



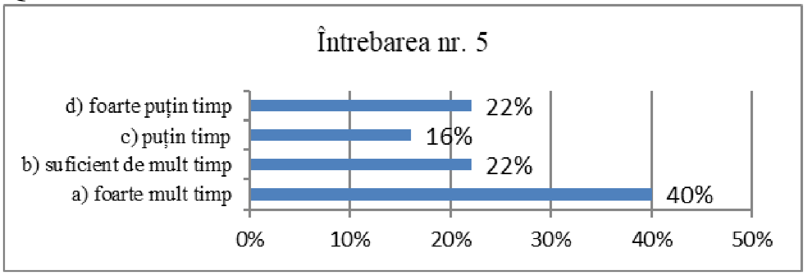
There were 14 questions in the questionnaire, most of them being multiple choice questions or questions with open answer. We will further analyse the answers received for questions no 4.

Question no 4



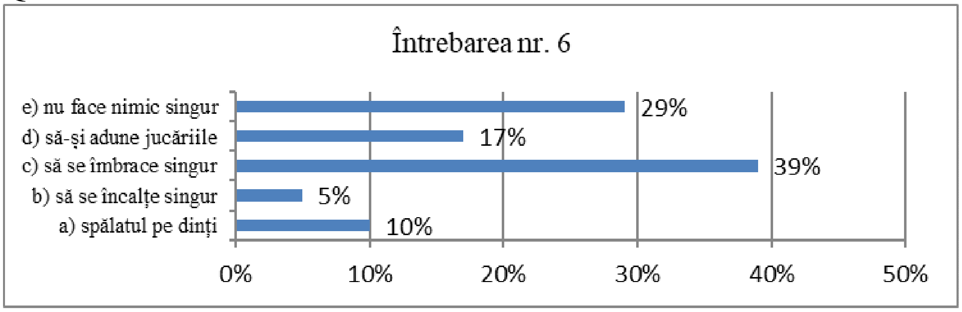
These data reveal that most parents regard the issue of education quite seriously and prefer to act in time to correct negative behaviours that their children might have. Discussing education is important because parents must select the best educational methods and both parents should agree upon them.

Question no 5



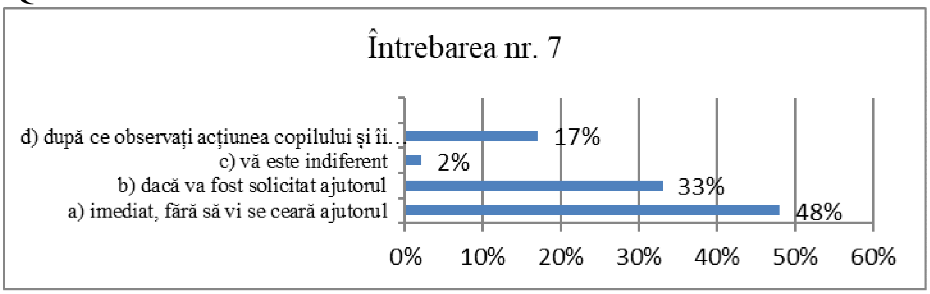
Knowing the child is directly related to the time spent with him, but also to the quality of this time. The fact that parents do not have time for their own children leads to their lack of knowledge of their needs and the impossibility to solve any issues their children could face. This affects the child`s harmonious and balanced development. The highest percentage of this question highlighted that 40% spend time with their own children, but in situations when parents spend very little time with their children, i.e. 22%, the child`s development will have many gaps, will result in less autonomy and self-esteem as well as in personality issues.

Question no 6



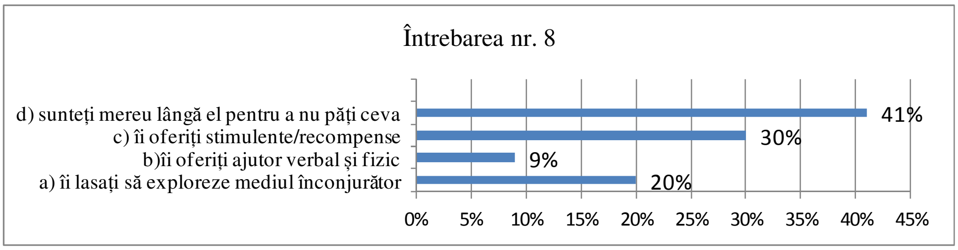
This question was asked to figure out how much parents encourage their children to perform activities that are repeated on a daily basis and to find out if they are taught to do them, they could do them independently. Children should be guided and encouraged to do these activities that will not make them dependent on an adult at any time in their lives. Any child can do something, and the fact that 29% of parents do not encourage such behaviour will unconditionally cause permanent attachment, a feeling of dissatisfaction, and the child`s adjustment to other environments will be difficult.

Question no 7



After centralizing the parents` responses, we have noticed that in most situations, children are not encouraged to act independently to find solutions, only with the help of parents. Parents feel the need to get involved in everything and even do things instead of the child.

Question no 8

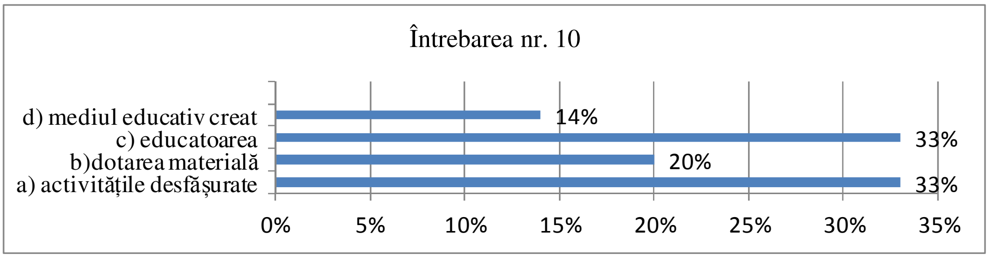


41% of parents think that being always "behind the child" i.e. supporting the child will keep them out of trouble and away from problems. Parents confuse physical safety with letting the child grow emotionally, become independent in carrying out certain activities. Guidance given to children means developing their autonomy, letting them discover what there are capable of doing alone, but without passing the limits of safety. That's why the parent has to supervise the child, but not control him constantly and prevent him from discovering himself.

Question no 9

100% of parents admit the importance of attending the kindergarten, and in terms of motivation, they emphasize that the main role of the kindergarten is to prepare the child for school, also contributing to their socialization.

Question no 10



Parents' responses attributed an equal percentage to the activities carried out in the kindergarten and to the teacher because they considered that an activity cannot be carried out without the teacher`s involvement. But the increase in pre-schoolers` autonomy is closely related to the endowment of the kindergarten, space, materials used and manipulated by children.

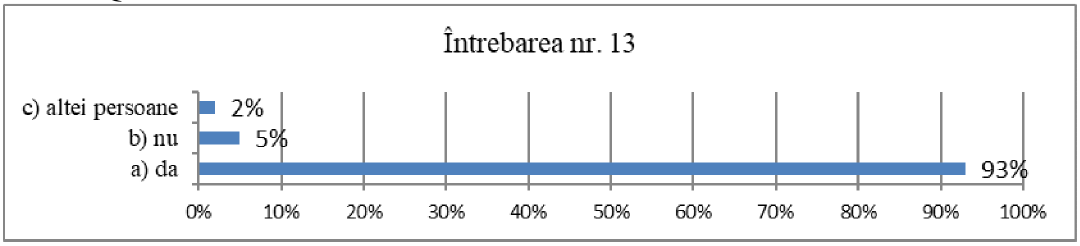
Question no 11

All parents responded that they would be involved in the kindergarten activities if they had been asked to. Parents would assist in carrying out certain activities as they are aware of the importance of child integration and the educational value of the kindergarten.

