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TRUST AS AN EVER-GROWING AND INEXHAUSTIBLE VALUE IN ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: *This paper summarizes the main findings of the literature on 'trust in organizations', relying mainly on the latest publications. The definitions, forms and development possibilities of trust used exclusively at the organizational level are discussed in more detail, so the names of classical authors appear in this section as well.In addition to building, expanding, and rebuilding trust, we also talk about the consequences of lack of confidence.Based on the findings of the more than 30 scientific publications used, we have tried to present the essential existence of trust, either in the workplace or in the private world.*

Keywords: *Trust; Trust Building; Types of Trust;*
JEL: M5
LCC: HD58

Introduction

In the recent years, the study of organizational trust has resurfaced in several literature researches, as organizations seek to resolve unanswered questions relating to performances. This resurgence is believed to have been partly caused by the changes in peoples way of thinking and the functioning of organizations within the last 100 years (Costa, 2003).

Unlike then, organizations are now becoming flatter, team centered and most especially with declining traditional approaches. The new approach focuses on participation leadership, and sharing of duties, thereby increasing the need for trust within the circle. To this, Costa (2003), citing Sabel (1993) thinks absent of trust will eventually slow down the pace as no one will risk moving first; additionally, creating conflict as members will sacrifice co - operational and collaborative gains, which could have increased efficiency.

However, for the purpose of this study, we will be discussing 'Trust' under intra organization phenomenon – between employees or manager/supervisor, and we will be discussing in brief, Trust building, its importance, limitations and finally conclude with recommendations on improving Trust in an organization.

Literature Review

Trust-interpretations

In business life (and everyday life too) to earn each other's trust is a key element in relationships. If individuals can trust each other within the company the first step to become a reliable facility is already done. In companies usually there are hierarchical differences, so the management should pay a big attention to help the employees to build reliable working relationships between each other and build a better team. (Fukuyama, 1995)

Trust has been defined by several authors in the past. Cook and Wall (1980) defined trust as 'the extent to which one is willing to ascribe good intentions and have confidence in the words and actions of other people'. Additionally, Boon and Holmes (1991), sees it as state of having positive confidence about another person's motive in risk situations. However, these definitions have its shortcomings as it covers only the sincerity (belief) aspect of trust.

Trust on the other hand is made of three aspects/ form namely; sincerity (belief), reliability (decision) and competence (action). (Figure 1.) Costa (2003) sees it as 'willingness to render oneself vulnerable. This definition shifted direction to the other form of trust which is decision. However, it is expected that belief must be present before other steps. Above all, there have been few squabbles on whether the third form of trust should be included in the definitions.

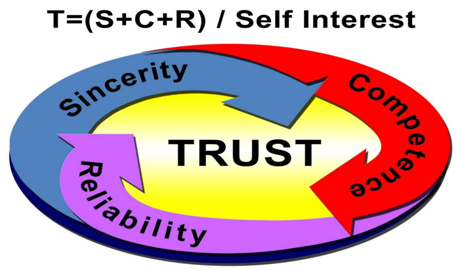

Figure 1: Trust Components

Source: trustedadvisor.com

Commitment and trust are essential to the success of organizations in general, and when trust is defined as the choice that each person makes when believing in someone or something, trust gives you publicity and free marketing for you and your organization. The business process is based on: open communications, commitment to full participation, good leadership, and flexibility to keep pace with variables. The increased confidence of the teachers and their leaders in the Organization increased their ability to achieve the goal and complete the work. (Joshua, 2003)

There are three broad ways in understanding the term 'Trust'. These include; intra organization phenomenon, inter organization phenomenon and marketing concern (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006). The first deals with trust within an organization i.e. supervisor to employee, the second is outside the organization wall as they relate to other organizations. The marketing concern as the name suggests deals on trust between organizations and their customers.

When it comes to the issue of employee performance in an organization, trust is one of the key factors to be considered. Trust forms the basis of all relationship and communications. (Brown et al., 2015) It is an influential tool that can increase reliability. Consequently, this reliability moves the organization in front foot against their competitors. It has been the tradition that good and efficient leaders find it easy to build trust within their organization.

However, this could be because of their knowledge on the value and importance. Luthra & Dahiya (2015), thinks trust is earned over the time period. They likened it to organizations dealings with the outside world. Consequently, they believe good and efficient leaders earn the trust of their business partners by working together as a team; highlighting communication as a tool.

Companies shouldn't fake their trustworthiness to anyone, because in the future it can have many negative consequences. Especially, if they lose the trust of the customers, they can go bankrupted in the worst cases. Trust and honesty are somehow always connected. To build out trust is a longer process than loose it. It can happen within minutes, that is why trust is a basic element of businesses. (Fukuyama, 1995)

Trust Building

Economic developing determinants such as trust and innovation are becoming subjects of several scientific studies. Innovation is a crucial attribute an organization uses to edge off competition from their rivals in the market and maintain larger market share. This overall keeps the organization in business for long foreseeable future as it impacts effectiveness and performance. Research has shown that organizations that create room for innovation and creativity perform better in turbulent times. Ordinarily, innovation arises as a result of market competition, but on other cases, organizations struggling for internal identity may focus on innovation as well. Table 1. shows the close relationship between the components of trust and the confidence building strategy.

Table 1: Strategies for Building Trust

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Trust Components</th><th>Strategies for Building Trust</th></tr>
<tr><td>Sincerity</td><td>Being perceived as open and honest about intent and motives; not having a hidden agenda.</td><td rowspan="4">• Increase your overall visibility
• Build connections with each employee
• Establish short-term focus and clarify direction</td></tr>
<tr><td>Competence</td><td>Knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the situation at hand.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reliability</td><td>Being perceived as dependable, following through on promises and commitment.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Self Interest</td><td>The degree that one is focused on self versus others. Focusing more on self rather than others will decrease trust.</td></tr>
</table>

Source: trustedadvisor.com

Luthra & Dahiya (2015) while examining communication as a tool for maintaining trust stated that trust is earned. In other words, trust building consists of these components; Sincerity, Competence, Reliability, and Self Interest. All these put together makes up trust building. While increase in sincerity, competence and reliability affects trust positively, self-interest on the other hand negatively affects trust. The reason for this is because; one is focusing on himself alone leaving others.

The implication of empowerment on leaders and their subordinate is huge. Not only does it act as management technique, it also serves as psychological state of the employee. (Spreitzer, 1996) He stated that empowerment encompasses the way leaders lead, how the individuals react, how peers interact, and how work-related processes are structured. The psychological effect of empowerment on employee tends to create a bond thereby increasing the trust level with the management. Empowerment as the opposite side of Autonomy is needed for employee to raise their performance levels. All leaders around the world expect to be empowered while these same leaders refuse to empower their subordinates. Some do these for reasons such as; to avoid risk emanating from the subordinate decision/action.

Studies have shown that empowerment is positively related to work satisfaction. The implication of this on organization reveals that employees are often distracted when they felt not being empowered. Also, this shows lack of trust on the leaders' side. Nevertheless, empowerment has been previously associated with organizational structure. This however, has been proved wrong as the recent research shows the importance of empowerment as it affects manager – employee relationship. (Gómez & Rosen, 2001) Delegation is one of the ways managers can empower their subordinates, building trust in the process. Other ways they can do this is by being transparent in decision making process and quality rewarding system. All these depict trust of the leader on the employee.

There are different trainings within the companies which can help to achieve this goal. For example, at my previous workplace we had a training, where the team members had to create 3 small groups and sell each other a product and pay attention to be reliable and trustworthy. Since we had to manage hotels from all around the world it was a must have skill to seems to be reliable. The other training payed attention to the team members and their relationship. (Fukuyama, 1995)

Fawcett at al. (2012), highlighted the importance of trust as they believe collaborative alliances cannot be sustained in absence of trust. They further placed trust in the heart of collaborative innovation capability. Additionally, recent researches have shown that there is positive relationship between trust in top management and innovation. (Michaelis et al., 2009) The innovation process requires a considerable amount of trust to create working environment. The risk and cost involved in the process has made it difficult for leaders to decide on best possible step to take, thereby risk losing their best talents. The worse of all may see the ideas of the employee taken to another place.

Nooteboom (2010) thinks both trust and innovation complement each other as the later starts where the former ends or vice versa. He further noted that ability of a leader to give his subordinate appropriate trust means lesser control over them thereby creating higher trust percentage within the organization. Furthermore, it is more difficult to analyse performance in innovation because there are unforeseeable opportunities in the future, hence giving lesser control and more support of innovation ability within an organization. It can be said, that the less the flexibility, the more the innovation and the vice versa as well.

Types of Trust within an Organization

Trust within an organization can be divided into three namely; Trust in management, Trust in supervisor and Trust in co-workers.

A. *Trust in Management*

Trust in management can be defined by two ways. Firstly, as a process by an individual, who becomes trustworthy for the other person. This trust is a criterion of success and survival, because it helps for individuals to collaborate. The second one is a process of assessing the reliability of others. Taking together these two aspects we can formulate the following definition of trust management: the activities of creating systems and methods that allow relying parties to participants make assessments and decisions regarding the dependability of potential transactions involving risk and allow players and system owners to increase and correctly represent the reliability of themselves and their systems.

Recent findings shows that trust in management has a positive influence in organizational commitment. Cho & Park (2011), states that increase in trust in senior management in turn increases organizational commitment and decreasing turnover intention in the process. This type of trust particularly is different from other types, because it reflects more on organizations policy, process and programs. In other words, trust in management is institutional and not rational like other types of trust.

In trust management there are some crucial points, for example some suspicion is often well-founded in competitive organizations, it can due to political circumstances as well, but the misplaced trust can cost a lot and can have a disastrous effect. Also, in potentially uncertain, risky and dangerous environment we need to know who we are dealing with, who we can trust and cannot, and we must be aware of potential dangers. (Grudzewski, 2008)

There is a strong relationship between trust and commitment. The greater the commitment, the greater the trust and vice versa. If your employees and customers feel that you are committed to the agreed work and contracts, they will increase their trust in the Belk and take care of what is raised. (Felfe & Schyns, 2006)

B. *Trust in Supervisors*

Findikli et al. (2010) believed that subordinates increase their work performances and willingness to work for an organization if they have trust on their supervisors. They further stated that 'there is a positive relationship between trust in supervisor and factors of ability, benevolence and integrity'. As mentioned earlier, this type of trust is interpersonal unlike trust in management. Thus, the employees are easily motivated when they have trust on their supervisors. On the other hand, employees that have no trust on the supervisors will not feel encouraged making extra efforts or assuming extra responsibilities.

C. *Trust in Co-workers*

The emergence of work team in the early 90's gave rise to studies in co – workers trust. It is widely believed that trust within co – workers facilitates easy ways of problem solving. Consequently, need arises for interdependence in collaboration among the co – workers. To this, Cho & Park (2011) thinks will increase the ability of co – workers to attend same assignment / project, thereby increasing the team performance altogether. Also, information sharing is expected to be on increase in an environment where the co – workers trust on each other.

A good leader can build trust within his co-workers in several ways. One of the ways he does this is by communicating. Communication is a key skill required by every good leader. Mayfield & Mayfield (2004), gave useful and detailed insights on how leaders verbal communication strategy can improve workers innovation. Other way he does this is by initiating team building activities. This activity can be in form of happy hour after work, which can be done occasionally. The purpose for such activity is creating sense of unity among the employee enabling them to see themselves as one family. Aside from communication and team building activities, there are other tools that directly or indirectly affect trust and realization of organization long term goals (i.e. fairness and consistency).

When someone at the company receives a message, he or she should not forward it until get a confirmation or receive more similar messages. It can be a good reason to forward it if the message has an ID number, or it is under the company server. This is just one case between the lots of cases where we should check the correctness. (Yefeng & Durresi, 2015)

We must also remember about that, once a person's reputation decreases, others will start refusing to carry its messages or even won't believe a true message so the chance of spreading a modified or a false message increases even more. A possibility for spreading a false message easier is for the malicious persons to work in cooperation. This means when they receive a certain message, they must agree to modify it in the same way. (Chonga et al., 2013)

Not all the problem is negative if you try to exploit it and turn it into a business opportunity and marketing, for example when a complaint is filed from the place where you headed it, if you neglected it has broken the trust between you and the customers and on the other hand if I choose their complaint and considered and cared for them and felt so Sensibly and morally, this will turn this problem into a job opportunity and publicity for free !! But they will prefer to deal with you in the future and because you have become their trust and thus used the method of repetition of service. (Johnson et al., 1999)

Increasing Trust

Trust is the foundation upon which all other human relationship lies. As easy it may seem to lose trust, it is very difficult to regain. However, there are several ways a good leader could rebuild the trust within the organization. One of the ways a leader can do this is by sharing information. As discussed earlier in the chapter, information is a power tool organization uses against their competitors. A good leader is expected to consistently share information about the organization, their position, customers and competitors. These altogether will empower the team to work harder in realization of the organizational goals.

When a person decides which version of a message is the correct one, it increases the trust of all the others in the company on the correct way and decreases it for the nodes on the incorrect paths. The other most important thing is in a company's life is the reputation. If a firm lost its reputation it loses customers, lost money, lost profit etc. and in the end goes bankrupt. As a potential improvement, employees from all the paths can be analysed, and only persons that appear on the incorrect paths should have their reputation decreased. However, they can behave badly occasionally, so they can also appear on both correct and incorrect way, which would make a receiving person increase their reputation. When one of the non-malicious persons on the path receives a message from one of the malicious employees, it should already know that the malicious employee has a bad reputation, and not forward its messages any further to others. This will happen after a time, when the algorithm is able to balance itself. (Bjerke, 1999)

Trust is one of the factors including organizational culture and social processes that supports knowledge sharing within an organization. (McNeish et al., 2010)

Lee et al. (2010) noted that 'team leaders who facilitates knowledge sharing and engender trust contribute to team effectiveness'. Trust not only acts as an antecedent of knowledge sharing, it also plays the role of consequences for knowledge sharing. The main role of Trust within an organization regarding knowledge sharing is to strengthen relationship existing within such organization and on various levels of management. However, there seems to be a hassle on roles of trust in group setting. This is because trust exists in between people even when they work in team or group. The implication of this on knowledge sharing results to uncontrolled information discretion, which may lead to increase in bargaining power relationship of one partner. This however may end up creating future competitor in the process.

Additionally, trust could also be regained by taking ownership of mistake. This happens to be one of the mistakes of leaders. Leading by example always entails consistency and transparency. When leaders are consistence in the manner, they deliver information, the level of trust within the organization tends to increase. Other ways a leader can improve trust is by providing feedback and resources to succeed. Every team member wants a goal and a feedback at the end of the day; this feedback may either positive or negative affect the employee psychologically.

Studies reveal that people are more likely to share useful information within an organization when there is trust. (Zand, 1972) This is because there are several records of improved performance as a result of knowledge sharing within an organization with high degree of trust among the employee. Also, co-workers, management are willing to listen and absorb the shared knowledge. However, it would be ideal to note that trust can either positively or negatively affect knowledge sharing within an organization, as well as the importance of other factors that necessitate knowledge sharing.

Having known that trust enables knowledge sharing in an organization, there are tools that act as motor for the process. Among the tools are transparency, open communication and active listening. Transparency be accessibility of information, decisions and processes within an organization. Open communication on the other hand relates to the mode of information sharing. It is essential in the sense that it limits gossip which emanates as form of knowledge sharing whereas the speaker is unknown or unofficial. Also, trust impact on knowledge sharing could further be measure with previous experience. When there has been a positive feedback regarding the knowledge shared in the previous encounters, it increases the likelihood of trust and further knowledge sharing.

Accordingly, knowledge sharing results in consequences such as improved performance and improvement in decision - making process. Coupled with, increase in sales and profit and reduced expenses and risk taken by organization. Improve group on the other hand facilitates easy decision making and increase focus in running business. (McNeish at al., 2010) Similarly, organization enjoys competitive advantage when their trust exists within the group. This is because trust could enable knowledge sharing which in turn positions organization mile above their rival/competitors.

The words and phrases from managers to employees that indicate the company's interest in employees remain hollow and fictional unless translated into the ground as actions seen by employees during their work. When employees find that the company deals with them in honest and realistic terms will increase their confidence in the company, so managers must follow These steps to achieve the motto (individuals are the most important assets of the company). (Johnson et al, 2005)

Limitations of Trust

For an employee, being able to earn the trust of your co-worker, supervisor or manager, you will have to stand out as being reliable and truthful; going extra miles when needed. Above all the advantages of trust within an organization, we still have demerits or loopholes created by trust. One of the limitations on employee path is absolute sincerity even when you are not at fault. The meaning of this is being able to take responsibility of mistakes without evasion or finding fault. Additionally, building of trust may back fire in the sense that you create bad impression for your manager. This can be in form saying ‘NO’ to duties you think you cannot compete effectively and efficiently.

On manager path, delegation is very crucial in completing their day to day activities. If a manager refuses to delegate, it will not only delay the whole process, but it will in turn result in some task not being performed at highest level. Therefore, there is need for delegation to the subordinate. Admittedly, this action on few occasions back fire. It is advised that every leader learn the process of delegation in order to know the best person to delegate and amount of support to give. This will enable him to get the required result. Otherwise, any mistake or error resulting from the delegation is treated as the managers’ mistake. Correspondingly, trust can secure your job even when others are laid off. It is also one of the reasons why human resource managers ask for referee during job offering.

Individual operation and competition are needed but focusing on them can create an unfavourable working environment for staff with no confidence, not to mention concerns about employees in this charged atmosphere. (Haider, 2010) It may happen that you give your trust to someone who is not worthy of it. You are surprised that you are talking about someone you are talking to or someone you have disagreed with. If, in this sense, giving trust is almost a risk, the only one who bears responsibility is you.

In a company it is important to forward the correct information to everyone, every employee and manager. If something is wrong in the communication, it easily can lead to gossiping. Thus, whenever two persons meet, they not only exchange their own local trust values, but also the trust values previously received from other employees. To have a local trust value is necessary and give away the most recent reliable and true information to every node at the company and avoid that the wrong information will spread and decrease the trust in the company and between the employees. (Ciobanu et al., 2017)

Identically, being trustworthy employee may lead to job overload leading to work life unbalance. Researches have shown that trusted employee work more time, because they are tied down always. However, this can be evaded by setting boundaries with your job commitment communicating with the management and when you feel overloaded. Most of the time, employees are afraid to reveal their feelings to their supervisor fearing the worse. At the same time, they forgot the worse which could happen if the goals were not met at the end of the day. Therefore, it is advised that employee communicate effectively with their supervisor their feelings. The supervisors on the hand are human enabling them to understand what the employee may be passing through.

There is a strong correlation between trust and employee satisfaction, high morale and low productivity. When confidence is lost between employees and their workplace, their commitment to work decreases, their productivity decreases, and they may think of leaving their jobs, while the employee who increases their trust with their work will feel part of their work, He has a moral and clings to his work to satisfy him. (Haider, 2010)

Conclusions

Having studied trust under various dimensions, it became clear about its value within an organization. Being able to build and maintain trust is imperative for any formal relationship to succeed. Indeed, trust is very delicate and therefore should be nurtured properly to avoid breaking it. Coupled with the delicacy, we also found out that regaining trust is not always easy. Action matters most in employee engagement, therefore leaders are advised to lead by example. This can be achieved by consistent, transparent and so on.

Furthermore, the effect of trust on innovation calls for more flexibility within organizations as it will not only encourage innovating spirit, but also create a good working environment. Also, leaders are advised to empower their subordinates in form of delegation as it helps to build the trust within the circle. These altogether will improve the general performance of the organization and pit them miles ahead of their competitors.

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DIFFERENCES IN EXPLOSIVE POWER OF THE LOWER LIMB BOYS OF ADOLESCENT AGE

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Abstract: *The research was carried out with the objective of establishing statistically significant differences between football players of FC "Novi Sad" (N=21) from Novi Sad and students who are not active in sports (N=23) also from Novi Sad, in order to point out the positive effects of training processes on the explosive strength of legs. The battery of 5 motor tests has been applied: Counter Movement Jump - CMJ – the height of bounce, Squat Jump - SJ- the height of bounce, Running for 10 m from a high start, Running for 15 m from a high start and Running for 20 m from a high start. Applying this multivariate analysis of variance, the existence of statistically significant difference (P=0.00) in motor space has been established. With individual analysis of the difference the following differences in variables have been detected: Counter Movement Jump – the height of bounce (p=0.00), Squat Jump - the height of bounce (p=0.03) and Running for 10 m from a high start (p=0.05) in favour of football player. Statistically much higher level of factor for evaluation of explosive power of legs caused by the uniqueness of movements structure and uniqueness of the speed of movement and speed of reaction, the start acceleration, due to training processes, were noticed.*

Key words: *football; motoric, students; differences; adolescents;*

Introduction

Football as a complex sport abundant in most various types of movements is classified into a poly-structural, complex sports. In order to be able to perform all football tasks, a football player must, among everything else, have a certain level of motor abilities which is possible to happen only with the help of systematic physical condition practices (Smajic, Javorac, Molnar, & Barasic, 2014).

In most sport games and in individual sport, strength is one of the most dominant motor abilities (Pelemis, Ujsasi, Dzinovic, & Josic, 2018). Not a single movement nor action in sport activities cannot be carried out without manifestation of some form of muscle strength. The ability that enables an individual maximal acceleration of its own body, object or partner in activities is the explosive strength. This motoric ability can be defined as the ability of absolute excitement of maximal number of muscle units per unit of time, in a movement which is determined by a single giving of acceleration to its own body or outer object, and which results in the efficient mastering of spatial distance. One the explosive strength is one of dominant abilities in the field of sport, which is a matter of interest here, it must be properly diagnosed, selected from the population and further developed. The evaluation of motor abilities of football player presents one of significant factors of football talents identification and development. (Tomic, Smajic, Radoman, Vujovic, & Ivancic, 2012). In the process of training sport it is relevant to choose adequate operators (exercises), suitable for the target process which is made easier by respecting the general principles of training sport. Application of the principle of training sport in sport depends on the specific goals of training. The basic principles of training must not be observed separately, because there is a tight relationship among them.They determine the content, means, methods and organization of training (Kalentic, Cvetkovic, & Obradovic, 2008).

The lack of information related to the factors which initiate and control the process of increasing of muscle mass and force with adolescents make it harder to precisely separate increasing of strength that came as a result of programmed training from the increasing which occurred due to maturing (Markovic, 2005; Ignjatovic, Radovanovic, & Stankovic, 2007). Some studies suggest that regular strength training results in lower total fat and increasing lean body mass (Zatsiorsky, & Kraemer, 2009).

The problem of difference in manifestation of motor abilities of football players and children who are not active in sport was something that many researchers dealt with (Bjelica, 2005; Kalentic, Cvetkovic, & Obradovic, 2008; Smajic, Javorac, Molnar, & Barasic, 2014) and confirmed positive influences of training processes on manifestation of, first of all, strength.

The protocols of explosive strength testing, type jumping, the so-called isoinertial dynamometry, are carried out with tests constructed in the form of vertical jumps with and without a burden, on the platform for measuring of force (Fratric, 2006). Tests and their results of evaluating different forms of explosive strength, type jumping, therefore, the specificity of each and every sport dictate the choice of tests in order to get a complete picture on sportsman (Milanovic, Jukic, & Vuleta, 2005). The explosive strength represents a significant factor in those activities in which it is necessary to provide great acceleration to the mass of body, of separate parts of body or outer object. This is mainly concerned with the activities of the following types: jumps (jumps in basketball, handball and volleyball, jumping disciplines and athletics etc.). (Newton, & Kreamer, 1994). Explosive strength in football must be very well developed in order for players to be able to adequately respond to the requests of the game itself. It is well-known that during the game, footballers often perform short sprints, quick twists, jumps and strong goal-kicks, which would be impossible to perform without developed explosive strength (Markovic, Dizdar, Jukic, & Cardinale, 2004).

The research problem is establishing differences in explosive strength of legs with children who train football and children who are not physically active in adolescent age. The aim of research is to determine any significant differences between adolescents who participate in sports and those who do not deal with explosive leg strength, while the subject of the research itself explosive leg strength. The research moved from the assumption that: H_1- there are statistically significant difference in manifestation of explosive strength of legs with children who train football and children who are not physically active in favour of football players.

Method

The sample of examinees made a total number of 44, male, age 12-13 (±6 months). The examinees who train football are members of FC “Novi Sad” (N=21) and at the time of conducting the tests, they had at least two years of sports experience dealing with the mentioned sport. Students who are not engaged in active sports (N=23) were people who regularly attend physical education in primary school "Dusan Radovic" from Novi Sad and sixth grades attend.

Performances of explosive strength of lower limps are estimated with the help of measuring on tanziometric platform “Kistler QuatroJump“ (Stojanovic, 2008). The sample of variables was made of: Counter Movement Jump - CMJ- the height of bounce (cm); Squat Jump - SJ – the height of bounce (cm); Running for 10 m from a high start (s); Running for 15 m from a high start (s) and Running for 20 m from a high start (s).

Measuring speed on 10, 15 and 20 m from a high start it was necessary to use the system of photo-cells (Beam Trainer QF11), they have the accuracy of measurements from1/100 seconds (Sudarov, & Fratric, 2010). Motor tests were planned in such way to avoid the influence of one test on the other. The first tests were implemented on tenziometrics platform, followed by tests running 10, 15 and 20 meters. Prior to any test, examinees were introduced with the test protocol in detail, after which there would be a practical presentation. Each examinee would have one trial attempt after which two more attempts followed. Only the better result was taken for statistical analysis. Besides these parameters, body weight and body mass of each and every examinee was measures. For measuring body height Martin anthropometer was used. The precision of this instrument is 0.1cm. The acquired values are expressed in centimeters (cm). For calculation of body mass a decimal digital scales will be used (Birotehna SD301).

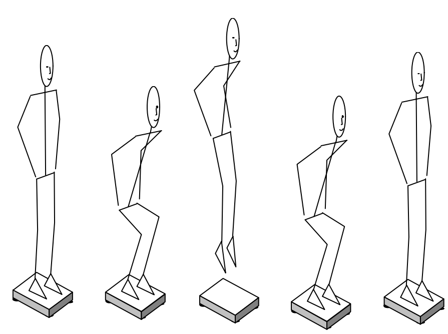
Testing was carried out in the sport club where the football players practice, and which examinees who are not active in sport, it was performed in the school gym. Body mass and height are firstly measured, and then the examinees were submitted to the testing on tenziometrics platform. Anthropometric characteristics were measured directly before the testing of motor abilities. Prior testing on tanziometrics platform, the examinees were introduced in detail with the protocol of testing.

Testing Protocol

Counter Movement Jump- CMJ. During testing all phases of jump are connected, that is there was no break in the moment of changing the direction of movement. The examinees hands are fixed on hips in order to avoid the swing of hands that would facilitate the jump. Respondent is standing in upright position for a few seconds and from that position he lowers down in the position of counter movement jump (legs are flexed in knees under the angle of 90º) and without stopping in the moment of changing the direction of movement, he performs maximal vertical jump. What follows is soft landing with light flexion in knees. New taking of initial position followed. This test evaluates the eccentric-concentric component of the jump explosiveness (the height of jump measured in centimeters).

Squat Jump-SJ is performed out from a static position. The examinee's hands are fixed on hips in order to avoid the swing of hands that would facilitate the jump. Respondent is standing in upright position for a few seconds and from that position he lowers down in the position of counter movement jump (legs are flexed in knees under the angle of 90º) where he stands still for 2 seconds. After the still stage follows a maximal vertical jump, then landing with light flexion in knees. Taking the initial position follows. This test evaluates the concentric component of jump explosiveness (the height of jump measured in centimeters).

Picture 1. INSTRUMENT KISTLER QUATROJUMP Picture 2. SHOW JUMP IN PHASES



For estimation of descriptive characteristics of variables there were the following calculations: arithmetic mean (AS), standard deviation (SD), minimal value (MIN), maximal value (MAX) of the measured results. For estimation of normality of distribution in the analysed variables, Shapiro Wilk test was used. For establishing the differences in the explosive strength of legs between the groups formed in advance, the multivariance (MANOVA) and univariance analysis or variance (ANOVA) were used. Statistical significance will be established on the level $p \leq 0.05$. The acquired data are processed in a statistic package SPSS 20.0.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the basic descriptive statistics for both groups of respondents. It can be noted that the sub-sample players on average higher (168.15±7.62 cm) relative to the sub-sample of pupils (166,13±8,04 cm), and that the value of the body weight less the football players (53.56±9.30 kg) compared to pupils (54.2 ±9.63 kg).

Analyzing the descriptive statistical parameters of motor variables in non-sporting students, one can conclude that the homogeneity of the results in all motor variables is noticed on the basis that in the tested motor variables three standard deviations can be classified into their arithmetic meanings. This is also the case in the sub player of the football player.

Table 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES

Variable	Group	MIN	MAX	AS	S	CV	SWp
Counter Movement Jump - CMJ- the height of bounce (cm)	F	23.63	38.46	30.05	3.63	12.07	0.54
	U	16.70	36.29	25.91	4.73	18.25	0.89
Squat Jump - SJ – the height of bounce (cm)	F	22.05	37.50	28.49	3.81	13.37	0.76
	U	19.13	39.01	25.38	4.86	19.14	0.30
Running for 10 m from a high start (s)	F	1.85	2.22	1.99	0.09	4.52	0.21
	U	1.84	2.34	2.06	0.13	6.31	0.88
Running for 15 m from a high start (s)	F	2.55	3.03	2.73	0.12	4.39	0.77
	U	2.54	3.19	2.83	0.18	6.36	0.89
Running for 20 m from a high start (s)	F	3.17	3.80	3.44	0.15	4.36	0.88
	U	3.20	4.02	3.56	0.23	6,46	0.84
Body mass (kg)	F	35.20	78.70	53.56	9.30	17.36	0.17
	U	37.50	71.00	54.28	9.63	17.74	0.56
Body height (cm)	F	151.70	182.60	168.15	7.62	4.53	0.94
	U	149.00	180.50	166.13	8.04	4.83	0.63

Legend: F – football players; U - students; MIN–minimal values; MAX–maximal values of the measured results; AS – arithmetic mean; S – standard deviation; CV – coefficient of variation, SWp – level of statistic Shapiro -Wilk test.

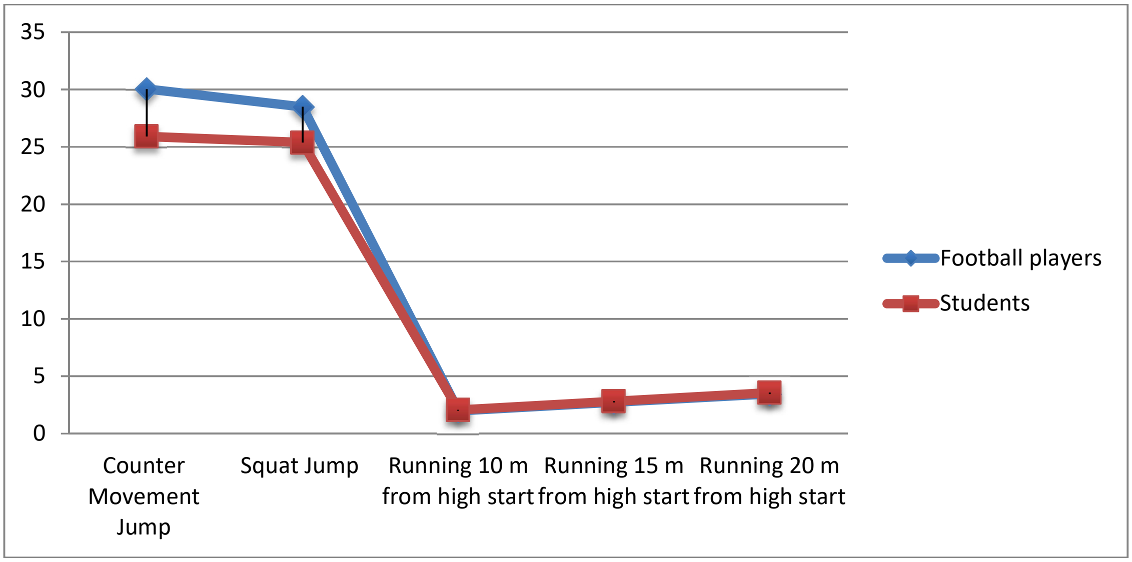
Based on F value (table 2) it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference (P=0,00) between the football players and students who are not active in sport regarding their motor abilities, observing the entire system of applied variables. By individual analysis of each and every motor variable, it can be concluded that there are statistically significant differences in the following variables: Counter Movement Jump - CMJ- the height of bounce (p=0,00), Squat Jump - SJ - the height of bounce (p=0,03), Running for 20 m from a high start (p=0,05) in favour of football players. In the remaining 2 variables some statistically significant differences were not established.

Table 2. DIFFERENCES OF DIFFERENT GROUPS EXAMINEES IN MOTOR VARIABLES

Variable	f	p	F	P
Counter Movement Jump - CMJ- the height of bounce (cm)	9.61	**0.00**		
Squat Jump - SJ – the height of bounce (cm)	5.05	**0.03**		
Running for 10 m from a high start (s)	3.84	0.06	**2.44**	**0.05**
Running for 15 m from a high start (s)	3.51	0.07		
Running for 20 m from a high start (s)	3.83	**0.05**		

Legend: f – univariance f test; p – level of statistical significance of f test; F – multivariance i Wilk's F test; p – statistical significance of multivariance F test.

Graph 1. AVERAGE VALUES OF MOTOR VARIABLES



Research investigations were carried out on a sample of 21 players from Novi Sad and 23 sixth grade students who do not pursue primary school "Dusko Radovic" from Novi Sad, in order to establish the differences in the field of explosive strength of legs. The survey results point out to the existence of statistically significant differences (P=0.05) in the entire motor area and which indicate the acceptance of the set research hypothesis (H_1). Guided with the training processes in the period of about 2 years and a continuous work, the examinees who are training football showed during measurements far better average values in variables for estimation of vertical jumps: Counter Movement Jump – CMJ - the height of (p=0.00), Squat Jump - SJ – the height of bounce, and in those variables there were the most prominent statistically significant differences in relation to students who are not engaged in sports. The structure of movement itself in football, abundant in starts, jumps for the ball and head kicks, speed-ups, caused statistically far better results of manifestations of explosive strength in the test of Running for 20m from a high start in favour of football players. Such acquired data confirms the so-far results Bjelica (2005) who also established the existence in compared to non-athletes of manifesting difference in favour of football players in the field of strength, explosive strength. Furthermore, the correlation was found with the research of Joksimovic, Joksimovic, & Bojic (2016) who established some higher level of manifestation of explosive strength in the test Running for 20 m from a high start and explosive strength manifested through test of Long jump. Although there were no statistically significant differences in tests of Running for 10 and 15 m from a high start, it should be pointed out that the football players had in these variables on average far better results in relation to students who are not engaged in sports, which confirms that for football, explosive strength is extremely significant (Lolic, Bajric, & Lolic, 2011).

Although the processes of maturing are inevitably present in the development of every young organism, with organized and guided physical activity you can increase in an efficient way positive influence of process of maturing on the development of certain motor abilities.

With adequate choice of means and the right quantity of burden during the adequate time duration in certain sensitive periods of growth and development of young football players, some key training influence are produced. Thanks to those influences in the adult age some maximal genetic potentials can be reached. By missing to react duly, motor abilities of future football players will most definitely stay on a lower level than maximally possible. Critical periods of growth and development are highly sensitive with influences of guided training burdenings, they are called sensitive periods and are different for different motor abilities.

The success in every field, and in the field of sport as well, is the result of a planned and arduous work. All successful top sportsmen are trained individuals who excel in their activities and follow well-prepared long-term plan of training in the course of many years. Training is the basis of process of progressive exercising that improves the potential of reaching the optimal results. For football players those are long-term programmes for development of physical condition of body and mind which lead to perfection of performance in its sport field. Apart from the training competence for annual planning of training process, it is very important to look further and perform long-term planning of development of football player. Football players should, together with his coach, start this process in the young school age so that he could progressively perform growth of body and mind thereby coming to the ultimate success, observing everything from a long-term perspective.

From theoretical point of view, the work should help with the choice of parameters of motor field which should be followed in the work with younger categories of football players as well as with the choice of adequate motor tests which could be applied in everyday work.

Conclusion

This work could contribute the anthropological disciplines like biological anthropology and anthropomotorics, sport training and it could be reflected in the analysis of stage of certain motor abilities. The work can help trainers in the selection of suitable motor tests that can be adapted, because on the basis of the obtained results, it would be possible to plan and program possible corrections in the training process as well as teachers in schools because part of the teaching process could be directed towards raising the level of explosive power boy, because explosive power makes dominant ability in complex both cyclic and acyclic activities.

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Statement

The authors have equally contributed to the paper.

Conflict of interest

We declare there is not conflict of interest between authors.

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PERCEPTIONS OF FUTURE ENGINEERING TEACHERS ON FORMATIVE E-ASSESSMENT USING THE CLASSROOM RESPONSE SYSTEM

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Abstract: *The new culture of higher education emphasizes the importance of integrating assessment into the training process. E-assessment, a term used to describe technology-facilitated assessment, can be useful and efficient in terms of cost and time, but also of providing an immediate feedback to improve the teaching and learning process. This study investigates students' perception of the effectiveness of using formative e-assessment in teaching activities and the usefulness of implementing a Classroom Response System (CRS) in improving students' learning as future engineer teachers. The study employed quantitative and qualitative research methods by two questionnaires to collect data from 75 second-year students in initial teacher training program, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The results were very encouraging and practically all students engaged in this process felt the e-assessment added value to their learning and they would like to see it implemented in other courses. By encouraging students to correct errors and to receive award marks, it has improved students' learning experience. The results are discussed considering relevant research to suggest recommendations for improving e-learning implementations in initial teacher training.*

Keywords: *formative e-assessment; classroom response system; mobile learning; future engineering teachers.*

1. Introduction

The new culture of higher education emphasizes the importance of integrating assessment into the process of instruction, decisively influencing the process of helping students to learn and understand their progresses in learning. In recent decades, the focus has been on integrating assessment into learning and its role in contributing to the development of this process in a formative way (Bryan and Clegg, 2006; Irons, 2008; Gilbert et al., 2011). Formative assessment is an assessment of the regulation of the training, carried out continuously, systematically, analytically, directly in the service of the individual and his training, which tends to improve it, to make it more efficient and, why not, more enjoyable (Bocos, M.-D., Raduţ Taciu, R., Stan, C., 2016). It can also be seen as an assessment for learning that takes place during training to support learning. Formative assessment activities are intrinsic aspects of training that allow learning to be controlled and training to be changed until the desired learning objectives have been achieved. Formative assessment is applied as a source of continuous feedback to improve teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 2008). Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006) and Hattie & Timperly (2007) stated that feedback is most effective when directly related to clearly defined learning objectives and that effective formative feedback is not based solely on monitoring progress towards these specific objectives, but it must encourage students to develop effective learning strategies. Thus, assessment must now be considered as a learning situation in its proper meaning (assessment for learning or formative assessment), in addition to fulfilling its main function of verifying what students know and what they can do at a moment of learning (assessment of learning or summative assessment).