Question no 12

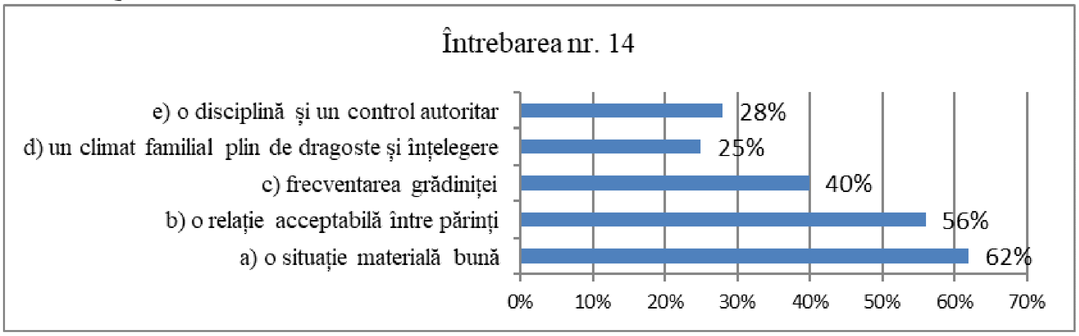
Parents' answers were among the most diverse. Many want their children to make friends in the kindergarten, learn many poems and songs, not be so "mumbles", play alone, learn to eat alone.

Question no 13



93% of parents believe that the teacher can give advice provide advice on how to educate their children. Teachers have the common goal of providing unconditional support, through direct and indirect intervention. A real collaboration between family and teachers will undoubtedly lead to the development of child`s self-esteem and its independence.

Question no 14



Most of those who filled in the questionnaire have chosen the answers a), b), c), prioritizing the material situation, even before a love and understanding based relationship. I think that to some extent this answer is justified by the precarious economic situation of many families in rural areas and the parents` desire to ensure good living conditions for their own children. Important is also the start of kindergarten and the contact with children of their age.

Kindergarten, at first glance seems to be a place where children are gathered to play or a place where children are supervised by certain people, and parents can leave them here to go to work. In fact, it is not like that. Here is the right environment to understand what it means to relate to people other than family. The foundation of what is going to happen and the changes that will occur is set in the first years of his life. Here, children learn that everything in the universe is governed by rules that we must obey them. A day structured according to a specific schedule teaches the little ones to be organized. But most progress will be made in terms of socialization, communication, engagement in various activities, focus on completing a particular task, cooperation and equal opportunities. The role of the kindergarten through its teachers is an extension of the family, and the teacher and parents have to complement one another.

At any time of the day and during any activity, teachers should use encouragement and praise. Any successful action of a child has been rewarded with praise and encouragement. I avoided praising the child, and emphasized what s/he did. Thus, I have stimulated other children to try to make the same puzzle or stick the same flower. Every successfully completed task has led to increased self-esteem and a sense of fulfilment.

3.Discussions

Even though I have addressed children aged 3-4, I have not hesitated to use communication at any time. I tried to explain any action so that they would understand it. Because group cohabitation required rules, I did not hesitate to talk with them to explain to them the positive parts of their application. I've also made these rules known to parents, recommending them to apply them at home. The rules were chosen together with them: "We listen to each other!", "We are friendly!", "We ask for the beautiful toy!". For starters, these were the first rules. Other rules were introduced throughout the year: "We leave order at the playground!", "We go nicely to the bathroom!", "We eat nice and clean!", "We wash our hands!", "We are polite!". Any compliance with the rules has been strengthened by praise and encouragement. The children were helped at first to carry out the actions that led to the observance of the rules, then to be able to do them on their own.

4. Activities conducted in partnership with the parents

I informed parents at the first meeting that during the counselling hours I am available and can talk to them. We can have individual discussions to solve problems that arise in relation to pre-schoolers. We designed a plan of activities that I thought was appropriate for parents.

I have included in the daily program the so-called "other" sessions, because the pre-school age did not allow me to make a classical celebration where the children are actors and the parents spectators. For example, at the celebration marking the start of the winter holidays all were actors and spectators. We created a cosy atmosphere where parents and their children made decorations, and at the same time we sang carols. The appearance of Santa Claus was a natural moment that created joy for everyone. Each child accompanied by his or her own parent stood on Santa`s knees, recited a poem and was rewarded. In such an atmosphere, no child felt abandoned, having the parent`s support.

Another type of activity developed in partnership with parents was the "Hats Parade". Children together with their parents made a hat of organic materials. The purpose of the activity was to create an opportunity for parents to do various activities with their children. The activity ended with a parade where the child accompanied by the parent presented his hat.

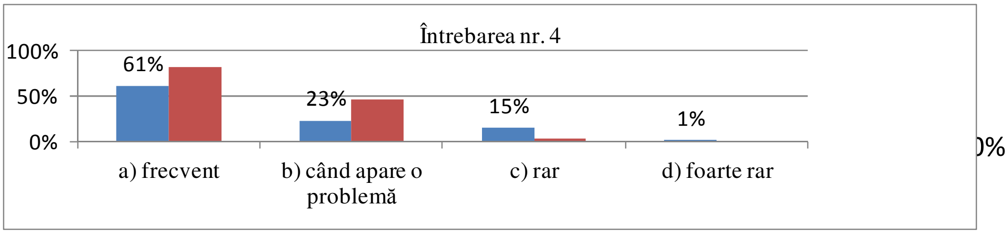
5. Research results

In the final stage, we applied the questionnaire to the parents (Annex 2). We observed if the activities carried out during the school year by teachers, family and counselling services led to a manifestation of autonomy in pre-school children.

We have started from the hypothesis that if the family and the kindergarten provide support and assistance when the child asks for it, his success and self-esteem will increase as well as the degree of autonomy. Constant attendance of kindergarten will lead to an optimal integration in various collectives, the child becomes more sociable, will respect rules of cohabitation by understanding their usefulness.

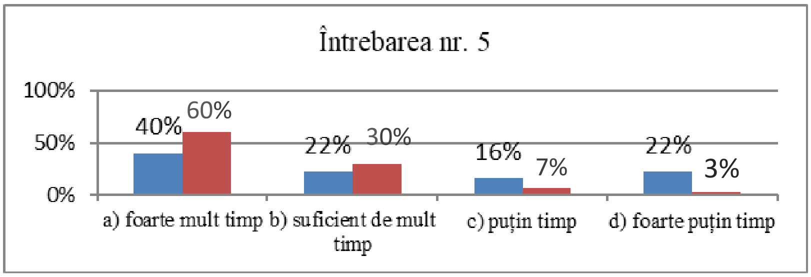
Comparing the parents` answers to questionnaire 1 and questionnaire 2, we found that they validate the research hypothesis. I will compare only the questions where changes occurred and which confirm my assumptions. If in the first questionnaire the parents answered the questions hypothetically in certain situations, in the second parents had to think about the real situations that they and their children had experienced during the school year.

For question no 4, the hierarchy changed as follows:

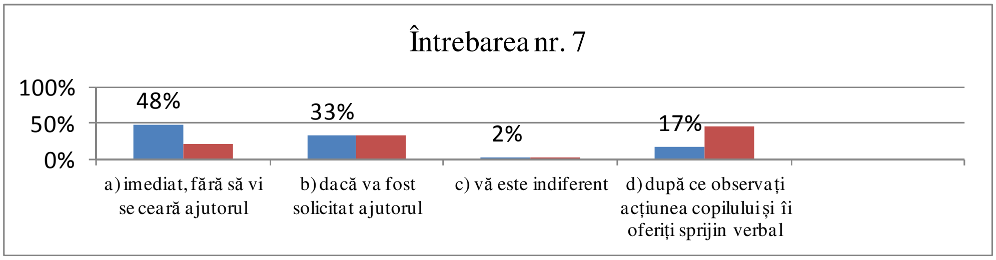


The interest in solving problems that occurred in children's education has increased. Parents discuss the issue and seek solutions together. Real communication between the two parents will lead to an optimal solution and most importantly, parents will agree with it.

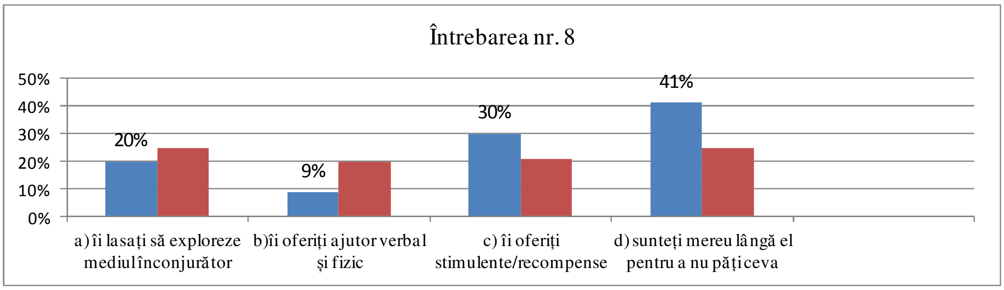
According to the answers given to question number 5, the time spent with their own children has increased. I also noticed an increase in the time spent by the children with their fathers. This is a gratifying thing because the education of children was put in the vast majority of cases in the hands of their mothers. Even if we live in times when both parents go to work, they do not have to neglect the child's education and this is only done if they spend time with them and try to know them as well as possible.



Question no. 7 aimed at changing the parents` behaviour when it comes to offering help immediately when the pre-schooler encounters difficulties in carrying out tasks. Parents have understood that pre-schoolers will increase their autonomy if they are encouraged and taught how to do certain things at the expense of taking over their tasks.

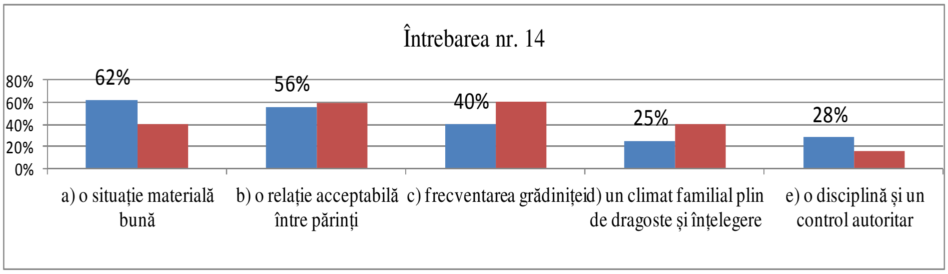


The balance between offering the opportunity to explore the environment and ensuring physical security is beneficial to the child and its development in a harmonious way, as observed in the comparison to questions no. 8. There is no need to eliminate the need to communicate permanently with the preschool child, to explain everything that s/he discovers in order to be able to distinguish between what is certain and what could physically damage him/her.



These facts are reflected in the following chart:

For questions 14 the situation was the following:



The parents' first choices were variants b), c) while d) and a) share the same percentage. Parents have begun to realize that a good material situation cannot substitute the time spent with their children when the relationships between parents is harmonious and the relationship between them and children develops in a positive direction.

6. Conclusions

Throughout the paper, we wanted to show that the foundation of a healthy society must be a balanced family that is actively involved in the pre-schooler's education. The way parents view education influences children negatively or positively, so there is a need for each parent to offer genuine education and a positive influence, to have the courage to talk to specialists who can correct mistakes in education, everything for the development of a healthy and harmonious personality as well as autonomy.

As a result of the activities that took place during the school year, the parents` involvement and the repeated encouragement given to their children, based on the discussions with parents and on the comparison of the two questionnaires, we noticed that parents need professional guidance to offer positive education to their children. Today's parents want optimal conditions for the development of their own children and know and have the courage to ask for guidance. They are willing to learn and apply methods promoted by kindergarten teachers to educate their children. So, there are resources and sources to be used to support the family for this activity of high social responsibility.

Throughout this paper, we have tried to highlight the special importance of the kindergarten and the family in the child`s life for the development of an autonomous behaviour. The educational role of the family cannot be substituted by any institution, but kindergarten and the teacher continue and complement the education received at home. Practicing a correct education by knowing the requirements recommends using and adapting the methods to each child`s peculiarities and traits.

A collaborative relationship between kindergarten-family-child will have positive long-term effects on each child leading to emotional well-being. Kindergarten and family have the same common goal of creating a harmonious personality and autonomy, enabling them to make the right choices, to be confident in their own strengths, be able to look for solutions and manage age-specific issues properly.

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CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN YOUTH PERCEPTION ABOUT GHOSTING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: *Ghosting or the art to disappear suddenly and without a trace from one's life represents an old phenomenon and is increasingly met by many people. Ghosting is a relatively new term, aroused a few years ago and specific to our generation, which has become more and more popular as society accepted it as if it were a normal online behavior among people, although it is not normal at all and can also have a negative impact on both the practitioner and the affected person. Our research team has developed the project Keeping youth safe from Cyberbullying, aiming to deeper understand the dynamics of cyberbullying in online environments among youth. Our focus was in analyzing the cultural differences between Romanian, Belgian, Turkish and Spanish youth perception about online ghosting behavior, in 507 high school students. Results show that there are statistically differences in the opinion of Romanian, Belgian, Turkish and Spanish youth regarding the emotional effects of ghosting on internet. Conclusions and implications are discussed.*

Key words: *cyberbullying; ghosting behavior; cultural differences;*

1. Ghosting in online

Ghosting is a relatively new term, aroused a few years ago and specific to our generation, which has become more and more popular as society accepted it as if it were a normal online behavior among people, although it is not normal at all and can also have a negative impact on both the practitioner and the affected person.

People experiencing this phenomenon are primarily focused on avoiding their own emotional discomfort without thinking about how to make others feel. The lack of social connections, because of the ones created online, also means that there are fewer social consequences to give up on someone. The more often it happens, the more people become less sensitive to this phenomenon (Pickett, C et.al., 2004).

Ghosting or the art to disappear suddenly and without a trace from one's life represents an old phenomenon and is increasingly met by many people. Before disappearing suddenly and without a trace from one's life, practitioners (ghosters) have more questionable and incongruent behavioral manifestations, which, for lack of information are misinterpreted.

These disputable behaviors are intended to help the ghoster test whether the ghosted is willing to let himself/herself be controlled and manipulated. All these are actually power games, where asymmetry is obvious, though they cannot be correctly defined, but felt. Power games mean abusive behaviors (some very well camouflaged by the mask of seduction) and have three clear features: intentional, repetitive, and power imbalance.