With the advent of technology and its role in education, a large body of research has developed in investigating the role of technology in the educational process and their effects in improving the interactive educational environment (Irving, K., 2015). Most students today grew up with digital technologies such as the internet, smart phones and tablets. Teachers are under pressure to review programs to provide more efficient and effective training. It is essential to use the training time in the most appropriate possible ways. **E-evaluation**, a term used to describe the evaluation facilitated by the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), can be an useful and efficient way in terms of cost and time to implement formative and ongoing evaluation. Online environments can be exploited to promote assessment as part of learning. Over the past two decades, many online and mixed courses have been developed by higher education programs to respond to 'the various needs and desires of students and the need for longer time to meet growing curricular requirements' (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Almost all universities have recognized the potential of online courses that have become an essential strategy in university programs. Even universities that do not offer such courses use learning management systems in various fields. On the other hand, online courses have not only become a destination for many universities, but also the beginning of a new paradigm and a new pedagogical method called mixed or blended learning. In higher education, the focus remains on the summative assessment, while formative assessment receives little attention despite its essential role in promoting learning (Pachler, Daly, Mor and Mellar, 2010; Wang, Wang, & Huang, 2008). In this regard, the researchers recommended a reorientation of the focus on online formative assessment to create student-centred learning and assessment environments. Thus, Pachler et al. (2010) used the term **formative e-assessment** that they defined as 'the use of ICT to support the iterative process of gathering and analysing information about student learning by teachers as well as learners and of evaluating it in relation to prior achievement and attainment of intended, as well as unintended learning outcomes'. In the same sense, Gikandi et al. (2011) define on-line formative assessment as a presentation of formative assessment in on-line learning and blended learning where the teacher and students are detached from time and/or space and where a considerable amount of teaching/learning events are driven by web-based technologies. Pachler et al. (2010) declared the field of formative e-assessment as highly complex, because it is integrated in the teaching and learning process and because the technology 'decides to restructure the context of the teacher-student interaction'.

Extending wireless distance learning has led to the emergence of mobile learning as an 'extension of e-learning' (Brown apud Park, 2011), a new way to obtain, process and transmit information for educational purposes using mobile technology equipment. Pedagogical research on mobile learning as an independent method or learning enrichment tool is relatively new. Thus, mobile learning has emerged as a potential educational method, but also as a supporting tool in the educational process, especially through mobile phones and tablets/iPads.

There are several new technologies and software introduced free or at affordable prices that help teachers with formative assessment during the training process and enhancing learning and evaluation. One of these technologies is the Classroom Response System (CRS). Irving (2015) said these tools 'assist the formative assessment process by supporting classroom environments that allow students and teachers to evaluate learning and to provide mechanisms for presenting information about student learning during training sessions.' Bruff (2009) defined the Classroom Response Systems (CRSs) as 'instructive technologies that enable instructors to quickly collect and analyse students' answers to questions placed during the class'. These technologies include, but are not limited to: Clickers, Kahoot, Socrative, Quiz Socket, Plickers, RecaP, Ombea, Top Hat, VotApedia, Poll Everywhere etc. The common denominator among these technologies is their ability to collect real-time data from formative assessment that helps the teacher to provide feedback on time. Some use specialized hardware (generically called clickers) to allow students to respond to the questions, some use mobile phones (cellulars), such as Wiley's Click On, Poll Everywhere, VotApedia, and some use web enabled devices like eClicker.

In a study by Dunn et al. (2013), some research is synthesized including the benefits of using a CRS, such as improving students' attitudes towards classes, improving attentiveness, improving attendance, improving engagement in course, enhancing teacher-student interaction by providing immediate feedback, especially in large classes and allowing students to remain anonymous. Research results have shown that CRSs have raised questions and feedback when technology is integrated with pedagogy, increased attendant involvement and had a positive effect on students' attitudes and academic performance. The help given by technology through these systems is seen in activating student thinking, providing immediate feedback, motivating participation and promoting knowledge-centred discussions. Also, essential features of CRSs help teachers to effectively transform the class from teacher-centred to student-centred. This is because CRSs help assess students' learning by questioning the topic, collecting student responses instantly and quickly, and finally projecting the answers of the entire class.

Many CRSs allow different types of questions, although multiple-choice questions seem to be most commonly used. Wilson et al. (2011) found that the use of multiple-choice questions administered by the computer as formative assessment techniques had an encouraging influence on student action. There are arguments about whether e-assessment, especially in the common form of using multiple choice questions, can benefit deep learning (Jordan, 2009). It is recognized that multiple choice tests often do not test upper-level skills or how students apply in practice what they have learned. However, multiple choice and continuous assessment approaches have been observed as assessment techniques favoured by students (Furnham et al., 2011), therefore it is expected that they will increase engagement, motivation and learning.

It has been widely recognized that e-assessment can help improve quality student learning experience, and many researches have been done on attitudes towards e-assessment from academic staff. Relatively little research has recorded students' perspectives on assessment experiences directly, especially the students' perspective as future teachers in their initial teacher training program.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

The purpose of the current study is to contribute to the literature on student learning using a CRS technology in formative e-assessment activities at future engineering teachers. The study will try to answer the following three questions in terms of students' perception:

1. What are the future teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of using formative e-assessment to improve learning within university courses?

2. To what extent does the on-line formative assessment vary, depending to gender and faculty profile of future teachers?

3. What is the usefulness of implementing Kahoot as a technology tool in helping formative e-assessment to enhance students' learning?

Descriptive research captures participants' attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and perceptions of current issues and trends. The study was conducted by one of the researchers in the course 'Theory and Methodology of Instruction. Theory and Methodology of Evaluation', for 10 weeks.

The study employed mixed research methods: quantitative by using the means and standard deviations and qualitative by analysing students' responses to four open-ended questions. In this case, no pre-determined responses were requested, and the participants were free to express their opinions. The researcher gave the quizzes in an online environment called as Classroom Response System, Kahoot, via students' mobile phones. The feedback was immediately given to both the researcher and the students and these feedbacks were taken into consideration during the training. At the same time, we used the digital portfolio that consisted of alternative assessment methods, such as the preparation of semi-structured or free essays, didactic activity projects, evaluation tests with different items in the specialized field.

2.2. Participants

The study sample consisted of 75 students representing second year level attending the initial teacher training program at Technical University of Cluj-Napoca. Out of the 75 participants, 25 are men (33.3%) and 50 are women (66.7%), and 31 subjects are enrolled on the electrical profile, 24 subjects on the building profile and 20 subjects on the mechanical profile.

2.3. Measures

Two questionnaires were presented to them in their classroom. First questionnaire related to the students' general views on formative e-assessment (14 items) within university courses. The second questionnaire used in this study consisted of 10 items on the efficiency of using Kahoot technology with multiple-choice quizzes implemented in this course. For both questionnaires the statements are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from one (Strongly Agree) to five (Strongly Disagree). For open-ended questions, only four questions were used to ask students about their perception on how effective is using Kahoot in the classroom in evaluation. The open-ended questions gave the participants the opportunity to elaborate and explain in-depth their perception regarding the use of Kahoot as a tool for formative e-assessment to improve learning. The use of the mixed methods is to allow data collection so deeper understanding can be attained.

3. Results

In this research, descriptive statistics have been used in the analysis of quantitative data, and the results have been evaluated in frequencies, percentages and means.

Aiming to investigate future teachers' perceptions of the importance and effectiveness of using formative e-assessment, it was resorted to calculating of the means for each item of the first questionnaire. The analysis based on observed scores by items, showed a high level of opinions for formative e-assessment (Table 1). The descriptive statistics results showed that the total sample mean score was at high level (M=2.42, SD=0.46). The higher mean was found at the item: *Feedback given is fas*t (M=1.58) and the lowest mean was found at the item: *Formative e-assessment favours some students more than others* (M=3.40) (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the formative e-assessment items

	Items	**Means**	**SD**
1.	Formative e-assessment must be an integral part of teaching-learning process.	1.64	0.69
2.	Using technology based formative assessment in the class can add value to my learning.	2.64	0.99
3.	Formative e-assessment helps me to identify the meanings of the different concepts that we strive to understand.	2.46	0.92
4.	Formative e-assessment helps me to form the skills that we acquire with difficulty.	2.50	0.79
5.	Formative e-assessment provides the necessary information to adjust teaching and learning while it happens.	2.44	0.73
6.	Formative e-assessment guides teachers and students in decision-making on how to advance in achieving their goals.	2.46	0.74
7.	Technical problems can make formative e-assessment impractical.	2.68	0.46
8.	The technology used in formative e-assessment is reliable.	2.54	0.82

9.	Online quizzes are more affordable than paper-based assessment.	2.48	0.96
10.	Marking is more accurate, because computers don't suffer from human error.	2.42	1.09
11.	Feedback given is fast.	1.58	0.63
12.	Feedback is easy to understand.	2.44	1.01
13.	Formative e-assessment favours some students more than others.	3.40	1.06
14.	Formative e-assessment goes hand in hand with e-learning (e.g. using Moodle).	2.17	0.64
	OVERALL	2.41	0.82

In investigating students' perceptions about the role of formative e-assessment in their courses, it is obvious from the research data that their responses showed how highly they view the importance of formative e-assessment as an integral part of teaching-learning process (88%). Of the respondents, 41.3% agree that using technology based formative assessment in the class can add value to their learning, while 21.3% believe the opposite. They also agree that this form of assessment helps to identify the meanings of the different concepts that students strive to understand (56%), to form the skills that students acquire with difficulty (57.3%), to provide the necessary information to adjust teaching and learning while it happens (65.4%), to guide teachers and students in decision-making on how to advance in achieving the goals (62.7%). The results also showed that 32% of participants agree that technical problems can make formative e-assessment impractical, while 68% of future teachers are undecided. Almost half of the participants agree that the technology used in formative e-assessment is reliable (48%). Their perception was that online quizzes are better than paper-based assessment (64%). Many respondents agree and strongly agree that marking is more accurate, because computers don't suffer from human error (64%). Also, most of the future teachers seemed to agree that feedback given is fast (94.7%) and is easy to understand (62.7%). Only 21.3% agree that formative e-assessment favour some students more than others, while 54.7% believe the opposite. Of the 75 future teachers, 69.3% of participants agree that the formative e-assessment goes hand in hand with e-learning (e.g. using Moodle).

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis for research question no. 2 showed that future teachers' background variables such as gender and the faculty profile of the future teachers, accounted for very slight differences in items scores, but they were not statistically significant (Table 2).

Table 2. Background variables and mean scores

Variable	**N**	**Mean scores**	**SD**
Gender	Male = 25	2.42	0.467
	Female = 50	2.41	0.472
Faculty profile	Electrical profile = 31	2.39	0.395
	Building profile = 24	2.56	0.529
	Mechanical profile = 20	2.28	0.468

For item 1, 'Formative e-assessment must be an integral part of teaching-learning process', 92% of male students and 86% of female students responded strongly agree and agree. For the same question, the students from the three profiles chose almost the same responses. For item 2, 'Using technology based formative assessment in the class can add value to my learning', 40% of male students and 42% of female students chose similar responses. The intention of introducing or even using the online assessment by the staff of our university is to enhance the formative role of testing, but its effects on learning efficiency are perceived slightly differently by students in different profiles. It also seems that 76% of male students and 66% of female students responded agree and strongly agree that 'Formative e-assessment goes hand in hand with e-learning (e.g. using Moodle)' (item 3).

The authors of this study have been using Kahoot technology in a university course in the initial teacher training program and were interested in finding out its effectiveness for formative e-assessment to enhance students' learning. Therefore, to further explore the usefulness of implementing Kahoot as a technology tool in aiding formative e-assessment in the classroom, students indicated that they generally agree on the usefulness of implementing this technology (M=1.72, SD=0.44). As students, participants showed that they generally liked to use Kahoot (M=1.61, SD=0.63) and it helped them to check their progress in learning and to master the subjects they learned (M=2.25, SD=0.91). Furthermore, they stated that they plan to use Kahoot with their students when they will become teachers (M=1.54, SD=0.81). Students who participated in this study know the features that Kahoot provides its users, e.g. it is simple to use in the course, it helped students to get immediate feedback about their responses, the feedback is helpful, the scoring was correct, the questions were well written, different questions were offered, with a range of means between 1.26–1.77 and standard deviations between 0.57–0.84. For item 'I prefer to work marked by Kahoot than by a teacher as human tutor' (M=3.1, SD=1.12), 36% of the future teachers responded with disagree and strongly disagree, while 38.7% of them were undecided.

Although, the participants' qualitative responses covered a wide range of aspects, the researchers highlight the most important themes emerged from these responses. In responses to the first open-ended question 'How do you compare the Kahoot assessment with the assessment from other courses?' participants overwhelmingly agree that Kahoot technology is an effective tool in evaluation and the learning process. The assessment provided by Kahoot is objective, interesting, accessible, fast, easy to use and fun. As students, they argue that Kahoot help them to be engaged in the course. One student stated, 'I think it is a fast and efficient method of evaluation.' On the same line, another respondent wrote, 'I think it is a more interactive method that draws your attention and preserves it over the evaluation period.' A third student stated, 'Kahoot is totally objective, and this is not always available for a teacher.' Most students found that using Kahoot is an effective way to interact in large-classes. It is obvious that new generations (millennials) want to use technology in their daily life and using it in the class has a positive effect on students learning as many researchers said (Preszler et al, 2007; Sheill, Lukoff, & Mazur, 2013). Another aspect that the researchers identified in the participants' responses to the question 'What were the things you liked the most at Kahoot?' is saving the learning time. One student wrote, 'I liked the short time I had to answer the questions', and another responded, 'I liked the most that everything was at an alert pace, that it put me the concentration capacity 'in moving' and that it awakened the competitive spirit in me. And I had fun'. Many of the respondents report the speed of feedback and the ease with which Kahoot can be used by several students at the same time. Among the participants' answers to the question, 'What were the things you liked the least at Kahoot?' was the time too short for the answer. One student wrote, 'The response time was sometimes short.' Another respondent wrote 'I didn't like the fact that if you answered later, you received a lower score.' The other participants' answer to the above question is about technical difficulties and problems. For the open-ended question 'What improvements would you recommend to Kahoot?', they indicated a longer response time and a better internet connection.

In analysing and discussing the open-ended responses, the researchers centred their attention on the relevance of the responses to the research's main questions. In other words, to what extent the participants' open-ended responses contribute to the research questions. Obviously, these responses supported the statements of participants in the first questionnaire when they agreed that using technology based formative assessment in the class can add value to student learning (M=2.64). For example, improving students' engagement by using Kahoot as a tool for formative assessment is a huge factor in creating an effective learning environment that promotes learning.

4. Discussions

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of future teachers about the effectiveness of using formative e-assessment, on gender and faculty profile differences, as well as the usefulness of implementing Kahoot as a technological tool in supporting formative e-assessment to improve student learning enrolled in the initial teacher training program.

As seen in this study's results, the future engineering teachers indicate a high level of opinions for formative e-assessment in their courses. Most respondents give the importance of formative e-assessment as an integral part of the teaching-learning process (88%). Also, most of the future teachers seemed to agree that the feedback given is fast and it is easy to understand, while only 21.3% agree that formative e-assessment favour some students more than others.

The positive student perception towards formative e-assessments is hard to be contested. As it was anticipated, students were positively predisposed towards the use of technology in assessment. This type of assessment sometimes used during the learning process provides the teacher with information required to adjust the teaching methods. On the other hand, students must be informed of the assessment results as soon as possible. The method is very well received if the assessment results are analysed by the teacher, and the style or contents of the course are changed where necessary. Not so much the audio-visual message delivered by ICT is likely to produce educational effects, as its efficient integration into an active didactic strategy, designed by the teacher, whose presence remains necessary.

The feedback obtained from the online tests or quizzes may allow to identify and correct any deficiencies or difficult concepts. It is also important to identify the nature of problems in filling the online quizzes and to eliminate them. Furthermore, in the eyes of the students, online assessment is considered to be more correct than paper-based one. The participating students appreciate the benefits of the online quizzes, the most valued being the possibility of obtaining the results immediately after the quiz is completed by means of feedback, and the possibility of verifying the current level of knowledge. However, in the present study some participants had been familiar with the use of Moodle platform, for example, and this has certainly contributed to their positive stance.

The results of the first questionnaire also indicated that future teachers' background variables such as gender and the faculty profile of the future teacher were not statistically significant. Again, it may come as a surprise to those who might assume gender differences to make them more visible.

To explore the usefulness of implementing Kahoot as a technology tool in aiding formative assessment into a course, students generally indicated that they agree on the usefulness of implementing Kahoot. As students, participants agreed that they liked to use Kahoot, it was simple to use in the course, it helped students get immediate feedback about their responses, the feedback was helpful, the scoring was correct, the questions were well written, different questions were offered. Furthermore, they stated that they plan to use Kahoot with their students when they will become teachers. Students appreciated that Kahoot helped them to obtain instant feedback on their learning. Furthermore, the way in which the researcher used the gathered results to inform the students was also appreciated. In this sense, using Kahoot retained the advantages of using other CRS as reported in the literature.

The positive impact of using technology to add value to the learning process, as presented in the results of this study, is in line with what several researchers have argued (Irving, 2015; Ramsey & Duffy, 2016). One of the main drivers for the introduction of e-assessment is often the claim that it has the advantages of saving time and better use of resources. The participants pointed out that the use of Kahoot in the course provides objectivity, commitment, accessibility, speed, ease of use and even fun, which, eventually, aid the learning process. Another important factor identified by the respondents who expected to improve their learning is that using Kahoot saves the learning time.

The combination of reward points and anonymous responses with instant feedback means that students are free to make mistakes without fear of social embarrassment (in front of peers or the instructor) or fear of adversely impacting their notes. The systems' ability to provide anonymous participation with private accountability is a critical feature of CRSs.

Regarding the problems, challenges and difficulties, most of the participants pointed out that technology resources and support are the main issues. As with any technology, users of Kahoot may experience technological problems sometimes, some due to university-specific issues (the internet connection fails) or computer-specific issues (for example, slow browser response). In the same line, Ali and Elmahdi (2001) stressed the correct integration of technology in training activities, arguing that when technology tools 'are not embedded for the intended use, because of the inability to use them, it defeats the purpose for which they were made available'.

From the comments and results above, it shows that students appreciated and enjoyed online formative assessment. In this way, we saw the use of a CRS such as Kahoot as a practical way of implementing assessment as learning. In the literature, there is a strong agreement that CRSs promote learning when coupled with appropriate pedagogical methodologies. A large part of the students' learning takes place in the class and it is therefore essential that the two modes complement each other to ensure the disadvantages of one mode is outweighed by the other (Gibbs, G., 2006).

5. Conclusions

The main purpose of the current study was to investigate students' perceptions of efficacy when using formative e-assessment and of implementation of a tool in a traditional course through a CRS such as Kahoot in improving students' learning. The students were found to be in favour of formative e-assessment, and they would like to see it implemented in other departmental courses. The results were very encouraging and practically all students were involved in this process. It has been found that online tests have been mainly beneficial to students, helping them to check their progress in learning and to master the topics they have learned, and to provide them with the opportunity to check the key aspects of the material during its time. The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that using technology-based tools, such as Kahoot, enhances formative assessment and, consequently, improves students' learning. Furthermore, this tool helps in providing individualized learning and engaging students with the feedback which, in turn, leads to creating effective teaching and learning environment and makes the course interesting, informative and fun. Further empirical research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of using technology-based tools for formative assessment on students' achievements and performance.

The current study suggests that future research is necessary in order to highlight the assessment practices undertaken during initial training, as well as teacher actions. As a result of such research, perhaps, teachers and students can learn to use assessment as an active and ongoing process. They can include it into the curriculum as a set of activities, rather than thinking about it as a singular event.

The results of this study can also be supported by teachers' need as instructional designers to design more interactive and engaging courses. However, the results of this study are limited to the extent of their generalization in situations with more advanced educational technology tools and to more innovative and integrated models, from traditional instructional methods to twenty-first century training strategies that guarantee student autonomy.

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PERCEIVED TEACHERS' COPING SKILLS INSTRUCTION, SELF-EFFICACY AND STUDENTS' TEST ANXIETY: WHAT RELATIONSHIPS EXIST?

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between perceived coping skills instructed by teachers to handle cognitive task difficulties and students' self-efficacy and test anxiety. Two hundred and nineteen secondary school students were used in the study. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between perceived problem-focused coping skills instructed and students' academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, and emotional self-efficacy; a non-significant positive relationship between perceived emotion-focused skills instructed and students' academic self-efficacy, emotional self-efficacy, and a significant positive relationship with social self-efficacy. There were also non-significant positive relationships between perceived seeking-social-support coping skills instructed and students' academic self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy; a significant positive relationship with social self-efficacy. Findings also showed significant negative relationship between perceived problem-focused coping skills instructed and test anxiety; between emotion-focused skills and students' test anxiety; and a non-significant negative relationship between seeking-social-support coping skills and students' test anxiety. Implications of these findings were highlighted.*

Keywords: *coping skills instruction; self-efficacy; test anxiety; cognitive tasks;*

1-Introduction

Academic activities at all levels have challenges they present to students. From preprimary to the tertiary education level, there have been reported cases of stress associated with academic activities and this might have led to a number of drop-outs especially among those who lack coping strategies that will help them in their bid to succeed academically. Nigeria, for example, is battling with a shocking state of affairs in the drop-out rates among school children (Eke, 2015) and citing Okpala (2013) Eke has noted with sincere disappointment at the secondary school level that 63% of students who are supposed to be in school are out of school. In line with the above, the report of the vision 2020 National Technical Working Group on Education Sector of the Federal Government of Nigeria (2009) has it that the expected enrolment figure for JSS is 9.27 million but the actual is 3.27 million leaving 6 million as unenrolled in JSS. However, the completion rate at the JSS is about 34%. Again, figures show that a high percentage of girls are progressing to JSS than boys (2005: 55% female, 49% male) (see also as cited in Unachukwu, Nwosu & Onyekuru, 2015).With this state of affairs, the dream of achieving the goal of the MDG in 2015 in which all children of school age are supposed not only to be school but also to be retained in school met a brick wall. This made Unachukwu and Nwosu (2015) to recommend that factors affecting access to education of school children in Nigeria and beyond should be re-conceptualized to include psychological determinants since access to education is not foreclosed within the ambit of gaining entrance into the four walls of the classroom but extends to retention and accomplishment of the set objectives.

When cognitive tasks outrun the cognitive resources of students, may be as result of inadequate cognitive tools, academic stress may set in. Redhwan, Sami, Karim, Chan, and Zaleha

(2009) are in agreement with the above by noting that stress is not only a phenomenon in the workplace but extends to academic activities in which students are subjected to different kinds of stressors, including but not limited to the presence of the academics with an obligation to succeed, an uncertain future and difficulties in adapting to the system and are therewith faced with social, emotional, physical and family problems which might affect their learning ability and academic performance. What teachers do to keep students going becomes inevitable considering the fact that students have reported that seeking support from the teacher is the principal coping strategy (Murray-Harvey, 1999).

Policymakers have stressed the integration of life skills in school curriculum (Huxley, Freeman & Frydenberg, 2004). Undoubtedly coping skills and intervention strategies for restructuring poor self-referent belief systems (self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-concept, etc) of students occupy strategic position in improving mental health, resilience, motivation, the achievement of students in schools and even the retention of students in school.There is a growing knowledge and conviction that an individual's belief systems affect his functioning which is embedded in the fact that human beings are not just cognitive beings but are also social persons with beliefs that influence his behaviours and choices (Nicolaidou, & Philippou, n.d; Pajares, 1996). Huxley, Freeman and Frydenberg (2004) have emphasized the fact that teachers have a big role to play in the instruction of coping skills. They need to provide support for students' individual needs since peer support may not always be effective (Moir, 2014).

Strong self-efficacy belief can help an individual cope in challenging situation while on the other hand one who possesses better coping skills can equally adapt to very challenging situations. This will invariably affect the anxiety in an individual since text anxiety has to do, in a way, with cognitive appraisal of a situation considered threatening, or perceived inadequate skills/competences to handle a situation. For this threatening situation to be effectively handled, the individual requires coping strategies that are appropriate. A student, by implication, who has stronger self-efficacy and better coping skills may be able to handle testing situations in a more relaxed manner. However, these skills can be improved on. Students (low achievers) have reported that teachers teach them coping skills to handle cognitive tasks (Unachukwu, Nwosu, & Onyekuru, 2015). When students are taught strategies to handle difficulties encountered in cognitive tasks, their self-efficacy in handling academic issues may increase; hence reducing their test anxiety. Recent developments in the educational setting have reiterated the need to emphasize life skills including interventions on coping skills for successful academic adventure even among gifted children (Simon, nd) because they are not immuned against stressful academic situations. In line with the above, Moore's (2006) findings have pointed out the need for school interventions to reduce test anxiety, and assisting students in developing the thought processes that give them a sense of control over the events in their life, in particular, their academic performance. The Nigerian government has stressed the need for personal development and life skills pointing out the fact that it will help students cope with contemporary development. However, the drop-out rate among Nigerian students at the secondary school level may suggest that they do not cope with school tasks. There have been reported cases of poor performances in public examinations (Owolabi, 2012). To help these students do well in school, there is the need for intervention programmes on coping skills to be mounted for them. This can equally be stressed when research brings to the fore how coping taught by teachers especially when it gets to do with cognitive tasks are related to other psychological constructs that influence students' academic achievement. There are several empirical studies on coping skills of students and researchers have correlated them with other psychological dispositions of students, however little attempt has been made to investigate the relationship existing among coping skills taught by teachers to handle cognitive tasks difficulties and such psychological dispositions. Previous research works have centred on coping skills possessed by an individual for an intervention to be mounted. What is apparently lacking in literature, especially in the Nigerian setting, are adequate studies correlating these psychological dispositions and the coping skills acquired after they might have been taught to students. It is important to determine if these learnt coping skills will impact on or relate to these variables. What this work intends to do is to correlate students' perception of 'learnt coping skills' taught perhaps by a more experienced individual (the teacher) with such psychological variables as test anxiety and self-efficacy. This study will contribute to knowledge by looking at students' perceived teachers' coping skills instruction as it has to do with cognitive tasks and correlate them with their self-efficacy and text anxiety. The following were hypothesized:

a. The different sub-scales of coping skills perceived as taught by teachers do not significantly correlate with the sub-scales of students' self-efficacy.

b. The different sub-scales of coping skills perceived as taught by teachers do not significantly correlate with their test anxiety.

2-Coping strategies

Kazemi & Kohandel (2015) see coping as cognitive and behavioral efforts geared towards managing internal and external forces that are considered stressful which may outweigh one's resources. Coping refers to the way a person handles his responses to everyday situations which may include appropriate and/or inappropriate behaviours (Lyrakos, 2012). Kazemi & Kohandel (2015) noted that coping strategies of each person are the unique ways of dealing with issues and problems in his life. Taking into consideration individual differences, there are bound to be countless ways individuals cope with stress. However, experts have pointed out broad classes into which coping strategies could be grouped. These strategies are divided into three: problem-focused coping strategy; emotion focused coping strategy and avoidance coping strategy (Kazemi & Kohandel, 2015). Passer and Smith (2007) on their part noted that coping strategies can be grouped into three broad classes as problem-focused coping strategies, emotion-focused strategies and seeking-social-support coping strategies, while Frydenberg and Lewis (1999) in Boon (2009) proposed three coping strategies: solving the problem, reference to others, and non-productive coping. Although little variances could be seen in the categories as stated above, there seem to be a kind of agreement in two major classes. Problem-focused coping strategies attempt to confront and directly deal with the demands of the situation or to change the situation and constitute ways on which the actions that must be done to reduce a threatening situation is calculated which include searching for more information about the problem, changing the structure of problem from cognitive point and prioritizing some steps to address the issue; emotion-focused coping strategies attempt to manage the emotional responses that emanate from stressful events and seeking-social-support coping strategies demand turning to others for assistance and emotional support in times of stress (Kazemi & Kohandel, 2015;Passer & Smith, 2007).

3-Coping and test anxiety

The testing environment in schools as well as the whole gamut of the learning-testing cycle has a way of eliciting a kind of challenge that may lead to anxiety in students. It is the opinion of Harries and Coy (2003) that one of the most threatening events that causes anxiety in students is testing, and they defined test anxiety as an extreme fear of performing poorly in an examination. It is composed of cognitive, affective and behavioural components (Harries & Coy, 2003). Cassady (2004) has pointed out that process-oriented conceptualizations of test anxiety as against the more traditional or classical orientation enable researchers to take an all-inclusive posture in capturing more contextual information relevant to understand the relationship between test anxiety and assessment, and these provide more accurate explanations for the thoughts and patterns of behavior observed during the three phases in the learning–testing cycle. Inadequate and inability to employ efficient study skills and metacognitive skills have been linked to test anxiety at the preparatory levels of the learning-testing of students (Cassady, 2004). Cassady also noted that 'the impact of test anxiety during the test reflection phase is generally driven through attributional biases that lead to future test-related perceptions and behaviours' (p.573). This has the tendency of clamping down on the self-efficacy, where there is negative impact, of the students in the sense that one's own assessment of past performance and verbal persuasions and conviction of possession of relevant skills in certain areas are vital sources through which one's self-efficacy are built (Siegle & McCoach, 2007; Zulkosky, 2009).

4-Coping and self-efficacy

Research has found active coping and planning to predict self-efficacy (Devonport & Lane, 2003/2004) indicating the fact that an individual with higher self-efficacy can cope by facing challenges headlong; self-efficacy and the ability to articulate coping responses as important personality characteristics that distinguished resilient youths from the maladaptive youths (Hamill, nd); academic self-efficacy positively correlating with positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance and planning (Khan, 2013); levels of stress are significantly negatively correlated with the positive ways of coping, the levels of social support, self-esteem and university satisfaction level of stress positively correlated with the negative ways of coping (Lyrakos, 2012).

5-Method

6-Design

The study adopted the correlational descriptive research design since the researchers are interested in determining the extent the variables are related and without the intention of manipulating any of the variables.

7-Participants

he respondents comprised of 219 senior secondary school students in SS II in Nigeria, specifically in Onitsha north educational zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. Onitsha is one of the hubbubs of trading centres in Nigerian, and there have been reported cases of high dropout rate in secondary schools as they tend to join businesses. The researcher chose this area to see the association between perceived coping skills instruction and students test anxiety and self-efficacy of secondary school students. Their mean age is 15.5. There are three local government areas in this city. The researchers distributed 231 copies of the questionnaire to students but only 219 were used for analysis because some respondents did not complete the questionnaire.

8-Sampling

The researchers utilized simple random sampling technique in selecting five secondary schools from the Metropolitan City and then the students who gave their consent to the study after being sensitized by their teachers who served as research assistants were used.

9-Instrument

Three instruments were used in this study for the collection of data. The instrument used to ascertain the coping skills instruction in secondary schools is a 20-item questionnaire tagged 'Teachers' Coping Skills Instruction for Enhancing Cognitive Tasks Questionnaire' which was developed and used by Unachukwu, Nwosu and Onyekuru (2015) specifically for low achievers. It comprised two sections; section A sought to ascertain the bio-data of the respondents while section B consisted of 20 items. It was structured using the 4-point scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. There were three sub-scales of the questionnaire namely, problem-focused coping skill instruction, emotion-focused coping skills instruction and seeking-social-support coping instruction. It contains such items as: "When I find myself not coping with school work my teachers encourage me to make a plan for my work", "When I face challenging tasks my teachers tell me to avoid thinking I can't handle the situation", "Teachers tell me to ask my peers questions when I find it difficult to cope with my study" for the three sub-categories respectively.

To determine the self-efficacy of students the self-efficacy questionnaire for children (SEQ-C) developed by Muris (2001) for secondary school students was used to measure students' academic self-efficacy. The brief survey questionnaire contains 24 items of 8 items for the three sub-scales of academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy. It is structured on 5 point scale of 'not at all' to 'very well'. A total self-efficacy score can be obtained by summing across all items. Determining the reliability of the questionnaire among Nigerian respondents, the Cronbache Alpha was used for the internal consistencies and the reliability coefficients for academic self-efficacy were 0.703, social self-efficacy was 0.75 and the emotional self-efficacy 0.77.

To determine the test anxiety of students, the test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) developed by Spielberger (1980) and validated in Nigeria by Oladimeji (2005) was used to ascertain the test anxiety scores of students. The inventory was designed for secondary school students and undergraduates, and consists of 20 items which are short, self-descriptive statements with four-point rating scale ranging from 1 for "almost never" to 4 for "almost always". The TAI used had been validated. Oladimeji (2005) said that different forms of validation such as concurrent, discriminate, constraint and convergent validity were determined when it was used on Nigerian students. Oladimeji (2005) noted that the Pearson Product Moment statistical technique was used to correlate the test-retest scores under the non-examination condition. The coefficients of reliability obtained were: 0.73, 0.79, and 0.56 for TAI-W, TAI-E and TAI-T respectively, significant at $p<0.01$, one tailed, df-98.For the test anxiety inventory, the items were scored with the four-point rating scale ranging from 1 for "almost never" to 4 for "almost always" except item number one which was scored in reverse order.

10-Procedure

The consent of the school authorities was sought and a brief was held with the research assistants who are five regular teachers in the schools sampled. They were told that the exercise was specifically for research purposes and was geared towards ascertaining how the coping skills taught by them is related to students' self-efficacy and test anxiety; thereafter they consented and agreed to help in distributing the questionnaire to the students. The consent of the students was sought and their teachers explained to them about the study. Two hundred and thirty-one students gave were then simple randomly sampled for the study. The teachers were told to monitor the filling in of the questionnaire and collect the copies which the researchers collected from them. They were given the whole day to fill in the questionnaire which the third researcher collected the next day from the teachers.

11-Results

Table 1: ***Descriptive statistics on perceived coping skills instruction, test anxiety and self-efficacy of students***

	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation
Problem-focused coping skills	219	2.79	.635
Emotion-focused coping skills	219	3.26	.684
Seeking-social-support coping skills	219	2.31	.580
Test anxiety	219	3.23	.503
Academic self-efficacy	219	3.56	.822
Social self-efficacy	219	3.48	.905
Emotional self-efficacy	219	3.27	.789

The above table shows the descriptive analysis of the perceived coping skills instruction, test anxiety and self-efficacy. The table shows that students test anxiety is high with the mean score of 3.23. Students' academic self-efficacy, social and emotional self-efficacies have mean scores of 3.56, 3.48 and 3.27 respectively. It also shows that in coping skills instruction, problem-focused coping skills instruction has a mean score of 2.79, emotion-focused coping skills instruction has mean score of 3.26, and the seeking-social-support coping skills instruction has a mean score of 2.31.

Table 2: ***Correlational matrix of perceived coping skills instruction and students' self-efficacy***

		Academic self-efficacy	Social self-efficacy	Emotion self-efficacy
Problem-focused coping skills	Pearson Correlation	.145*	.246**	.202**
	Sig. (one-tailed)	.031	.000	.000
	N	219	219	219
Emotion-focused skills	Pearson Correlation	.032	.159*	.112
	Sig. (one-tailed)	.633	.019	.097
	N	219	219	219
Seeking-social-support coping skills	Pearson Correlation	.080	.208**	.132
	Sig. (one-tailed)	.236	.002	.051
	N	219	219	219

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results obtained from table 3 showed a significant positive relationship between problem-focused coping skills instruction and students' academic self-efficacy, r = .145, n = 219, p< .031, students' social self-efficacy, r = . 246, n = 219, p = .000, and emotional self-efficacy, r = .202, n = 219, p = .000. There was a non-significant positive relationship between emotion-focused skills instruction and students' academic self-efficacy, r = -.154, n = 219, p = .023, a significant positive relationship between emotion-focused coping skills instruction and social self-efficacy, r = .159, n = 219, p = .019; a non-significant positive relationship between emotion-focused coping skills and emotional self-efficacy, r = .112, n = 219, p = .097.Between seeking-social-support coping skills instruction and students' academic self-efficacy, there was a non-significant positive relationship, *r* = .080, *n* = 219, *p* = .236; significant positive relationship between seeking-social-support coping skills and social self-efficacy, *r* = .208, *n* = 219, *p* = .002; and a non-significant positive relationship between seeking-social-support coping skills and emotional self-efficacy, *r* = .132, *n* = 219, *p* = .051.

Table 3: ***Correlation matrix of perceived coping skills instruction and students' test anxiety***

		Test anxiety
Problem-focused coping skills	Pearson Correlation	-.200**
	Sig. (one-tailed)	.003
	N	219
Emotion-focused skills	Pearson Correlation	-.154*
	Sig. (one-tailed)	.023
	N	219
Seeking-social-support coping skills	Pearson Correlation	-.126
	Sig. (one-tailed)	.063
	N	219

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Using Pearson's Moment Correlation coefficient to analyze the data, results obtained showed a significant negative relationship between problem-focused coping skills taught by teachers and test anxiety, *r* =.-200, *n* = 219, *p*< .05. There was also a significant negative relationship between emotion-focused skills and students' test anxiety, *r* = -.154, *n* = 219, *p* = .023. Between seeking-social-support coping skills and students' test anxiety there was a non-significant negative relationship, *r* = -126, *n* = 219, *p* = .063.

12-Discussion

The present study investigated perceived teachers' coping skills instruction for cognitive tasks difficulties and its relationship with students' self-efficacy and test anxiety. From the descriptive statistics, it was found that students to an extent agreed that their teachers teach them coping skills that would enable them handle cognitive task difficulties. This is in agreement with the findings of Unachukwu, Nwosu and Onyekuru (2015) in which it was ascertained that low achievers agreed that their teachers taught them coping skills with which to handle cognitive task difficulties. What differs here is the weight given to each of the sub-categories in the teaching of coping skills. In Unachukwu et al, teachers were perceived to teach their students more of direct-action (problem-focused) coping skills, followed by seeking-social-support coping skills. The emotion-focused coping skills were not stressed so much. However, in the present study, teachers were perceived to stress more of emotion-focused coping skills than the rest of the other two. This may be as a result of the fact that the low-achievers and high achievers were not separated from the presents study and this may suggest that teachers in instructing coping skills for difficult task may take into consideration students' individual competences and needs. Students had strong self-efficacy scores in the subscales under study and it was also shown that they had high test anxiety. The high test anxiety may be as a result of high premium placed on examinations in Nigeria.

In ascertaining the relationship existing between perceived teachers' coping skills instructed and students' self-efficacy, relevant analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between perceived problem-focused coping skills instructed and students' academic self-efficacy, *r* = .145, students' social self-efficacy, *r* = . 246, and emotional self-efficacy, $r = .202$. Research has found active coping and planning to predict self-efficacy (Devonport & Lane, 2003/2004); and academic self-efficacy positively correlating with positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance and planning (Khan, 2013). What this implies is that teaching students problem-focused coping skills in which there is an attempt to confront and directly deal with the demands of the situation or to change the situation and constitute ways on which the actions that must be done to reduce a threatening situation is calculated is significantly associated with the three subscales of self-efficacy. One's belief in his ability to handle academic matters being related to the extent one is equipped with problem-focused coping skills may be as a result of the fact that such skills involve searching for more information about a problem, tackling the problem headlong and strategizing steps that will be used to solve the problem. This, in no doubt, will equip the learner with a level of confidence to confront cognitive difficulties. Problem-focused coping skill instruction being related to social self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy might have also resulted in the confidence that may emanate from such skills since there is always a problem to solve in social interactions, and emotional problems demands productive steps to handle. This is in agreement with Kazemi and Kohandel's (2015) study in which it was found that there is a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and its three sub-scales with problem solving coping strategy.

Also revealed in the analysis is a non-significant positive relationship between emotion-focused skills instruction and students' academic self-efficacy, $r = -.154$, a significant positive relationship between emotion-focused coping skills instruction and social self-efficacy, $r = .159$, and a non-significant positive relationship between emotion-focused coping skills and emotional self-efficacy, $r = .112$. This result which could not relate significantly with academic self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy is likely to be expected since it appears to be the least effective among the coping skills components. In fact if not carefully examine many may see it as one of the avoidance coping strategies. But because the researchers set out to see the productive coping skills taught students by their teachers (and because teachers are not likely to teach unproductive coping skills), the items here were structured to reflect the productive coping skills (Passer & Smith, 2007). Typically, avoidance coping skills have correlated negatively with self-efficacy (Kazemi & Kohandel, 2015). This contradicts the findings here since emotion-focused skills taught had to do with productive skills involved in the management of emotional responses that emanate from stressful events (Passer & Smith, 2007). Emotion-focused skills only correlated with social self-efficacy which may have resulted from the fact that social interactions demand emotional competencies.

Furthermore, between seeking-social-support coping skills instruction and students' academic self-efficacy, there was a non-significant positive relationship, $r = .080$; significant positive relationship between seeking-social-support coping skills and social self-efficacy, $r = .208$; and a non-significant positive relationship between seeking-social-support coping skills and emotional self-efficacy, $r = .132$. Seeking-social-support coping skills had no significant relationship with academic self-efficacy which may have resulted from the fact that it takes a lot of one looking inwards to ascertain his/her own abilities in a more accurate manner than reliance on what others have to say or what one could get from others though social persuasion is one of the sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994; 2000). Also seeking-social-support coping skills could not significantly correlate with emotional self-efficacy but significantly correlated with social self-efficacy.

Using Pearson's Moment Correlation coefficient to analyze the data, results obtained showed a significant negative relationship between direct-action coping skills taught by teachers and test anxiety, $r = -.200$, $n = 219$, $p < .05$. There was also a significant negative relationship between emotion-focused skills and students' test anxiety, $r = -.154$, $n = 219$, $p = .023$. Between seeking-social-support coping skills and students' test anxiety there was a non-significant negative relationship, $r = -.126$, $n = 219$, $p = .063$. Negative correlation between perceived coping skills instructed reveals that one with high coping skill to tackle cognitive task difficulties may likely have lower test anxiety level. Instructing students coping skills will likely reduce their anxiety levels. This agrees with Simon's (nd) finding in an action research that teaching students coping strategies can reduce their test anxiety. The result from his study indicated that post assessment results on the TAI show that the overall levels of anxiety decreased in the sample population. On average, the sample improved 15.6 points, or a26% improvement. Teachers teaching embedding coping skills in handling difficult cognitive tasks can in a way reduce their test anxiety.

Conclusion

This study has made a considerable contribution to knowledge given the fact that it has established the relationship existing between perceived instructed coping skills and students' self-efficacy and test anxiety. This has shown that students' self-efficacy may be related to the repertoire of coping skills they might have been taught and teachers may be in a better position to teach these students more productive coping skills to handle cognitive tasks. Building and improving students' confidence to handle cognitive task difficulties will likely help to reduce dropout rates in the country. What is more interesting, is the negative correlation existing between the perceived taught coping skills by the teachers and students' test anxiety. There is the need for teachers to teach students the skills they need to acquire to handle cognitive task difficulty.

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THE FINALITIES OF TEACHING-LEARNING *TAP-DANCE* TO ACTORS

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Abstract*: In the following study we attempt a presentation of the professional (artistic) and transversal competencies that are targeted in the process of teaching-learning tap dance. These represent a personal contribution, and have been formulated both by our valorising the existing specialised literature on the subject, as well as by our twelve years of experience in the field of tap dance. Our interest in this particular subject is justified by the fact that, in general, the educational finalities represent a referential educational component in the teaching, learning and evaluation stages, as they are the foundation of outlining, realising, directing and regulating these stages. Consequently, current didactics is centred on the problem of educational finalities.*

Keywords: *teaching in the artistic field; tap dance teaching; the finalities of teaching-learning tap dance; professional (artistic) competences; and transversal competences*;

1. Introduction

Tap dance is a dance style which has its roots and historical-cultural preconditions in the Irish and African dances, it appeared and imposed itself as a traditional dance form in the United States of America at the beginning of the 19th century. Gradually, it succeeded in affirming itself on a global scale, re-activating itself in various artistic contexts. Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, we can say with certainty that *tap dance* is compatible with contemporaneous society and that it is a complex and expressive form of art and music.

In the present study, we endeavour to capture the didactic dimension of the subject of *tap dance,* namely to formulate the educational finalities specific to this dance style's teaching-learning process to actors. Therefore, we have conducted a theoretical research, during which we have utilised the method of thematic analysis, as well as our own reflections, with the help of which we have intended to devise a theoretical and descriptive approach to the *tap dance*'s teaching-learning finalities to actors: professional and transversal competences, general and specific objectives, and learning results.

2. Didactics of the artistic field and that of *tap dance* - conceptual boundaries

In order to analyse *tap dance* from a didactic perspective, respectively from that of teaching, learning and evaluating tap dance, it is necessary to create a specific didactics, subordinated to the didactics of the artistic field.

The didactics of the artistic field is a theoretical and practical branch of general didactics, which studies, in a systematic manner, the teaching-learning-evaluation process specific to the artistic field. The existence of this didactics does not mean the decrease or negligence of the specificity of the various sub-domains and artistic phenomena, but the promotion of an integrative, global vision for analysing them, as well as a logical, divergent, critical, creative and highly integrative thinking.

The didactics of the artistic field places the emphasis on the cognitive, actional/procedural and affective-behavioural contents' mobility, namely on the artistic values' cognitive, procedural-practical/applicative and attitudinal-behavioural competences. All of these types of contents enable processes of acquiring knowledge and of forming artistic competences corresponding to some important ideas/themes/problems, which can eventually be transferred in time and space, be it artistic, cultural, social, or geographic.

When delimiting the object of study of artistic didactics, the need to take into consideration the specificity of the different sub-fields and artistic phenomena, as well as their subordination to a broader thematic domain serve as the departing point. Thus, the aim is to support the people engaged in acquiring a type of thinking specific to the artistic field, in reaching a profound understanding not only of the aspects they have learned, but of the individual or collective teaching process, from a cognitive and metacognitive point of view as well.

Tap dance didactics is a theoretical and practical disciplinary branch of the artistic didactics, which studies, in a systematic manner, the teaching-learning-evaluation process of *tap dance*. In the case of these didactics, the learning process is essential, didactics being interested in studying its specificity, theorising it, in studying the processes of acquiring cognitive, actional/procedural and specific affective-attitudinal contents as well as specific artistic competences.

Starting with the particulars of the choreographic and musical structures' contents used in tap dance, the didactics of tap dance answers the following question "Why (should they operate in a certain way?) and it offers a systematic and integrative vision on the educational activities".

When theorising the learning process, *tap dance* didactics takes into account aspects such as:

a) the particularities of the learning process of *tap dance*, by the artistic and choreographic distinct features of this dance form;
b) the specific of the cognitive, actional/ procedural and affective-attitudinal contents which have to be learned in a systemic manner;
c) the methods and the learning/self-learning techniques suited for *tap dance*
d) significant and frequent difficulties which may arise during the learning and practising process;
e) the exigencies of *tap dance* - from the perspective of the artistic element, choreography, stage expressivity, aesthetic factor, the synergic bond between music, movement, rhythm, and creativity etc.;
f) concrete means of achieving specific finalities;
g) forms and means of evaluating the degree to which the specific finalities have been achieved;
h) the formation and development of the self-appreciation, self-evaluation capacities and objective self-regulation of the artistic practices

Bidirectional relationships are established between the artistic didactics and *tap dance* didactics. These two elements support one another in their theoretical and practical-applicative development, and they contribute to the cementing the artistic interpretations and the development of artistic practices.

3. The finalities of teaching-learning *tap dance* to actors: professional competences, transversal skills, general objectives, specific objectives and learning results

The aim of learning-teaching *tap dance* is the acquiring of specific artistic and transversal competencies by the people learning it, through the profound understanding of the *tap dance* phenomenon's complexity, while manifesting their artistic creativity.

The finalities of teaching-learning *tap dance* focus on the need to master this form of dance, both theoretically and practically, and it also targets the following:

1. the acquiring of theoretical knowledge and the formation of intellectual competences, associated with the *tap dance* phenomenon;
2. practical artistic competences and *tap dance* learning/self-learning process management.

The finalities of teaching-learning *tap dance* enjoy the status of a referential didactic component, which directs and guides the processes involved in teaching and learning/self-learning *tap dance,* seeing as:

- It illustrates the progressive development of the acquisitions, as well as the evolution of artistic and transversal competences;
- It ensures the necessary conditions for the entire learning/self-learning process to focus on the formative aspects of learning and on the formation of the person learning.

We have used the paradigm of learning which is centred on competences and the functional-actional paradigm of education to formulate the finalities of teaching-learning *tap dance*. Promoting functional type competences facilitates, in this context, activation, mobilisation, and the transfer of acquisitions so as to accentuate the actional dimension of learning/self-learning *tap dance.*

Our opting for formulating competences is justified by the integrative character of these acquisitions, character which allows the successful development of an activity. In the European Parliament and the Council's Recommendation from the 23rd of April 2008, regarding the establishment of the European Organisation for Long-Life Learning (The Official Journal C 111 from the 6th of May 2008) the following are stipulated; „Competence" is the proved capacity of using knowledge, abilities, and personal/social and/or methodological skills in work-related or educational contexts, as well as for prefessionaland personal development. The European_Organisation of Qualifications describes competence from the perspective of responsability and autonomy. "Competence" is an individual or collective skill of selecting, mobilising, combining and efficiently using, in a given context, an integrated, multifunctional and transferable ensemble of knowledge, abilities and attitudes.

As integrated acquisitions, competences have cognitive/intellectual, affective-attitudinal and psycho-dynamic components. As such they mobilise, utilise and integrate suitable cognitive, psycho-dynamic, affective and contextual resources for purpose of successfully approaching and tackling a task. The concept of "competence" is in a close relationship with the notion of practical action, therefore, one cannot speak about competences in the absence of effective actions, which entail: selecting (professional, artistic, social) resources adequate to the situation, combining these resources, verifying their efficiency, and establishing their correctness, etc.

In the case of *tap dance* we have formulated specific professional (artistic) competences in order to facilitate the successful approach of learning situations, which are specific to this type of dance and music. In the National Law of Education nr. 1/2011, with its later amendments and completions (http://legeaz.net/legea-educatiei-nationale-1-2011/), in Annex 1-The List of the Definition of Terms and Expressions used in the contents of the Law, point 15 it is stipulated that: "Professional competences are a unified and dynamic assembly of knowledge and abilities. Knowledge is characterised by the following: discovering, understanding and using of the specific language, explanation and interpretation. Abilities are expressed through the following: practical application, transfer and problem solving, critical, and constructive reflection, creativity and innovation."

We have also formulated transversal competences, which are realised longitudinally "throughout" the objects of study as well as the educational practices and specified in terms of transferable and not strictly disciplinary acquisitions. "Transversal competences represent attitudinal acquisitions and acquisition of values, which go beyond a certain study programme and express themselves through the following: autonomy and responsibility, social interaction, personal and professional development." – National Law of Education nr. 1/20011, with its amendments and completions (http://legeaz.net/legea-educatiei-nationale-1-2011/), in Annex

1– The List of the Definition of Terms and Expressions used in the contents of the Law, point 16.

For each competence we have, in operational terms, formulated a set of results of the learning process, which "represent what a person knows, understands and is capable of doing at the end of the learning process and which are defined as knowledge, abilities and competence." –Article nr. 345, line(1) from the National Law of Education nr. 1/2011, with its amendments and completions (http://legeaz.net/legea-educatiei-nationale-1-2011/).

Table no. 1

The system of professional (artistic), transversal competences and of learning results that concern teaching-learning tap dance to actors

Professional/Artistic Competences	Finalities/Results of learning *tap dance*
1. Management of information relating to the roots (origins) and to the stagnant, regressive, and evolutive stages of *tap dance*, starting at the beginning of the 19th century and ending with what *tap dance* represents for the 21st century.	**1.1.** The actor goes through a process of informing himself regarding *tap dance* by going through both written and cyber documents on the subject, selecting and systematically valorising information. **1.2.** The actor realises a short historical account of the tap dance phenomenon, from its origins to its modern condition. **1.3.** The actor explains the stagnant, regressive, and evolutive stages in the evolution of the tap-dance phenomenon. **1.4.** The actor realises a multidimensional analysis of the cultural, political, social, and economic context of the *tap dance* dynamics. **1.5.** The actor identifies the system of factors favouring and halting the dynamics of the *tap dance* phenomenon, by taking their interdependence and mutual influence into account. **1.6.** The actor brings forward arguments that support the present status of *tap dance* as a complex and expressive art form, while keeping in mind its connection to other forms of dance.
2.Using active and critical reflection in what concerns the theatre phenomenon in its ensemble, so as to identify solutions to increase its attractiveness, and for stimulating and cultural consumption among the public as well as shaping the consumer culture	**2.1.** The actor reflects actively and with a critical attitude on the status of theatre and that of the artist in today's modern society. **2.2.** The actor reflects actively and with a critical attitude on the present and future evolution of the theatrical phenomenon as a cultural element, on both a national and international level. **2.3.** The actor analyses the contemporary theatrical phenomenon by means of cultural indicators (the peculiarities of the various countries and their cultural systems, their technological development, national cultural strategies, types of audience). **2.4.** The actor explains the need for identifying means of increasing the attractiveness of the theatrical phenomenon, so as to stimulate its consumption among the public. **2.5.**The actor defines the causal relationship between going to the theatre and the culture of going to the theatre **2.6.**A The actor defends the artistic potential of *tap dance* in hopes of bringing theatre a step closer to modernity and of increasing its attractiveness.
3. Ensuring there is artistic syncretism between *tap dance* elements and	**3.1.** The actor practices and correctly executes the steps specific to *tap dance*, which correspond to the following levels: 1(essential and optional), 2(essential and optional), 3 and 4, and he does this according to a set of rules and principles.

professional theatre in what concerns the musical and the contemporary dance, from the perspective of scenic art, as well as that of the amplification of the artistic message and impact.	**3.2.** The actor develops new artistic abilities and attitudes based on the mutual influence between reflection, action, communication, and feeling in practicing *tap dance*. **3.3.** The actor works/envisions creatively and gains basic artistic experiences by the synergetic combination between music, movement, rhythm, and artistic creativity, so as to intensify the scenic expressiveness. **3.4.**The actor makes the best of the elements of choreographic language that are specific to the expressive territory in which theatre interacts with dance and music, as well as with the non-verbal, kinaesthetic, and verbal communication codes, in a syncretic manner. **3.5.** The actor promotes cultural and artistic practices that stimulate creativity and artistic improvisation regarding *tap dance*, in the context of professional contemporary theatre shows. **3.6.** The actor manages to diversify, develop, and extend the cultural and artistic practices by highlighting *tap dance* in the world of professional contemporary theatre, thus contributing to the stimulation of the public's appetite for culture and to the shaping of this consumer culture. **3.7.** The actor gains cognitive contents (notions, knowledge, representations, principles, rules) relating to *tap dance* and to specific artistic practices, developing his cognitive component of artistic values in a systemic direction. **3.8.** The actor gains active/procedural contents (movements, actions, techniques, procedures) relating to tap dance and to specific artistic practices, developing his procedural-practical/applicative cognitive component of artistic values in a systemic direction. **3.9.** The actor gains affective-attitudinal contents (movements, actions, techniques, procedures) relating to *tap dance* and to specific artistic practices, developing his attitudinal-behavioural component of artistic values, in a systemic manner.
Transversal Competences	**Results/Finalities of learning *tap dance***
4. Assuming a role and performing tasks either individually or as part of a team, in conditions of professional independence, and efficiently managing one's career.	**4.1.** The actor analyses from the perspective of constructive criticism, supervises and explains the difficulties and advancements in the field of theatre, by means of an approach both systemic and interactive. **4.2.** The actor responsibly undertakes an active part in working on individual tasks or team projects, developing his artistic judgement. **4.3.** The actor actively and creatively participates in the interpreting of parts and in the execution of individual or team assignments, improving his performance and artistic practices. **4.4.** The actor develops and promotes professional practices and strategies that are specific to the field of theatre, which is of a humanist-spiritual orientation; he does this responsibly, by respecting the ethical values and principles, as well as those of the professional deontology.

	4.5. The actor utilises efficient learning strategies, methods and techniques throughout his life, for the purpose of continuous professional and personal (self-)improvement, (self)-development, and (self-)regulation of professional activity. **4.6.** The graduate realises reflexive, analytical, and critical analyses, self-evaluations and constant improvements to his own professional activities and to the evolution of his career; and all this in order to ensure an efficient career management. **4.6.** The actor comes up with research subjects pertaining to movement expressivity, and especially to the study of choreography, in order to continually improve the artistic practices.
5. Efficient communication and cooperation in teams that have multiple specialisations and are essential for the carrying out of projects and programmes in the field of performing arts.	**5.1.** In order to stimulate, consolidate, and make the relationships with other artists more efficient, the actor engages in active and interactive listening. **5.2.** The actor is capable of becoming involved in processes of artistic communication, during which there is an exchange of messages, meanings, emotions, and other such things that relate to the artistic experience. **5.3.** The actor is capable of becoming involved in processes of intercultural communication, during which there is an exchange of messages, meanings, emotions, and other such things that relate to the artistic experience. **5.4.** The actor identifies roles and responsibilities in teams that have multiple specialisations and are essential for the carrying out of projects and programmes in the field of performing arts. **5.5.** The actor applies strategies and techniques of professional bonding, communication and cooperation in teams that have multiple specialisations and are essential for the carrying out of projects and programmes in the field of performing arts. **5.6.** The actor cooperates efficiently in interdisciplinary professional teams, together with the cultural events' producers, towards obtaining artistic and cultural activities of a high quality.

Through pedagogical derivation we have gone from the professional and transversal competences to the finalities that have a lower grade of generality, namely to the educational objectives/aims. Which we have classified into general and specific.

Educational aims/objectives are sentences characterised by finality, which anticipate the finalities of learning that are expected as a result of the actors' involvement in the teaching-learning process of *tap dance* learning. The general educational objectives/aims that we have formulated name the results of learning in terms of competences, while the specific educational objectives/aims name the results in terms of behaviours that are specific to *tap dance*. Between the two types of objectives there is a relationship of teleological causality; therefore, the general educational objectives (with a higher degree of generality) are realised by means of the specific educational objectives (with a lower degree of generality).

Table no. 2.*The system of specific educational objectives/aims that relate to teaching-learning tap dance to actors*

General educational objectives
1. Diversifying, developing, and extending cultural and artistic practices through the use of *tap dance* in professional contemporary theatre, so as to stimulate cultural consumption among the public and shape the consumer culture

2. Developing the artistic culture by internalising new values, as a form of manifesting artistic abilities and attitudes based on the blending of reflection, action, communication and feeling, in the context of practising *tap dance*
3. Shaping artistic consciousness through *tap dance* related acquisitions and specific artistic practices, which can be highlighted in professional theatre
Specific educational objectives
4. Learning and practising the steps specific to tap dance, which correspond to the following levels 1 (essential and optional), 2 (essential and optional), 3 and 4, according to specific principles and rules
5. Acquiring of basic artistic experiences through synergy between music, movement, rhythm and artistic creativity, in order to intensify the stage expressivity
6. Developing one's capability of expression and artistic communication by syncretically valorising the elements of choreographic language specific to the expressive field in which theatre interacts with dance and music as well as with non-verbal, kinaesthetic and verbal communication codes
7. Promoting cultural and artistic practices that stimulate creativity and artistic improvisation in practicing *tap dance* in the context of professional contemporary theatre shows
8. Diversifying, developing and extending artistic and cultural practices through the use of *tap dance* in professional contemporary theatre, in order to stimulate cultural consumption among the public and shape consumer culture **9.** Developing new abilities and artistic attitudes based on the mutual influence between reflection, action, communication and feeling in practising *tap dance*
10. Developing of the cognitive component of artistic values, based on the cognitive contents (notions, knowledge, representations, principles, rules) relating to *tap dance* and to specific artistic practices, in a systemic manner
11. Developing of the procedural-practical/applicative component of artistic values, based on actional/procedural contents (movements, actions, techniques, procedures) relating to *tap dance* and to specific artistic practices, in a systemic manner
12. Developing of the attitudinal-behavioural component of artistic values, based on affective-attitudinal contents (movements, actions, techniques, procedures) relating to *tap dance* and to specific artistic practices, in a systemic manner

3. Conclusions

All types of finalities specific to the process of teaching-learning *tap dance* that we have formulated present a unified vision on this process, which is based on the methodological option of ensuring active learning/ learning through practice. In the process of formulating these finalities, we took into consideration the following referential aspects:

- Competences entail the existence of a number of abilities, which are reliant, in turn, on certain practical and intellectual processes, which is why they are realised in a considerably large amount of time.
- Educational objectives that are centred on competences place the emphasis on forming and practising practical and intellectual processes, and accentuate the formative character of the teaching-learning process.
- Educational objectives that are centred on specific behaviours place emphasis on the change in behaviour that is intended, for the sake of forming and practising practical and intellectual activities.
- The finalities/results of learning pertain to what a person that has completed a learning process is knowledgeable about, understands, and is capable of doing. These are defined as abilities, knowledge, and competences. Thus, the professional (artistic), and the

transversal competences, as well as the general and specific educational objectives, which we have formulated, have to do with attaining the results of learning, as illustrated in figure no. 1:

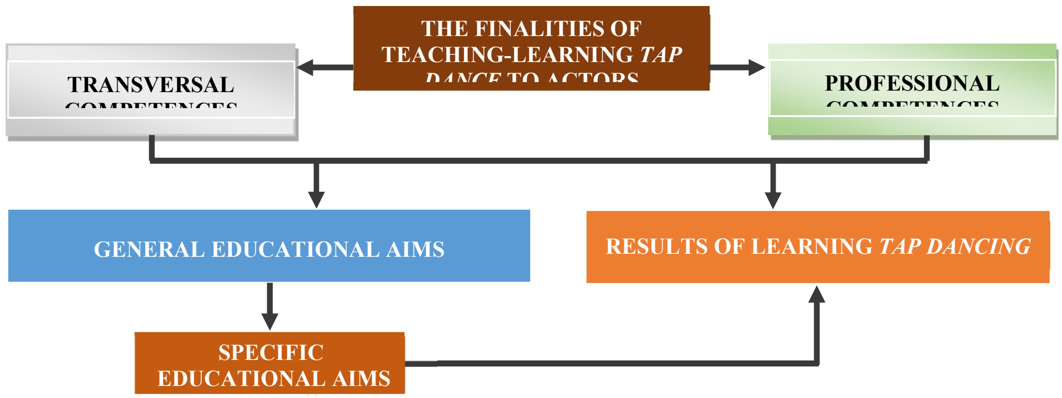

Figure no. 1. *Graphic model for illustrating the functional relationships between the professional (artistic) and transversal competences, general and specific educational objectives, and the results of learning*

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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

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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)

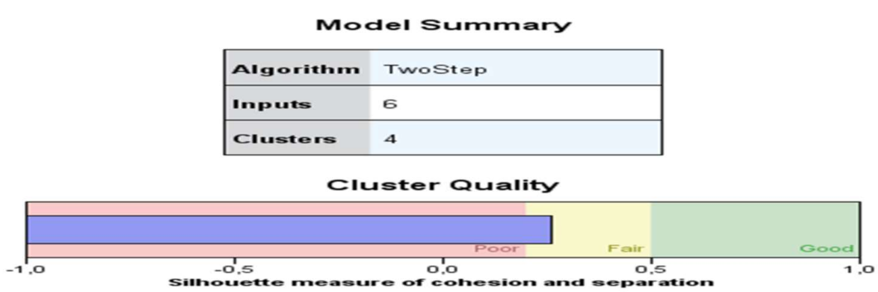
		Empathy – prosocial contribution to society – sense, purpose of life											
		Contribution to changes	*Fight for equality, freedom*	To do good deeds	To be a proper member of society	I am still searching	To move things in one's profession	To give love, to help others	Religion ethics	Hedonism	*Contribution to mankind*	Life itself as a purpose	Total
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.

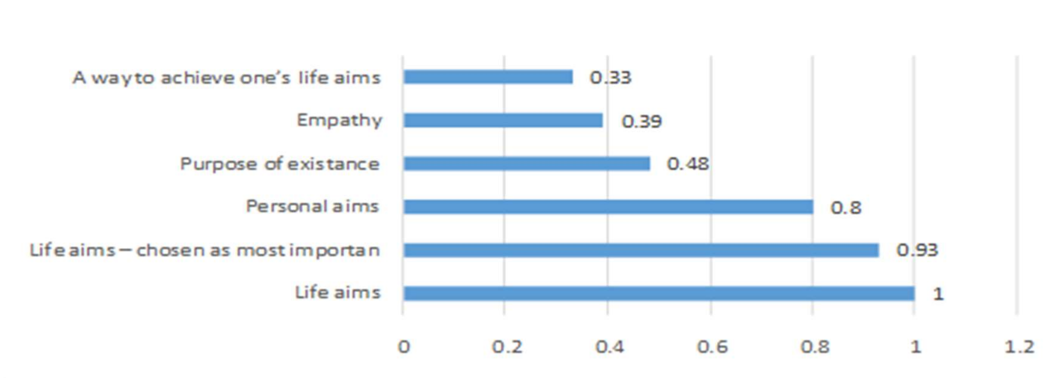
What is also important for the confirmation of the first hypothesis are the data derived from the cluster analysis showing a solid discriminatory value of clusters, i.e. classification of statistically significant differences between the formed clusters (groups), in regard to each variable individually (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).

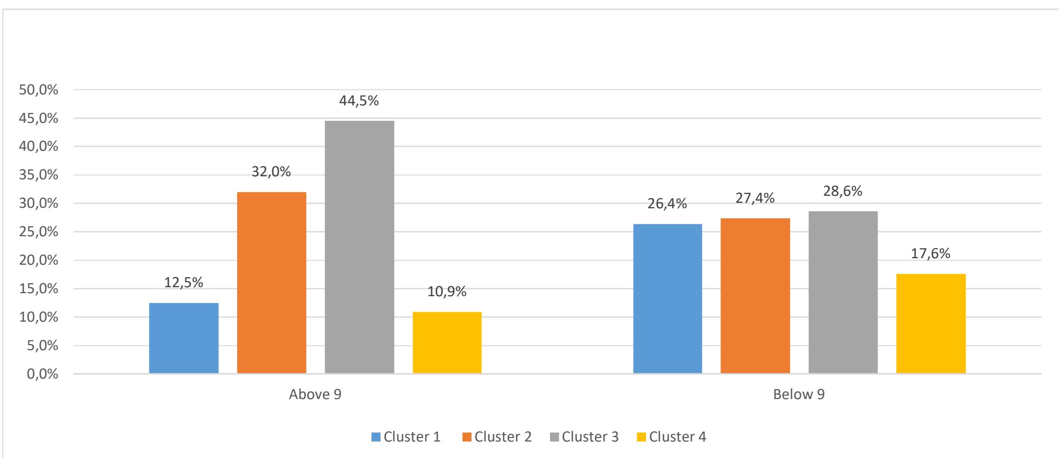
So, it could be concluded that there is statistically significant dependence between academic achievement and purpose, i.e. its structural elements: *empathy derived from prosocial reasons, imagination of projection of oneself, purpose in the future* and *recognition of opportunities for engagement,* 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	Total
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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CRITICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE ACCESS OF STUDENTS COMING FROM RURAL AREAS TO UNIVERSITY QUALIFICATION IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Abstract: The objectives of the present study aim at knowing the factors that contribute to the decision to continue studying in university education for students; identifying critical aspects of rural students' access to qualification and identifying measures to improve access for students from rural areas to universities. The study is a qualitative-exploratory one, based on the focus group method. Seven focus groups were organized at the West University of Timisoara, Romania, with personnel involved in the development of university education programs: teachers, rural students and social services employers. The research tool was the moderation guide, having as main topics the students' motivation to continue their studies, the process of admission to the university, the admission process, proposals for improving the access of rural students to the university. The results of this study have an essential instrumental value in terms of developing measures to improve the access of rural students to qualification in university education programs.

Keywords: rural students, university qualification, social sciences, admission.

1. Introduction

Access to education is a fundamental right provided in European and national education policies, with a significant role in addressing socio-economic, demographic, technological, informational or environmental challenges. Access to higher education is a topic widely discussed in the literature, not only in Europe, but also in other countries of the world. (Huges, 2018; Maila & Ross, 2018; Lucheș, Sava, Crașova & Malița, 2016; Friesen &, Purc-Stephenson, 2016; Hobden & Hobden, 2015; Irvin et al., 2012; James, 2001) The educational policy of the last period, without giving up the objective of quality, has reintroduced equity and equality of education chances among its priorities. The rural environment is a priority for development programs, both for infrastructure investments, support for social services and for education. The access of rural students to higher education is a topic debated on the agendas of universities in Romania, as well as a way of supporting the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. Traditionally, young people in rural Romania have had little participation in education compared to those in the urban environment. In the 1990s, 31% of age-specific cohorts of access to higher education born in the urban area took part in university studies, while the share of those in rural areas was only 5%. (Voicu & Vasile, 2010) After 2001, with the elaboration of the Rural Education Re-launching Strategy, increasing the participation rate of rural youths in higher education in Romania increased to 22%, compared to 38% for the urban environment. (Voicu & Vasile, 2010) In the context of the European Union's strategy to have a knowledge-based economy, meaning a workforce with a high level of education able to compete in a common market, graduating from university is a necessary condition. According to the *Europe 2020*, at least 40% of people aged 30-34 should be graduated in tertiary studies in 2020. With the advancement of young people in the education system, the level of under-representation of those in rural areas is increasing, with the highest value in higher education (National Institute of Statistics, 2019).

In the academic year 2015 - 2016, the rate of students from Romanian universities from disadvantaged environments (using as criteria: the rural environment, localities under 10.000 inhabitants, persons with disabilities and Roma persons) was 26.81%, the share of students coming from the rural area being 77.2%, and those from the localities with a population under 10.000 inhabitants was 21%. (Popescu *et al.*, 2017)

The motivation of Romanian pupils in rural areas to continue their studies at tertiary level is lower than in urban areas. Only 54.9% of rural students want to attend a college, while in urban areas the intention to continue to university studies is 75.6%. (Pricopie *et al.*, 2011) Among the factors that negatively influence the decision to continue university studies, Voicu & Vasile (2010) states: the social norm (of non-continuing education at university level) distance from the university, the demand on the labor market, the quality of pre-university education, especially at the primary level and gymnasium.

Several studies have highlighted the factors contributing to the disparity in urban / rural proportions in terms of participation in tertiary education in Romania: lower graduation rates for young people studying at high school in rural areas (37% compared with 68% graduation rate of high school students in the urban area); high living costs to continue their studies in urban areas, where universities are located (Sandi & Moarcas, 2007; Novak, & Iosifescu, 2017); low income for young people in rural areas (Novak & Iosifescu, 2017; National Tertiary Education Strategy, 2015-2020); continuing studies is not a rooted model to be followed in life; (National Strategy for Tertiary Education, 2015-2020).

The strategies developed in recent years facilitate the existence of a framework for the development of measures and the implementation of educational programs aimed at increasing the chances of access to education for disadvantaged groups, including young people from rural areas. Romanian authorities are funding support measures for first year students, especially for those at risk from under-represented groups, such as young people in rural areas. For the first time in the academic year 2018 - 2019 nationally funded tuition figures (2000 places) were allocated for high school graduates located in rural areas, thus applying some form of preferential treatment or positive discrimination. (H.G.131, 2018). The idea underlying such an approach is that, in order to achieve equal access to higher education for different social groups, existing inequalities in resources and opportunities must be combated by favoring disadvantaged groups (Trancă, 2016). Another measure designed to support equal access and participation in university education was the provision of rail and metro railway facilities, implemented from 1 February 2017 (HG 42, 2017). Thus, the students enrolled in full time education curriculum - bachelor, master, doctorate - in the accredited higher education institutions in Romania benefit from free of charge internal railway transport in all train categories, second class, throughout the calendar year, regardless of distance or travel routes. One of the directions of the Education and Training Strategy in Romania for the period 2016 - 2020 (2016) is to facilitate access to vocational training programs in the youth education system, focusing on those from vulnerable groups, ie young people from rural areas, the Roma population and people with disabilities, with specific actions providing financial support for the accommodation and living needs of young people. Students residing in the countryside benefit from scholarships from the state budget, which are awarded according to Order 6200/2008 and H.G. 769/2005. This type of scholarship is cumulative with all other types of scholarship and the beneficiaries of this scholarship are obliged to practice in rural education for the specializations for which they have been trained for at least the duration of the studies.

In the context presented above, we propose through the present study to identify the critical aspects that contribute to the access of students coming from rural areas to university studies.

2. Research Methodology

The goal of this research is to identify academic ability of ensuring access to higher education to students from rural areas.

The objectives of this research aim at knowing the factors that contribute to the decision of pursuing further studies in higher education; at identifying some critical aspects regarding students from rural areas accessing qualification; at identifying some measures to improve students from rural areas accessing higher education.

The study was carried out at the West University of Timișoara, the largest university in Western Romania with 11 faculties of social sciences, humanistic sciences and sciences. International ranking placed it 4th among other Romanian universities, hence its status of elite university. Timișoara is the largest academic city in Western Romania, with a rather high living standard.

Research method: To reach our objectives, we initiated a fundamental qualitative-exploratory study based on the focus group method because students can supply new perspectives on the topic that have not been taken into account initially, and because it can ensure the control of the line of question, which impact positively the accuracy of the answers. At the Wet University of Timișoara, we organised seven focus groups on this topic to which participated people involved in the development of academic programmes: teachers, students from rural areas and employers in social services. Experts in the field moderated the focus groups. Participants were free to state their opinions based on their own experience. Each focus group had three stages. In the first stage, experts explained the study objectives, provided information on the rules regarding the course of talks, provided information regarding the recording and the use of it, and obtained participants' agreements. In the second stage, experts moderated the talks based on the interview guide, and in the third stage they consolidated the information by summarising them, asked for completions, and asked for feedback and provided feedback. The interviews were audio recorded. The approximate duration of a focus group was 60 to 80 minutes. Participation did not incur physical, social, or legal prejudice. Experts did not use names, addresses or people's identities since they were bound to observe the right to privacy and personal life.

The research instrument was an interview guide containing the following topics: the factors determining the participants to the study to pursue their studies in higher education; the motivation for professional choice and the Wet University of Timisoara; the information and resources necessary to document upon access to higher education; participation in events dedicated to academic careers; observations regarding the admission process and criteria; difficulties before and after becoming a student; future plans in relation to area of origin; suggestions for the improvement of admission to higher education of applicants from the rural area.

There were maximum 20 students per focus group. They were students from the 1st year majoring in social work, pedagogy, sociology and education science; representatives of employers and people involved in the development of academic studies; teachers in the same academic fields.

The methodological approach of this study covered the design of research methodology, data collection through focus groups, analysis of results, and editing the report.

3. Research Results

Our research approach favours the visibility of perceptions and of participants' points of view on motivational factors for pursuing studies, information regarding access to higher education, relevance of admission criteria, difficulties in admission to higher education, ad recommendations regarding the improvement of rural area students' access to higher education.

3.1. Motivational Factors for Pursuing Studies

Participants' debates scanned two categories of most representative reasons to pursue higher education: professional and personal.

Personal reasons for pursuing higher education are intrinsic: aptitude, personal interests, solving one's own problems or the problem of relatives or friends, personal development, knowing social realities in the studied field, a profession of choice, desire to self-assess abilities in the field of choice, desire to live in the urban area, desire to change the marital pattern (marriage at an early age specific to rural area), and choosing a career.

Professional factors are: competition specific to contemporary society asking for choosing society-related jobs and careers, specialising at higher education levels, meeting the need for professionals on the labour market, developing professionally (by getting employed or by developing one's own organisations after improving the knowledge in the field), finding opportunities to get employed in fields for which they believe are gifted, progressing at social level, validating knowledge and abilities acquired informally, certifying professional competencies acquired during volunteer activities in the field before going to university, getting a diploma ensuring the preservation of one's current job (constraint by either the employer or by the legislation in action), getting a diploma allowing promotion within the organisation, wish to reconvert professionally after graduation wish to gain financial independence after graduation, completing one's studies after graduating abroad to comply with Romanian regulations, norms, and standards.

The conclusion is that the motivation for pursuing higher education is essential: it valorises participants' aspiration related to themselves and to their own career.

3.2. Information regarding admission to higher education

In order to be admitted to higher education, the participants got information regarding the admission to higher education through recommendations from their colleagues, from graduates, from acquaintances or from relatives who either worked in the field, acted as volunteers or had pertinent information from within the system; through one or several internships as volunteers in the field, particularly in organisations cooperating with the university; through specialists working in organisations whose beneficiaries they were; through the university guides received upon high school graduation and through information from the faculties and departments they were interested in; through university fairs, the Open Doors Day during the "Week Otherwise" (a national event for non-formal education activities in schools) or through presentations made by teachers promoting their universities, faculties, and departments in high schools; through fliers promoting the educational offer of the university supplied within promotion activities in high schools or from acquaintances; from a related field in which they were already active. All these information from different source were completed with online sources (the sites of the university, the Facebook pages of the departments, the sites of the different organisations with which the university cooperates, etc.).

3.3. Relevance of admission criteria

During the documenting period on the admission process to higher education, there were two categories of information of great interest for the participant: administrative information, on one hand, and academic information, on the other hand.

The most relevant administrative information in the choice of a major were: admission conditions and degree of difficulty of these conditions; admission period (admission opportunity in a second admission period); contents of admission file (documents necessary to apply for admission); number of budgeted places (including knowing admission means of the last years and graduation percentage of admission examination); level of the tuition fees (and the possibility of reductions or of instalment payment); duration of courses and the possibility of prolonging this period; schedule flexibility (number of classes per day and per week;

morning or afternoon courses; weekend classes; minimum number of course and seminar attendance classes); availability of distance courses; facilities for disabled people, for people from placement centres, or for Rroma people; accommodation in the university campus (prerequisites for a place in the dormitories; accommodation fees; accommodation conditions and number of beds per room).