For many people, ghosting can lead to contradictory feelings. People feel disrespected, used and discouraged. If people have known the ghoster beyond simple data, then the situation may be even more traumatic (Williams, C., 2012).

In the virtual environment, there appeared the term of "orbiting" that renews the term "ghosting".

Already the "old" ghosting appeared in 2017 and defines the sudden and unexpected disappearance of a Facebook account (or other social media) of a person with whom you have / had a close relationship, friendship or even love. This creates a sense of frustration or alienation. The year 2018 introduces a new concept, the "orbiting" concept that has no connection with the physics or movement of the stars. Orbiting is a behavioral form of social networking that drives the "annoying" ghosting further. The boyfriend, the girlfriend, the ex, turns into a "ghost", acts passively-aggressive, and in darkness follows the detainee in detail. Maybe the phenomenon is not of cardinal importance and would not be perceived as a tragedy, however, let's not forget that there are segments of the population for which 95% of their social and even professional lives take place in the virtual environment, Facebook or other networks, the dependence being a reality, malignant as any addiction.

2. Research

If we look at the last decade, we can argue that the new communication methods, social networks, have had a positive impact in all societies. Both researchers and specialists in various fields believe that new technologies contribute to generating civic movements, community reconstruction, and the ability to connect people in a variety of ways. Connecting has become the mantra of our world that determines our way of communicating. The stories about online tragic separations show on the other hand the dark side of online communication. In the age of social networks, connecting means that people are much easier to be replaced. Ghosting is a term that has become popular in recent years and refers to the sudden ending of a relationship by interrupting communication. Although leaving someone without warning is not new, the habit has intensified in social media times.

The project *Keeping youth safe from Cyberbullying*, ID 2016-3-TR01-KA205-036619 under Erasmus+, had been developed by our research team aiming to deeper understand the dynamics of cyberbullying in online environments among youth, to develop educational resources for professionals involved in youth activities in order to prevent these type behaviors. One of our objectives is to analyze the cultural differences among the 4 participant countries related to youth online ghosting behavior. In this regard, our team has designed an online questionnaire aiming to gather descriptive data, general perception about the frequency and typology of cyberbullying type incidents, perceptions about the safety of the educational environment, perceived parental support, and an auto evaluation scale centered on self-efficacy perceptions.

This research that is focused on measuring online youth perceptions about ghosting behaviors. Single item measures owns the same efficacy in identifying statistical trends like multiple items scales; the procedure has been successfully used by researchers when measuring quality of life (Zimmerman et al., 2006). Single item scales are usually used to represent global constructs that are conceptualized as mono dimensions, like the one we have focused on, ghosting behavior.

The item that measured the perception about ghosting behavior is:

Item F – *Please rate your opinion regarding the following affirmation: I feel bad when my friends don't respond my messages when they are online.*

1. Totally agree; 2. Agree; 3. Neutral; 4. Disagree; 5. Totally disagree.

We start from the assumption that there is a statistical difference between Romanian, Belgian, Turkish and Spanish youth regarding the perception about youth ghosting behavior. In order to test our hypothesis, we have used SPSS' one way ANOVA analysis, where ghosting behavior perceptions were statistically observed based on residence country.

The study was conducted on a random sample of 507 high school students: 98 from Romania, 130 from Belgium, 224 from Turkey and 50 from Spain, aged 17-19, of both sexes, 68 male (48.6%) and 72 female (51.4%), from both rural and urban environmental origins.

In Fig.1, there are graphically depicted the mean differences among the four participant countries on the perception about ghosting behavior dimension. On scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for total agreement and 5 for total disagreement, Romanian youth has a mean score of m=2.40, Belgian youth score m=2.47, Turkish youth score m= 3.03 and Spanish youth score m=1.92. We can observe that Romanian and Belgian youth population show no statistical difference in between, slightly agreeing with the fact that ghosting behavior causes bad feelings in the online relationship environment. There is then a slight disagreement with the statement that says that online ignoring messages causes bad feelings in Turkish youth, and there is a strong agreement with this statement in Belgium youth population. In other words, Spanish youth feels the most threaten by ghosting behavior, then Romanian and Belgian youth are concerned about this phenomenon, then Turkish youth do not put too much emphasis on ghosting behavior.

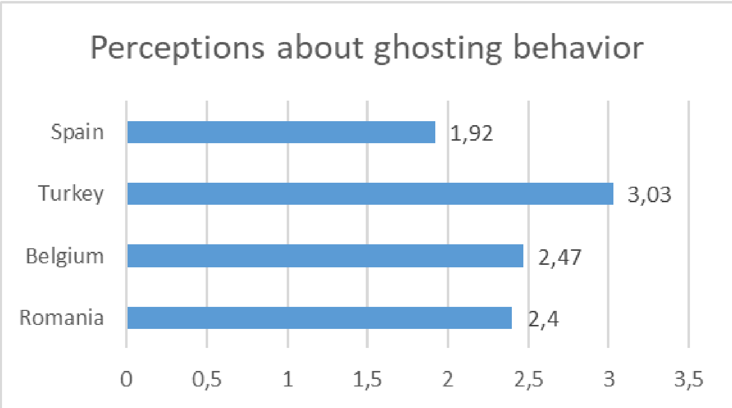

Fig.1 – Youth mean perception about online ghosting behavior

Checking for statistically differences among these results, we can observe in Table 1. that our hypothesis is partially confirmed, meaning that there is no statistical difference between Romanian and Belgian youth responses, only between these two and Spanish and Turkish responses.

Table 1. – Cultural differences on the perception of Romanian, Belgium, Turkish and Spanish youth about ghosting behavior

Descriptives

I feel bad when my friends don't respond my messages when they are online.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		

Romania	98	2.40	1.233	.125	2.15	2.65	1	5
Belgium	131	2.47	1.297	.113	2.25	2.70	1	5
Turkey	224	3.03	1.403	.094	2.85	3.22	1	5
Spain	50	1.92	1.122	.159	1.60	2.24	1	5
Total	503	2.65	1.366	.061	2.53	2.77	1	5

ANOVA

I feel bad when my friends don't respond my messages when they are online.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	69.518	3	23.173	13.343	.000
Within Groups	866.597	499	1.737		
Total	936.115	502			

When running one way ANOVA analysis, we have obtained the coefficient $F=13.343$, significant at a $p<0.01$, data that support the assumption of cultural differences among the 4 countries related to youth perception about the effects of ghosting behavior.

3. Conclusions and implications

But what are the consequences when someone decides to break all links on social networks and get out of someone's life? Apparently, ghosting is one of the worst ways of ending a relationship and can generate serious confrontations. Not surprisingly, it causes anxiety and problems in managing future relationships. Avoidance has an impact on whoever does it, it gets to burden it like any anti-social act.

Wondering if ghosting can be a morally accepted phenomenon is like asking if it's morally wrong to forget a book you read last year. When you are flooded with information, the forgotten part is inevitable. Similarly, when you are flooded by social connections, you have to give up some of them from time to time. No one can keep up with the extraordinary number of relationships available in a world so virtually connected. If you are constantly forced to send more emails and messages than you like, you will end up losing your soul in the smartphone.

Ghosting has often been viewed by mental health professionals as a form of emotional cruelty. In essence, it leaves you powerless and gives you no chance to ask questions or receive information that will help you emotionally process the experience. It prevents you from expressing your emotions and being heard, which is important for maintaining your self-esteem. Regardless of the intention of the person who left, ghosting is a passive-aggressive interpersonal tactic that can leave psychological scars.