Academic information of interest in the decision of pursuing higher education in a certain field were: the subjects to study; majoring opportunities; academic prestige, credibility and tradition in the field; international recognition of the graduation diploma (which partly justifies the wish of the participant to emigrate, at least temporarily); opportunity of identifying a job in the field at local, regional or international level after graduation; possibility of acknowledging credits from another major in a similar field; possibility of training stages abroad or of volunteer stages acknowledged by the university; type of practice stages (during summer or during the semester); attitude of the teachers towards the students (type of interaction, degree of availability, etc.).

3.4. Difficulty of getting admitted to higher education for people from the rural area

General talks and focused evaluations about the difficulties students from the rural area face when accessing higher education show the following: information and recruitment of future students is rather poor in the rural area: the only people really informed about almost everything are those who attend high school in towns and cities; poor quality of education and training during secondary school because of the substitute teachers that have no proper training, hence the low rate of graduation and the impossibility of pursuing higher education; access to information regarding academic offers provided directly in the rural area, hence the need for supplementary information and the difficulty of obtaining such information (the income of their parent prevent them from paying the subscription for cable Internet); the long distance between home and university, hence supplementary time for commuting (commuting is less costly for them compared to rent because accommodation in the dormitories is not available for all students due to compelling criteria and renting in an academic town is rather costly; means of transportation difficult to access because of the route map and of the schedule, which hinders academic schedule; difficult access to local transportation because of the snowfalls in winter and of floods in spring and autumn; high costs of transportation; lack of parental support for the pursuit of higher education because of the low income level of the students' parents.

3.5. Recommendations for the improvement of admission to higher education for people from the rural area

After analysing the debates with the participants to the focus groups, we can suggest a few solutions for the improvement of the access of students from the rural area to higher education:

- promotion activities in the high schools of neighbouring counties ever since the beginning of the school year (grades 11 and 12) to present our educational offer and future job opportunities, together with teachers, students, and graduates that are already working in the field;
- school children's access to activities within the university to better know the academic environment (courses, seminars, laboratories, practice, library, etc.);
- improving the information on the university, faculty, or department sites regarding the admission process or the education process, testimonials or videos of graduates, video materials depicting activities and events organised by the different departments;
- taking into account the gap between information in urban and rural areas, we suggest posting our educational offer and job descriptions in the most visible and accessed places in the rural areas: town halls, cultural centres, shops, etc.;

- publishing information on a constant basis in town hall publications (such as Monitorul) that are distributed free of charge to all inhabitants;
- promoting within NGOs active in the field;
- organising volunteer stages in the field of choice before applying for admission;
- supplying teaching aids in both printed and electronic formats (for the students from the rural area) and sharing them via an online platform allowing access and downloading, as well as communication with the teachers;
- organising Massive Open Online Courses accessible from local public institutions especially for educational activities for community members;
- organising admission selection online or in a town (county seat) close to rural areas;
- establishing, administering and developing within local public administration level of information services for the youth to motivate people from the community to pursue higher education;
- development of information and awareness raising programmes for the parents of future students;
- developing support services to approach barriers in the process of enrolling in higher education and, later, in student life in an academic town;
- granting scholarships to students from the rural area;
- involving students from the rural area in paid practice stages;
- support from students from higher years.

4. Conclusions

Students from rural areas face difficulties in their pursuit of higher education; this study identifies a few critical aspects regarding the training of these students. Rural students' access to academic training in Romania is difficult because of the costs of higher education, including accommodation and food costs, motivation, access to information and communication, lack of parental support, and other factors. This topic is of real interest nowadays, which made us advance recommendations for the improvement of higher education. Since access to education is a human right, we need to develop equitable conditions for all students, no matter their environment. Compared to students from urban areas, students from rural areas need more time and financial resources to pursue higher education. Enrollment of more students from rural areas in higher education contributes to creating an educated workforce for rural communities. Also, obtaining a university degree helps a person to have a broad set of less tangible opportunities for those without higher education, more employment options, higher income potential, and improved quality of life at a general level. The specializations chosen for this study provide jobs that are needed in rural areas, such as social workers, pedagogues, psychologists and sociologists, but which are not sufficiently available at national level.

This study could be a basis for the extension of learning opportunities and it could contribute to the development of measures for the improvement of rural students' access to higher education training. This study provides clues regarding the opinions of social science students; however, the study should be extended to the other domains of study in the university. Our study provides a first perspective on the challenges for students from rural areas majoring in social sciences at the West University of Timisoara, but this perspective should be followed by an implementation of their suggestion correlated with their future progress.

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TEACHING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PREREQUISITES FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT

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Abstract: Engagement of students in the teaching process, joint project activities with teachers, their readiness for learning and initiative are the basic prerequisites for ensuring the quality of higher education process and outcomes. Searching the possibilities of improving university teaching quality, we examined students' attitudes (N = 174) in order to determine whether students recognize the importance of joint activities with teachers, project planning and implementation, in the context of their motivational readiness for more efficient learning and higher quality acquisition of knowledge. The research was performed using a descriptive method and a scaling process. Research results confirm that students recognize the importance of joint project activities they implement with teachers during instruction, as well as of step-by-step learning (by smaller units), further motivating them to learn. These results point the researchers to the directions of action aimed at developing a system of measures to improve the quality of contemporary university education.

Keywords: higher education; quality assurance; project planning; motivational readiness for learning; step-by-step learning;

1. Theoretical approach to the problem

The starting points for theoretical consideration of our research problem are based on the pedagogical ideas of John Dewey, who was an opponent of verbalism in teaching, book knowledge and learning, and who advocated experiential learning, education through problem-solving, independent observation and student inference. Today, these ideas determine the mission of the modern education system, implying the assurance and improvement of higher education quality. Also, this mission implies the creation of conditions for ensuring the basic prerequisites of a quality life and development of each social community member, based on the knowledge and achievements of each individual. In the university education system, learning, teaching, and assessment must be directed at students. In such situations, curricula are implemented in a way that encourages students to participate in activities in which they play an important role in developing motivational readiness for learning and initiative in the learning process. This implies careful designing of study programs, their implementation and assessment of outcomes (Standardi i smjernice za osiguranje kvaliteta u Evropskom području visokog obrazovanja 2005; Strategija razvoja obrazovanja u Srbiji do 2020. godine 2012).

According to the current strategic directions of education in the Republic of Serbia, the long-term goals of its development are established from "increasing the quality of education process and outcomes to the maximum attainable level - the one that arises from scientific findings about education and reputable educational practice - to increasing the efficiency of using all educational resources" (Strategija razvoja obrazovanja u Srbiji do 2020. godine 2012, 7). With the aim of accomplishing these goals and increasing the education system quality, strategic directions of action are defined implying education quality as a primary development goal. The significance of teachers' work quality is emphasized as the key factor in education quality, and within this context, a special strategy of education, professional development and professional advancement of teachers is defined. Innovative teaching requires university teachers to use such forms and methods of organizing class activities in which students' cognitive activity, the encouragement of the development of hypothetical, divergent and abstract thinking and the ability to apply new ideas in solving creative tasks are compulsory (Novković Cvetković 2017).

In contemporary literature on the quality of education of future teachers and educators in pre-school institutions, we recognize the established strategic directions of higher education development. These directions involve higher engagement of students, their motivational readiness for better learning and the adoption of new, applicable knowledge. The professional competences of those who educate, on the basis of the greater achievements of those who learn and teach, determine their sense of job satisfaction, personal confidence, and self-efficacy (Florian and Pantić 2013). As reflexive practitioners, teachers are ready to cyclically introduce changes and complex tasks in teaching activities, create a positive working atmosphere, provide students with help, incentives, and support, and then monitor the effects of these changes in relation to students' achievements. In such a way, acquired work experience and identification of possible problems determine the direction of further professional activity and development of teachers (Kadum, Lepičnik-Vodopivec, and Hmelak 2017; Mathew, Mathew & Peechatt 2017).

Innovative teaching models, such as ambient and programmed teaching, are a prerequisite of university education quality. They justify student expectations, learning opportunities through trials and mistakes, with the aim of better understanding and adoption of teaching contents. Their needs for greater involvement in the organization and implementation of teaching activities have been identified, where a teacher will apply the methods based on which students will be initiators in educational activities, demonstrate their creative potentials, achieve good communication with the teacher, and receive feedback on their achievements. The application of various innovative approaches, methods, forms, and models aims to intensify and modernize teaching in higher education institutions making it more interesting for and "closer" to students (Kopas-Vukašinović and Golubović-Ilić 2017; Kopas-Vukašinović, Golubović-Ilić and Cekić-Jovanović 2017; Skopljak, Zečević and Drobac 2016).

The concept of contemporary university education implies the establishment of teaching quality which is one of the key responsibilities of higher education institutions (McKimm 2009). Students should be given the opportunity to work together with teachers to plan, create, comment and distribute teaching content, and to adopt material piece by piece ('step by step') according to their interests, abilities and pre-knowledge. In the university education system, students are expected to acquire functional (practically applicable) knowledge, develop key competencies, thus securing their place in the labor market by personal qualities and professional competencies. If we add to this the fact that today's constantly changing society requires an individual who is ready to quickly learn, react, adapt to new situations, make decisions, critically think and use modern technology, university teachers face a major professional challenge. They must be able to devise and implement teaching activities that will enable, on the one hand, the development and popularization of subject contents studied by students, and, on the other hand, joint activities of teachers and students aimed at better accomplishment of teaching outcomes in terms of quality of acquired knowledge.

Research has confirmed the positive impact of the project work model on the level of knowledge and engagement of students, their interest in learning and developing strategies for solving problems (Holm 2011). The advantage of the project work model compared to the traditional model has also been determined in terms of 'academic performances', motivation, cooperation in work and engagement in the learning process. (Kaldi et al. 2011). Also, studies that researched programmed teaching have confirmed that this work model has some advantages and that its application to certain subjects positively influences the acquired knowledge quality. (Cekić-Jovanović at al. 2014; Cekić-Jovanović 2015; Terzić and Miljanović 2009; Županec et al. 2013, etc.)

2. Research methodology

Research goal: Determine whether and in what way students recognize the opportunities of organizing teaching activities that would encourage greater engagement, higher quality learning, and adoption of new, applicable knowledge.

Research tasks:

(1) To determine whether students recognize the importance of joint activities with teachers, project planning and implementation, within the context of their motivational readiness for more effective learning and better acquisition of new (applicable) knowledge.

(2) To examine students' attitudes about the opportunities of learning 'step by step' (by smaller units), whether this work contributes to the better acquisition of teaching contents.

Research methods, procedures, and instruments: The research used a descriptive method and a scaling process. For the purpose of this research, a scale of students' attitudes (Likert-type) was made.

Research sample: For the purpose of this research, a suitable sample was selected - students of the second and third year of undergraduate studies at Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences, University of Kragujevac, from the departments of grade teacher and preschool teacher (N=174).

3. Research results with discussion

The first research task was to determine whether students recognize the importance of joint activities with teachers, project planning and implementation, in the context of their motivational readiness for more efficient learning and better acquisition of new (applicable) knowledge.

Students' attitudes were examined in relation to the claim By joint activities with teachers, project planning and implementation, students are further motivated to learn and acquire new knowledge. Descriptive indicators point to the fact that the majority of students surveyed, 158 of them (90.80%), agree completely (46.0%) or agree (44.8) with the above claim. They believe that students should be provided with joint activities with teachers, project planning and implementation, with the aim of additional motivation for learning and acquiring new knowledge. Only 2 students (1.1%) have a negative attitude regarding the above-mentioned claim. The value of median (as a measure of average), which in this case is 2.00, supports these results. This value confirms that more than a half of the students covered by the research have a positive attitude in relation to this claim.

The second research task was to examine students' attitudes about the opportunities of learning 'step by step' (by smaller units) and whether this work contributes to the higher quality adoption of teaching contents. Students expressed their views in relation to the claim It is important for students to be given the opportunity to learn 'step by step' (by smaller units) as in this way they can better acquire teaching contents. The results of the research show that 107 students (61.49%) agree completely, and 62 (35.63%) agree with the above claim. The value of the median, in this case, is 2.00, which determines the relevance of the data that 97.1% of the students surveyed have a positive attitude in relation to the claim that within university teaching it is important that a teacher applies methods and procedures that will enable 'step by step' learning. Only 2.9% of students surveyed have a neutral attitude.

Considering that the data from the survey were collected by the Likert's five-point scale of attitudes and that they originated from the ordinal measurement scale, we believed that the Mann-Whitney test was the most appropriate for testing the zero hypothesis and computing the statistical significance of the differences in respondents' attitudes, in relation to the independent variables defined in this research (the year of studies and the study program the respondents attended at Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences of University of Kragujevac, Jagodina).

When it comes to the respondents' year of studies, the significance value for all claims is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), confirming that a statistically significant difference in student attitudes regarding the claim It is important for all students, regardless of the year of studies, to be given the opportunity to learn 'step by step' (by smaller units) as in this way they can better acquire teaching contents was not established in relation to this variable.

However, in relation to the variable study program the respondents attended, the Mann-Whitney test determined the statistical significance of the differences in relation to student attitudes regarding the above claim. The significance level, in this case, is less than 0.05 ($p <0.05$), therefore it can be concluded that the difference in the values obtained is statistically significant, that in 95% of cases there is a systemic factor or some kind of regularity that leads to this difference. The determined differences in the attitudes of the students surveyed, determined by the study programs they attended (grade teacher, preschool teacher), can be the starting point for further research on the problem of improving university education quality in the context of, for example, contents of study programs and didactic-methodical instructions for their realization.

Based on the presented research results, in relation to the established tasks, we conclude that the research hypothesis assuming that students recognize the importance of joint project activities implemented in teaching with teachers, as well as step-by-step learning (by smaller units), in the context of their motivational readiness for more effective learning and better acquisition of new (applicable) knowledge is confirmed. These determinants are recognized in various innovative teaching models, such as programmed, problem, exemplary, project teaching. As motivational factors in learning, aimed at acquiring quality knowledge, they represent key elements, that is, the essential parts of project and programmed teaching.

Bearing in mind the fact that students see the possibility for additional motivation in learning 'step by step' and joint project activities with teachers, it should be noted that the proposed models of teaching allow for constant feedback on their achievements. Students, after each 'step', know at all times what they have or have not learned, where they have wronged and how to correct the mistake. Continuous feedback, which follows each step of student activity, is motivational because objective knowledge of own results stimulates further activity in mastering the envisaged curriculum. Students are more willing to learn and to acquire new knowledge more effectively, which encourages the development of their critical thinking and learning process management.

4. Conclusion

Contemporary university teaching requires learning, teaching and assessment to be directed at students. They, as subjects in the teaching process and equal partners of teachers, should establish good communication with teachers, actively participate in project planning and implementation, organization and realization of various teaching activities, and receive feedback on their achievements in a timely manner. Increased activity and engagement of students during classes have positive effects on their motivation, initiative, creativity, but also on the quality, durability and practical applicability of the acquired knowledge.

By examining students' attitudes, we wanted to determine whether and how students recognize the opportunities of organizing teaching activities that would encourage greater engagement, better learning and the adoption of new, applicable knowledge. The research results confirm that the students ($N = 174$) of the second and third year of undergraduate studies at Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences, University of Kragujevac, from the department of grade teacher and pre-school teacher, recognize the importance of joint activities with teachers, project planning and implementation in the context of their motivational readiness for more efficient learning and higher quality acquisition of new (applicable) knowledge (90.80%). Also, they consider (94.02%) that it is important to give them the opportunity to learn 'step by step' (by smaller units) and that such work contributes to better adoption of teaching contents.

Based on the research results presented in this paper, conclusions implying certain measures for improving university education quality are imposed: 1) university education quality implies that teachers, according to their professional competences, develop a learning environment encouraging student development, where the quality of teachers work is recognized as the key factor in student education quality; 2) it is important that teachers, through modern teaching systems such as programmed and project teaching, encourage the initiative and cooperation of students in the teaching process; 3) joint project planning and implementation of activities with teachers is a prerequisite for university education quality, as this kind of work encourages students to expand their knowledge, enrich their experiences and develop abilities; 4) teaching models that offer students the opportunity to learn 'step by step' (by smaller units) can contribute to the development of their potential and interest in research work, thus requiring the need to identify the possibilities of their application in teaching practice.

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Notes

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COOPERATIVE LEARNING – APPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract: *This study was intended to assess the efficacy of an intervention program built on the principles of cooperative learning. We assumed the classroom climate of 4th graders would improve for the experimental lot (n=32) as compared to the control lot (n=30). Our research tool was The Classroom Climate Questionnaire designed by Johnson & Johnson (1983, 1996) and adapted for the Romanian population by C. Popa (2010). The intervention program was conducted on a 5-week period of time, on a basis of 3 hours per week, and it completed 15 cooperative learning activities in History, Civic Education and Religion.The results showed that working in cooperative learning groups leads to both, minimize the need for teacher support and minimize the need to learn independently from one's peers. The intergroup comparisons showed that the need for independent learning in relation to one's peers had dropped for the children in the experimental lot as compared to the children in the control lot, in posttest (t=-2,247 p=0,028). The results for intragroup comparisons for the experimental lot are statistically significant for the following subscales: teacher support (t=2,326, p=0,025), having a lower mean in posttest, and independent learning (t=2,298, p=0,029), having a lower mean in posttest. For the control lot, there were statistically significant results for the subscale of independent learning (t=-2,147, p=0,040), having a higher mean in posttest.*

Keywords: *cooperative learning; support in learning; classroom climate; primary school;*

1. Introduction

Coming home from a parents' meeting from my son's school, I was wondering if all teachers are more focused on academic performance and excellent results for their classes than on their students' well being and joy of life. Why this question? My son was in the 3rd grade, and his teacher told us that during the week dedicated to extracurricular activities (*Şcoala altfel* – School in a different way) the children would take part in a school competition every day. Unfortunately, for many, the results in such competitions and the need for medals and diplomas/prizes are the most important indicators for the academic performance of a class/grade/school. Plainness (depersonalized) teaching, focus on excellent results with no concern for children's interest or motivation, ranking and competing, they are all present realities in nowadays school teaching activities in Romania. We personally believe there is a need for chance: the teachers should be made aware that achieving academic performance is conditioned by the child's involvement and motivation in reaching learning objectives, that they should teach the children 21st century skills: "critical thinking and problem solving; creativity and innovation; communication; teamwork/collaboration; diversity; leadership; professionalism/work ethic; ethics/social responsibility; lifelong learning/self direction; ICT literacy" (Casner-Lotto, 2006, apud LeButt, 2012, p. 5).

Cooperative learning is a teaching method that focuses on the students, but only if the teacher is open to communicate with them, to build with them a relation based on values like: cooperation, honesty, fairness, dialogue, transparency. Thus, the teacher has to undertake more various roles than the traditional ones. J. Howden underlines some of these roles: planning, observing (keeping in mind that the entire process of observation is conducted following certain stages: readiness/preparing, observation – a systematic data recording, intervention and

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summarizing), intervention (to correct understanding errors or wrong conceptions, to show the children the correct way of using cognitive and social skills; the intervention has to be minimal and it has to occur only when a certain problem/issue cannot be solved by the children by themselves), reflection (there has to be a time allocated for reflection and for discussing on functioning as a team and on solving the working task) (1997, apud Nicu & Conțiu, 2010, p. 66 – 69).

Cooperative learning has proved to be a complex learning strategy that draw the attention of teachers and specialist from the field of Sciences of Education. In his review on the researches on cooperative learning, Gillies R.M. (2014) underlines that cooperative learning is known as a pedagogical method that promotes learning and socialization among children and teenagers, from kindergarten to college.

D. Johnson, R. Johnson and E. Holubec show the particularities of cooperative learning groups as opposed to traditional learning groups by stating that "cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that children/students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (1994, p.3). Cooperative learning group is different from other types of groups by the fact that "the focus is not only on reaching certain learning skills, but also on building certain interdependent relationships among the members of the group, and on the everyday practice of social skills to maximize the unity of the group, and thus, the unity of the entire classroom" (Popa, 2010, p. 30).

In *Cooperative learning for intercultural classrooms* , Ferguson-Patrick & Jolliffe (2018) underline the benefits of cooperative learning:

- "Cooperative learning improved academic outcomes" (p.6)
- "Social and emotional learning – Cooperative learning improves social skill development and helps to promote socialization and learning among students" (p. 8)
- "Student relationships – Cooperative learning has an impact on student relationships because in a classroom of this type students assist others with their learning and, in doing so, give and receive help" (p. 8)
- "Including all students in learning" (p.9)

Our study was intended to analyze the effects of cooperative learning on classroom climate, thus, we want to pinpoint various opinions on the concept of classroom climate as presented in the field bibliography, as well as to to present the results of certain researches on the subject.

F. Cerezo and M. Ato define classroom climate as "a concept that sums up all the main aspects concerning classroom environment that coexist with all learning processes, and involves the interaction among subjects and their attitude in completing their working tasks" (2010, p. 138). R. Iucu states that "at classroom level, the climate is the intuitive, and directly perceivable reality for those in contact with its organizing structure, a specific mark for the learning group in question" (2006, p. 160). He believes that the concept of school life "points to the environment, the moral and emotional state of the classroom; it is the indicator of the health of a learning group and it can be taken as an axiological criterion for differentiating student classrooms; it is the product of certain interpersonal relationships on different levels (formal or informal), and their sum, or more likely, their product is the learning climate" (Iucu, 2006, p. 176 – 177).

I. Neacsu also gives a definition for the classroom psycho-social climate saying that "it represents the superior level of integration and maximization of certain factors, objective and subjective, internal and external, that are significant for both, the student and the teacher"

(2015, p. 109) and that "generates a psychical mood relatively located and generalized at the level of the group members" (Cristea, 1984, p. 104, apud Neacsu, 2015, p. 109)

Taking into consideration all the above mentioned definitions, it can be stated that "the essential elements of classroom climate are the following: the characteristics of social relationships in the classroom, children/students behaviors in various learning situations, the type of the authority performed in class, the level of (dis)trust in the teachers and children/students"; and also "the level of frustration, intimacy, indifference, distancing, consideration, trust" (Tudorică, 2007, p. 86).

There are also present dimensions of classroom climate, like: collegiality, familiarity, disengagement, support, authority, restrictiveness (Iucu, 2006, p. 161).

For space saving reasons, we will present only some of the studies that analyzed to what degree the classroom climate is influenced by cooperative learning as a teaching method.

In 1985, a team of specialists: D. Johnson, R. Johnson, Bucknam & Richards studied the influence of work experience in cooperative groups on children's attitude towards classroom climate. The subjects were 8th graders and they had to fill in *The Classroom Life Instrument* questionnaire (this is the research tool that we have adapted and used in our study). Research results showed that "children having a positive attitude towards working in cooperative groups had the same positive and encouraging attitude towards classroom climate, too".

In 1986, Farivar's quasi-experimental study compared the cooperative class with the traditional one. He had 57 subjects from the 3rd and 4th grades and three teachers. The dependent variables were: social relationships, children attitudes, their school results, performance at the intellectual level and classroom climate. Research data showed that cooperative classroom children have positive feelings for their colleagues, unlike the ones in traditional classrooms; they enjoy working cooperatively, but not in competitions; they have a positive approach on working cooperatively with more intelligent children than themselves and not with children having a lower IQ; cooperation maximizes performance and interpersonal relationships; there were significantly statistic differences between the two classrooms for all six subscales that measured classroom climate (apud Satyaprakasha, 2015, p. 41).

In 1991, Kevin Johnson analyzed in his PhD thesis, *The effect of cooperative learning on student and teacher support in first grade*, to what extent is there a positive correlation between perception of social support and positive attitude towards cooperation. The research was conducted on a subject lot of 1st graders. Research data validated the fact that "in the classrooms where teachers provide and support a cooperative environment, children feel they are helped to reach academic performance and personal development" (apud Popa, 2010, p. 53). An important fact is that "such an environment is the result of a precise and adequate implementation of learning social and cognitive skills" (Johnson, 1991, apud Popa, 2010, p. 53).

Effects of cooperative learning structures on self-esteem and classroom climate in social studies (1996) is a study made by a group of teachers from the National Institute of Education from Singapore, which analyses how cooperative learning can be implemented at classroom level and whether this teaching strategy can maximize classroom climate and children self esteem (Lee, Lim & Ng, 1996, p. 1). Both research lots, experimental (n=36) and control (n=38), were formed with 5th graders that had Social Studies lessons for one hour and a half each week, during two school semesters. Kagan's structures of cooperative learning were used as teaching strategy: *Listen-think-pair-share*, *Numbered heads together*, *Sequential roundtable* and *Send-a-problem* (Lee et. al., 1996, p. 3). Classroom climate was also measured with *My Classroom Inventory* (MCI) designed by Fraser in 1982 and having 5 subscales: MCI1 (*Satisfaction* – measures classroom's state of well being), MCI2 (*Friction* – measures the aggressive behavior of children), MCI3 (*Competition* – measures the importance of achieving academic performance within the classroom), MCI4 (*Difficulty* – measures children's perception on the difficulty of the class activities) and MCI5 (*Cohesiveness* – measures the friendship relations between the children in the classroom) (Lee et. al.,1996, p. 4)

After the experimental stage, there was a significant difference at the experimental class for the *Difficulty* subscale, showing that cooperative learning stimulates mutual support and team work, and the children see the tasks as being less difficult. But, there were no significant improvements for the most part of the measured variables on classroom climate, except the difficulty of classroom activities. One of the findings was that "the emotional aspects of cooperative learning can be hardly measured within the classroom; but, still, many of the interviewed children said they'd rather work in groups than by themselves, because such an activity makes the lessons less difficult and more enjoyable" (Lee et. al.,1996, p. 10 - 11).

In 2008, Roseth, Johnson & Johnson underlined that the best academic results and positive relationships between peers were associated with a cooperative structuring of the objectives, more than with a competitive and individual one (apud Gillies, 2014, p. 794).

In her PhD thesis, C. Popa (2010) conducted a vast research to validate the efficacy of the Learning together cooperative pattern to primary school in Romania. For 10 weeks, she used this teaching pattern in teaching-learning activities for Romanian language and Mathematics classes, for 1 hour each, in 6 experimental classrooms (three 3rd grades and three 4th grades). One of the hypothesis of the above mentioned study was to see to what extent "using *Learning together* teaching pattern leads to achieving a different perception from the children on classroom cooperative relationships and students and teacher support" (Popa, 2010, p. 240). Research data validates this hypothesis: children had a better perception on student and teacher support and on cooperation. The results of post-test and re-test (comparisons for pre-test – post-test means and post-test – re-test means, as well as comparisons between the means of experimental classrooms and the means of control classrooms in post-test and re-test) show that "working in cooperative groups helps the children to have a positive attitude towards classroom climate" (idem, p. 240). Another finding is that "preserving a student positive attitude towards cooperation and student and teacher support requires a long term practice and a need to generalize cooperative principles on all classroom activities. Having a cooperative climate while peer teaching leads to a better understanding of the role of cooperation and to the consolidation of the children's cooperative skills. If we want our students to use these skills in everyday life, the whole educational process has to focus on cooperation" (idem, p. 240).

The above mentioned studies show there is a constant interest at the international level on identifying the effects of cooperative learning on classroom climate. This pedagogical trend requires and motivates us, the Romanian field specialists, to also conduct researches to identify the effects of the implementation of cooperative learning in Romanian schools.

Research goal

The goal of the present research is to identify the efficacy of an intervention program based on teaching activities centered on cooperative learning principles with primary school children to maximize/improve classroom climate.

Research hypothesis

We start our study from the hypothesis that the implementation of an intervention program based on cooperative learning leads to a maximization of classroom climate for the children in the experimental lot;

Independent variable (a): implementation of the intervention program and its assessment

a1: pretest assessment

a2: posttest assessment

Dependent variable (x): children's results in *Classroom Life Instrument*

Research lot

The research lot comprised a total number of 62 children from the 4th grade from "Emanuel" Baptist Theological High School, in Oradea, divided in the experimental lot (32 children) and in the control lot (30 children); as gender division, 36 were girls and 26, boys.

Research procedure

The intervention program was conducted on a 5-week period of time, on a basis of 3 hours per week, and it completed 15 cooperative learning activities in History (1h/w), Civic Education (1h/w) and Religion (1h/w). All these three school subjects belong to Social Studies (Rom. "Om și societate") curricular area.

In History, the children learned about: Iancu of Hunedoara (1441-1456) – voivode of Transylvania, Transylvania – multi-ethnic space, Cuza and the Union of the Romanian Principalities (1859), Romanian Independence War under King Carol I (1877-1878).

In Civic Education, they tackled the following topics: Violation of children's rights, Defending children's rights, Moral norms and children's human rights – Revision, Moral norms and children's human rights – Assessment.

In Religion, the following topics were talked about: Living in harmony with the others – God's commandment, God's commandments are not difficult, The great commandment of love, Our Lord Jesus Christ put into practice the great commandment of love.

Description of the intervention program

The intervention program had two stages. During the first stage (3 lessons), the children from the experimental classroom were divided into groups, they were helped to rearrange the sitting in their classroom, got accustomed to cooperative learning groups and performed activities to develop their interpersonal skills. The children in the classroom were divided into 6 groups of 5-6 members each. The teacher had the children fill in a sociometric questionnaire to identify the students with the highest level of acceptance in the classroom, so he could decide the members of each group. The teacher also made sure that each group had children who accepted and were willing to work with one another. The groups were heterogeneous as children's academic performance and gender were concerned.

The children were explained in an age appropriate manner the five basic cooperative learning principles as stated by David and Roger Johnson. The positive interdependence was summed up with the statement: "We need one another!"; individual responsibility, by "Willingly solve the task!", face-to-face interaction, by "Give support to the others!", while personal and group skills took the form of group work rules: "We speak in a low voice!", "We speak in turn!", "Encourage your peers!", "Listen carefully to the others!". These skills were practiced by the children in role plays and, at the end, they filled in charts for each of the skills (eg. for "We speak in turn!", the children wrote for seen behaviors: "We look in the eyes the person we talk to", "We call him/her by his/her first name!", "We speak only when our colleague has finished speaking"; while for what we hear, "The name of the person we talk to spoken in a low voice", "What we tell our colleague in a low voice", "Words spoken in low voice to our colleague").

The children were also explained the roles they can have inside the groups, like: "speaker/ the voice of the group" - he/she tells the group/classroom the task/results of their team work, "secretary" - hands in the materials/writes the answers of his/her group, "cheerleader" - encourages all members to work together in a friendly manner, "noise supervisor" - uses conventional signs to remind the group to make less noise, "time supervisor" - makes sure the group solves the task in due time and constantly reminds them the amount of time left or if they have to step up, "observer" - supervises the way the roles within the group are delivered and how they work in a cooperative way.

The last of the principles of cooperative learning was the assessment of group functioning. The children were told the teacher would monitor not only the results of their tasks, but also the way they manage to practice within their group the interpersonal skills they'd learned about during cooperative learning activities. Each week, they had to fill in a self-assessment chart for group activity ("How would you rank your contribution to task solving?", "How do you see your involvement within your group?", "What problems did you have in solving the task?"). They also had to fill in a chart about group functioning and group members' behavior ("What improvements should be made within your group?", "What changes should be made within your group?", "How do you see your group members' participation to task solving?", "How do you see your group members' involvement within your group?")

The activity aiming the development of their interpersonal skills was a game; the children had to tell their group members certain details about their personal life (eg. the names of the persons they love, a thing/fact the others do not know about him/her, the places where they spend their holidays, their hobbies etc.)

During the second stage of the study, the teacher performed weekly activities in History, Religion and Civic Education, and there was peer working, but also pair or group work. The group work tasks aimed at cooperatively solving various handouts having a wide range of topics, as presented in the above pages. As an example, in Religion, after the teacher presented the 10 commandments, the children worked in groups: they talked about real situations they'd experienced/heard/seen in which the commandments were obeyed or broken and they had to rank the most important 3 commandments for children, but also to give arguments to support their ideas. The interdependence skills practiced in solving this task were the following: the interdependence of goals (the main goal of the group was to present in front of the classroom each group's ranking of the 3 most important commandments, after group discussions), the interdependence of roles (each group member had a clear defined role: secretary, time supervisor, noise supervisor etc), the interdependence of reward (each group would receive a score for solving the task; the teacher monitored the score chart and at the end of the school day, they received rewards) etc.

Research tools

Research data was gathered with The Classroom Climate Questionnaire designed by Johnson & Johnson (1983, 1996) and adapted for the Romanian population by C. Popa (2010). The questionnaire had 48 items divided into 5 subscales: student support (3, 12, 13, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 31, 34, 42), teacher support (2, 8, 11, 14, 21, 25, 29, 30, 32), cooperation (6, 9, 28, 35, 37, 40, 41, 44, 46), competition (1, 17, 36, 38, 39, 43, 48), extrinsic motivation/social approval (4, 7, 15, 19, 27), individual learning (5, 10, 16, 33, 45, 47). The answers were recorded on a 5-level Likert scale.

Research data analysis

Research hypotheses were tested with SPSS17. We analyzed data distribution by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and saw that data distribution is symmetric (test values have significance thresholds higher than 0,05 for each of the subscales of the research tool); research data would be analyzed by parametric comparison tests.

In pretest, the results after comparing the means of the two subject lots justifies the fact that we could use them as being equivalent, except for the results of student support subscale: there were higher means for the experimental lot (m_lot de control =4,3370, m_lot experimental =4,6319; t=2,402, df=41,834, sig=0,021).

To validate research hypothesis, we used Independent Samples t Test, but also Paired Samples t test. The results for independent samples are presented in **Table 1**.

Table1. Comparative results for independent samples in *Classroom Climate Qustionnaire*

Subscale	Lot	Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Student support	Experimental group	3,445	,6411	,225	60	,822
	Control group	3,405	,7462			
Teacher support	Experimental group	4,333	,6612	-,062	60	,951
	Control group	4,344	,7543			
Cooperation	Experimental group	4,086	,9337	,616	60	,540
	Control group	3,948	,8313			
competition	Experimental group	3,258	1,0930	-,455	60	,651
	Control group	3,371	,8250			
Extrinsic motivation	Experimental group	2,993	1,2520	,137	60	,892
	Control group	2,953	1,0565			
Individual learning	Experimental group	2,901	,8261	-2,247	60	,028
	Control group	3,394	,9028			

The analysis of research data in **Table 1** presented statistically significant differences for *individual learning* subscale t=-2,247, df=60, p<0,05, with a lower mean for the experimental lot (m=2,901) as compared to the mean of the control lot (m=3,394).

The intervention program lead to minimize the need for individual learning for the children in the experimental lot, the effect being an average one (d=0,58) according to Cohen's criteria.

At the comparative analysis of the results of all other subscales there were no statistically significant differences.

The results for **paired samples** for the same research tool are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Comparative results for paired samples in *Classroom Climate Questionnaire*

Lot	Subscale	Stage	Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental group	Student support	Pretest	3,4896	,64018	,431	31	,670
		Posttest	3,4453	,64118			
	Teacher support	Pretest	4,6319	,30059	2,736	31	,010
		Posttest	4,3333	,66127			
	Cooperation	Pretest	4,1667	,61444	,682	31	,500
		Posttest	4,0868	,93378			
	Competition	Pretest	3,3125	,99003	,302	31	,765
		Posttest	3,2589	1,09306			
	Extrinsic motivation	Pretest	3,1750	1,17364	1,042	31	,306
		Posttest	2,9938	1,25208			
	Individual learning	Pretest	3,2500	,75372	2,296	31	,029
		Posttest	2,9010	,82616			
Control group	Student support	Pretest	3,5417	,83728	1,058	29	,299
		Posttest	3,4056	,74623			
	Teacher support	Pretest	4,3370	,60612	-,071	29	,944
		Posttest	4,3444	,75435			
	cooperation	Pretest	4,2037	,72543	1,471	29	,152
		Posttest	3,9481	,83134			
	Competition	Pretest	3,3048	,90874	-,389	29	,700
		Posttest	3,3714	,82501			
	Extrinsic motivation	Pretest	2,9467	1,17319	-,035	29	,972
		Posttest	2,9533	1,05658			
	Individual learning	Pretest	3,1333	,96331	-1,296	29	,205
		Posttest	3,3944	,90283			

The analysis of the research data in **Table 2** shows statistically significant results for the experimental lot for two of the subscales of the research tool:

Teacher support (t=2,736, p<0,05), which shows that the children's need to get support from the teacher minimized in post-test (mpretest=4,6319, mposttest=4,3333). The effect size measure indicates an average influence of the intervention program at the experimental lot for this subscale (d=0,49).

Individual learning (t=2,296, p<0,05), which means the children's need to learn independently minimized in post-test (mpretest=2,901, mposttest=3,25). The effect size measure indicates an average influence of the intervention program at the experimental lot for this subscale (d=0,412).

There were no statistically significant results for any of the subscales of the research tool for the ***control lot***.

Findings

Our research results show that *the need for teacher support*, as well as the need for *individual learning* had minimized when we used cooperative learning groups for school activities.

We believe it is important for our students to gradually gain independence from the teacher; when frequently using peer teaching, the teacher does not give the children the possibility to work on their own. That is why one of the difficulties the children experienced when working in groups was the lack of trust in their actions to solve the task, frequently asking the teacher for guidance in what they were supposed to do. Many teachers told us that the most common mistakes in a test are due to the improper reading of the working tasks. Practicing group work made the children to communicate more with one another to overcome different obstacles. Throughout the program we kept telling the children that the teacher should be asked for guidance only after the problem was discussed within the group and none of the members could find an answer for it. So, gradually, the children stopped asking questions to the teacher and started communicating with one another.

We talked to the children and found out they really loved being given the opportunity to freely express their opinions and to talk among themselves. They enjoyed being actively involved in the learning activity due to their roles within their groups, for task solving. In other words, they became aware that the opinion and contribution of each group member matters and that learning can be also achieved when working in groups, not only when one learns by himself/herself.

One of the limitations of this research is the short period of time of the intervention program in which the cooperative learning activities were performed with the children. Although statistically the results of The Classroom Life Instrument did not show significantly increased effect size measures for all of its subscales, the teachers involved in the program stated there was a change in children's behavior: they paid more attention to the way they communicated to one another and they helped one another more. Furthermore, the teachers, even if distrustful at the beginning in the impact of cooperative learning, at the end of the experiment, changed their minds. The class teacher observed every activity of the program and she was amazed of the way the children interacted ("I did not believe that children can work in groups and we do not lose control of the class, that they can so seriously take charge of their roles"). We believe that many teachers do not use this teaching model because of their superficial understanding of group work ("I believed that group work means just giving students tasks and letting them solve the tasks by themselves. Now, I've understood that if we want to teach the children to cooperate, we have to teach them the ABC of cooperation by explaining them the rules, the roles, but also to carefully monitor both, their academic performance, and the quality of their interactions, the level of their social skills.") The same idea is also stated by the authors Ferguson-Patrick & Jolliffe (2018):

"Barriers to developing cooperative learning that help explain its lack of use are twofold. The first concerns political motives that promote more traditional approaches to teaching in a drive to improve attainment, and the second concerns a lack of sufficient understanding by teachers of cooperative learning." (p. 9-10)

Because these activities were scheduled as the last classes of the school day, there was a drop in attention and concentration during task solving for some of the children.