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THE REFLECTIVE NATURE OF ACADEMIC TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract: *The imperious goal of the actual educational system is to develop individuals which have the capacity to develop themselves in accordance to the specific social context and its characteristics. What are the modalities used to assure this goal in higher education? These are certainly related to the nature of teaching and to the learning process and how to dynamize, grow, optimize or change some of their particularities. In this way, this article offers some scientific approaches on reflective teaching and learning as theoretical framework. Also, we present an implemented practical model which sustains the relevance of reflective journal use in the academic teaching process for increasing students' reflection on their learning and the optimisation of their educational results.*

Keywords: *reflective teaching; reflective learning; reflective practitioner;*

1. Introduction

How did the accreditation of reflection in the educational process begin? The scientific literature presents Jh. Dewey as initiator of reflective teaching. He points to the fact that teachers need to be reflective practitioners and not passive recipients (Dewey, 1933) during each moment of the educational process. Using reflection implies thinking about the action while we do it (reflection in action) or after we do it (reflection on action) (Wilson, 2017). The reflective process must also be a reflexive one although it still has a highly personal note. Reflexivity is an interactional process (between teachers and learners) and a transformational one (because it determines changes both in the teaching and learning process). This means that teachers not only analyse their work but transmit students their reflection through reflexive practice. In this respect, reflection becomes a highly complex process in which thinking, interaction, knowledge and learning have a reflexive relation (Semetsky, 2008). So far, Dewey's work has been a landmark for many studies and researches, which approached some aspects of the reflective educational practice.

1.1. Reflective teaching

The application of reflectivity in the teaching process during each stage of the lesson determines the reflective practice of the teacher (Thompson & Pascal, 2012; Schon, 1974; Thompson, 2008). Reflective practice represents the value that can be brought in practice through interventions on the teacher's analytical abilities. In this respect, the teaching process does not become a mechanical one and teachers could discover the modalities through which they can use their analytical abilities in the educational practice.

Embracing reflective practice, university teachers have the prerequisite for self-analysis of their teaching activities in order: to make the best use of the professional knowledge; to match their educational activities with the personal system of values and to generate learning and development opportunities for their students. This is a very complex and long-term process which imposes the approach of some dimensions of the teaching-learning process (Zwodiak-Myer, 2012):

- ✓ The study of personal teaching for developing it permanently (self-knowledge, reflection in action, and reflection on action).
- ✓ The use of a systematic evaluation on personal teaching through classroom research procedures.
- ✓ The assurance of the connection between theory and practice.
- ✓ The theories and personal beliefs (self-efficacy and efficiency in creating a positive climate).
- ✓ Taking into consideration the alternative perspectives and possibilities.
- ✓ The modalities of using strategies and ideas that maximize the learning potential of all students.
- ✓ Methods to continually improve the teaching activity.
- ✓ Strategies for enhancing the quality of the teaching process.

Each dimension supposes knowing and applying a set of knowledge, theories and applications which will conduct both educational actors to reach the educational objectives. Also, it is imperiously necessary to particularize the general guidelines to each group of students and its characteristics.

1.2. Reflective learning

A reflective teaching process conducts to a reflective learning process. It is not a facile process because it is a long-term process and supposes effort and constant implication of the students. Reflective learning is conceptualized as the basis of action and reflection, including the practice of questioning our own way of learning and solving problems related to the learning process or the real-life situation.

How do we give students a base for reflexive learning in the academic process? Certainly, through the teaching model which teachers offer their students, and which has the previously mentioned particularities. This could be expressed into: training reflection into action which supports students in the process of internalizing reflection by action (Bruno & Dell'Aversana, 2017) and usage of several methods of reflective learning (see Smith, 2011), such as: learning journals (Wall et al., 2004), memos (Dowling, 2006), reflective notes (Smith, 2008), the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954), the critical portfolio (Brockbank and McGill, 1998); tabulation or lists of reflective summaries (Alvesson, M. and Sköldberg, 2000), feedback and self-evaluation forms (Boud et al., 1995), reflective interview (Bolam et al., 2003), peer or group discussion (Brookfield, 1987) and other specific modalities. These teaching and learning techniques contribute to the development of each dimension of a reflective learning process. For university students, being reflective in the learning process, means to hear, write, read, speak, create and interact in a reflective way. In other words, students should be active participants and open to new knowledge and educational situations.

Reflective learning has the following direction: the settings of learning objectives; documentation about the existent approaches on the learning issue; identifying the reason for studying the issue; placing the new knowledge in relation to the personal approach on the issue and reframing the issue in a personal manner. This direction of action was expressed by M. Ryan (2013) in a reflective scale (adapted from Bain et al. 2002) with different levels which involve finding the response to different questions: 1. Reporting and responding – choosing the issue, pointing to its relevance, observing, expressing the personal opinion on it and asking questions; 2. Relating – making connections with the professional experience, the background or discipline knowledge; 3. Reasoning – analysing different approaches, perspectives on the issue; 4. Reconstructing – reframing the future knowledge or professional practice.

1.3. The reflective practitioner

Adapting the term primarily used by D.A. Schon (1983), we refer to the reflective practitioner in education as a professional who reflects about what he/she does while he/she does it and assures a base for students' learning in a more profound way. This term could be used in the educational process in both the teaching and learning role: in the first situation the teacher is a practitioner in action and in the second situation the student will became a reflective practitioner in a specific field. The teacher or student has some characteristics, as the following (Wilson 2017, Farrel 2008): uses reflection in action; is aware of himself/ herself: analyses the educational situations, questions, issues and finds alternative interpretations or solutions; develops decision-making skills and can become proactive and confident in the educational process or outside it; achieves a deeper understanding of teaching and learning; retrospectively analyses its own actions; identifies how his personal actions influences the educational activities; self-assess the personal professional growth. These necessities could be attended only if they have time for solitary reflection and solve all the problems that appear in the educational process (Larrivee, 1999, 2000). All the actions and issues will be analysed and a personal way to operate and to relate to the educational process' issues and practices will be assumed. In other words, teachers should have settled tools for practicing reflection in the educational process as (Farrel, 2008, 2011): short-term research projects; writing a teaching journal; joining a teacher development group; using observation, as a method of reflection on their own activity. Also, students should permanently develop their reflective learning techniques and settle up a personal reflection style which could have a dominant type of reflection (Jay & Johnson, 2000): Descriptive - describes the reason for reflection; Comparative – rebuilds the problem of reflection in the light of alternatives, other perspectives or studies; Critical - takes into account the implications of the problem and sets a renewed perspective.

The practice of reflection in action supports students in the process of internalizing reflection. Training and development as a reflective teacher (Shambaugh & Magliaro, 2001) are based on the critical investigation which must take into consideration the moral and ethical implications and the consequences of educational practice on students (eg. assessment as an ethical issue: judgment on student activity). This must be accompanied by profound examinations of personal values and beliefs embedded in the assumptions of teachers in teaching and their expectations towards students.

2. The research methodology

This research presents a proposal for a reflective teaching-learning model at university level. The *aim* of the research was to establish the influence of the reflective nature of the teaching process in which they were involved on their educational results. Our hypothesis was that using reflective learning and teaching modalities students will improve their learning and obtain better results.

The *objectives* of the research were to:

Q1. Identify the modalities used by students in a reflective learning process at university level;

Q2 Establish the impact of using the reflective journal and formative feedback on the students' obtained results;

Q2. Setting up a reflective model for teaching and learning which could be used in the academic educational process.

The *target group* of the research were 143 first year students at Teacher Training Department, from different specializations. The *method* of the research used was the content analyses of the students' learning journals, at the seminar activities of discipline Pedagogy I. We also analysed, in a qualitative and quantitative manner, the impact of using the proposed learning model on their results.

The stages of the implementation of the reflective learning model were the following:

1. The presentation of the discipline.
2. Setting up the learning journals by each student.
3. Reflection on the proposed steps and optimization of the seminar paper through the teacher' feedback and correlation with the proposed steps.
4. The comparative analyses between the proposed and the obtained mark at the seminar activities for the discipline Pedagogy I.

The analyse of the results is presented below:

1. The presentation of the discipline has been carried out at the first meeting and included a discussion with the students of the discipline syllabus and a short ice breaking session (we used techniques as The Little-Known Fact and the True or False technique).

2. The learning journal was completed by students at the second meeting and it was structured in four items which were the following: A. What will be the desired evaluation mark at discipline Pedagogy 1? Which steps will I follow for obtaining this result? How will I implement these steps concretely? How will I do my personal evaluation on the seminar activities? The students had to offer minimum 3 and maximum 5 answers on each item. We coded the answers in specific items for each dimension. The following

table presents the coded responses and their percentage at the level of the all research target group (Table 1) regarding the followed steps for obtaining the desired note:

Table 1. What will be the steps that I will follow for obtaining this result?

Steps to follow for obtaining the proposed results	The percentage of students' responses
Attendance in the seminar activities	90%
Knowledge and appliance of the conditions for the elaboration of the seminar paper	80%
Engaging in classroom activities	78%
Seriousness in seminar activities and work	75%
Timely delivery of the seminar paper	69%
Making a good presentation of the work	68%
Individual study	24%
Shaping the own learning style	17%
Self-assessment	15%
Review of the seminar paper	16%
Opinions on the approached topic	7%
Practical application of the learned knowledge	5%
Learning specific terminology	3%

As we could observe in Table 1, students related their steps to the current seminar activities, meaning their personal participation or teacher's support. The responses that sustain this affirmation had the highest percentage. Also, the rules and the assessment criteria of the teacher were very important (up to 60%). Other responses, more related to reflective learning than the initial ones, were mentioned but have obtained lower percentage (individual study, shaping the own learning style, self-assessment, etc.). These percentages (Table 1.) demonstrate that at the projection level, students were afraid to set up steps that will involve only individual commitment and reflection on the personal learning process. Also, we could conclude that learning the specific terminology of the discipline is not considered a very important step (3% of the responses).

Table 2. How will I concretely implement these steps?

Modalities for implementing the proposed steps	The percentage of students' responses
Correlation with the taught theoretical aspects	95%
Documentation by reading books	93%

Respecting the rules and conditions for elaborating the paper	85%
Organising my individual study	82%
Timely delivery of the seminar paper	80%
Establishment of concrete ways for achieving the proposed objectives	76%
Understanding the concepts used in the paper	74%
Structuring the information gathered from documentation sources	66%
Getting involved in class activities	64%
Reading the course support	63%
Persevering in accomplishing the task	45%
Systematic learning	43%
Continuous improvement of the seminar tasks	39%
Relating the work to the already acquired knowledge	38%
Analysing the group's feedback	37%
Sustaining my personal approach	27%
Using new technologies	14%
Using my competencies at maximum level	13%
Taking part in other activities which could support my work	9%
Identifying some logical connectors	7%
Self-evaluation tests	4%

Following Table 2 we observe the highest percentage of the responses show the correlation with the taught theoretical aspects (95% of responses). At the previous item students declared that learning the specific terminology meant only for 3% of them a specific step to reach the results but insisted on the correlation with the theory that was taught by their teacher at the course activities. This fact appeared because students didn't think at first that the learning process supposed also making correlations, arguing, applying and not only memorising the scientific knowledge (we observed that when we analyse the concept of learning process, a subtheme of our course). A high percentage (82%) was obtained by organising the individual study and this answer is reinforced by other responses with high percentage related to this issue: the specificity of elaborating a seminar paper (documentation in books – 93%, respecting the rules and conditions for elaborating the seminar paper – 85%, timely delivery of the seminar paper – 80%).

Also, answers were related to characteristics of the learning process which support reflective learning, but with a percentage lower than 50%: persevering in accomplishing the task (45%), continuous improvement of the seminar tasks (39%), relating the work to the already acquired knowledge (38%), arguing my personal approach (27%), using my competencies at maximum level (13%). The students also mentioned other important aspects of reflective learning, such as: analysing group' feedback (37%), sustaining my personal approach (27%), taking part in other activities which could support my work (9%), identifying some logical connectors (7%).

Table 3. How will I do my personal evaluation on the seminar activities?

Self-evaluation modalities	**The percentage of students' responses**
Teachers' feedback	98%
Self-evaluation tests	95%
Relating the seminar paper to the teachers' evaluation criteria	91%
The comparison between the proposed and the obtained mark	90%
Colleagues' evaluation	56%
Comparison to the other colleagues' responses	46%
Continuing the optimization of the seminar paper	29%
Using the learned knowledge in concrete actions	27%
The ability to sustain an opinion using pedagogical ideas	14%
Other ways	4%
I don't know	3%

The first four mentioned modalities for self-evaluation were the classic ones and were obtained up to 90% of percentage. The other mentioned modalities were considered in the specific literature as ways to assure reflective feedback: other persons' evaluation (colleagues – 56%), continuing optimization (29%), appliance of the learned knowledge in practice (27%), constructing arguments using the learned pedagogical knowledge (14%). Only 3% of students responded that they don't know.

3. In the middle of the semester each student reanalysed the proposed steps and the ways of their implementation. The teacher requested them to approximate the percentage of their achievement of what has been proposed and to reflect on how they could obtain the proposed result concretely. Each student did this action and has improved their paper. The teacher also used formative assessment, giving feedback on each student's paper. Students had the possibility to improve the paper based on teacher's feedback and reflection on how they attend the proposed steps and modalities for implementing it and self-evaluating their work.

4. The following table (Table 4) presents a correlation between the desired results, the partial and the final evaluation mark for each group of students (specialization):

Table 4. Correlation between desired, partial and final students' marks

Specialization	**Desired mark** (mean) DM	**Partial evaluation** (mean) PE	**Final evaluation** (mean) FE	Correlation DM/FE	Correlation PE/FE	T test DM/FE	T test PE/FE
Arts	8.02	8.03	9.02	r=0.50, p=0.02	r=0.86, p<0.001	t(19)=3.10, p<0.01	t(19)=6.58, p<0.01
Chemistry/Biology	9.20	7.83	8.60	r=-0.31, p=0.60	r=0.89, p=0.01	t(4)=0.86, p=0.43	t(5)=3.95, p=0.011
Law	8.93	8.28	9.18	r=0.24, p=0.56	r=0.59, p=0.15	t(7)=0.83, p=0.43	t(6)=2.56, p=0.04
Sport	9.02	7.86	9.09	r=0.32, p=0.03	r=0.88, p<0.001	t(41)=0.41, p=0.68	t(41)=13.79, p<0.001
Physics	9.00	7.58	8.33	r=0.10, p=0.83	r=0.94, p=0.004	t(5)=0.89, p=0.41	t(5)=3.50, p=0.01
Maths/Informatics	9.54	7.90	9.18	r=-0.21, p=0.53	r=0.65, p=0.03	t(10)=1.00, p=0.34	t(10)=4.98, p=0.001
History	9.34	8.73	9.61	r=0.13, p=0.67	r=0.84 p<0.001	t(12)=1.07, p=0.30	t(12)=6.88, p<0.001
Music	9.42	7.59	9.23	r=0,72, p=0.75	r=0.72, p<0.001	t(20)=0.55, p=0.58	t(20)=10.11, p<0.001