Another limitation of the experiment was the teacher that conducted it: he was a 3rd year student in Primary and Preschool Education, at the University of Oradea, but he used this teaching strategy for the very first time, although he had a teaching experience of several years. He got familiarized with cooperative learning during a 2nd year optional course "Cooperative learning", so he only had theoretical knowledge about it. The lack of a complete program that should have included him also being monitored by an instructor with a greater experience in cooperative learning can explain the existence of significant differences for only two of the subscales of the questionnaire.

Because of the positive attitude of children towards this pattern of cooperative learning, it is recommended this interactive teaching strategy should be used over a longer period of time and in school subjects from other curricular areas, as well. And due to the social dimension of cooperative learning, it is important we study its effects on the development of social skills of primary school children, too. The study can also be used for secondary school children and/or high school students.

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THE PROFESSIONAL ADVANCED TRAINING OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS BY MEANS OF E-LEARNING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

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Abstract: Modern technologies have been making progress in all socially significant domains, thus it is necessary for an individual to be computer-literate so that he can be in touch with novelties and innovations in his professional field. Beside the acquisition of knowledge and information important for professional competences, the use of modern technologies contributes to the better time organization of individuals. This is especially important for educational workers who are frequently exposed to stress due to the lack of time. In order to follow contemporary events related to their profession in the first place, educational workers have to receive advanced trainings throughout their lives. Lifelong learning has become the imperative of educational professions. The organization of accredited seminars, approved by the Bureau for Education improvement in Serbia, represents the aspects of professional advanced trainings where educational workers acquire new knowledge and competences. The largest number of trainings in Serbia has been performed in a traditional way, "Ex - cathedra", however, there is also a tendency for the organization of e-learning trainings by means of modern technologies. The goal of this research is to be determined whether kindergarten teachers, teachers and the teachers of subject teaching have accepted remote learning, which would strengthen their professional competences in a faster and simpler way. The sample has included 300 educational workers employed in preschool institutions and primary schools. The instrument which we have used to respond to the goals of this research was constructed. The research findings point to significant differences in educational workers' responses in regards to the gender, chronological age and working experience of respondents.

Key words: educational workers; e-learning; competences; lifelong learning and accredited trainings;

I. INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Distance learning is a customary form of knowledge acquisition in almost every field of social activities. Distance learning is a usual type of knowledge acquisition in almost every field of social activities. This type of learning has the wide diapason of possibilities. Some of the advantages are the costs reduction of schooling and traveling as well as the possibilities for an individual to learn at time and at pace that suits him. Additionally, this type of learning realizes the potentiality for respect and support of various styles of learning with every individual separately etc. (Petrović, 2009). In this context, besides economic benefits, the human aspect that relates to individual differences of separate persons with the respect of their right to lifelong education would also come to the fore. Lifelong learning expands the concept of education from the schooling of young people and adults to the informal education of adults, also including the experiential learning of young people and adults (Paustović, 2008). Educational workers in Serbia are offered the wide range of accredited training courses by the Institute for education improvement for the purpose of their lifelong education. These training courses aim to enable educational workers the acquisition of knowledge from various fields that is directly related to the novelties and innovations necessary for the realization of contemporary teaching, that is, of educational process (the ZUOV Catalogue, 2014) with priority fields and defined competencies which are acquired by the seminars participants. The accreditation of training courses for the lifelong learning of educational workers lasts for two years. After that period the training courses effects are reviewed and the ZUOV makes a decision on the accreditation of already existent seminars supplemented with new ones which meet the criteria of contemporary methods, forms and approaches in the realization of teaching and aimed activities in schools and kindergartens. Researches show that students – future educators, use contemporary learning methods and the preparation of pre-exam obligations (Janjić, Petković & Grujić, 2014; Vasiljević-Prodanović, Jeremić & Markov, 20117) which supports the importance of a modern technologies using in a significant social activity – higher education.

E-learning has proved the advantages in the sense of the learning access at time when it suits to an individual, although the cost savings achieved in that way are not negligible. By e-learning, the absence of employees with the aim of additional education, per diem expenses, material printing expenses, seminars organization expenses are discontinued or reduced to a minimum (Mikšin, 2002).This is significant for many reasons. First, a teacher finds it hard to set aside the funds for lifelong learning in accordance to financial income. In addition to this, the fact that teachers are able to plan their time in the way that they can use it for what they will be able to implement in practice and for what is in the sphere of their interest, is also important. Certain researchers believe that e-learning presents the combination of high-quality and progressive achievements of pedagogical technology. It is based on the principles of free learning using a computer in educational programs and of modern telecommunication. New internet technologies enable the use of various records which are combined in multimedia content and presented to students. The description of a technology development process that accompanied this form of learning is given in this work (Stojanović, Ilić & Mihajlović, 2012).

Distance learning is both a challenge and a means for the improvement and promotion of educational processes as well as one of the fundament for the new and better ways of knowledge managing. The intensive introduction of information technologies into educational processes has become the priority of modern institutions of higher education worldwide (Pokorni, 2009). Contemporary teaching can hardly be imagined without technological support today. It is common for preschool and school teachers to be educated throughout their lives and to give advantage to some aspects of e-learning compared to traditional learning since they are more accessible among other things. It must be noted that the enhancement of availability, the important characteristic of e-learning, is ethical by itself. However, it brings certain ethical risks and weaknesses. Taking into account that the expansion of e-education in recent years insinuates to an even higher share in the future, we realize that these issues must be identified. There are also following ethical dilemmas: the dilemma of a digital gap, the one of multiculturalism, the obligations of automation process learning, the dilemma of psychological distance, of identity, confidentiality and anonymity; of supervision and privacy; of academic fraud and the quality of education (Arsenijević & Pražić, 2012). In any case, new technologies and digital literacy can provide professional competencies to an individual since information exchange is becoming bigger every day so it is necessary that every individual be computer literate (Mikanović & Oljača 2010; Andevski & Arsenijević 2013; Arsenijević & Andevski 2016) Today it is almost impossible to imagine contemporary teaching without technological support. It is common for preschool teachers and professors to educate themselves during their lifetime and to give advantage to some aspects of e-learning, being more accessible among other things, comparing to traditional ones.

Some authors believe that teaching should also be adjusted to a distance learning concept and in that context, distance studies should be accredited. A small number of academic programs from socio-humanistic and technical and technological science fields have been adjusted to distance learning until now (Matijašević-Obradović & Joksić, 2014). The reasons for this may be various. The traditional way of learning is still given advantage. However, we should bear in mind that in the world, distance learning has been used as compatible to the traditional one. However, many authors believe that the fast development of modern technologies leads to significant novelties on a global social level in all spheres, thus information should be reached quickly so that experts of various professions could be up to date with the latest achievements (Arsenijević & Pražić, 2012; Andevski & Arsenijević, 2013; Noe, 2010; Simpson, 2004). Considering that lifelong learning has been recognized as crucial one for knowledge society (Anđelković, Labrović & Milosavljević, 2015) thus in this context, personal learning environments should be considered as permanent, adaptive and developing, adjustable to various learning styles in different contexts and different periods of life. Thitherto, distance learning is becoming a possibility to find a way to include distance learning in everyday practice, to evaluate acquired knowledge in this manner and to acknowledge its contribution to a personal and professional development.

Work method

Sample

The sample included 300 kindergarten teachers, teachers and the teachers of subject teaching employed in preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools in Serbia (in towns: Kikinda, Belgrade, Novi Bečej and Zrenjanin). There are 163 respondents of female gender and 137 respondents of male gender. The value of Hy square test $\chi^2 = 2.253$(p =0.133) indicates that the sample is equable according to a gender parameter. Out of the total number of respondents, 162 respondents are younger than 40 years of life, while 138 respondents are older than 40 years of life. The value of Hi test square

$\chi^2 = 1.92$(p =0.165) indicates that the sample is equable according to the parameter of the chronological age of respondents. From the total number of 300 respondents, 159 respondents have less than 10 years of working experience in the profession, while 141 respondents have more than 10 years of working experience. The value of Hy square test $\chi^2 =$ 1.08 (p =0.298) Points out that the sample is euable according to the length of working experience parameter. The total number of respondents according to the type of employment is following: 111 respondents are employed in preschool institutions as kindergarten teachers, 98 respondents are employed as teachers in primary schools, while 91 respondents are employed as the teachers of subject teaching in primary and secondary schools. We have not determined significant statistical differences according to the type of the respondents' (χ^2 =2.06; df=2; p=0.357).

Instruments and procedure

The research was conducted during May and June in 2016. The sample consisted of 300 preschool teachers, teachers and professors employed in preschool institutions, elementary and high schools (Kikinda, Belgrade, Novi Bečej and Zrenjanin). The questionnaire for the evaluation of preschool teachers' and professors' readiness to educate them via distance learning was constructed. The examinees had the possibility to encircle one of three offered answers: "yes", "sometimes" and "no". Respondents were offered the possibility to leave a comment with each assertion. These comments were analyzed in the results interpretation and used as the content of a statement and the degree and quality of an elaboration. A survey technique was used. The respondents sample is random. Educative workers were asked to answer the questionnaire constructed for the purpose of this work. Theoretical e-learning considerations constituted the basis for the development of the questionnaire, but a pilot research had previously been conducted in which basic questions and possible answers were defined through interviews with 10 kindergarten teachers and 10 teachers. The questionnaire consisted from 5 questions of a general character – a gender, profession, the years of life, working experience in the profession, the place of residence. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 15 clearly defined questions the purpose of which was to answer the research objective. Respondents had the opportunity to leave a short comment with each assertion.

II RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was realized so that we could determine whether preschool teachers and professors familiar with the advantages of distance learning regarding lifelong learning. Solesa spoke on the potentialities of e-learning in the context of online courses in the function of teachers education improvement (Soleša, 2014), while some authors think that an educational process will not be successful if teaching and online courses attendants only receive information from available literature and electronic sources, but also the communication with a lecturer as well as the feedback on a student and the way of a work present the help and support in the mastering of educational contents (Pećanac, Sakač & Cvetićanin, 2013; Andevski, Vidaković, & Arsenijević, 2014). Therefore, the compatibility and combination of e-learning and a traditional way of learning help teachers to gather necessary information in order to concretize them in practice and also to have a critical reflection in relation to them. In that sense, the communication with information sources – knowledge and finding ideas so that teachers could concretize their creativity in pedagogical and educational process is necessary. The essence of lifelong learning is in the professional advanced training of a teacher and, above all, in teaching children and students with the aim of functional knowledge acquisition. Due to the fact that the number of users and media consumers frequently increases, we can expect changes from all competent authorities at the state level as well as from educational institutions concerning the purposeful, functional acquisition of media competencies and media literacy of young people and adults (Arsenijević & Andevski, 2013). Particularly, when it comes to distance learning, it is concluded that e-learning becomes a possibility for additional mandatory training courses concerning children with disabilities owing to various advantages for educational workers (Kojić, Kojić-Grandić & Markov, 2017). However, the results of this and similar researches should be also considered as a good base and guideline for the reconsideration of our own competencies, good and bad sides on an individual level.

Table 1. The respondents' answers on the advantages of distance training courses realization in regards to the respondents' profession

Profession type	f1	%	f2	%	f3	%	total			C
Kindergarten teachers	37	33.30%	33	29.70%	41	37%	111			
Teachers	55	56.12%	29	29.60%	14	14.28	98	**27.804**	**0.000**	**0.29**
Subject teachers	59	64.83	17	18.68%	15	16.49%	91			

By the insight in the Table 1., we conclude that the question *I am familiar with the advantages of a distance seminar realization* was answered by 37 (33.33%) kindergarten teachers with yes, 33 (29.70%) kindergarten teachers answered that they were partially familiar with the advantages of a distance seminar realization, while even 41 (37%) respondents answered that they were not familiar with the advantages of a distance seminar realization. Out of the total number of respondents, 55 (56.12%) respondents gave a positive answer, 29 (29.60%) respondents answered that they were partially familiar and 14 (14.28%) respondents answered that they were not familiar with the advantages of a distance seminar realization. A positive answer was given by 59 (56.12%) subject teachers out of total, stressing that they were familiar with the advantages of a distance seminar realization in their comments, 17 (18.68%)

subject teachers did not have a clear insight into the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning, while 15 (16.49%) subject teachers believed that they did not possess sufficient knowledge in this field and they were not aware of the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning. There is a significant statistical divergence i the respondents' answers ($\chi^{2\ test=}$ 27.804; df=2; p=0.000). The value of a contingency coefficient of C=0.29 indicates that the connection between observed phenomena is of low intensity. In their comments, the respondents stated that the concept of distance learning was not understandable enough and that they advocated the traditional way of training courses. Numerous authors have spoken about the advantages of distance training courses organization. They believe that the designers of these courses should introduce group activities that encourage the active participation of seminars attendants, since the activities will get their attention so that learning will be more effective and applicable in practice (Soleša, 2004) where online mentors should be capable of establishing the positive climate of support among participants.

Table 2. The respondents' answers to the compatibility of traditional and distance learning in regards to their profession.

Profession type	f1	%	f2	%	f3	%	total	$\chi^{2\ test}$	p	C
Kindergarten teachers	27	24.32%	35	31.53%	49	44.15%	111			
Teachers	36	36.73%	45	45.92%	17	17.35%	98	32.938	**0.000**	0.31
Subject teachers	46	50.55	31	34.06%	14	16.49%	91			

By the insight in the Table 2., we ascertain that concerning the statement *I consider traditional and distance learning compatible,* 27 (24.32%) respondents think that traditional and distance learning are compatible, 35 (31.53%) respondents believe that they are sometimes compatible, while 49 (44.15%) think that they are not compatible and they give advantages to traditional way of learning and knowledge acquisition in comments. From the total number of teachers, 36 (36,73%) of them consider these learnings compatible, 45 (45.92%) teachers think that it is sometimes so, while 17 (17.35%) teachers give advantage to traditional learning. More than a half of the teachers of subject teaching, the total of 46 (50.55%), think that these two learnings permeate and that a contemporary educator needs to constantly upgrade and that distance learning offers such a possibility, 31 (34.06%) subject teachers think that these two types of learning complement each other, and 14 (15.39%) subject teachers believe that they are not compatible and they give advantage to traditional learning in comments. The value of Hi test square 32.938 (p=0.000; df=4) indicates to divergences in the respondents' answers, while the contingency coefficient of 0.31 points to the moderate connectivity amongst variables. The value of a contingency coefficient of C=0.31 indicates that the connection between observed phenomena is of low intensity. The research findings show that the awareness of subject teachers is about the significance of distance learning since with the development of knowledge technology, information increases daily, thus there is a need for distance learning so that educational workers could be competent for their profession. Many authors also speak of the need for lifelong learning in this context (Mikanović & Oljača, 2010) since informal education contributes to the development of an individual and the possibility to stay competitive in his work.

Some other researches that had been carried out within the Ministry of education of the Republic of Serbia projects (Mikšin, 2012) showed that e-learning had its advantages and disadvantages. The factors that have the most negative impact on the successfulness of e-learning are: the deficiency of free time, fatigue and the ignorance of foreign languages. E-learning has proved the advantages in the terms of an approach to learning in time when it is convenient for an individual as well as the saving that is realized on that occasion. By means of e-learning, the absence of workers from work for the purpose of additional education, daily allowances costs, material printing costs, seminars organization costs etc. are abolished or minimized.

Table 3. The examinees' answers according to gender

items	yes		sometimes		no		$\chi^{2\ \text{test}}$	p
	f	m	f	m	f	m		
1.	72	38	63	50	28	49	15.596	**0.000**
2.	76	38	49	50	38	49	11.904	**0.002**

With an insight into the Table 3. we can state that 72 (24%) female examinees and 38 (12.66%) male examinees responded to the item *By attending the distance learning seminars I acquire professional competences that I apply in practice* with "yes". The total of 63 (21%) female examinees and 50 (16.66%) male examinees responded with "sometimes". The answer "no" was given by 28 (9.33%) female examinees and 49 (16.33%) examinees of a male gender.

The statement *I consider e-learning much more efficient in terms of knowledge acquisition at seminars in regards to traditional learning* was responded by 76 (25.33%) female examinees and 38 (12.66%) male examinees with "yes". "Sometimes" was responded by 49 (16.33%) female examinees and 50 (16.66 %) male examinees. Negative answer was given by 38 (12.66%) female examinees and 49 (16.33%) male examinees.

By analyzing the results displayed in Table 1., we notice that there are differences in answers of male and female examinees at the question number one since the value of Hi test square is 11.904 (p=0.002).

From the total number of examinees, 162 are less than 40 years old, while 138 examinees are more than 40 years old. The value of Hi test square of $\chi^2 = 1.92$ (p =0.165) indicates that the sample is equitable according to the chronological period.

Table 4. The examinees' answers according to chronological age

items	yes		sometimes		no		$\chi^{2\ \text{test}}$	p
	Up to 40	Above40	Up to 40	abv 40	Up to 40	abv 40		
1	66	45	54	37	42	56	7.272	**0.002**
2	67	46	57	34	38	58	12.04	**0.002**

With an insight into the Table 4., we notice that the statement ***E-learning seminars enable teachers to significantly strengthen professional competences*** 66 (22%) examinees below 40 years of life and 45 (15 %) examinees older than 40 years of life, answered to the item with "yes". The total of 54 (18%) examinees below 40 years of life and 37 (12.33%) examinees above 40 years of life answered with "sometimes". The answer "no" was given by 42 (14%) examinees younger than 40 years and 56 (18.66%) examinees older than 40 years of life. The findings of the research carried out at the Faculty of Medicine in Nis show that age range did not have statistically important impact A statistically important divergence in the taking of positive attitudes towards distance learning knowledge. A statistically significant divergence in the taking of positive attitudes towards distance learning among the medicine students of the first and sixth year of study was not found. (Stanković, Petrović & Milošević, 2015) thus we conclude that the results of this research are contrary to ours. However, we ascertain that the respondents of a younger chronological age better accept novelties, which, in this case is distance learning.

The statement *I am aware of e-learning advantages, because it enables me to follow novelties and innovative acts brought by fast technological development of the society and which are related to the development of my competences* was answered with "yes" by 67 (22.33%) examinees below 40 years of age and 46 (15.33%) examinees above 40 years of age.

This question was answered with “sometimes” by 57 (19 %) examinees below 40 years of life and 34 (11.33%) examinees above 40 years of life. A negative answer was given by 38 (12.66%) examinees below 40 years of life and 58 (19.33%) examinees above 40 years of life. In their comments, the respondents specify that they are motivated to acquire new knowledge, since an educational system is being modernized and there is the need of daily novelties observing. The results comply with the findings (Miljković, Petojević & Žićović, 2015) where it is described the way motivation processes impact the course attendants from the standing point of knowledge absolving, knowledge and skills transfer and usage in the distance learning system. The model of motivational processes is presented in the function of the learning goals of the course attendants. By the monitoring of a motivation factor influence on the execution of cognitive tasks and the way the course attendants’ reactions are formed, that is, how the motivation factor influences success or failure and the quality of a cognitive performance in a learning process, a methodical and didactical approach to teaching has been changed and modified. Implications in a practice and an intervention through the design of distance learning software system are directed to the correction of educational process to the noted incompatibility of motivational processes in learning environment or a professional training, following two forms of prior knowledge throughout the research.

Analyzing the results displayed in the Table 4., we notice that there are differences in the examinees’ answers to the first question regarding chronological age, since the value of the Hi test square is 12.04 (p=0.002) and to the second question because the value of the Hi test square is 11.904 (p=0.002). The results of the research that were carried out on the sample of 271 respondents showed that a gender did not have a statistically significant impact on the knowledge of distance learning. A statistically significant divergence in the taking of positive attitudes towards distance learning among the medicine students of the first and sixth year of study was not found. The impact of a gender on the taking a certain attitude was statistically significant. E-learning does not eliminate the existing learning methods, but it complements them and helps in the overcoming of curriculums (Al-Zoube & El-Seoud, 2009; Stanković, Petrović & Milošević, 2015), which is contrary to the results obtained in our research.

From the total number of 300 examinees, 159 examinees have less than 10 years working experience in the profession, while 141 examinees have more than 10 years in the profession. The value of the Hi test square of $\chi^2 = 1.08$ (p =0.298) indicates that the sample according to the chronological age of examinees is equitable.

Table 5. The examinees’ answers according to the years of the working experience in profession

items	yes		sometimes		no		$\chi^{2\ \text{test}}$	p
	Up to 10	above 10	Up to 10	above 10	Up t 10	Abv 10		
1.	67	46	55	36	37	59	11.874	**0.002**

With an insight into the Table 5. We can ascertain that the statement *I consider e-learning to be much more efficient regarding the acquisition of new knowledge at seminars compared to traditional learning* was responded to by 67 (22.33%) examinees with less than 10 years of working experience in the profession and 46 (15.33%) examinees with more than 10 years of working experience with “yes”. The total number of 55 (18.33%) examinees with less than 10 years of working experience in the profession and 36 (12 %) examinees with more than 10 years of working experience in the profession responded with “sometimes”. The answer “no” was given by 37 (12.33%) examinees with less than 10 years of experience in the profession and 59 (19.66%) examinees with more than 10 years of working experience in the profession. Analyzing the results displayed in the Table 3. We notice that there are differences in the answers to the question number 1 of the examinees with more and less than 10 years of working experience in the profession since the value of the Hi test square is 11.874 (p=0.002).

Authors also speak about the potentialities of distance training courses when they consider the trainings connected to children with disabilities (Kojić, Kojić-Grandić & Markov, 2017), as an inclusive process demands educational workers who are competent for inclusion, so that distance learning is considered to be able to provide the knowledge which will help educational workers to realize educational work with children with disabilities.

III. CONCLUSION

According to the research results we can state that differences in the examinees' answers appeared with 5 items in total. When it comes to a gender, the questions were: *By attending distance learning seminars, the professional competences that I apply in practice are acquired and I find e-learning much more effective considering knowledge acquisition comparing to traditional learning.*

Additionally, a larger number of female examinees believe that e-learning is more effective when it comes to seminars than traditional learning. The examinees of younger chronological age mostly answered the question: *E-learning seminars enable teachers to significantly strengthen professional competences and I am aware of the advantages of e-learning since they allow me to follow novelties and innovative activities brought by the fast technological development of society and which are related to my competences development.*

When it comes to working experience in the profession, the higher percentage of examinees with less working experience in practice responded with "yes" to the statement *I find e-learning much more efficient considering new knowledge acquisition at seminars comparing to traditional learning,* in comparison to the examinees with more working experience. By the insight in the site of the Institute for Education improvement of the Republic of Serbia, we can state that there are accredited online seminars; however, they are less present in comparison to traditional ones (The Institute for Education improvement of the Republic of Serbia catalogue http://www.zuov.rs).

This research encourages and gives the impetus for further researches that could indicate the advantages of e-learning concerning lifelong education. The idea of the introduction of novelties concerning accredited online seminars in the Rule book on professional advanced training of preschool teachers, teachers and associates may be born. *The rule book on constant professional specialization of subject teachers, kindergarten teachers and professional associates* ("The Official gazette of the RS", no. 86/2015), since professional distance education is becoming a need so that an individual could be up to date when it comes to his competencies (Milosavljević & Vukanović 2000), as lifelong learning include all the formal and informal activities the goal of which is knowledge advancement and the development of various competencies (Mikanović & Oljača, 2010), thus when it comes to accredited training courses, lifelong and distance learning can be used for the improvement of educational workers competencies. After formal education, learning is continued through various aspects. Insufficient awareness must not be an excuse for educational workers concerning lifelong education and the possibility for education via modern technologies after completed studies. Electronic learning is a young phenomenon, actual in the world and in our country for the last twenty years. This phenomena has been conditioned by the amazingly fast and great development of computers and internet technologies that influence the change of learning and teaching concepts, changing a view to a contemporary educational technology. Their acting transfers the learning from a school system to lifelong learning (Petrović, 2009:263). Therefore, by the synergy of an active participation in accredited seminars, knowledge acquisition via informal approaches, using modern technologies etc as the aspects of lifelong learning, educational workers can follow contemporary happenings in the 21st

century and to satisfy all the competences needed for the high-quality teaching of the youth from preschool to adolescent age. We believe that all researches which awake awareness to students – future educational workers of the necessity of lifelong learning have positive effects on the professional responsibility of future educational workers because they are aware that by the establishment of employment they just start the upgrade of the base they achieved by the basic studies completion. That is the reason why students – future kindergarten teachers should be encouraged from the first year of studies to lifelong learning aspect and the attendance of accredited seminars and other forms of training courses. Educational workers need to react quickly in certain pedagogical situations and that is where the management of knowledge, skills and information can help them. One should bear in mind that operating takes place at the speed of the thought (Gates & Hemingway, 2001) so that educational workers have to be up to date in order to be able to answer contemporary pedagogical tendencies requirements. In this sense, there is a need to clarify a fact to educational workers that traditional learning and the learning via modern technologies are compatible and that information is important for the quality of their profession much easier and more accessible to contemporary technologies. This research presents an inducement for investigators. How and in which way can stereotypes with educational workers who give advantage to traditional way and the knowledge acquisition in classical way, be repressed.

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Developing Reading Skills in Pre-primary and Primary School Education

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Abstract: The present course aims to present techniques and specific ways that can be used for developing reading skills in pre-primary and primary school education. Over time, a lot of these techniques have already been validated with positive results. Recently, we proposed strategies that have been adapted to the current educational needs. However, it is anticipated that the reading act should be introduced already from a very young age such as prenatal stage. Depending on the stage of intellectual development of the child (developmental stages described by Jean Piaget), parents and those in care of the children should gradually strengthen the development of reading through concerted efforts. Additionally, some of the techniques presented in this article undertake the stimulation of reading for students in secondary school, through becoming more self-motivated and developing a routine of reading, therefore becoming a sine qua non element of the adult's lifestyle. These techniques were applied by a lot of our (former) students enumerated at the end of this article.

Key-words: *reading skills; pupil/student; development;*

On the Importance of Reading

Numerous studies have shown that "Reading engages the mind into a more active state rather than watching television or focusing on various gadgets such as the computer. /…/ The reading of a novel, no matter how easy the literary genre is, it instantly shifts the mind present perspective into one of the book themes. Therefore, this act challenges your thinking, stimulates your imagination and eventually along with the escape from the daily routine that one gets when reading a book, we could also benefit from finding answers related to our daily life quests."[4]

It should be mentioned that we cannot establish precisely which of the next valences appear strictly because of the act of reading, and which are a result of the fictional content of reading. In some cases, things seem unambiguous[5], while in others the valences have a double causality, hard to quantify to the extent that they are either the result of the reading act or either to the specific content that has been read[6]. These results are: enriching the vocabulary and its nuanced use; stimulation of interest, passion for reading, desire to know more, and the desire to individual study; stimulating creativity and artistic intelligence; offering examples of desirable behavior (the latest to form a judicial spirit). Moreover, it expands the view and interests of education in the spirit of high moral qualities in accordance with traditional moral norms (honor, dignity, patriotism, courage, truth, etc.), but also with those of contemporary society, an expression of the educational ideal; it promotes teamwork spirit and awareness of the small petting world (and the animal world in general). The most important out of all, the reading act it strengthens mental processes (thinking, memory, imagination, etc.) it cultivates a sense of will and self-control of self-control and will; it cultivates aesthetic taste; it forms its

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[4] Petrea, Irina, *Și tu poți fi supernanny 1. Cum să-ți crești copilul* [*Even you can be supernanny 1. How to grew up your child*], Ed. Trei, 2012, p. 235

[5]For example, vocabulary enrichment and refinement, providing models and anti-models of behavior, learning teamwork etc. is due to the content of the reading, while the cultivation of self-control and will (especially the reading of large texts, usually, the novels) is especially relevant to the act of reading.

[6]e.g.: development of mental processes (certainly, it has dual causality, but we have not the ability to measure how much is due to the reading effort and how much is due to the content of reading)

own axiological perspective; it familiarizes us with various professions and trades; it provides solutions to solve ontological problems; possible and desirable isolation from automatism (temporary, of course) in a virtual universe; catharsis[7].

In the article *Reading as a Teaching Adventure*, it is shown that the reading act „is one of the few ways to stimulate the curiosity and the desire of discovering in children of all ages. It is said that the reading act is one of the gates of a pleasant escape from the pressures of a system of the great distance between the flexible school curriculum and the strictness of the evaluation".[8]Without this bookish adventure, Michel Houellebecq showed that adults can be harmed: „Living without reading is dangerous; you have to limit yourself to life, and it is not without risk"[9].

Recent studies recommend reading therapy[10], but also reading as an ingredient of happiness. Moreover, Roland Barthes rightly showed the ineffable character of the delight / seduction exercised over the lecturer[11].

Concrete ways of stimulating independent reading in preschool and primary school

The first step in shaping the interest in reading is initiated by the parent or any other people in care of the children. As most researchers show, since the intrauterine period the fetuses should be introduced to sounds which consists of aloud works from children's literature.

In the pre-primary school education

In the beginning, the familiarization with **coloured cover** of the book - illustrated, tactile, colouring etc. - is likely to sensitize the child to the book. The next step is to determine along with the future readers a description of the book contents (animals, numbers, letters etc), which in turn will be resulted in the verbalization and the intuition of the book images by the child alone. Moreover, another approach that helps in stimulating the curiosity and the interest in reading is **to surround the children with a library containing magazines, story volumes which are illustrated**, fables, snoops, novels, legends, science books etc. The children who are not introduced to books from a very young age will have their interest for reading any kind of content considerably low, and difficult to develop later into adulthood.

Bath stories are realized using floating books (that have a support that permits to the books to float) or pneumatic/inflatable books.

Bed time stories involve a ritual with many valences, because "stories enrich the child's soul, giving him various affective feelings"[12]. They stimulate children's imagination, they bring into the child's life positive examples which have an impact in shaping positive attitudes. Once this approach is very well embedded in a child's routine and consistently followed, it will also become a ritual for an adult's routine.

We can also use **motivational image with cute animals reading** (Fig.1), because for a child it is important that a rabbit/cat/monkey/pig/dog/puppy/hedgehog reads…

Moreover**, stories of various famous characters such as Spiderman, Batman** could make the children's learning more fun and interesting and the knowledge easier to acquire. For

[7]Here is an enumeration of the valences of reading and of the literature for children in eclectic way, without specifying the subject and the literary species illustrated by a text, considering the sphere of literature for children, from which we assume that various works are selected!

[8]Elisabeta Roşca, Rodica Lăzărescu, *Lectura ca aventură didactică*, în: *Tribuna învăţământului*, nr. 948 (2829), 5-11 mai 2008, p. 8

[9]In rom.: *Să trăieşti fără lectură este periculos; trebuie să te limitezi la viaţă, şi nu e lipsit de riscuri*- Michel Houellebecq, *Platforma*, Ed. Polirom, 2003, trad. Emanoil Marcu, p. 82

[10]De exemplu, Paola Santagostino, *Cum să te vindeci cu o poveste*, în românește de Corina Popescu, Ed. Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2008

[11]Barthes, Roland, *Plăcerea textului,* în româneşte de Marian Papahagi, Ed. Echinox, Cluj-Napoca, 1994

[12]Elena Popescu, *Cum să ne creştem copiii bine*, Ed. Booklet, 2000, p. 105

example: When students learn their letters, some of the letters could be presented such as *B* from Batman, Spiderman starts with letter *S*.

In the primary school education

In primary school, the students' interest for independent reading is stimulated mainly by the class teacher, who proposes **a list of textbooks to be read**. Additionally, along with the textbooks there are various activities that could be performed during lesson, based on what has been read by the students.

In the beginning of every school year, in the first literature lesson, **the textbook is presented and debated** over its cover's artwork, the identification of its coordinates etc. Any kind of perspective from the student is welcomed, as this sensitizes the student to the printed book and draws a series of expectations on its reading.

They are also encouraged to read through an attractive book **by selectively reading fragments** (which can be extracted from the text, with some autonomy) **and debate them** in more detail with a workbook support (that contains a lot of activities, exercises, questions based on the textbook at hand). For this purpose, the teacher must compile a list of literary works age appropriate, with the appropriate informational level and psychological development. **Students are advised on how to make summaries, quotes, or various transcripts of information**.

Moreover, only the act of reading itself is it not enough. The reading act has to be educated in such a way that students understand what is being read and why. They have to be taught what to do with extracted information from a specific content and how it can be applied or updated in real life. Therefore, **the students have to be challenged through different activities** or tasks that are gradually increased in difficulty for a better understanding of the textbook.

It is very important **to have a positive and an active attitude during reading** for attaining a correct understanding of what is be ingrained and taking small steps in acquiring a set of self-training skills for reading. Kieran Egan believes that, what children lack most often is the reason why they should make the effort of reading, pointing out that "humanities are addressing intellectual ecstasy". "If I want pupils to learn to read, the most important step is to give them reasons to worry about and give them the chance to ask questions".[13] Consequently, the author pleads for "ecstasy" as a reading argument: "None of the research I have conducted has mentioned about the idea of ecstasy, and it seems to me that this concept is a irreducible core to what actually literature is".[14]

In partnership with a teacher of preschool and primary education, who is welcoming both parents and children for **a discreet pleading of reading** (for example, by a remark such as "If X reads the work Y, surely would have done otherwise / had the solution to the problem / would have expressed more care, etc. "...)

For the same purpose, **we can use motivational quotations**, such as: "There is no other more beautiful and useful in all man's life restfulness than the reading of the books."[15] (Miron Costin, chronicler, 1686)

Recommended literary works for second, third and fourth grades, offers the student the option to choose from a number of titles, with the possibility of choosing two or three books for every literary genre. Moreover, having a diverse list from where the student can chose for himself what he would like, it will also help the student in familiarizing himself with works of different types of literature.

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[13] idem
[14] idem
[15] In Romanian: „Nu este alta mai frumoasă şi mai de folos în toată viața omului zăbavă decât cetitul cărţilor." - Miron Costin, *De neamul moldovenilor*, *din ce țară au ieșit strămoșii lor, Predoslovie* (1686)

Storytelling, summarizing model, expressive, nuanced reading by teachers and students of the subject, types of techniques that could be applied to incite the act of reading. Similarly, **the selective, and expressive reading** of some texts with relative autonomy, done by the teacher, **the interruption of reading at an interesting time** of the text action or providing the text with incomplete information, all of these techniques raise the students interest to continue reading independently.

Attendance at a library or a bookstore (or online platforms) is more than welcomed, followed sometimes with someone reading to a group of colleagues or friends. Strategic partnerships with different institutions such as libraries with book presentations, or participation in meetings with various writers, the organization of thematic exhibitions, presentation of manipulation techniques, maintenance and refurbishment of books are good ways that could be introduced to students. These aim to raise interest and curiosity in students about certain subjects, themes etc where the answers could be found only by researching through books.

Organization of regular literary contests (e.g.: *The most passionate reader / The professional reader / Literary work that I liked the most* etc.) **or a literary club, workshop, medallion literary** mobilizes students to read and to be rewarded with different incentives. These are meant to provide satisfaction and motivation to the student.Consequently, it is recommended **to highlight the reader of the week or of the month on the school's notice board**, also in front of his classmates, other schoolchildren, in order to stimulate his motivation and to demonstrate a positive behavior to the other students.

Some lessons of **introducing different books of some writers, meetings with writers, as well as promoting literary contests** for age appropriate, contribute to shape an attitude favorable to the act of reading.

We also suggest comparing a recommended book (e.g.: *Nobody's Boy/Alone in the world* by Hector Malot) with another book that students preferred or read recently. The comparison is based on many elements as possible for example: cover design, graphics, cover art, format, characters, the readiness to read it, any new words etc., could be another way to stimulate reading in pupils.

We consider the most stimulating way to mold the desire for independent reading, has to contain **successful exercises to persuade students to read something that they have been attracted** by at a given time during reading. **A student is invited to persuade others to read the literary work he/she has read.**

It is good to have at least two propelling pupils who have read something interesting from the recommended bibliography and are driving curiosity and could also offer more recommendations about the book in other classmates or future readers. We can recommend to students to encourage other students to read by telling them that reading done with vigor is really rewarding and satisfying feeling.

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Fig. 1

VOCATIONAL TRAINING NEEDS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES IN TARABA STATE

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to identify the vocational training needs of unemployed graduates in Taraba state. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The area of the study was Taraba state in North-eastern Nigeria, and the population of the study comprises of all unemployed graduates with a minimum qualification of Higher National Diploma (HND) in the state. Stratified random sampling was used to arrive at a sample size to 150. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts in vocational education who are lecturers in institutions of higher learning. 150 copies of the instrument were administered of which 148 copies were properly filled and returned. Frequency count, Simple percentage and Ranking were used to analyze the research questions. Findings from the study among others indicated that most of the unemployed graduates (72%) are male while the rest (28%) are female. None of them had a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D). Also, 3%, 53% and 44% had Master of Science (M.Sc.) Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and Higher National Diploma (HND) respectively. Electrical Installation and Maintenance, tailoring and hair dressing are the first three most preferred vocational training needed by unemployed graduates in Taraba State. It is therefore recommended among others that, Government should take girl-child education with all the seriousness it deserves through the promotion of inclusive education. Universities should ensure that the entrepreneurship components of their programmes are overhauled to respond to the needs of the society and the students.

Key words: Vocational; Training; Needs; Unemployment; Graduates;

Introduction

Graduate unemployment has become a matter of concern to the society. This is more pronounced in developing countries such as Nigeria where graduate unemployment has become so scary in the labour market (Longe, 2017). According to Adawo (2013), among all the problems facing Nigeria in recent time, none is as persistent and distressing as the problems of high rate of unemployment among Nigerian graduates.

As part of measures aimed at finding solution to this scourge, the authors observed that, successive governments have been putting in place various vocational education programmes aimed at equipping unemployed graduates with relevant skills that will make them self-employed. For instance, when the federal government of Nigeria decided to partially removed subsidy on petrol in 2009, it introduced subsidy reinvestment programme (SURE-P) with one of the components meant for the training of graduates in the areas of skills acquisition.

In the present regime, as part of it desires to fulfill some of its campaign promises, the government introduced some social investment programmes (SIP) with NPower build as its vocational training arm. The success or otherwise of these programmes is still debatable (Surajo & Zehadul-Karim, 2016). However, what is not in dispute is that, some of these graduates abandoned the training along the way; the few that managed to complete the training mostly ported to other irrelevant endeavours after selling off the startup tools supplied to them by the federal government for the commencement of their journey to self-employment.

The authors also observed that, this unwanted behaviour may not be unconnected with the fact that most of these vocational training programmes were put in place without considering the needs of the beneficiaries (graduates) or based on any observable data even though, learners' interest is a key to success or otherwise of any training and indeed, any vocational skill acquisition programme. These situations necessitate this study to identify the vocational training needs of unemployed graduates of in Taraba state.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the vocational training needs of unemployed graduates of in Taraba state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Describe the salient demographic characteristics of unemployed graduates in Taraba state.
2. Identify the areas of vocational training needs of unemployed graduates in Taraba state.

Research Questions

The findings of the study answered the following questions:

1. What are the salient demographic characteristics of unemployed graduates in Taraba state?
2. What are the areas of vocational training needs of unemployed graduates in Taraba state?

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The area of the study was Taraba state, and the population of the study comprises of all unemployed graduates with a minimum qualification of Higher National Diploma (HND) in the state. For the purpose of sampling, the state was stratified along the three senatorial districts, in each of the three senatorial district headquarters, 50 unemployed graduates were randomly selected, thereby, bringing the sample size to 150. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers in accordance with the vocational trades training framework developed by Savion (2018). The instrument was validated by three experts in vocational education who are lecturers in institutions of higher learning. 150 copies of the instrument were administered of which 148 copies were properly filled and returned. Frequency count, Simple percentage and Ranking were used to analyze the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1

Table 1

Sex Distribution of unemployed graduates in Taraba state

S/N	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	107	72%
2	Female	41	28%

Table 1 show that 72% and 28% of unemployed graduates in Taraba state are male and female respectively.

Table 2

Educational Qualification Distribution of unemployed graduates in Taraba state

S/N	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ph.D	0	0%
2	M.Sc, M.Ed, M.A, M.Tech	4	3%
3	B.Sc, B.Ed, B.A, B.Tech	79	53%
4	HND	65	44%

Table 2 shows that 3%, 53%, and 44% of unemployed graduates in Taraba state hold Masters, bachelor Degree, and Higher National Diploma respectively. However, none of the unemployed graduates hold a Ph.D.

Table 3

Age distribution of unemployed graduates in Taraba state

S/N	Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	15-24	21	14%
2	25-34	88	59%
3.	35-Above	39	27%

The data presented in Table 3 indicated that 14%, 59, and 27% of unemployed graduates in Taraba state have their age range between 15-24, 25-34, and 35 and above respectively.

Research Question 2

Table 4

Frequency, Percentage, and Ranking on areas of vocational training needs of unemployed graduates in Taraba state

S/N	Vocational Trade	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Electrical Installations and maintenance	21	14.19%	1
2	Tailoring	19	12.84%	2
3	Hair Dressing	15	10.14%	3
4	GSM Repairs	13	8.78%	4
5	Computer Operations & Maintenance	13	8.78%	4
6	Furniture & Upholstery	12	8.10%	5
7	Mechatronics	9	6.03%	6
8	Carpentry & Joinery	8	5.40%	7
9	Catering Craft	8	5.40%	7
10	Fabrication & Welding	7	4.73%	8
11	Plaster of Paris (POP) Craft	7	4.73%	8
12	Painting & Decoration	6	4.05%	9
13	Blocklaying & Concreting	5	3.40%	10
14	Radio and Television Repairs	3	2.03%	11
15	Plumbing & Pipe Fittings	2	1.35%	12

The data presented in Table 4 reveals that the 15 vocational areas presented received a frequency count ranging between 2 and 21 with corresponding percentages between 1.35 and 14.19. Electrical Installation and Maintenance was ranked No.1 while Plumbing and Pipe fittings was ranked No.12. This shows that Electrical Installation and Maintenance was the most preferred vocational area while Plumbing and Pipe fittings was the least preferred vocation.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study on the salient demographic characteristics of the respondents indicated that most of them (72%) are male while the rest (28%) are female. This may not be unconnected with the low female enrolment of female students into high institution. (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, 2015). With regards to the educational qualification of the unemployed graduates, none of them had a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D). However, 3%, 53% and 44% had Master of Science (M.Sc.) Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and Higher National Diploma (HND) respectively. This may be due to the fact that there is a high demand for Ph.D holders in our tertiary institutions which makes them “sought after” after graduation. Okafor (2017) opined that most of the Ph.D graduates are either lecturers in tertiary institutions or are “well to do” in their respective callings thereby making them slightly immune to the prevalent scourge of unemployment. The findings also indicated that most of the unemployed graduates fell with the age range of 25 – 34. This can be associated with the fact that the age range fell within the period where an average Nigerian student graduate from the University or its equivalent and might have completed the mandatory one year National Youth Service Corp (NYSC). This finding is also consistent with the Federal Government of Nigeria, FGN (2013) which indicated that a child must pass through basic education and senior secondary education before proceeding to institutions of higher learning which requires a period of 12 years of studies after pre-basic education.

Findings from the study also indicated that Electrical Installation and Maintenance, tailoring and hair dressing are the first three most preferred vocational training needed by unemployed graduates in Taraba State. This can be linked to the central role electricity plays in the life of our nation and the need to have competent personnel to handle its installations and maintenance in our homes, offices and factories. The choice of tailoring and hair dressing on the other hand may likely be due to the societal need of fashionable appearance and to confirm the long held notion that one is "addresses the way he or she dresses". This was corroborated by Nnamdi (2018) who opined that today's society have evolved to the extent that one dressing speaks volume about his or her personality and the respect one earn commensurate with his or her appearance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings presented in the proceeding heading, it can be concluded that the success of any vocational training programme depends largely on the needs of the trainees and the society. Where programmes are developed without recourse to any observable data, its tendency to remain and mirage is very high.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

1. Government should take girl-child education with all the seriousness it deserves through the promotion of inclusive education.
2. Universities should ensure that the entrepreneurship components of their programmes are overhauled to respond to the needs of the society and the students.
3. Government should continue to make adequate budgetary provisions for the training of unemployed youth in various skills so that they can become more productive and useful to the society.
4. Government should ensure that only those vocational training area that are needed by the unemployed youth are mounted so that the maximum benefits of such laudable project can be derived.

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Integration of Erasmus+ project's results into academic curricula-good practice example of the "Aurel Vlaicu' University of Arad

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Abstract: The transfer of methodology from the non-formal education area to the formal education area is one of the aims of the Erasmus+ program and one of the priorities of the current education. An example of this type of transfer is also the product made under the project "The Suitcase, the Map and the Voyage of a Youth Worker". These are career guidance tools - Career Box, Professional Simulations - that have been integrated as work and evaluation material as seminar activities for the Educational and Caree Counseling disciplines within the Psychology bachelor Program of the "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad. Students' use of the thevoyage.eu platform has enabled them to enrich their knowledge of career counseling but especially to work with interactive tools that put them in real situations of self-knowledge and in projective situations of using them tools as future counselors.

Key words: career counselling academic curriculum; non-formal education recognition; Erasmus+ projects curriculum universitar;

General description

The complexity of the challenges of higher education, the theoretical and practical aspects related to the educational policies in the field, to the managerial policies of the universities, but especially to the development of the educational process in the university, make necessary the existence of a university pedagogy whose objective is " the scientific analysis and the improvement of educational activities in higher education institutions, students' theoretical and practical instruction and education, as well as scientific research activity "(Ionescu, M., Bocos, M., 2000, p.227).

University pedagogy does not provide solutions for the present but, by looking at the future, tries to anticipate the evolutions and trends and, through the proposed solutions, contributes to the adaptation of the university to the requirements of the external environment and to the efficiency of the educational-educational process in the universities for the benefit of the students.

In the spirit of "creating the future" paradigm, "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad implemented between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2017 the Erasmus + project "The Suitcase, the Map and the Voyage of a Youth Worker" funded with the support of the European Commission. The partners of the project were: • CSD Consulting (Romania) co-ordinator • Millennium Center Association (Romania) • Schultz Development (Romania) • Dacorum (Spain) • Centrum Aktywnosci Tworczej (Poland); OPPI (Cyprus) • EURO - NET (Italy).

Methodology

The innovative nature of the project lied both in its purpose: professionalization at a European level of the Youth Workers career, but also from the developed learning platform that values the principles of interaction and gamming, so dear to today's young people. (**Thevoyage.eu).** Through play and discovery, those on the platform can go through the following project products:

O1 Career Box-Online Guide for Career Guidance, a Tool to be used in getting ready for a career nowadays, from discovering ones inner preferences to preparing themselves for an interview – 1st area;

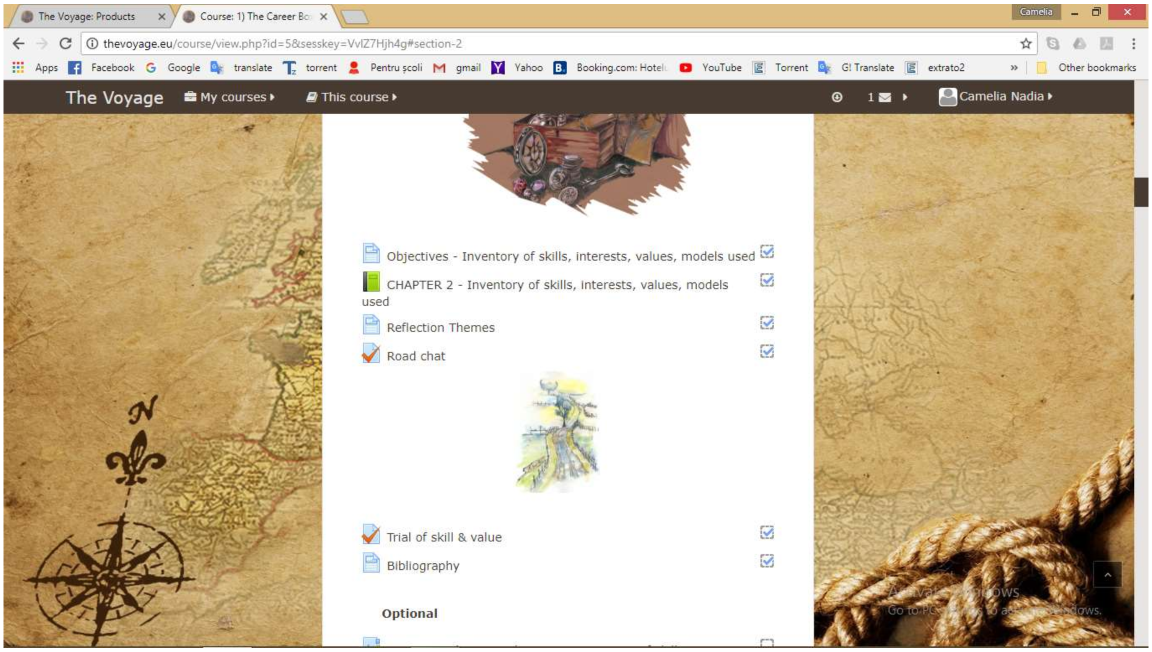

Figure no.1. Printscreen of one chapter of Career Box

O2**. Simulation box of jobs-** Description of 10 occupations required on the labour market. The package for each occupation contains a **description** of the profession, a **video** presentation and a **simulation**, tasks and inventory of interests and abilities specific to that profession.

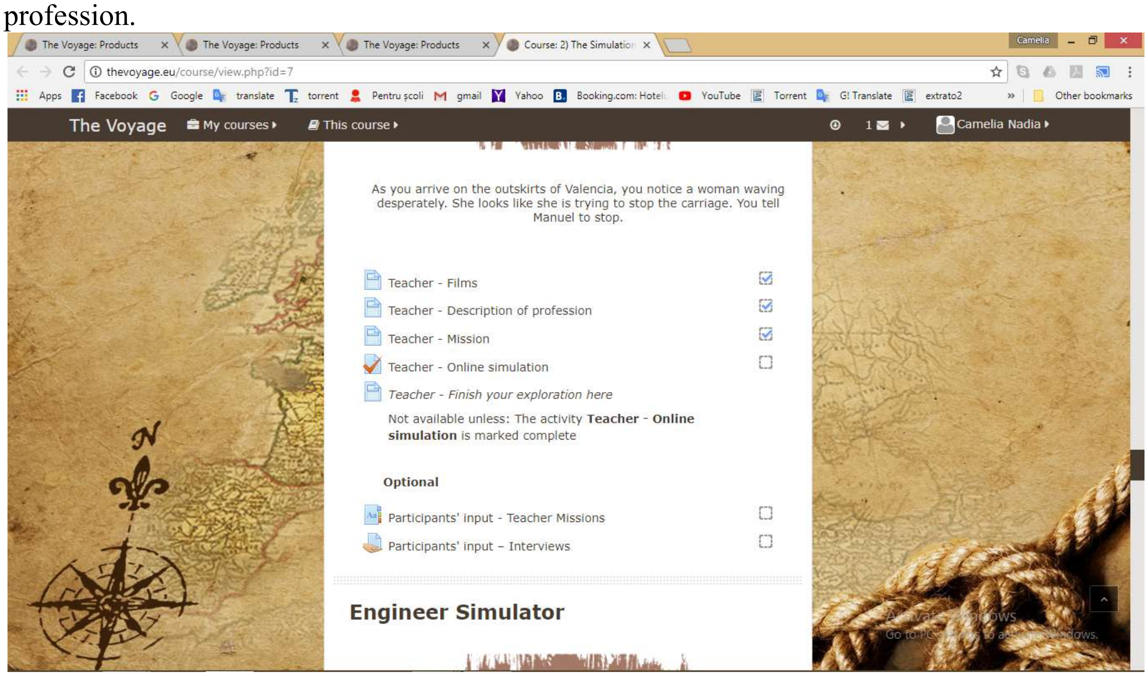

Figure no.2. Printscreen of Simulation Box of Jobs

Students of Aurel Vlaicu University "from Arad and teachers from the Faculty of Sciences of Education, Psychology and Social Work were involved both in the process of designing and testing the products of the project as well as in the dissemination process.

Results

Taking into consideration the tools and materials developed within the project, we considered useful to use and disseminate them as working materials for students within the discipline *Educational and Career Counselling* which is included in the core curriculum of the Psychology Studies program, 3rd year, as well within the discipline *Counselling and orientation* ,part of psycho-pedagogical teacher training program, level II.

The convergence of the objectives of these disciplines with the objectives of the learning sequences provided in the Career Box and in the Simulation Box was the first premise to support the use of these materials as ancillary to the students' seminar. It can be noticed that the objectives of these disciplines are oriented towards the development of a system of knowledge in the field of vocational counselling, but also on the formation of some competencies concerning the design and the implementation of vocational counselling activities. These objectives are overlapping to a very large extent with the operational objectives of the Career Box tool developed within the project.

Objectives of the discipline *Educational and career counselling*:

- Development of an applicative knowledge system in the field of vocational psychological counselling;
- Identify the general principles of vocational psychological counselling appropriate to different age groups;
- design and implement vocational psychological counselling programmes for children, young people and adults, by integrating their psychological peculiarities, market requirements and specific counselling tools;
- Developing a responsible attitude towards the contents of science, the ethical principles of work and the interest of the beneficiaries of vocational psychological counselling.

Objectives of *Career Box* tool on thevoyage.eu platform:

- identify self-knowledge tools;
- use self-knowledge tools;
- Identify the need to develop an Individualized Study Plan;
- Identify the advantages of implementing an Individualized Study Plan;
- to carry out an Individualized Study Plan, respecting the design stages;
- to follow principles of action that are useful in own professional development.

Contents within the discipline *Educational and Career Counselling*	Contents proposed by *Career Box* tool on Thevoyage.eu
1. Management and career counselling • Career - Concepts and Current Theories • Career development stages • Mutations in the career context • Career management • Organizational management of the career 2. Personal characteristics relevant to career decisions • Characteristics of personality and professional career • Motivational structures and professional activity • Personal values and skills in career planning • Vocational Personality Theory (Holland) • Career Anchor Theory	1. Self-knowledge, self-knowledge tools; 2. Inventory of competencies, interests, values, models used; Exploring occupations, sources, tools; 4. Planning of studies; 5. Tools used in career decision making, career planning; 6. Looking for a job; 7. Personal Branding; 8. Preparation of applications, CVs, letters of intent; models, the Europass portfolio; 9. How to Write a Curriculum Vitae; 10. Interview with a potential employer; employers 'and employees' perspectives on youth career development;

4. Psychological counselling and professional career • Self-knowledge and Self-Assessment • Psychological tools used in vocational guidance • Techniques of vocational psychological counselling 5. Aspects of the career decision • Components of career decision • Decision-making styles • Factors of the decision • Career Plan • Techniques to search for a job Seminar activities • Vocational orientation - current challenges • Analysis of organizational career policies • Value lists as tools for psychological evaluation • JVIS Questionnaire - Use in Vocational Guidance • Compilation of a sample battery for psychological evaluation in vocational counselling • Group counselling - principles and techniques • Creating a career plan Drawing up a CV and letter of intent	11. Challenges and difficulties in the process of applying and interviewing for a job;

As we can see, the contents of Career box on the thevoyage.eu platform correspond to the contents described in the academic disciplines syllabus, regarding both course and seminar activities. Moreover, the way of organizing the learning activities of each chapter of the Career Box - learning objectives, contents, themes of reflection and tasks with an evaluative role - complements very well the direct activity from the course activities and the seminar. The learning activities included within the Simulation Box provide a wealth of information about the professions, but their value lies in the fact that they provide effective tools for future career counsellors or future teachers. Thus, each profession is described and short films presenting the profession are presented, which provides essential information for students to decide on a profession. Much more important as instrumental value are the missions and simulations proposed for all the 10th professions on the platform. It is obvious that future counsellors will be able to use these simulations as a framework from which simulations can also be made for other professions than those presented in the platform.

The final evaluation of the learning activities from this course involves calculating a weighted average of 70% - the written exam score and 30% - the seminar activity score. To evaluate the seminar activity, students can use the scoring system in the platform.

For the Career Box tasks - http://thevoyage.eu/course/view.php?id=10 - the maximum score one can get is 1500 points (bonuses included), no bonuses - 1380. A possible rating grid for the The career is Box is10 for those who receive the bracelet, for the rest only the point to consider, from grade 9 down:

Tabel no 1. *Equivalation between number of points obtained for completing The career Box and academic grade awarded*

No crt	**Points on thevoyage.eu Career box**	**Equivalent academic grade**
1	Are bratara si minim 600 puncte	10
2	551-600	9
3	501-550	8
4	451 - 500	7
5	401 - 450	6
6	351 – 400	5
7	301-350	4
8	251-300	3
9	201-250	2
10	101 - 200	1
11	Sub 100	0

The Romanian and English sections were completed, according to the participants' final statements, in about 10 hours. Times vary between 3 hours and 50 hours.

For the SIMULATION BOX of JOBS we can not discuss the score as a equivalent for the academic grade, because it's relevant and connected to the occupations. Someone can navigate through but not matching with one of the 10 professions, then it's not logical to be sanctioned . Consequently, scoring can be done on the system referring to the number of professions visualized on the platform.

Table no.2 Academic grading based on the number of the occupations simulations completed on thevoage.eu

No crt	**Standard**	**Grade**	**Comments**
1	One has obtain **the bracelet** for – simulation box of jobs	10	It was completed at least 2-3 professions
2	One has obtain **The hat simulation box**	5	It was completed minimum one profession
3	No badge	0	It was no one finished

The final grade for the seminar will be the arithmetic mean between the two types of activities.

Conclusions

Instead of conclusions, we believe that students' opinions are relevant to the appreciation of this working tool used in university education. In this respect, the students appreciated the opportunity of the information provided, their clear structure, the extensive and clear information base, the accessibility of the information, the attractiveness of the proposed career counseling themes. At the same time it was appreciated the interactive way of working, especially the possibility of self-evaluation. Career guidance tools have been appreciated by the students for self-knowledge opportunities. These students feedbacks are consistent with those of the platform users. "*This course is very useful in secondary education counselling hours, for learning activities and small workshops about vocational counselling within the programme ,,, To know more, to be better", for helping young students in choosing a job they* *would like to embrace afterschool graduation. The two instruents also enable students to developed their own learning plan, to set up learning goals, to take steps in order to achieve them and to measure its impact."*(Carmen Biniuc, Colegiul Tehnic Gh. Asachi Iași)

Acknowledgment – More information about this project are provided at thevoyage.eu – Sorin Roman , project coordinator. The information from this paper was presented and debated in an oral presentation at ACCES4ALL International Conference – Institutional change for inclusion in Higher Education, University of Bucharest.

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COMPETENCY GAP: LEARNERS AND TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF ASSESSMENT

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Abstract: Evaluation is a highly disputed process in pedagogical literature, largely due to its complexity, but also in view of the fact that educational systems generally place great emphasis on standardized learnerss' testing and less on the use of complementary evaluation methods. Of course, we can not discuss evaluation without questioning the training of teachers in this field. This research aims to address a theme of great practical importance for the parties involved, namely the perception of evaluation from the perspective of teachers and learners. We wanted to know the learners 'views on the evaluation criteria used by teachers in terms of labeling phenomena, as well as the teachers' opinions on how to achieve classroom assessment. We used the interview technique to study behaviors that are difficult to observe, greetings and attitudes, about which there are no written documents in advance.
Keywords: teacher training; assessment skills gap;

1. Introduction

The book refers to the work of Bontaş (2001), reports that the evaluation of knowledge is a complex didactic act that is integrated with the whole educational process and which ensures the highlighting of both the quantity of knowledge gained and their quality, which regards the value (level, performance and efficiency) at a given moment - regularly, periodically and finally, offering solutions to improve the teaching-learning act.

As a rule, classroom assessment is susceptible to numerous criticisms. Some studies(Grisay, 1991) have linked teacher grades to pupils in their grades with results obtained by the same learners in a standardized test. The discrepancy between the notes and these results is great.

If teachers evaluate pupils in class with each other, they misrepresent in their grades the real level of learners compared to those in other classes. This illustrates the famous Posthumus law that "a teacher tends to adjust the level of teaching and appreciation of pupils' performance so as to keep roughly the same grade from year to year" (Landsheere, V .; Landsheere, G., 1979).

Good class pupils can be considered weak in another class and vice versa. Learners with performance above average may only fail because they are the weakest in their class.

Thus, evaluation itself proves to be most often inadequate and may lead to school failure.

In a different paper, Perrenoud (1989) reports on his research, that failure is associated in school with the production of excellence hierarchies. Pupils are ranked at the top of norms of excellence defined in the absolute or embodied by the teacher and the best pupils.

Mostly, the notes express the position of a learner in a group or his distance from the maximum level that can be reached, rather than the actual content of his knowledge.

Another criticism of the evaluation system is that often the marks serve as much to reward and punish. They do not indicate to the learner how to progress, so it is necessary to better integrate the assessment into the learning process. It has to become a tool of support, acting to this extent both on the processes and on the results. Not adapted to learners' needs, the assessment may negatively influence the learning conditions offered in school.

These conditions, suggests Bloom (1980), "emphasize the differences that exist between pupils in their capacities and learning speed, as well as motivation in later learning".

This has led to the establishment of differential pedagogy aimed at school success. The assessment should take into account that all learners are able to achieve a good level of learning if they are given the opportunity and the necessary conditions and if their learning pace is respected.

Evaluating school results means determining the extent to which the objectives of the training program have been achieved and the effectiveness of teaching-learning methods. This is the endpoint of a succession of actions such as: establishing pedagogical goals, designing and executing the goal achievement program or measuring the results of program implementation.

The essence of the assessment is the knowledge of the effects of the action taken so that on the basis of the information obtained, this activity can be improved over time. Evaluation, therefore, means: measuring, interpreting, assessing the results and making the decision.

One of the broadly applied solutions to ensure the objective character of the assessment is standardization, seen above all as a way to reconcile objectives, criteria, and outcomes of the evaluation at the level of the education system, thus removing the evaluation from the influence of short-term factors, and distinct from subjective factors. The introduction of standardized assessment methods and techniques, generally objective evaluations, raises at least two issues related to the functions and quality of the assessment:

• The first problem arises from the evaluation itself, insofar as it leads to evaluation without evaluator, which means an evaluation without a teacher and, in a certain sense, without a student. In a book about assessment, Voiculescu (2001) shows that"It is obvious that such an assessment greatly reduces the pedagogical function of the evaluation."

• The second issue concerns the relevance of the evaluation, the relationship between the subject of the assessment (what is being evaluated?) And the assessment methods ("how to evaluate?"). In this respect, the criticism of objective standardization and evaluation refers to the fact that only quantifiable elements can be evaluated, while qualitative, attitudinal and personal, creative approaches escape evaluation. In the qualitative area, objective assessment methods based on standards, scales, grids and any other methods outside the actors involved in the concrete act of evaluation are insufficient and largely inefficient.

To these two issues, it should be added that standardized, strictly objective assessment methods are not and can not be applied systematically throughout the educational process, but sequentially, so much of the current assessments continue to remain within the interaction of teachers and pupils and under the influence of the subjectivity of the participants in the evaluation act. The general problem of precision in assessment should be studied not in terms of disaggregation or opposition to the objective and the subject, but in terms of the real relationship between the contributions of each factor in the concrete conditions in which the assessment is made. In this respect, it would be necessary to answer other questions suggested by the objective-subjective relationship in the assessment: "is a strictly objective assessment unqualified and an assessment that meets the criteria of truth, correctness, and relevance?" Or "a subjective assessment is necessarily an erroneous, incorrect and insignificant assessment? "

A purely objective, impersonal, and absolutely neutral assessment is not only practically impossible but also less significant, less relevant than an assessment that explicitly engages the subjectivity, values, attitudes of the assessor and the one being evaluated. The pedagogical value of the evaluation, as well as its social value, can not be achieved by eliminating the subject from the evaluation activities. As an inseparable component of the educational process, school assessment is and must be accomplished as part of the pedagogical interaction and, in general, of the social interaction that accompanies any educational process. At any of its levels, evaluation reflects and is ultimately dependent on the concrete educational process achieved in the classroom in the context of direct relationships between teacher and pupils, between school and the social community, ie in the context of relationships between known subjects, between groups concrete actions that act on the basis of their own motivations and attitudes, specific experiences, needs and possibilities consisting of an inseparable dynamics of the objective and the subjective. Solutions should, therefore, be sought not in separating and opposing the objective and the subjective, but in analyzing the specific contribution of each factor, so that the action of the subjective factors is not disturbed in what it is relevant, but only when it manifests itself as an error, as a departure from the truth and fairness of the assessment. The best solution, therefore, is knowledge, control, and self-control of the action of subjective factors.

Some of the blurring and confusion about the objective / subjective nature of the evaluation stems from the differences of significance given to the concept of "objective factors" and, in relation thereto, to the "objective" attribute associated with a process, a factor or condition in the educational field.

Defining objective factors as external factors and independent of the individual's consciousness and will suffer due to their general character. If it can be accepted in abstract terms, it is no longer operational. This is because there are no individuals in general, but always real, individual individuals, different so that the objective character of the factors and living conditions is not the same for all individuals or social groups. For pupils, for example, school timetable is an objective factor, while for school leadership it is the result of a decision. The theme of a written work is an objective condition for the student, while for the teacher it is the result of a subjective choice.

The notion of the objective used in the social-humans sphere designates not only the external and independent reality of the subject but also the way the individual approaches this reality. The objective term, therefore, applies not only to structures, factors, processes outside the subject but also as an attribute of the subject's relationship with the subject. Also, the objective factors of the evaluation are the real way in which the structures, processes or conditions that at one point acquire the character of objective factors are formed.

Iluţ (1997) considers that "from a wider perspective, the social objective is the product, the construction of the human subjective". In the evaluation plan, the objectives and it's content, the scoring system, the social functions, mostly act as objective factors, enshrined through legal regulations and methodologies, which are objectified by the very structures that make up the education system. It does not mean that these factors come out completely from the subjective influence area. The correctness of the evaluation is ensured by an optimal combination of the objective and the subject in the evaluation.

1.1. The influence of subjective factors in the evaluation

In order to better understand the subjective nature of the evaluation, it is necessary to exemplify the phenomena (situations) that lead to a subjective scoring, phenomena that need to be removed from the assessment act.

The "halo" phenomenon - noted by Coombs, Timothy W; Holladay, Sherry J. (2006), which in English means irradiation; in the case of evaluation means negative irradiation (influence), such as small notes in other subjects, negatively influences the giving of notes lower than they deserve in another discipline; Higher grades in other disciplines have a negative impact on giving higher marks than they deserve in other disciplines; friendship or antipathy can influence the attribution of more or less (at antipathy) notes.

Contrast phenomenon: good student and poor student; good student and student (student) with deviations. The correct, objective assessment requires: if the good student does not know, be given the note he deserves; if the poor student knows, give him the note he deserves.

The "oedipal" phenomenon (prediction, reconceived - as it is known from Greek mythology that Oedipus killed his father, for this was predicted by the oracle). The prediction of a notation distorts the way of thinking and action and determines a subjective assessment and assessment. "It is good to know the pupils (students), but do not pretend (we predict) the notes we know, saying: x will take 10, y will take 4 and so on. Bontaş (2001) indicates that only the concrete situation, the proven preparation of the examination, with the application of the correct scoring criteria, are the elements that lead us to note.

The "order" phenomenon. Ranking can be negatively influenced by the phenomenon of order, so some teachers are demanding in a particular part of the day (in the morning, at noon, in the evening) or in a certain part of the semester or the school or university year; teachers need to demonstrate constant assessment requirements throughout the day, semester or school year (university).

Establishing the middle-class level as a benchmark in assessment distorts the conception and leads to subjectivization. The evaluation starts at the highest level of the curriculum and according to it the scales of verification, assessment, and scoring are provided, thus assuring an objective hierarchy of pupils on the scoring scale.

Regarding the relationship between the assessment of knowledge and the behavior of pupils (students). When establishing knowledge marks, students' behavioral deeds are not taken into account, except in the case of copying (theft of knowledge), when a grade 1 mark is given in schools or declared repetitive - in higher education. For behavior, there is a note on school behavior, and sanctions in schools and faculties - according to school regulations and university charter.

Avoiding the "theft" of knowledge. In frequency and low-frequency education, it is not right to admit the "theft" of knowledge (copy, blow), which can be avoided, as the case may be, ascertained and sanctioned, due to the direct, face-to-face assessment of the teacher with the examiner. This requirement must also be met in distance learning. Due to the fact that the evaluation, apart from the bachelor's examination, is made at a distance by written works, faxes, internet, one can not control the "theft of knowledge", especially the phenomenon that the learner "learns" do the verification work) another person. Pedagogical solutions must, therefore, be found to avoid this phenomenon. Among these solutions, the following could be considered: direct face-to-face checks at certain intervals and distance-to-face verification, in the sense that the media can see and hear the two partners: the teacher and the examiner in order to avoid the phenomenon of substitution with another person of the person being examined. The direct assessment of the Bachelor's Exam is insufficient because the candidate may not be able to obtain a graduation certificate and the matrix sheet without knowing if he or she has personally taught or taught another for him.

Subjectivism in the evaluation is the negative phenomenon that violates the ethical norms, it can reverse the values, placing the unprepared ones before the trained, thus enveloping some. Subjectivity can lead to demobilization, psychic traumas for the inmates, misinforming society. The subjectivity of the evaluation can arise from incompetence, but also from unprivileged personal relationships, from material, mockery, which can disqualify the examiner.

The nature and meaning of the influences of the subjective factors on the evaluation results can be considered as:

• a positive, constructive influence that appears as a consequence of the subjective commitment of the teacher and the student, guided by positive motivations and attitudes, which highlights the ability of subjects to seize what is meaningful, to give meaning to objective data;

• a negative, deforming influence that produces misleading misconduct, deviation from the objective character of the assessment, influence that may occur unintentionally - originating either in the evaluator's competence or in the subjective effects accompanying the act evaluation - or intentionally - originated either in the educational objectives of the evaluation (use of the mark as stimulus / sanctioning of behaviors), or in the use of evaluation as a means of favoring / disfavoring some students.

The positive influence of the teacher's or student's subjectivity acts as an influence that not only must not be rejected, but it appears as a condition often decisive for the assessment to be meaningful, to have pedagogical relevance, and ultimately to be correct. This contribution of the subjective factor can be capitalized on several levels:

• through the ability of the subject to understand, explain, interpret and anticipate, to grasp the essence in the multitude of concrete facts. In this respect, the influence of the subject correctly reconstructs the real. In this respect, the favorable influence of the subjective factor is a decisive condition for the quality of the evaluation.

• by subjective commitment, making evaluation an effective means of directing and self-managing behavior. On this plane, the influence of the subjective factor contributes to the "humanization of the evaluation".

• by placing the assessment in the context of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, the attitudes that both teachers and students have and manifest in the evaluation process. On this level, the influence of the subjective factor contributes to the socialization of the evaluation, engaging the dynamics of the expectations (of the students from the teacher, the teacher from the pupils).

The negative manifestation of subjective influences undoubtedly poses a much greater interest than the positive side of the subjective factor action in the act of evaluation. Most studies on the influence of the subjective factor in the evaluation have in mind this type of influence, in the same sense being directed the most of the techniques of control of the subjective factor intervention.

Influences and unintentional subjective effects are most frequently encountered, and appraisal studies relate almost exclusively to them. It is natural to evaluate incorrectly or to mislead the results of the evaluation. In general, subjective evaluation errors originate in the complexity of this activity, to the lesser or greater degree of uncertainty that accompanies any appreciation of human qualities. In particular, subjective evaluation distortions can be grouped into specific causes, of which the most important are:

• Insufficient primary information on which the evaluation is carried out;

• Inadequate verification and evaluation methods and techniques against the subject of the assessment (what is being evaluated) and the objectives of the evaluation (for what purpose it is assessed);

The effects of unintentional manifestation of the subjective in the assessment are imperfections or errors of assessment, they have cognitive and not moral significance, being part of the normality of the evaluation activities. The existence of these errors is also the reason why the improvement of the evaluation must be a continuity of the educational process. In this respect, each of the above-mentioned causes calls for specific ways and ways of improving the evaluation activities, which are mostly within the teacher's reach. The meaning of reducing or removing such errors is the control and self-control of subjective influences through better knowledge and use of assessment methods and techniques.

Regarding the intervention of subjective factors, it has a complex causality, including social-moral implications. Under the context in which the teacher deliberately changes (amplifies or diminishes) the results of the evaluation, two typical circumstances can be identified:

• one is when evaluation and, in particular, the mark is used as a means of stimulating/sanctioning with a pedagogical function, in directing students' learning behaviors - a situation where teacher values may deviate in one way or another from the real level the student's training (the other is when the deformation of the evaluation is deliberately intended to favor (or disadvantage) some pupils, on criteria, having socio-moral connotations, being associated with the moral conduct of the teacher.

As far as the first is concerned, this does not raise any particular problems. Teachers often give higher or lower grades to make the pedagogical evaluation function worthwhile, but this way of using the note is done during the educational process as intermediary assessments that are brought to life in the notes or environments final.

The second circumstance is much more complicated, on the one hand, it is harder to spot, and on the other hand, it is harder to prove. Overexposed or underestimated intentionally, with the pupils' advantage/disadvantage, are not usually obvious, they are masked by using "objective" criteria, methods and techniques, sometimes excessively rigorous and on the background of a "hard impartiality" to question. Even though they are uncommon and can not be considered as characteristic to teachers, these subjective interventions still exist and can have very significant consequences.

These influences do not always have direct benefits for those who do it. They may appear on the basis of sympathetic (preferential) relations between teachers and parents or between teachers (for example, reciprocity of support when teachers are part of the examination boards, including a certain "guild solidarity").

The intentional distortion of the assessment can also belong to students through specific schooling techniques: the prediction of the date when it will be "listened", the ability of the pupils to perceive the "style" of the teacher and to adapt it, including copying or "blowing" more or less tolerated by teachers. It is necessary to overcome the conception that only the teacher subjectively influences the evaluation. Subjective influence should also be sought at the level of the pupil, the family, and the others who have a certain connection with the evaluation process.

The factors that distort the marking are those who intervene in the processes of appreciation and are related to the relative nature of this process. Knowing and controlling these factors are helpful in making a fair, objective assessment. In most cases, evaluation errors do not belong to the teacher as an individual or as a "neutral assessor", but to the teacher as a social person, as a member of a social group (teacher group), as a bearer or representative of interests and endowed with certain responsibilities.

Another group of scoring error sources comes from the student, but not from the level and quality of the training, but from other attributes and capacities that make their mark as the student can demonstrate the level and quality of this preparation. Students can be more or less emotional, have a higher or lower verbal fluency, a different writing speed, different intellectual activity, particularities that influence the level of performance during the examination, and thus the level of appreciation of the grade.

Improving the assessment cannot and should not schematize or lack the subjective content of the assessment. Essentially, school assessment is an inter-human relationship with multiple emotional and moral connotations, an act of intercommunication and inter-knowledge that engages both the personality of the teacher and the pupil, both official norms and regulations, as well as non-formal representations and attitudes, attitudes and mentalities.

1.2. The role of evaluation in education and society

Any attempt to discuss evaluation in education should also be placed in the context of a country's social, economic and political context. This is not a novelty, as long as education is part of a much wider system, especially from the social one. The educational subsystem attracts resources, prepares the workforce, creates, not least, school-community tensions, teacher-student, teachers and authorities, and examples can continue.

Educational assessment is a sensitive subject in any education system. Of the three components of the spiral of education, teaching-learning-evaluation, the latter is often neglected or is often given a minor role in planning and conducting training. Stoica (2001) reflects that "It is too easy to look at the fact that the training process depends to a large extent on the way the evaluation is designed". For example, if the emphasis is only on the appreciation of the accumulated knowledge, students will learn definitions, concepts, laws, and rules in the memory, and not at the level of reflection, critical thinking, or discovery learning.

Haladyna (1998) considers that many of those who decide on educational policies in general and evaluation policies, in particular, are not well informed about what is happening in schools, educational theory, and research, or the statistical interpretation of results learning. However, they have a decisive influence not only on the development of educational policy but also on the practice of education.

Evaluation by complementary methods is in the process of development. According to Birenbaum (1996), it is very important, in this process of change, to move from the test perspective to the transformational assessment as the stage in learning.

Sambell, McDowell, and Brown (1997) supports this idea, completing the fact that the integration of assessment culture as feedback can have positive consequences in the field of learning and teaching, active participation of learners in their own learning by tracking progress, focusing on the process learning rather than the product of learning (the mark obtained). Of course, all of this implies that the evaluation is pursuing more concrete goals than a grade or rating.

Thomas and Brain (1984), through research findings, argues that the most important factor in learning is the perception of learning. The methods used in the assessment can either have a motivational role to follow the learning process or an inhibitory role, transforming learning motivation into a single note rather than achieving long-term results.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research Tools

In the research, the survey method was used to investigate the questionnaire (in the case of pupils) and the interview (in the case of teachers), in order to fulfill both the qualitative and the qualitative techniques.

Chelcea (2004) defines the research questionnaire as "a technique and, accordingly, an investigative tool consisting of a set of written questions and, eventually, graphical images, logically and psychologically ordered, which by the investigation by the investigators or by self-management, determine from the surveyed persons answers to be recorded in writing. "The questionnaire used in this research comprises 14 questions addressed to the students, 3 of which are identification questions, and the rest are focused on the established objectives.