When we look at the results of students from the Faculty of Arts we can see that there was a significant difference in the means between the desired mark (M=8.02, SD=1.60) and the final mark (M=9.02, SD=1.21); t(19)=3.10, p=0.006. There was a positive moderate relationship between those two variables (r=0.50, p=0.02). Students obtain a M=8.03 on partial evaluation which is similar with the mark that the students desired but it is lower than the final evaluation (M=9.02). There was a strong positive correlation between the partial evaluation mark and the final evaluation mark (r=0.86, p<0.001) and the considered difference was statistically significant t(19)=6.58, p<0.001.

Students from Faculty of Chemistry and Biology had a mean of M=9.20 when they proposed a target mark. At the partial evaluation they obtained $M=7.83$ and for the final evaluation the mean mark was $M=8.60$. We chose to compare initial target mark with the final mark and we observed that, in terms of statistical significance, they are quite similar $t(4)=0.86$, $p>0.05$. When we compared $M=7.83$ ($SD=0.68$), partial evaluation, with $M=8.60$ ($SD=1.03$), final evaluation, we had a statistically significant difference, $t(5)=3.95$, $p=0.01$. Also, we found that there is a strong positive correlation between those two variables, the partial evaluation and the final evaluation, $r=0.89$, $p=0.01$.

Students from Law had proposed high marks ($M=8.93$, $SD=0.41$) and they obtained them on the partial evaluation ($M=8.28$, $SD=0.95$). The difference between those two wasn't statistically significant, $t(7)=0.83$, $p>0.05$. When we looked at the comparison between the partial evaluation and the final evaluation we discovered a bigger difference. It was a statistically significant difference, $t(6)=2.56$, $p=0.04$. On the final evaluation Law students had obtained higher marks ($M=9.18$, $SD=0.84$) than on the partial evaluation and even greater than those proposed initially.

Another comparison we made is between the desired mark, the partial evaluation and the final evaluation of Sports' students. Between the initial mark and the final evaluation mark we found a medium but significant correlation ($r=0.32$, $p=0.03$). When we considered the differences, we found that the students obtained at the final evaluation a similar mark with that they expected as an desired mark, $t(41)=0.41$, $p=0.68$. Also, the mark they obtained at the partial evaluation ($M=7.86$, $SD=1.21$) was significantly lower than the mark obtained at the final evaluation ($M=9.09$, $SD=1.10$), $t(41)=13.79$, $p<0.001$.

Physics students proposed, initially, a high mark, $M=9.00$ ($SD=1.22$) which wasn't correlated with the mark obtained at the partial evaluation ($r=0.10$, $p=0.83$). The partial evaluation ($M=7.58$, $SD=1.65$) was positively correlated with the final evaluation ($M=8.33$, $SD=1.50$), $r=0.94$, $p<0.005$. We also found that the differences between the partial and the final evaluation were statistically significant, $t(5)=3.5$, $p=0,01$

Informatics students obtained $M=7.90$ ($SD=1.01$) on the partial evaluation and on the final evaluation $M=9.18$ ($SD=0.98$). Those two evaluations were positively correlated ($r=0.65$, $p=0.03$) and the differences were also statistically significant, $t(10)=4.98$, $p=0.001$.

Students from History had a mean of 9.34 ($SD=0.71$) on the initial evaluation, $M=8.73$ ($SD=0.85$) on the partial evaluation and $M=9.61$ ($SD=0.65$). Analysing the differences between initial and partial evaluations we observed that the differences aren't significant, $t(12)=1.07$, $p=0.30$. When we compared the partial and final evaluations we discovered that the differences are statistically significant, $t(12)=6.88$, $p<0.001$ and also that those two evaluations were strongly and positively correlated, $r=0.84$, $p<0.001$.

When we compared evaluations of students from the Music specialization we observed that there was a statistically significant difference between the partial evaluation ($M=7.59$, $SD=1.00$) and the final evaluation ($M=9.23$, $SD=0.99$), t(20=10.11, $p<0.001$. These results suggest that the students improved their mark from the partial to the final evaluation.

3. Conclusions

Analysing the investigative approach that we previously presented, we could synthesize that students are open to reflect on their learning process and to optimize their work but supported by the teacher's guidance and by objective evaluation conditions.

Reflecting on the steps which students projected to do for achieving the desired mark, we observe the dominance of the teacher's conditions and their implication in their future learning activity. The possible cause can be the fact that students were first year students and didn't have a well-defined academic learning style or, if they had it, they were not confident in its efficiency. In this respect, the mentioned modalities to achieve the desired mark were mostly the traditional well-known ones: documentation, organization of the individual study, participation in face to face activities, knowing and respecting the teacher's required evaluation conditions, correlation with the theoretical aspects of the discipline.

Even in lower percentages, students mentioned modalities that sustain their reflection on the learning process and its optimization: correlation with their background, arguing their personal approach, using their competencies at maximum level, analysing the group's feedback, taking part in other activities which could support their work, identifying some logical connectors or persevering in attending the task.

At the level of self-evaluation, the link between the teacher's feedback, the assessment criteria and the self-evaluation tests also stand out, comparing the desired mark with the final mark. Students used also reflective modalities for self-evaluation, which involved other students' feedback or their capacity to apply or to argue their work, but in a lower percentage.

Supported by the reflective journal and the formative teacher's feedback, the obtained final marks' means were higher than the partial ones for four specializations (Arts, Low, Sport). For other four specializations (Chemistry/Biology, Physics, Math/Informatics, Music) the obtained mean was lower than the desired one, but statistically not significant. It was a positive correlation between the partial evaluation mark and the final evaluation mark and the considered difference was statistically significant, that sustained our initial hypothesis: using reflective learning and teaching modalities, students will improve their learning and obtain better results.

In this respect, we observe the importance of reflection in the educational process at university level. Building on the traditional modalities teachers must guide students to reflect and reconsider their learning process and progress through other reflective modalities and instruments. Teachers and students at university level must be aware of the difference between routine action and reflective action (Zeichner & Liston, 1987):

- ✓ Routine action is guided primarily by tradition, external authority and circumstance.
- ✓ Reflective action involves an active, persistent and careful analysis of any belief or approach to other forms of knowledge than those practiced.

It is important that both education actors assume that the mechanistic approach can affect the system of values. Often, we react to educational situations in a non-reflexive way and our actions often contradict it. Reflecting systematically and continuously, teachers and students could add to the academic teaching and learning processes the value of being updated and qualitative in the same time.

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LA DIDACTIQUE DU FRANÇAIS LANGUE ÉTRANGERE: TRADITION ET INNOVATION

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Coming after another book published by Corina-Amelia GEORGESCU (namely *La Didactique du français langue étrangère. Guide pour les professeurs débutants,* Editura Universităţii din Piteşti, Piteşti, 2009), *La Didactique du français langue étrangère : tradition et innovation* (Tiparg, 2011) is the author's way of showing the changes having taken place in such a short time and it is the result of a genuine feed-back that she had from the persons concerned by this field.