The interview, one of the major methods of sociological research that is most commonly used to collect data in the qualitative investigation, is "a technique of obtaining through questions and answers verbal information from individuals and human groups to verify hypotheses or for a scientific description of social phenomena "(Chelcea, 2004). We used the interview technique to study behaviors that are difficult to observe, greetings and attitudes, about which there are no written documents in advance. Our interview is semistructured, semiformal and based on predefined questions. We have previously set the themes around which the discussion will be held, in an interview guide, which includes 14 questions addressed to the teachers. We chose this type of interview because it is both a quantitative and a qualitative technique designed to produce both statistical and qualitative data.

2.2. Target group

In the case of a quantitative investigation, the sample is comprised of 112 pupils, lyceum, grades XI and XII. We chose high school students because we started from the premise that they can appreciate more correctly and more easily identify labeling phenomena than younger pupils.

In terms of qualitative investigation, we interviewed a total of 10 teachers, but it should be noted here that we did not encounter the same openness from the teachers as with the students. Although they were previously informed that they were not trying to verify the theoretical knowledge, only aspects of the educational practice, there were also teachers who refused to collaborate.

The questionnaire addressed to students starts with 3 identification questions. After centralizing the data, we list 53 respondents, grade XI and 59 pupils, 12th-grade students, of whom 70 are girls and 42 boys. Of these, 109 are Romanians and 3 belong to the Roma ethnic group. Therefore, the respondents to the administered questionnaire were a total of 112 pupils from high school.

2.3.Research objectives

Without any claims of representativeness, the research aims to capture, through the views of students and teachers, some aspects of the phenomena that underlie the objectivity of the assessment, such as labeling. The proposed objectives are:

• identifying the presence of labeling phenomena in a teacher-student relationship;

• identifying the effects of labeling phenomena on pupils;

• identifying the extent to which teachers and students are aware of the presence of these phenomena and their effects;

• identifying the extent to which labeling phenomena have a negative impact on the objectivity of the assessment.

2.4. Research hypotheses

In conducting our research we have set the following working hypotheses:

• Labeling phenomena are present in the teacher-student relationship.

(The presence of these phenomena has predominantly negative consequences on pupils' school results.

We have also established a complementary hypothesis, namely: in certain situations, labeling can also have beneficial effects.

By testing, by confronting reality, our assumptions can be confirmed or denied.

3. Research results

Next, we will describe the data obtained (from the questionnaire and from interviews), both from the perspective of teachers and students.

Learners admitted that the notes do not fully reflect the extent to which the student is prepared and asked the students to indicate to what extent they think the grades reflect their knowledge. As shown in Figure 1, 8.93% of the respondents consider that the grades reflect students' knowledge very much; 51.79% - much; 32.14% - little; 5.36% consider that the marks reflect very little of the students' knowledge, while only 1.79% of the respondents consider that this does not happen at all. So the knowledge is reflected in the notes, largely in the opinion of most subjects.

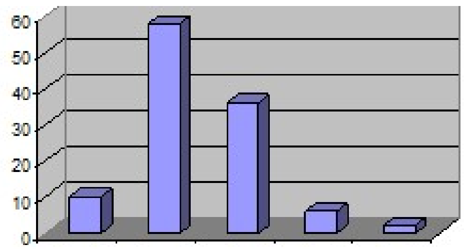

Fig.1 The extent to which grades reflect learners' knowledge (very much, a lot, little bit, very little,not at all)

The extent to which the scoring is influenced by one of the following aspects (grades previously received in the subject, notes from other school subjects, student discipline during classes, teacher's sympathy or dislike towards certain pupils, the physical appearance of the student, ethnic minority), is revealed by students.

Most of the respondents - 41.07% - consider that the previously received marks in this school discipline greatly inflame the manner in which teachers give notes. 30.36% of them consider that this is one of the reasons that greatly influence pupils' markings, 10.71% - slightly, and 8.93% think that grades are very little / not influenced for this reason. In the case of teachers' perspective, seven of them stated that the student's previously received grades in the discipline affect the evaluation process at some point. In other words, noting pupils (in the case of 7 out of 10 teachers) is not necessarily done according to objective criteria, many of the interviewed teachers applying inappropriate evaluation effects.

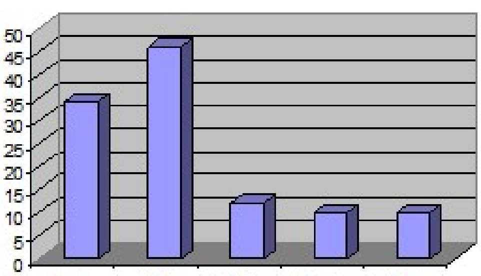

Fig.2 The grades previously received by the learners' matters for the actual evaluation(at the same subject)- (very much, a lot, little bit, very little,not at all)

Figure 3 shows that 42.86% of the respondents consider that the scores from the other subjects have much influence on the score, while only 19.64% agree with this reason very much. 17.86% agree little, 7.14% - very little, while 12.50% disagree. Most of the interviewed teachers (9 out of 10) claim that they do not take into account the grades obtained in other school subjects when making a student assessment.

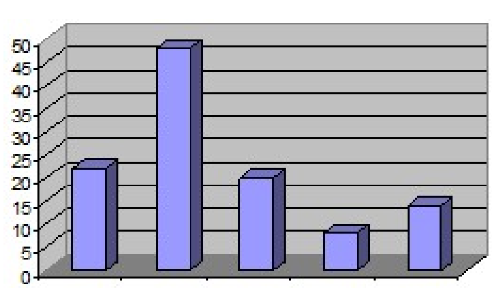

Fig.3 Grades obtained to other school subjects influence the grade obtained in a particular school discipline((very much, a lot, little bit, very little,not at all).

Most of the learners questioned - 35.71% - consider that the student's discipline during the lessons influences considerably the grades received, and 32.14% of them consider that the discipline of the pupil greatly influences the grades received. 14.29% believe that the discipline inflates little, 12.50% is very small and 5.36% at all (Figure 4). For 7 teachers (out of 10), the learner's discipline at the time influences his / her notation.

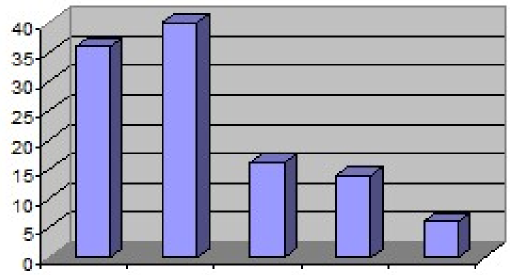

Fig.4 The influence of learner discipline during the hours affects the mark obtained(very much, a lot, little bit, very little,not at all)

Finding out the learners' opinion about the classroom presence of the teachers preferred by teachers indicates that 87.50% of the subjects consider that there are teachers in their class, while only 12.50% of them consider that in their class they do not there are such pupils (Fig.5). The data collected from teachers' interviews (who answered the question "What qualities do you think a student needs to get big grades?") Shows that the evaluation process is a restrictive one. The answers received were: the student's seriousness, the attention during the hours, the desire to know, to learn and to do their new things, the active participation in classes, the lack of knowledge, the discipline, the conscientiousness, the creativity, the ability to concentrate, intelligence. Also, the volume of assimilated knowledge and the effort made in performing the themes were also mentioned.

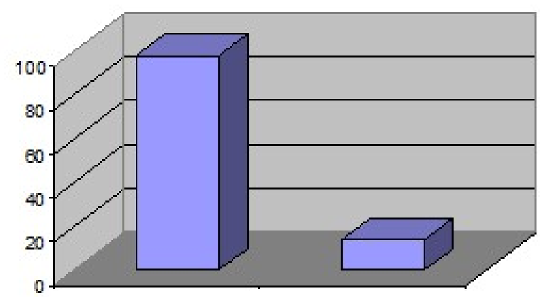

Fig.5 Existence in the class of learners preferred by teachers(yes/no)

When asked about the factors that influence the deformation of the evaluation, the answers received by the teachers are similar and have largely addressed aspects highlighted by the majority of the interviewed teachers. The most common aspects were the grades previously received by the pupil in the discipline, which were found in the answers of seven of the interviewed teachers, followed by the pupil's discipline during the classes as well as the emotional state of the teacher that was mentioned five times the teachers' answers. One interviewee mentioned the student's belonging to a minority ethnic group. When asked about the formation of a certain opinion about the level of training of each pupil with whom they work and if this opinion is confirmed by the pupils 'results, all the interviewed teachers confirmed that they are used to forming opinions about the level of pupils' training but motivated this phenomenon through their previous assessments or the outcomes and attitudes of past students that are still confirmed. The answers to this question highlight once again the influence of the students' past notes and their discipline on the expectations of the teachers, and implicitly on the future appreciations made by them. In connection with this, only two teachers admitted that they "take a look" through the pupil's notebook or the catalog, although in the second question of this interview - three of them considered that the notes from the other subjects may somewhat condition current evaluation.

The next question, which is part of the interview grid, was to teach ordinary teachers to increase or shrink the marks initially given to students. The opinions offered are different, so four didactic cadres have never been in this kind of situation, while others consider that they increase the pupils' grades more by practicing positive, encouraging, but at the same time recognizing that when necessary (ie to stimulate or motivate) warns students by decreasing the mark.

The next question was to bring back a question previously addressed, namely discipline of students. This time it has been correlated with their training, especially if teachers have the habit of lowering students' grades (though these are prepared) for disciplinary reasons. All of the interviewed professors admitted that it was not desirable, but three of them confirmed that they only take a positive view of discipline, ie raise a student's mark if he has a proper attitude during the class. The next question was about the attitude of the teachers towards their favorite students, namely whether they get higher marks than they would deserve because of this reason. The majority of students, 75.89% of them, consider that the students preferred by teachers get higher grades than they would deserve, while only 24.11% think that they do not get higher grades. 6 of the interviewed professors say there are students who will never be able to get big marks no matter how much. Their arguments are related to lack of home education, inappropriate entourage, teachers 'disinterest, students' lack of interest in some subjects, their intellectual ability reduced and, last but not least, invoked medical causes. 4 teachers (out of 10) have testified that such cases do not exist.

74.11% - among learners surveyed - think that there are pupils in their class against whom teachers have some antipathy, while only 25.89% of them consider that there are no such pupils in their class. Looking at the case where the students to whom teachers have some antipathy get fewer marks than they would deserve due to this reason, 55.36% of the interviewed subjects consider that the students against whom the teachers show some antipathy get fewer marks than they would deserve due to this reason, and 44.64% of them believe that they do not get lower grades than they deserve. It is noticed that several subjects consider that there are teachers in their class, rather than pupils to whom teachers have some antipathy. Cumulative student responses highlight the fact that only 24.11% of teachers' favorite students get the grades they deserve, while 44.64% of students against whom teachers have some antipathy get the grades they deserve.

4.Conclusion

It is easy to see that school performance depends largely on what teachers teach their pupils. The effects of the evaluation are mainly reflected in three major areas: training, learning and the needs of society. Assessment is indispensable to teachers because findings on pupils' results are a source of improvement in training activities, as these results will be continually compared to learning objectives but at the same time, an effective assessment produces positive changes in pupil school behavior. That is, students think more deeply about the tasks they have to accomplish, they are aware of the responsibility of their own actions, they find satisfaction and trust in their abilities to solve the tasks, they learn to identify areas where they need help, have more understanding and respect for ideas others. In addition, through self-evaluation, students learn to better understand their intellectual potential. This will give them self-confidence and motivate them to improve their school curriculum. Therefore, it is preferable for teachers to help students develop their self-evaluation skills, compare their educational attainment and impose a program and pace of learning.

The evaluation also has a psychological dimension. This is manifested both by the students' attitude towards the evaluation and by the teacher-student relations and the student-student relationship that develops as a result of the evaluation activity. Thus, if classroom assessment does not focus primarily on its formative function, the student learns an attitude of fear, stress, and rejection. The teacher's authoritative style, manifested in student appreciation, leads to the same type of attitude. The assessment also has an important psychological effect on student-student relationships. This can create a positive environment for a student or team competition, but it can equally easily lead to conflicting states generated by the rush of notes or getting a "supremacy" in the classroom.

Adrian Stoica (2000) starts from the following principles in an attempt to highlight the characteristics of the evaluation as well as the practical measures that should be used:

• evaluation of school results is an integral part of the training and learning process;

• evaluation should be based on: clearly defined objectives, various measurement methods, and instruments - to ensure the complementarity of evaluation actions -, standardized ways of recording and communicating school results;

• An effective assessment helps teachers and students: Assess the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved, as well as progress and learning difficulties, identify the choice of a particular profession, and provide feedback to parents, policymakers and the public.

As can be seen from the results obtained, the initially identified assumptions are confirmed. Teachers still have to develop competencies to carry out the evaluation process. In the current situation, most teachers are aware of the fact that subjectivity in assessment exists generally, but when it comes to personal attitudes and practices, teachers are either unaware of the consequences of their actions on subjective notation, or they find different pretexts justifying actions undertaken in connection with the labeling and marking of pupils.

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THE DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMOR AND UNIVERSALISM AS GROWTH ANXIETY-FREE TYPE OF VALUES

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Abstract: The theory of basic human values measures universal values that are recognized throughout all major cultures. Schwartz's theory refined the set of 19 basic individual values that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or group, further describing the dynamic relations amongst them. Current paper contributes with evidence to the theory of values reformulated by Schwartz in 2012, according to which values are arrayed on a circular motivational continuum in dynamic relationships, according to the compatibility or conflict between the motivations they express. A total of 220 youth respondents from the West side of Romania have answered using a Likert scale from 1 to 6 to a 46 items online questionnaire. The 46 items questionnaire shows solid internal consistency. This study brings evidence to interclasses dynamic relationships between humor as an openness to change value and universalism as a self-transcendence value, both included in the growth anxiety-free value specter. Conclusions and implications are discussed.

Keywords: values theory; humor; universalism; dynamic relationship;

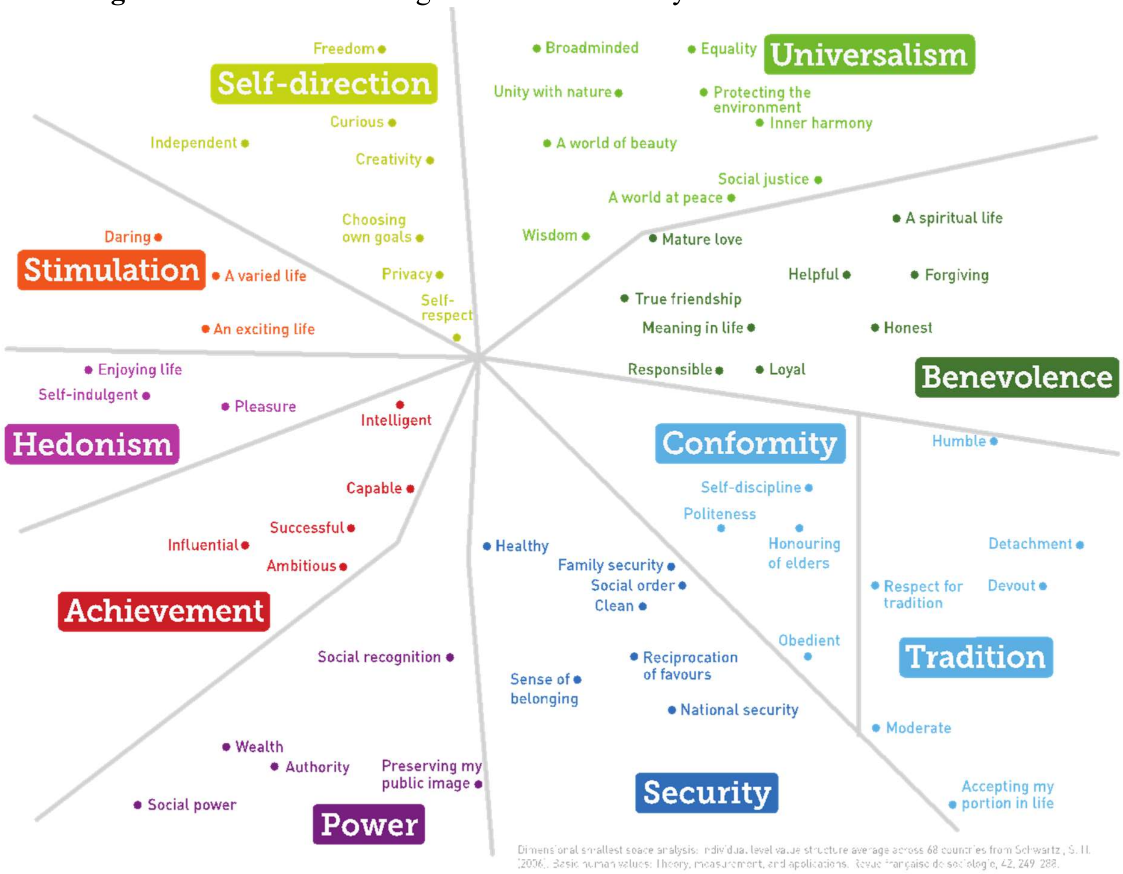
1. Introduction

Individual values have been the subject of different studies in the field of personality research. According to Rokeach, value is defined as an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence (Rokeach, 1973).

Values are organized on several levels: general human values, values specific to a sociopolitical system, values that characterize a certain culture or ethnicity, values of large and average social groups, micro-group values (family) and individual values (Ilut, 2004). They influence both the individual in the choices they make from a relational and professional perspective (Dughi, Bran & Ignat, 2016), and also morally according to them adhering to a certain social, professional and cultural level at different stages of development (Ignat, S., 2017).

Values constitute a rational judgment, an agreement realized between a groups of individuals. And they also provide criteria for evaluating actions, individuals and events. Thus values are defined as an enduring prescriptive or proscriptive belief that a specific end state of existence or specific mode of conduct is preferred to an opposite end state or mode of conduct (Munson & McQuarrie, 1988).

Figure 1 – Values according to Schwartz's theory



Schwartz's approach is based on the typology of Rokeach, being structured around fifty-six values categorized in ten domains: self-orientation, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence and universalism. These values are arranged in a circular structure and form a continuum.

Schwartz (1992, 1994, 2006) defines values as ideals, endowed with universal content and structure, corresponding to the requirements characteristic of the human species (biological needs, inter-individual coordination, societal continuity). Basically values are beliefs, they refer to the ideals that individuals strive to achieve, they transcend specific situations and actions, they are abstract objectives Schwartz (2011, 2012), making this concept distinguishable from other concepts such as norms, attitudes.

Values are ranked in order of relative importance. They form an ordered system reflecting the priorities of each person's values.

The refined theory of Schwartz (2011, 2012) retains all the benefits of the original theory and adds to it the possibility of representing the motivational continuum of human values even more finely. The continuum of values can be viewed as organized along two bipolar dimensions:

- Self-enhancement values (power, achievement) that encourage and legitimize pursuit of one's own interests oppose self-transcendence values (universalism, benevolence) that emphasize concern for the welfare of others.
- Openness values (self-direction, stimulation) that welcome change and encourage pursuit of new ideas and experience oppose conservation values (security, tradition, conformity) that emphasize maintaining the status quo and avoiding threat.

2. Research methodology

Our research team has developed the national project *Identitatea Nationala a Tinerilor Romani*, with the purpose of deeper understanding the dynamics of national identity aspects and personal values among youth from the West side of Romania. Among the first research questions was the identification of the existent relationship between universalism as a self-transcendence value and humor as an openness to change value, both included in the growth anxiety free type values, the first being oriented towards social focus and the second towards personal focus, according to Schwartz (2011). In this regard, we have designed an online questionnaire aiming to gather descriptive data, general perceptions about national identity and values.

Starting from Schwartz's three axes conservatism / autonomy, hierarchy / egalitarianism and mastery / harmony, we have designed a 46 items questionnaire including the following values: self-determination (items 1, 2, 3), stimulation (items 5, 6, 7), hedonism (8, 9, 10), achievement (12, 13, 14), power (16, 17, 18), security (20, 21, 22), conformity (23, 24, 25), tradition (27, 28, 29), benevolence (30, 31,32), universalism (33, 34), humor (36, 37, 38), trust (40, 41, 42), health (44, 45, 46) and a dissimulation scale (items 4, 11, 15, 19, 26, 35, 39, 43). We have asked respondents to score on a Likert scale from 1 to 6 the importance of that value, where 1 means less important and 6 very important. A total of 220 responses were gathered between November and December 2018, by sharing them on social media groups of youth, for freely and voluntarily answering.

Our hypothesis states that humor and universalism are in a curvilinear relationship. In order to test our curvilinear hypothesis, we have used SPSS' multiple linear regression analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects, where humor was the dependent variable and universalism the independent variable.

The study was conducted on a random sample of 220 students from the West side of Romania, of both sexes, 17.3% males and 82.74% females, from both rural 42.7% and urban 57.3% environments, with 50% of participants having high school level of education, 35.5% bachelor and 14.5% master degree.

3. Results

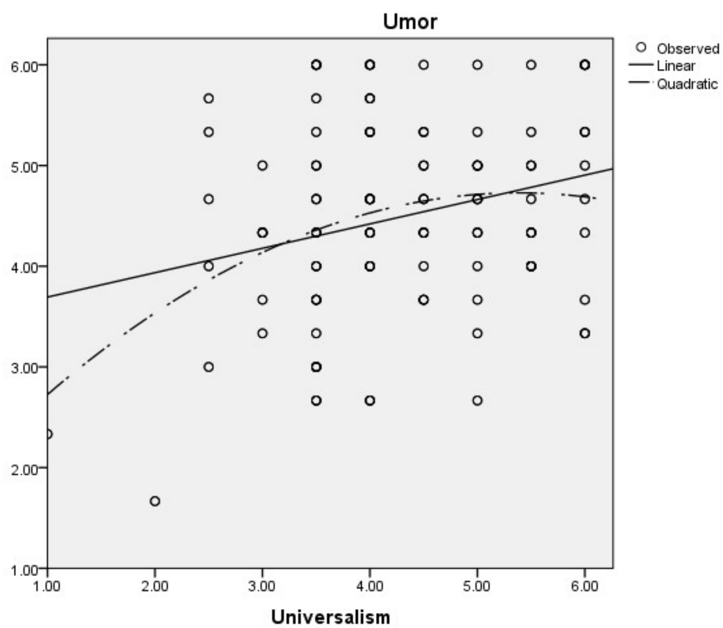
As data shows, the dominant value of the research sample is intellectual autonomy. Identifying aspects such as intelligence and creativity as highly important, with an averages mean of m=5.57 and m=5.26, results outline this type of autonomy. On the opposite, lower scores of values like pleasure m= 4.97 or excitement and exciting life m=5.04 indicate a lower concern for affective autonomy. Contrasting to autonomy there is conservatism, with respondents choosing the lowest interest in this value - social order and respect for traditions having the lowest scores, m=4.81 and m=4.43 respectively. It is noted here that one of the specific values of conservatism, namely security, has a very high score m=5.52.

Regarding the internal consistency of the 46 items scale of values, we have obtained an alpha coefficient of .839, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency, a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered acceptable in most social science research situations. We have also computed the Total Variance Explained output, where the Eigen value for the first factor is twice larger than the Eigen value for the next factor (10.278 versus 5.312). Additionally, the first factor accounts for 71% of the total variance, suggesting that the scale items are unidimensional.

In order to test our hypothesis that states that between universalism and humor conceptualized as self-enhancement value, respectively openness to chance value there is a curvilinear relationship, we have used a confirmatory factor analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects. We describe a curvilinear relationship as a relationship between two or more variables which can be graphically depicted by anything other than a straight line. A particular case of curvilinear relationships is the situation where two variables grow together until they reach a certain point (positive relationship) and then one of them increases while the other decreases (negative relationship) or vice-versa, the graphically representation of the function being an U or an inverted U shape.

This relationship can be easily identified graphically by a Scatterplot, choosing additional two representations of the regression line: Linear and Quadratic model, for depicting curvilinear effects. The Scatterplot diagram presented in Figure 2 indicates the curvilinear relationship between universalism on the horizontal axis and the humor, represented on the vertical axis. The sample consists of 220 youth from Romania.

Figure 2 - *Linear and quadratic curve estimation of universalism (universalism) and humor (umor)*



There is a very high correlation between universalism (m=4.30, SD=1.045) and humor (m=4.49, SD=0.981) of r=.258 significant at a p<.01, which methodologically allows us to proceed with multiple linear regression analysis (Balas-Timar, 2014).

For the curvilinear relationship testing, the present study proposes a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the dependent variable being universalism, and the independent variable in step 1 humor, and in step 2 squared humor.

Table 2 presents the fitting of the two models, linear – Model 1 and curvilinear/ quadratic – Model 2. As we can see in Model 1 the model that supposes linear relationship, universalism accounts for 6% of the variance in humor with an F=15.557significant at a p<.01. In Model 2, the model that supposes curvilinear relationship, universalism accounts for 8% of the variance in humor with an F=5.461 significant at a p<.05.

Table 1. *The relationship between humor and universalism as personal values, model summary, ANOVA and coefficients*

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.258[a]	.067	.062	.94946	.067	15.557	1	218	.000
2	.299[b]	.090	.081	.93990	.023	5.461	1	217	.020

a. Predictors: (Constant), Universalism
b. Predictors: (Constant), Universalism, sqrt_universalism

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.024	1	14.024	15.557	.000[b]
	Residual	196.523	218	.901		
	Total	210.547	219			
2	Regression	18.848	2	9.424	10.668	.000[c]
	Residual	191.699	217	.883		
	Total	210.547	219			

a. Dependent Variable: Umor
b. Predictors: (Constant), Universalism
c. Predictors: (Constant), Universalism, sqrt_universalism

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.451	.272		12.691	.000
	Universalism	.242	.061	.258	3.944	.000
2	(Constant)	1.708	.793		2.154	.032
	Universalism	1.122	.381	1.196	2.942	.004
	sqrt_universalism	-.104	.045	-.950	-2.337	.020

a. Dependent Variable: Umor

All standardized coefficients of Beta (β= .258; β= 1.196 and β=-.950) are significant at p<.05 which gives a high consistency to our both models. Changing Beta coefficient's sign from + to - means that the effect is growing in the opposite direction, which demonstrates that the relationship between the two variables: universalism and humor is not linear, but curvilinear. The additional incremental predictive capacity of 2 percent, added by including the squared humor variable which is accounting for the band in the regression line, indicates that there is a curvilinear relationship between universalism and humor.

This curvilinear relationship demonstrates that extreme aspects, extremely reduced and extremely high levels of humor, significantly influences the universalism value, in a negative way. Normal levels of humor triggers a high level of universalism value prioritization. Thus a too humoristic person and a low humoristic person will envisage a low level of universalism seen as a self-transcendence value, compared to a person with normal humoristic value prioritization that is associated with a high level of universalism.

4. Conclusion and implications

This study brings evidence to interclasses dynamic relationships between universalism as a self-transcendence value and humor as an openness to change value. The curvilinear relationship demonstrates that extreme aspects, extremely reduced and extremely high levels of humor, significantly influences the universalism, in a negative way. Normal levels of humor triggers a high level of universalism value prioritization.

This study is limitative, respondents are 220 youth from the West side of Romaina, being needed additional research is needed in order to generalize the conclusion to the total population.

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HOW ARE THE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES FOSTERED IN SOME ROMANIAN TEXTBOOKS FOR 6thGRADE

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Abstract: This article represents a synthesis of a study from our PhD thesis that aims to investigate to what extent the Romanian textbooks value and develop students` s multiple intelligences as defined by Howard Gardner. We used as methodology the content analysis and nonparametrical statistics in order to analyze the data collected. We confirmed our hypothesis that in the Romanian 6th grade textbooks of Romanian, History and Physics there is still a strong preference for traditional or academic intelligences (namely logico-mathematical and linguistic intelligences) but we did not expect to find such a huge discrepancy, since all the other six intelligences proved to be covered only 20% in various activities.

Keywords: multiple intelligences; textbooks; Gardner; content analysis;

1. Introduction

In 1983 Howard Gardner launched his exciting theory about humans ` intelligence, stating that our cognitive profile is made of at least 8 types of different intelligences : logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, bodily- kinaesthetic ,musical, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal , distinctly situated in the brain but interdependent in everyday activitiesand that can be continuously developed. He defined intelligence as ”a biopsychosocial potential of solving problems or creating new products valued in at least one culture” [Gardner, 2004].

Since then many educators all over the world put it into practice as they considered it a valuable tool (and not a mean!) to be used in the teaching and learning process and some of them such as [Bocoș, 2013]even appreciated it as basis for differentiated instruction .

In this article we will present the results of a research we have done in order to check how multiple intelligences are fostered in some textbooks from 6th grade since in Romania the textbook is unfortunately still considered by many teachers as the main support of the educational process.

2. The research

The main objective was to explore to what extent the activities proposed in the textbooks value the multiple intelligences. The research hypothesis was that the textbooks value significantly more the logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences (so called *academic* intelligence) compared to the other 6 types. The null hypothesis was that there is no such a difference , all the 8 types of intelligences being equally fostered.

We did a content analysis mainly based on Agabrian`s theory [Agabrian, 2006]. We used 6 textbooks selected from the official list approved by the Ministry of Education for the year 2015-2016 as follows: 2 Romanian textbooks (from the Printing Houses Humanitas and EDP), 2 Physics textbooks (from the Printing Houses Teora and Radical) and 2 History textbooks (from the Printing Houses Corint and All Educational).

The theme chosen for investigation is intelligence as defined by Gardner, coded IM with eight sub-themes, namely: logical-mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, musical intelligence and naturalistic intelligence, shortened as follows: ILM, ILINGV, ISP, IKI, IINTER, IINTRA, IMUZ and INAT and coded from 1 to 8 in the order already mentioned. We stress that these are nominal variables as they do not imply any order therefore numbers are simply labels since none of the intelligences mentioned is more or less valuable than the others. In order to define the sub-themes we based on Gardner ` s theory and also on the list of activities that value the 8 intelligences proposed by Campbell and collab. [Campbell et al.,2004, p.253]. But since in that list one can find some activities valuing two or more intelligences (due to their interdependence in the real life) we carefully assigned only distinct activities for developing each type of intelligences in order to respect the principle that the categories be mutually-exclusive.

For example, if in this list the activity to create graphs is considered to value both the spatial intelligences and the logical-mathematical one, for our content analysis we will keep it as being representative especially for the development level of spatial intelligence. Other examples: classifying facts /data was assigned to naturalistic intelligences based on theory, map identification was assigned to spatial intelligence , the activity of identification or transformation of various relations was assigned to logical-mathematical intelligence, while the activity of identification or transformation of various speech parts was assigned to linguistic intelligence. In order to test the reliability we calculated the intra-coder agreement following the formula proposed by Agabrian on 10 activities coded twice within more than two weeks and we got the value .80 which means a very good reliability. But for a more accurate analysis we consider that it is very important to have 2 or more independent coders since the interdependence of the intelligences in the real life might generate different interpretations.

2.1. Establishing the unit of registering and analysis

The unit of registering (collection) for this analysis, namely that part which is to be coded (labelled) and after that analyzed – is represented by each sentence/phrase or paragraph, or by any exercise, problem and/or activity proposed at the end of each lesson in the textbook and in the tests . The unit of analysis (numbering) is represented by the verbs. The analysis will be done on all the units of registering and analysis from the textbooks mentioned above.

2.2. Defining the categories of content

We list below the activities-key words for each sub-theme of research:

- ***ILM (1) :***calculate, demonstrate, explain, proof, transform, infer, give examples, compare, combine, order, substitute, make the plan of main ideas, identify, (de)compose, use the formula, invent, imagine an experiment, use Venn diagram, choose the correct answer, make analogies, create a code for, fill in , find the correspondence between two sets of facts, observe.
- ***ILINGV (2) :***write, (re)read, copy, orally present, answer, formulate, enumerate, discuss, make sentences/expressions/a composition etc, find synonyms/antonyms etc, correct the spelling, crosswords, give the definition, transform the text, sintaxis analysis, use the story for, debate, write a poem/article about, write a guidebook about, invent slogans for, take an interview to a character, write a letter to the author/hystorical character/inventor etc
- ***ISP (3) :***create graphs/ maps/schemes, PPT , make a poster for, use a mnemonic system to learn, make an artwork, draw , vary size and shape, give colour codes to.., underline, paint, carve, use the videoprojector for
- ***IKI (4) :***play a role, simulate, mime, create a dance, create a game, make cards, build, manipulate objects, use your hands or materials for.. make a product for..
- ***IINTER (5) :*** work in pairs/team, analyze in groups various perspectives on, do a group project, teach somebody, establish rules of the group, do collaborative plans for the lesson, take a role in the group, interact with, identify the character s feelings, identify the main moral traits of, give feedback, evaluate your peers work, do a SWOT analysis for the character, give a title for
- ***IINTRA (6) :***identify your strengths and weaknesses, do the personal SWOT, do you identify yourself with the character, describe your feelings about, describe your personal values, keep a personal diary, do a project for.., express your opinion about, get feedback, self evaluate your work, reflect upon, imagine another ending for, continue the text
- ***IMUZ (7) :***find an appropriate musical background for.., write a song for a topic in the lesson, sing a song , identify the rythm, break the word into syllables, put the correct accent, choose a song for.., make a musical collage for, use the musical technology for
- ***INAT (8) :*** collect and classify /group data, keep a diary with observations about nature/phenomena, compare to natural phenomena, use the telescope/microscope for, take care of plants and animals, go for a trip outdoor

2.3. Defining the categories of content

We present below the distribution of the activities that value the eight intelligences in each of the six textbooks (tab.1).

Table 1. Distribution of the activities that value the multiple intelligences in each textbook

Manual	ILM	ILINGV	ISP	IKI	IMUZ	INAT	IINTER	IINTRA	TOTAL
Romanian Humanitas	542 41.85 %	538 41.54 %	30 2.31 %	27 2.8 %	38 2.9 %	21 1.6 %	38 2.9 %	61 4.7 %	**1295 100 %**
Romanian EDP	329 35.22 %	450 48.17 %	19 2 %	0 0 %	18 1.9 %	40 4.2 %	61 6.5 %	17 1.8 %	**934 100 %**
Physics Teora	575 66.86 %	28 3.25 %	66 7.67 %	162 18.83 %	0 0 %	23 2.67 %	2 0,2 %	4 0.4 %	**860 100 %**
Physics Radical	608 58.97 %	114 11.05 %	110 10.66 %	156 15.13 %	0 0 %	40 3.87 %	0 0 %	3 0.2 %	**1031 100 %**
History All Educational	204 53.96 %	119 31.48 %	10 2.64 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	17 4.49 %	28 7.40 %	**378 100 %**
Hystory Corint	133 44.78 %	133 44.78 %	18 6.06 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	6 2.02 %	7 2.35 %	**297 100 %**
TOTAL	2391 49.86 %	1382 28.82 %	253 5,27 %	345 7,19 %	56 1,17 %	124 2.59 %	124 2.59 %	120 2.50 %	**4795 100 %**

We mention that in the Physics textbook from Radical Printing House even there is a section named ”We work together”, the exercises proposed there did not have a clear structure or clear specifications in order to suggest the team work as we found in other textbooks (e.g.: you divide in groups of x pupils, each works independently for a while and after that share the results of their work to the whole class, often by delegating a spokesman of the group etc) and that is why we could not include them into the IINTER category but in ILM, ISP or IKI. When we have a look at the table above we can clearly see that there is a strong unbalanced distribution of the activities, some of the intelligences being by far more valued and stimulated than the others. In order to have an objective approach we used the non parametric tests after having removed previously the categories with less than 5 activities considered by field and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Contingency table of the distribution of the activities by the three fields

Subject	ILM	ILINGV	ISP	IINTER	IINTRA	TOTAL
ROMANIAN	871 1167.50	988 674.81	49 117.6	99 60.54	78 58.59	**2085**
PHYSICS	1183 845.52	142 488.71	176 89.46	2 43.85	7 42.43	**1510**
HYSTORY	337 377.96	252 218.46	28 39.99	23 19.60	35 18.96	**675**
TOTAL	2391	1382	253	124	120	**4270**

$\chi2$ (8) expected for alfa=0.005 is 21.955.We have got $\chi2$ (8)=857.56 >>21.955, p=0.005, Φ=.44, V Cramer = .33, which allows us to reject the null hypothesis with a risk less than 0.005 and to state that there are significant differences in how multiple intelligences are valued in the three field of study, with an effect size medium to high.

We can also notice that the averages of the activities that value the multiple intelligences differ a lot as we can see in Table 3.

Table 3. The average of the activities valuing each of the 8 intelligences in the 6 textbooks

Type of intelligence valued	N	Average
ILM	6	398.50
ILINGV	6	230.33
ISP	6	42,17
IKI	6	57.50
IMUZ	6	9,33
INAT	6	20,67
IINTER	6	20.67
IINTRA	6	20,00

2.4. Results

For a better visualisation we illustrate with some graphs (Fig.1-5):

In Figure 1 we notice that ILM is by far stimulated in both Physics textbooks as it was expected and is also highly valued in both Romanian textbooks and in History textbooks. As expected ILINGV is highly stimulated in Romanian and less in History textbooks, but all the other 6 intelligences are very very little stimulated, some of them being practically absent. Basically our textbooks miss the great opportunity to tailor the 2 extremely important personal intelligences IINTER and IINTRA…It is in vain if someone knows tons of formulas and complicated problems to solve if that person does not have a strong sens of Self or does not know how to work in groups, how to solve conflicts , how to adapt himself or herself, key abilities that will make the difference later in the real life.

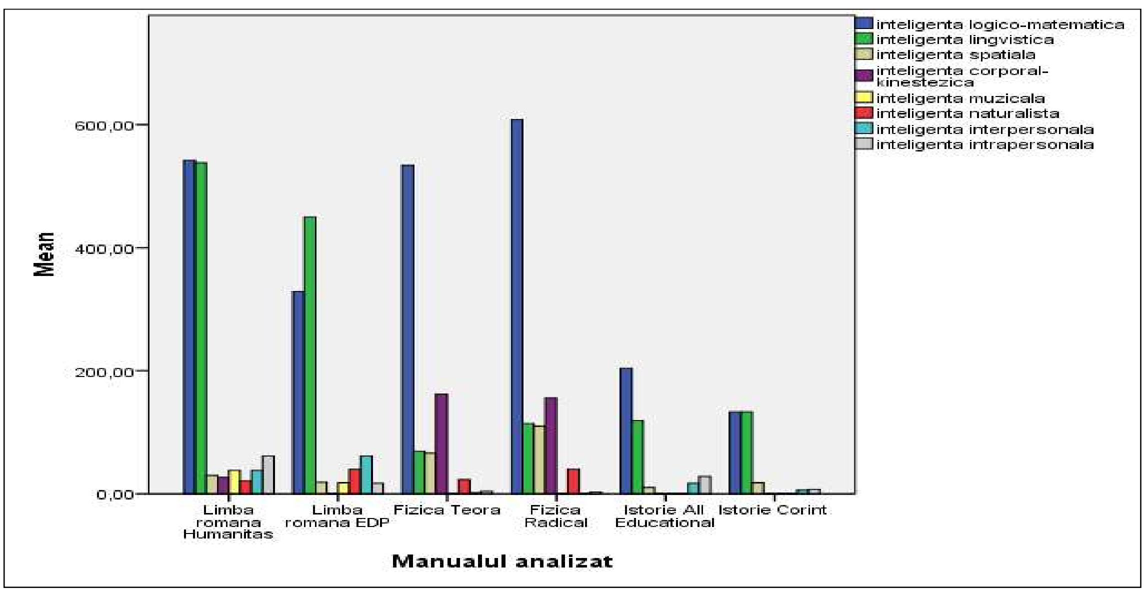

Fig.1 Distribution by textbooks of the activities that value multiple intelligences

In Figure 2 we can clearly see how much the two ”academic” intelligences are valued compared to the others.