The book, even after 7 years, remains unique in the field by the way it is designed and by the topics it is focused on; it is a synthesis of the knowledge a person might need to pass the difficult exams that a teaching career involves. Following closely the curricula for these exams, it is supported by a logical frame and it brings before the reader the basics of the field (becoming thus a precious aid for the beginners) as well as suggestions of different kinds, including research issues useful for more experienced teachers. The main idea is that everyone may learn and becoming a good teacher is not a process ending at a certain moment of the career, but an ongoing process which each of us should be aware of. The ten chapters focus on issues which are of great importance when teaching foreign languages, even though the author deals with French as a particular case. The reader may find relevant information about the European Framework for Languages, the aim-based approach versus the skill-based approach, the organization and designing of a class of French, the teaching aids and the teaching methods, the learner's skills, the communicative techniques, teaching French culture and civilization, assessing during the foreign language classes or using research in order to improve one's teaching activity.

The first chapter of the book emphasizes the importance of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* as a modern tool facilitating teaching, learning and assessing according to the same standards in the European Union. Although it is generally known by the teachers, this framework is not always fully understood and put into practice; this is why, commenting on some of the issues it includes is very useful especially as it reflects "the overall language policy of the Council of Europe and in particular the promotion of plurilingualism in response to European linguistic and cultural diversity"[16] and in the XXIst century language is not anymore a matter or a subject of learning, but especially a tool for the people to better communicate. Thus, this part clearly states the aims, objectives and uses of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and it is followed by a part focusing on the place that didactics holds among the sciences of education; the author chooses more variables influencing the learners' performance when studying foreign languages and analyses them: the type of learner according to criteria such as age, motivation and cultural background, his/her objectives, needs, expectations, the relation between his/her mother language and the second language and last but not least, his/her relation with the teacher.

The second chapter tries to answer a question still in debate today: should one teach taking into account aims and objectives or skills? The author has the courage to denounce an attitude which is common practice in Romania:" En Roumanie, et cela n'est pas un cas isolé, les enseignants ne travaillent pas pour développer les compétences : on n'en a pas l'habitude, on n'y est pas instruit, on n'est pas motivé."[17] Hoping to help change this situation, the author explains the difference between what objectives/aims mean when compared to skills.

One of the most difficult issues when it comes to teaching foreign languages is planning classes. That is why the author approaches it very carefully explaining why and how teachers should design everything beforehand as well as which the necessary documents are. The book attempts at showing the two main sides of the educational process which a teacher should take into consideration:

"Le processus éducatif implique **l'anticipation** des actions et des procédures auxquelles le professeur recourra ainsi que **la préparation** de celles-ci. L'activité didactique est une activité complexe à cause de l'implication du facteur humain (professeurs, élèves), des contraintes temporelles et délais imposés pour atteindre certains objectifs. La qualité de l'activité didactique dépend donc de la qualité du professeur d'anticiper et de préparer certaines situations."[18]

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[16] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment,* p. 8 (https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf (21.05.2018)

[17] Georgescu, Corina-Amelia, ***La Didactique du français langue étrangère : tradition et innovation,*** Editura Tiparg, Pitesti, 2011, p. 35 ("In Romania, and this is not an isolated case, teachers do not work to develop skills: they are not accustomed to doing it, they are not taught or motivated to do it."- our translation)

[18] Georgescu, Corina-Amelia, ***La Didactique du français langue étrangère : tradts ition et innovation,*** Editura Tiparg, Pitesti, 2011, p. 46 ("The educational process involves

A whole chapter is devoted to the teaching aids in order to support teachers to choose the best suitable aid for their classes. The teaching aids are classified according to different criteria and a section is included in order to provide support in order to make teachers aware of the advantages or disadvantages they may encounter when using a certain aid or another. Annex 3 which one finds at the end of the book is very helpful as it presents different sets of criteria a teacher could use in order to choose a textbook.

After a brief review of the foreign language teaching methodologies, chapter five combines the presentation of the traditional methods of teaching (lecture, exercise, conversation, dialogue etc.) with that of the interactive ones (Philips 6/6, Starburst, the 6/3/5 technique, cooperative learning etc). The author thinks that a contrastive approach between the advantages and the disadvantages of each method might be useful and she includes tables for both of them as well as examples of activities foe which one may choose a method or another one.

"The User/Learner's Competences" is the title of chapter six; it willingly coincides with that of Chapter five of the *Common European Framework for Languages* as it describes and explains the main concepts agreed upon by the European Framework; the author dwells upon general competences versus linguistic competences. Each category is defined and described by its sub-categories, that is the ***general competences*** fall into declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, "existential" competence, ability to learn while the ***linguistic ones*** are divided into: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. After this section which closely follows the *European Framework for Languages,* a whole one is focused on how to develop different types of linguistic competences; for instance, the lexical competence is first defined and then described in terms of general principles of teaching vocabulary, specific objectives for teaching vocabulary and appropriate exercises or activities. All the linguistic competences are similarly approached. Chapter VII is complementary to Chapter VI as it shows appropriate strategies in order to develop reception and production. In order to get the best results, a teacher should know the basics about listening, reading, writing and speaking and the author includes specific information such as objectives, elements facilitating the respective skill and different activities aimed at developing it. At the end of the chapter,

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anticipating actions and procedures which the teacher will use as well as preparing them. Teaching is a complex activity especially because of the human element (teachers and students), of deadlines required in order to reach specific goals. Under these circumstances, the quality of the teaching activity depends on the teacher's ability to anticipate and prepare certain situations."- our translation) there is a whole section on the ludic uses of language, suggesting educational games which are classified according to different criteria.

One of the most challenging chapters is the one on *Teaching French Culture and Civilization*. Using authentic texts in language teaching/learning is one of the issues carefully presented by the author who takes into account different types of texts (newspaper articles, songs and pictures) providing examples on how to use each of them in the classroom. Intercultural awareness is a key concept of this chapter and it is related to identity. Such concepts are better understood when using literary texts; thus, literature seems reassessed after a long period of time during which literary texts were banned from textbooks.

Chapter IX focuses on assessment in the sense of "the proficiency of the language user"[19] as it is defined by the *European Framework for Languages* and comments on the different types of evaluation included in this document. It provides specific methods of evaluation for written tests, for oral tests as well as some information on the *Portfolio* and comes with a section commenting on the advantages and disadvantages of using different types of tests.

The final chapter is not a common one in a book on teaching foreign languages as it has the research as a central issue; it is about researching for teaching and how this type of activity may improve and enrich a teacher's activity. For instance, it brings information on how to design and teach an option course of French.

At the end of the book, the reader may find different types of information included under the heading *Annexes*: The Deontological Code for the Teacher Profession, A Lesson Plan, Assessing and Choosing Textbooks, Romanian Official Documents, A Research Guide. All of these are followed by a large bibliography which does not reflect only the author's documentation but it may become a support for any research on teaching foreign languages.

Corina-Amelia Georgescu's *La Didactique du français langue étrangère: tradition et innovation* (Tiparg, 2011) is one of the few books published in Romania lately aimed at being in the same time a comprehensive synthesis of theory and a helpful aid in everyday teaching.

[19] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment,* p. 177 (https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf (28.05.2018)