Fig 2. Percentage of activities valuing MI in all the textbooks analyzed

In Figure 3 we notice that all the 6 textbooks analyzed have the same tendency to values much more the ILM and ILINGV compared to the others.

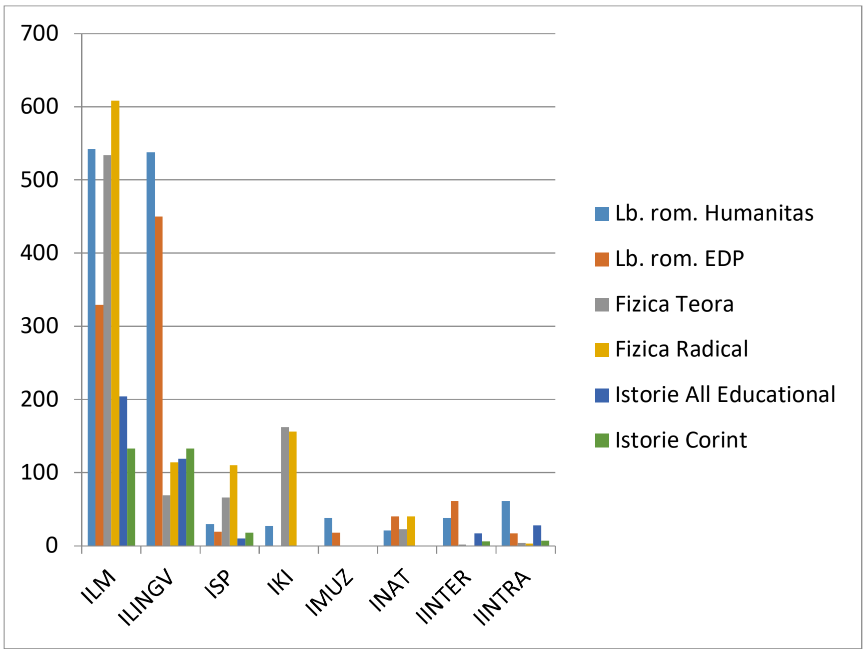

Fig. 3 Distribution of the activities by type of intelligence in each textbook

In Figure 4 we have the same perspective as in Figure 2 but more evidently pictured as the dominat intelligences are by far ILM and ILINGV.

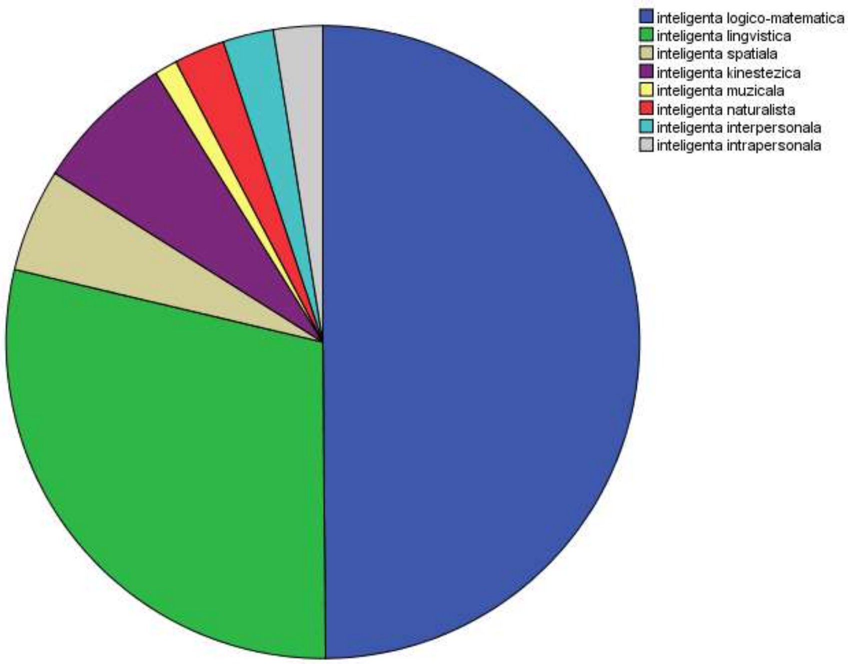

Fig.4. Distribution of the activities by type of intelligence in each textbook. Valuing the 8 types of intelligences in the 6 textbooks analyzed

Finally in Figure 5 we can notice that also if compared by subjects the most dominant intelligences valued are also ILM and ILINGV.

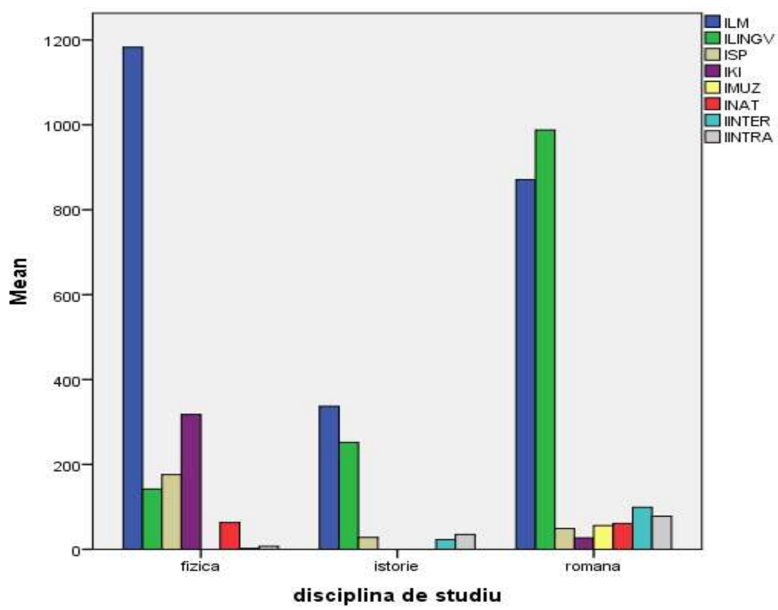

Fig.5 Distribution by subjects of the activities valuing the multiple intelligences

2.5 Conclusions

- ✓ There is a significant difference in the way the multiple intelligences are valued in the textbooks analyzed
- ✓ ILM and ILINGV are by far the most valued, no matter the subject
- ✓ IMUZ and IINTRA are the least valued, no matter the subject
- ✓ ISP is best valued in Physics

- ✓ IINTER and IINTRA are best valued in Romanian and almost neglected in Physics but overall are very little addressed.

2.6. Discussions

We confirmed our hypothesis that in the textbooks there is a preference for traditional or academic intelligences (ILM and ILINGV) but we did not expect to find such a huge discrepancy, since all the other six intelligences proved to be covered only 20% in various activities. This means that the cognitive profile of the pupils is incompletely formed in school and we can even talk about a severe discrimination among children, as the ones who have musical or personal intelligences as dominant, for example, will be obviously disadvantaged and school will be a tough challenge for them, while the ones with traditional intelligences as dominant will be at ease in school [Gardner, 2011a, p.161].

Besides the very poor valuing of musical intelligence we also remark the same situation regarding the kinaesthetic one, which is absent in the History books analyzed, vaguely represented in the Romanian ones and a little better in the Physics ones. It is an unexpected absence with huge impact on the development of independence and initiative of pupils and also on long term memory.

Interpersonal intelligence is almost missing in Physics and a little better represented in the other two fields, especially in History. In other words pupils are not offered time and space to analyze themselves, to express their own opinions, to express their emotions and feelings, to make choices, to agree or disagree and it seems that they are expected to act rather as mere robots that get information and less as human beings with emotions and personal opinions.

The same stays for interpersonal intelligence, very little valued in Physics and a little more in Romanian. We notice again that the pupils are not stimulated to cooperate, to work in teams or pairs, to interact, to mediate and solve conflicts, to negotiate, to learn to play different roles and to accept different points of view and thus to become more tolerant and prepared for the real world. Individualism and competition are unfortunately still strongly encouraged in school, both in the class and in the homework, with a negative impact on long term .

Another big surprise was the poor valuing of the naturalistic intelligence, missing from History books and very little present in the others. Apart from classification and grouping activities, which are associated by Gardner with the naturalistic intelligence but that have a strong link with the ILM, we have found very few activities related to the natural world and phenomena our lives depend so much on. ISP was valued in all the three fields but also very little, and it is a pity that the pupils are prevented from developing important abilities such as making diagrams, drawings, presentations.

In the end we would like to restate the limit of our study regarding the number of coders and also to conclude that in our opinion the textbooks should be profoundly changed in order to become more attractive , more interactive , to better stimulate the curiosity of the pupils and to help them get multiple perspectives about different topics , to better understand themselves and the others, to think and make deductions, to understand and connect to nature, to be active, motivated and happy about learning and celebrating all their intelligences.

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MOTIVATION AS PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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Abstract: School expects all pupils to be motivated. But the truth is there is a big difference between ideal and reality. Some pupils are motivated from the beginning and stay that way all their life, other pupils lose their motivation along the way, some appear to never have been motivated and there is also a category with those who become motivated in time. A lot of questions spring from this situation. How come some pupils are motivated and some not? Why some pupils give up and in the end quit school? Is the saying "Education pays off" still valid, after moving generations? What solutions are there in order to support and motivate children in their education? In the research I have made with my students I have tried to find the reasons that provoke motivation or demotivation in learning.

Key words: intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation; learning; education;

Introduction

In specialty literature there are several motivation types, but in the educational activities the most important are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation represents joy and satisfaction you get from the learning process, exploration and understanding something new. Extrinsic motivation deals with achieving certain desirable behaviours or certain educational objectives through gaining a reward or avoiding a punishment or sanction. Psycholigists such as I. Pavlov (1849-1963), J. B Watson (1878-1958) and B. F. Skinner (1904-1990) have considered the human behaviour through the prism of social conditioning, like answers learned through experience and survival needs.

In 1980 J.J. Rousseau published "Emile" – in this book education was approached through the games perspective. During the following 200 years several ideas appeared which have developed educational systems "centred on the child" promoting games and creativity in the development of personality. We can name here J. Pestalozzi (1746-1847), R. Steiner (1861-1925), M. Montessori (1870-1952), F. Froebel (1782-1852), C. Orff (1895-1982) and J. Dewey (1859-1952). For these educators learning was a natural process, a natural development of children's capacities, without being subjected to a standardized instruction and seen as a whole: body, mind and soul. They also insisted that academic education ignored the essential elements of the human being, such as: intuition, emotions, creativity and aesthetic education.

"The intellect cannot work at maximum capacity without emotional intelligence. The relationship between intellect and sentiment can be found at the centre of the creative processes in all fields, including in art and sciences." Sir Ken Robinson (2011, p. 229).

According to the principle of the cognitive approach of motivation, the way in which a pupil is engaged in a task is very strongly influenced by the representations he has of the situation and about himself: "their perception about the controllability of the situation, their perception about the purpose of school (or of the teacher / teachers) and their concept of intelligence … The human being always searches for an explanation for what is going on. They always attribute a cause to a happy or unhappy event." M. Crahay (2009, p. 405). The most important theory about the motivation of the human beings is that of A. Maslow – Maslow's Pyramid of Needs. The needs are placed hierarchically as follows: **physiological needs** (in order for children to learn they need to be in a favourable state, to be fed, rested, not cold etc.); **safety needs** (in order to feel secure children need an environment that gives them organization, predictability, what to look forward to, and the level of expectations should be according to age and individual); **belongingness and love needs** (the relation and connection in class between teacher and pupils is very important); **esteem needs** (achievement of children's needs such as:

autonomy, freedom of speech, freedom of choice, social adequacy, appreciation and attention from others, prestige, positive feedback from teachers, support, self-respect; the lack of satisfaction of such needs leads to inferiority feelings, inadequacy, helplessness and incapacity; self esteem is a key factor in the activation of motivation for learning); and **self-actualization needs** (the need to speak up and realization of one's full potential – each pupil should be supported and encouraged to become whatever he is!). "Even if these needs are satisfied we can often (if not always) expect for another discontent or unease to appear in cases when the individual does not do whatever suits him. Musicians should make music, artists should paint and poets should write poetry if they want to be content with themselves. People should be whatever they can be. They must stay true to their nature." A. Maslow (2007, p.93).

According to Sir Ken Robinson "one of the most important roles of teachers is to bring into the light the uniqueness of each child" (2011, p. 221).

Methodology

The research was conducted during January-June 2018 period. The sample group was made up of 50 students from approximately all faculties, 1st, 2nd, 3rd years and Master from U.V.T. The research method was qualitative, namely the semi-structured interview, with the following key questions: if the subject has felt motivated during the learning process, what caused their motivation, who was the motivator (family, school etc.), during which grades / period has the subject felt more motivated, what sort of motivation was prevalent (intrinsic or extrinsic), in what way was their personality influenced and developed etc.

Research objectives:

- Identification of reasons that cause learning in the educational process;
- Explanation of the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation;
- Analysis of the way in which extrinsic and intrinsic motivation influence personality development.

Research hypothesis:

The more learners are intrinsicly motivated, the more they are interested to learn.

Results

Next, I will present a selection of results from the interviews. In order to preserve their anonymity, the students that took part in the interviews will not be mentioned by name and the faculty where they study will not be specified.

1. F. C.

1st-4th grades. I believe I was most motivated during that period. I had an extraordinary teacher who molded our behavior with excellent skill. She made us ambitious and caused us to have a constructive competitiveness among us. She encouraged our self-confidence and made us be independent in our decisions and follow our most authentic way. This is the reason why in the 4th grade I took the first important decision in my life, without consulting anyone, and it turned out to be beneficial for my future. I registered myself in the Voley Club! After that I went home and informed my mother of my decision and for 12 years I did not give up on this decision!

5th-8th grades. I was motivated by marks and by trying to achieve the maximum in each discipline. I had very demanding teachers who gave us the impression that in their discipline it was very hard to excel. And it was true! Playing sports continued to give me balance and ambition. My schedule was very well organized. The satisfaction that I felt on the sports ground was something that I searched for in other fields as well. This thing motivated me and made me more competitive.

9th-12th grades. During this period I was motivated by the other pupils and the group that I was part of – it was an elite group and my motivation was very high because of them.

During University my intrinsic motivation was much more powerfull. At the same time, because I have chosen a major that I believed was not compatible with my psychological profile, I was motivated to prepare myself better than other colleagues. My level of preparation lead to good results and appreciation form everybody (colleagues, teachers), which has encouraged me to continue on the chosen road and even to identify myself with this field. Also, during this same period I have discovered my calling. Actually, my discovery may have come during secondary school, but now I was certain. Definitely my mother and my pedagogy teachers have strengthened my belief and have helped me find some high goals in the educational respect.

2. P. C.

During my 1st-4th grades I was motivated by the idea to be the best and by the rewards received from the teacher (good marks, verbal appreciations etc.).

In secondary school, besides my motivation I had teachers that knew how to motivate me to want to know more, to research and to go deeper in certain fields. I can namehere my history and my English teachers.

During high-school my motivation to learn was applied most to specialty subjects, while the rest of the subjects were left in a secondary plan, but not abandoned. During the last year of high-school I think the Baccalaureat exam play a major motivational role for most pupils.

During faculty motivation to learn is connected to the desire to accumulate as much information while you still have time and while you are still in the period where you are not preoccupied with other factors such as work, family etc.

3. F. F.

1st-4th grades – During this period I do not believe I was motivated to study just for the sake of studying, but it was more as a consequence of the fact that I liked going to school. I liked my teacher and I was very satisfied every time I would do something right, when I got a good mark on a test or had a very good homework.

5th-8th grades – It was a rather weird period for me because of the passage from a school with alternative pedagogy to a vocational school. I was not used to learn for marks but rather for personal satisfaction. Even so, after I got used to the new system I realized I still liked going to school and to learn. During my 8th grade this became a major motivational factor, especially since I had to take the capacity exam.

9th-12th grades – During this period my most important motivation was to excel in my specialty subjects. Besides these I really enjoyed studying the subjects I liked: Romanian language, philosophy, psychology and history. I had little motivation to study subjects such as mathematics or physics and I considered them lost time.

University – Now I can say that I am motivated to work hard and that I want to excel in almost all subjects. In faculty I realized that in order to be an interpretive artist you must be familiar with all aspects of music – this is exactly what motivates me and makes me curious about all the things we study in faculty.

4. B.F.

1st-4th grades – marking system based on getting bonuses for active involvement in school activities.

5th-8th grades – material rewards, sweets, financial rewards, marks replaced by research papers and projects.

9th-12th grades – material and financial rewards, marks for tests and oral reports replaced by papers and projects.

University – bonuses given for fulltime presence in class, material and financial rewards, scholarship for good studying results.

5. R. D.

1st-4th grades – marks were an external motivator, I wanted my family to be proud of me.

5th-8th grades – to be better than before, so that I don't disappoint my teachers and family.

9th-12th grades – when I was in the 12th grade I wanted to get a good mark at the Baccalaureat and this motivated me for the whole year.

University – to know as much as possible, to be a well prepared person in my field, financial rewards such as a scholarship and career opportunities.

6. L. K.

1st-4th grades – I liked some of the subjects but I studied others just to make my parents happy.

5th-8th grades – the desire to grow in the eyes of my favourite teachers and my family.

9th-12th grades – the desire to outdo myself, to improve and to be the best.

University – the desire to find a job in my field and to do what I always wanted.

7. J. G.

1st-4th grades – I learned for knowledge, for the desire to know more and to accumulate information.

5th-8th grades – I studied in order to be among the best and to get into the high-school I wanted

9th-12th grades – I studied to get good marks, to get the first prize and to feel proud of myself.

University – I study for myself, in order to know as much as possible, but I don't study for grades because I am annoyed by the injustice I see every day.

8. R. F

1st-4th grades – in order to make the teacher happy and get "prizes" from her. For the satisfaction of my parents and getting praises and rewards such as going to camps, going on trips, various objects (bicycle, scooter etc.), but also for my internal satisfaction of being appreciated in front of the other colleagues and relatives.

5th-8th grades – I studied most of all because I was "forced" by my parents but there was also the motivation to get good mars in the exam to enter a very good high-school.

9th-12th grades – my motivation became more intrinsic, because I started learning in order to know certain information, but also because I liked / disliked certain teachers. Also, during the 12th grade I was motivated to study for the Baccalaureat in order to get a 2-week holiday in Italy.

University – although I often find myself learning to get good marks, I stopped learning to please my parents and I started concentrating more on myself. I study with more pleasure for certain subjects and I do additional research work, but for the subjects that I consider useless I just study to get a good mark. The scholarship is a good motivation, but also the satisfaction of knowing more than my collegues who are my competitors.

9. P. M.

I was always in a class with good pupils and I wanted to be the first.

1st-4th grades – competition, parents, self-motivation, marks, alternative pedagogy (this was seen as a negative thing), the thing that I will not be able to work by myself – this made me more ambitious and I started learning better to prove that I can do it.

5th-8th grades – competition, parents, and marks.

9th-12th grades – competition, desire to know, marks, scholarship, and fear of failure.

University – competition, desire to know, surpassing my own level, marks, scholarship, desire to be assert myself, and fear of failure.

10. S. H.

1st-4th grades – money, sweets, sometimes fear of my parents.

5th-8th grades – fear of my parents, desire to go to a good high-school, not wanting to be embarrassed and for rewards we received at the end of the year.

9th-12th grades – to be among the best in my class and have a good name, because this is how I felt appreciated.

University – in order to prove my mother that I am good for something, so that I can get a job and be an example for my brothers.

11. M. J.

I only had high marks form 1st to 12th grades. I must admit that I did not like all the subjects but then I learned in order to get a food mark, because I could not stand to see anybody is better than me or get better grades than me! I have worked all the time to build a certain image for myself and to keep it, especially because my mother did not trust me and I was trying to prove that I was the best! I think this happened alsi because I was compated all the time with my older sister, who went to the same schools as me. She was also a very good student! I have taked part in the national Olympics contest and I got many awards.

12. G. D.

1st-4th grades – I was ashamed of my teacher.

5th-8th grades – competitive nature, I wanted just highest marks, in order to get into the desired high-school.

9th-12th grades – ambition, the Baccalaureate exam, going to the desired faculty.

University – the desire to outdo myself, ambition, competitive nature, scholarship, I always wanted to be among the best.

13. R. P.

1st-4th grades – my motivation to learn did not come from the teachers. I got good grades because I was motivated, I had moved from the country to the city and I wanted to prove that children from the country are not less capable. My mother encouraged me to study, she checked my homework, listened to me and scolded me when I did not want to study. At those moments I felt that learning was something imposed on me, something hard to do, and needing efforts that I would not make except if I was scolded.

5th-8th grades – in secondary school the pupils who studied were praised in class and those who got bad marks were scolded and made to study. At first I was motivated to study in order to get the sympathy of people around me. While learning I started to discover that certain subjects gave me information that I wanted to go deeper in.

9th-12th grades – I was studying because I got used to being the good pupil.

University – at first because of the scholarship, then because I wanted to learn new information about the subjects that I liked.

14. M. A.

1st-4th grades – I learned because of my mother who was always involved in my homework, gave me dictations in orthography and taught me how to correct my mistakes. Even if sometimes I did not feel like learning, I did not have a choice.

5th-8th grades – in order to please my mother who was making efforts to pay for my tutoring lessons (for English and for the subjects in the capacity exam).

9th-12th grades – during high-school I was a mediocre student, I liked to study and be seen as diligent but there were many factors that stopped me and diminished my motivation to learn for school.

University – I study because I want to, because it's my passion, ambition and vanity. I aspire to prove myself that I can do it and to keep my place among the subsidized students.

15. E. B.

1st-4th grades – my desire to finish studying as quickly as possible in order to go out and play.

5th-8th grades – at first I did not have any motivation; while in the 8th grade I started studying in order to get into a good high-school.

9th-12th grades – in order to get into facuty.

University – the thought that I am closer to going into a profession that I have wanted for a very long time.

16. G. A.

1st-4th grades – during primary school I was learning because I had to, I was not really conscious about the purpose of learning.

5th-8th grades – during secondary school I was studying for fear of the teachers. They did not do anything to me but were very authoritarian, hard, and cold and I saw how they treated other pupils that were not very good. I attended one of the best high-schools, with very high standards, I did not like it but my father wanted me to go there.

9th-12th grades – during high-school I started learning for myself. I moved to the Art High-School. This was the moment when I started to talk more and be more open to communicate. The teachers were warm and friendly and encouraged me to express my opinions. In high-school I met a geography teacher who became my role model – a very professional person, sensitive, modest, who involved us in all activities in order to demonstrate that we can learn anything if we wanted.

University – one of the main reasons I got into this faculty is my high-school geography teacher.

17. U. A.

1st-4th grades – my teacher was also my second aunt and I always wanted to prove to her that I was the best and that I deserve 1st prize. Also the corrections I got at home made me want to learn as good as possible in order not to disappoint.

5th-8th grades – my marks were lower, it was my rebellious period when school was not on the first place for me, but I also did not want to be among the last in class, especially since our class master always made a classification of our marks, and it made me want to be at least in the first half.

9th-12th grades – my motivation was to get good marks in order to manage to get into faculty. I was fighting for a subsidized place because I could not afford to pay for faculty.

University – In faculty I learned to get a good scholarship, to keep myself on the subsidized places but after I saw that all the students in my year were on subsidized places my motivation decreased and I only wanted a place in the state dorm and to take my exams.

18. A. A.

1st-4th grades – I was afraid of what the teacher will say and I did not want my parents to scold me.

5th-8th grades – I was afraid my parents and my maths teacher will punish me and I was afraid of taking a low mark in the 8th grade exam.

9th-12th grades – my desire to surpass some of my colleagues and to prove to them that I can do it too; my fear of having problems with maths – I had the same teacher as in secondary school; my desire to take the Baccalaureate exam and to get into a good faculty.

University – the desire to be the best; the desire not to disappoint my family; my desire and passion to know and study in depth as many things as possible.

19. C. X.

1st-4th grades – not to disappoint my mother.

5th-8th grades – I did not want to disappoint my mother.

9th-12th grades – the history teacher, my motivation to read and becoming conscious of my own gaps.

University – intrinsic motivation and my desire to become emancipated from my family.

20. T. R.

I learned even at subjects that I did not like so that I would not disappoint my parents, teachers, and colleagues.

The results of the interviews show that up to 9th grade extrinsic motivarion is predominant: praise, prises, marks, appreciation, positive socio-affective relations, fear of not disappointing significant people, desire to get into a good high-school etc. During high-school and faculty besides the extrinsic motivation the intrinsic one starts to develop: curiosity about knowledge, satisfaction gathered from informational content, the need and joy to know and understand as much as possible in order to be good in your future profession etc.

Conclusions

Learning is a human need that we all have in us. Children are born with a great desire to learn. This desire must be sustained, encouraged and supported by the educational system. Children will go to school with pleasure if the learning tasks are pleasant, interesting, provocative, full of meaning and relevant. Learning must cause joy. When children discover they like something they will excel and perform best. Losing the joy of learning will have consequences in the adult life, we will become bored, without desire to work, waiting for the weekend to come. Work will become something difficult because this has been our experience in school, homework has felt like a chore or an obligation. The child needs to keep his sense of autonomy, the freedom to choose his own rhythm, to choose the high-school and faculty he wants and the way to study. We are not their superiors and they are not some empty vessels that we try to fill with information!

Competition is frequently used in the Romanian educational system with the purpose to mobilize, but to the contrary – it affects the self esteem of the child. I consider that intrinsic motivation is the one that leads to the joy of the experiences, of the things done well, by exploring and learning new things and implicitly to an elevated self esteem.

Intrinsic motivation represents the flame of curiosity and adults are the ones that need to light it inside every child and to find methods to keep it burning. It must come from the inside, and be the trigger and driving force of curiosity. Curiosity leads to implication in the educational experiences, the responsibility of tasks and conscious choice. Even if some activities seem difficult at first sight, they must be achieved with the purpose of consequent finality. Children must understand what are the reasons for which they must study mathematics, literature, geography etc. and what purpose they serve in real life. During the teaching-learning process "curiosity should precede, accompany and follow cognitive activities taking place in and outside school." Ioan Neacşu (1978, p. 45).

Extrinsic motivation is generated through the reward-punishment system. At first children are easy to impress with toys, sweets, little treats and the marks, prizes, praises, appreciation, money and material goods becoming more and more expensive, or they are terrorized with threats, insults, criticism, humiliation etc. In time we will determine children to do what we want but this does not mean they will be happy and will do everything, will learn in order to impress their mother or teacher, in order not to disappoint the others but themselves! The rewards transfer the sense of activities towards the materials goods, achieving conditioning and to learning in itself. Extrinsic motivation in timewears down intrinsic motivation and children lose their interest in learning.

What kind of adults do we want to form? Do we want them to be dependent on various rewards, other people's applause, obedient, hungry for tomorrow's acknowledgement or do we want them to confident in themselves and self-motivated by what they are doing?

In the Finnish educational system, which is considered to be one of the best in the worls, ambition is replaced with passion, competition being relegated to second place. In the Romanian educational system competition takes centre stage and the price for it is the loss of humanity. Usually in the Romanian educational system the attention is focused on the pupils that have high academic intelligence and who form the elite. In reality pupls are divided into two categories: Olympics-level ones and the "others". I think we must shift our attention to the "others" and to help them identify their resources, to develop their abilities and to make them become conscious of what brings them joy and what is the dream it's worth fighting for. Sir Ken Robinson considers that young people should be supported in "discovering things that want them to be good at and to consolidate their will and abilities to research these." (2015, p. 169, 170).

Achievement and self esteem, creation if a positive image, for oneself and in a group, development of authenticity and building happiness are some things that can be achieved through that "something" that touches on their intrinsic motivation, without waiting to be "applauded" by others.

Carol S. Dweck, psychology teacher at Stanford University, renowned for the research of motivation and success talks in her book "Mindset" about two types of mentality: rigid and flexible. She demonstrates that "the opinion you have about yourself has a great influence on your life" (2017, p. 15). According to Carol S. Dweck "we are all born with a strong tendency to learn. Children develop their capacities day by day. What influences in a native way our desire to learn? Rigid mentality. Once capable of self-evaluation, some children start to fear challenges. They start worrying they are not smart enogh. According to them, smart people must always succeed. For children with a flexible mentality to be successful meand to surpass yourself, to become smarter." (2017, pp. 29, 30).

1st-4th grades are very important for the development of personal values and of self esteem. It is very important that the positive messages transmitted to children during this period should not be connected to marks of any kind, because they are not the ones giving value to the child.

The teacher is the key to the good motivation of any pupil in class – he is responsible for involving the child in tasks as an integral part of the educational process, through self-discovery and curiosity. Curiosity is one of the most important triggers for motivation in learning. But this is not something new! The human being is attracted to the challenges of discovering new things. Teachers should insist on learning through discovery, unpredictability, and development of critical thinking, reflection and self-reflection. I believe that this is the only way human thinking will achieve its purpose.

"If you do not try new things you may never find out what you are capable of." Sir Ken Robinson (2014, p. 45).

Schoolbooks are full of information and pupils must memorize them in order to reproduce them. In the Romanian educational system the accent is still on memorization to the disadvantage of thinking. Learning must become our super-power and self-motivation is the secret of this action. "We must eliminate the idea that learning means passing some standardized tests and we must rebuild our approaches trying to support children's ability to wonder, to imagine, to express themselves, to analyze to criticize and to doubt, to analyze like scientists." Alex Beard (2019, p. 410).

Education must take care of children's overall development and not just of their academic capacities. In the educational process we need a deep access to the self, the passion and not just to skills. Something that makes some people happy discourages other people. Activities that some people do easily, for others mean a lot of effort. When students are exposed to various and provocative learning experiences they will be helped to identify their resources, potential, skills and passion for certain activities.

The academic activity does not stand for intelligence as a whole. There is too much accent on the cognitive cquisitions and too little on social competencies and skills. If we ask a child to have only high marks in all subjects it means that we limit his development to the cognitive dimension only.

As part of the educational process I consider that teachers shoud focus on three dimensions: **emotional** (children should feel better about themselves, should have confidence, should know their resources, skills and explore their feelings, personal values and be given opportunities to express themselves and their imagination), **cognitive** (the methods through which children are helped to organize their information and learn) and **meta-cognitive** (reflection or self-reflection on one's own learning experience). Durable and authentic learning is done only through reflection and self-reflection. Teachers should become "treasure hunters" because in every child there is a "treasure" that waits to be discovered.

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INITIATION TO READING MULTIMODAL NARRATIVES AN INTRODUCTION TO UNDERSTANDING COMICS

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Abstract: In the present article, I try to define comics as multimodal narratives, in order to explain the role it plays in our modern culture and to outline a series of reading strategies it requires. The research focuses on a theoretical approach to comics, but also on the analysis of the vocabulary of comics – both visual and linguistic – which reveals the reading practices it demands. Furthermore, I try to prove that the transformations of our society (regarding technology but also the types of discourse) increase the presence of multimodal texts (such as comics, advertising, poster and film) in our daily lives. Consequently, learning how to read multimodal narratives may become equal to learning how to read the world we live in. This is precisely why the research includes an experiment focused on a didactic approach to comics.

Keywords: Narration; Multimodality; Comics; Reading Strategies:

1. Introduction: multimodal texts – initiation to a new reading system

In our contemporary cultural environment, there is a series of changes regarding the forms of discourse. The specificity of current cultural behaviors – defined by criteria such as rapidity, synthesis ability, fascination for the visual – imposes new types of discourse that require a refinement of our reading strategies. For this reason, in the Western world of the last decades, the need to initiate readers in media literacy has been stated. This necessity is encouraged by the cultural environment of the postmodern society where multimodal narratives become part of human existence.

Along with the changing of discursive patterns, major advances in technology have been made, which allow the fusion of literature and visual arts (Manolescu, 2011, p. 33), resulting in new ways of narrative construction. We are currently witnessing a phenomenon of massive dissemination of noncanonical cultural products which spark numerous debates regarding their artistic and literary status. The so-called multimodal texts propose new strategies of discourse construction and require the assumption of a new reading system (Manolescu, 2011, p.37), which targets multiple levels of narrative and visual analysis.

The concept of *multimodal text* has been studied among others by authors such as Monique Lebrun or Kress and Van Leeuwen[16] and it was defined as an association of different semiotic systems through which narratives are delivered (Gardner, 2014, p. 193). Jared Gardner (2014) draws a boundary line between classical literary text – where the written language tells the story while the image is a luxury – and the multimodal text – where the written language and the image tell a story together, the latter being a necessity (p. 193). In the contemporary society, multimodal texts – in their various formulas – become more and more present both because they correspond to specific cultural behaviors of our times and because mass media allows a wider propagation of popular culture. Consequently, as readers and teachers, we have to be able to understand these new types of discourse in order to find the best reading strategies that allow their comprehension and exegesis.

Comics is the simplest version of the multimodal text, associating two different means of expression that become indissociable: static image and written language. The uncertain

[16] See Monique Lebrun, Natalie Lacelle, Jean-François Boutin, (2012). *La littératie médiatique multimodale: de nouvelles approches en lecture-écriture à l'école et hors de l'école.* Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec and G. R. Kress, T. Van Leeuwen (2002). *Multimodal Discourse: the modes and media of contemporary communication.* London: Edward Arnold.

status of comics derives from the difficulty of placing it within the fixed frames of a typology. Since it artistically combines linguistic and visual elements, when studying comics most authors discuss two distinct levels of analysis. Although comics is known worldwide as *the ninth art*, it is still seen in many cultural spaces as *paraliterature*, being a subject of controversy both in the artistic and literary research fields. Some authors believe comics is "an art accessible to everyone" (Cahen, 1993, p. 9) while others plead for the readers' initiation in the absence of which authentic comprehension – in other words, reaching the text's highest level of accessibility – is not possible.

2. Key concepts in reading comics

2.1. Comics as multimodal narratives

Comics and film are two narrative types of discourse specific to our times. These are types of discourse that contemporary man encounters in everyday life and he must be able to read and understand them (Gardner, 2014, p. 193). There is a difference between the inexperienced reader and the experienced one - who quickly grasps the message (Eco, 2008, p. 170) - and this difference is visible when trying to understand, to analyze and to interpret the message of a multimodal text. Therefore, an authentic introduction to comic strip reading points at two levels of construction – narrative and visual – and involves both the identification of the invariants of this type of discourse and the investigation of the strategies that allow the comprehension, taking into account the specificity and the complexity of its own aesthetic vocabulary (Teampău, 2012, p. 179).

Depending on each author's view, comics gets the most varied definitions: it is *drawn literature* for Umberto Eco and Hugo Pratt, a *hybrid subgenre* for Ion Manolescu (2011, p. 140) or a new literary genre, called *graphic prose*, for Ioan Stanomir (as in: Niță, 2015, p. 215). Scott McCloud (1994) talks about a series of "juxtaposed pictorials and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (p. 9). In a wider context, comics is seen as a complex phenomenon of mass culture (Teampău, 2012, p. 161). Finally, a balanced view of this phenomenon should address both means of expression that provide its specificity (Teampău, 2012, p. 144), since comics is at the same time a form of communication and a form of art that combines the letter and the image in a simultaneous reading (Mitchievici; as in: Niță, 2015, p. 5).

Beyond these definitions, a series of analytical levels can show the roles and functions of comics in our contemporary culture. In this context, Angelo Mitchievici (as in: Niță, 2015) states that comics assists on great works that risk marginalization (see the numerous abridgments of literary texts in comic strip language), it plays the role of mediator between elitist and popular culture, it is a graphic representation of our epoch and it can easily become an instrument of social criticism (p. 9). Moreover, according to Charles-Olivier Carbonell (as in: Teampău, 2012), comics is a building site where the images that attest how a society sees itself and how it wants to be seen get formed, achieving, at the same time, the most effective intergenerational relationship (p. 239). Although it plays a role in shaping one's vision of the world and of itself, Gelu Teampău (2012) states that there are several prejudices regarding comics: a "harmful" effect, a degree of infantilism, a cultural and social inferiority. The primordial interest for profit from the publishers and authors' side is also seen as a negative factor (p. 172). Comics can be seen as an ephemeral art that fails to perpetuate in time unlike the canonical literature. At the same time, it has a serial character which implicitly provides its continuity (the success of famous superhero comics proves it – if we take into consideration the fact that Superman is born in the 1930s and survives to this day). It is also worth mentioning that comics can become a place for the promotion of axiological systems. Following a close-reading of Steve Canyon's adventures, Umberto Eco (2008) identifies an ideological declaration regarding the universe of values which becomes possible in the comic strip language (p. 157).

Relying on these considerations, I note that the analysis of this type of text can be done according to multiple criteria: the aesthetic one (regarding the text's semantic density and its configuration), the sociological one (regarding audience, circulation and profit) and the axiological one (focusing on attitudes and sets of values). From the definitions assigned to comics, I retain the narrative construct and the visual dimension of the sequential unfolding, as they are relevant in the comprehension process. I also emphasize the importance of the roles and functions of comics in the contemporary cultural context, outlining that the phenomenon cannot yet be circumscribed as it is still emerging as discourse and consequently the full complexity and specificity of its dynamics cannot be revealed.

2.2. Comics – graphic and textual conventions

Comic strip brings together a script and a visual representation. Therefore, reading this type of text will take into consideration both component parts and will involve specific interception strategies. There is a series of key concepts for each of the two means of artistic expression – graphic representation and literary writing – that the reader has to acquire. These concepts become even more important for the teacher who prepares his introductory lessons in comics.

Unlike cinematic art, comics does not hide the linguistic and artistc codes by which the message is built. As it graphically renders a narrative, the first element is the *script*, with a structure that involves the initial situation, a suite of complications and the final situation, all enchained according to the narrative prototype[17]. Another key element is the *thrill*, perceived as a moment of maximum intensity in the unfolding of the narrative, which involves increased attention, anxiety, abeyance (Durand, 2006, p. 40). It is achieved through overturning moments and its mission is to capture the reader's attention. A comics page musters illustrations and *balloons* (*speech/thought bubbles*), where the characters' *dialogues* are written. Among the most commonly encountered graphic conventions are the *ideograms* (that type of drawing that can acquire, in time, the status of a symbol or *icon*). The *onomatopoeias* are included within the same register, lexical elements that can bear various visual distortions, rendered through easily recognizable aspects (bold characters of different sizes or sharp colors). Instead, *captions* carry essential information or spatial-temporal clues that become a link between those *panels* which have no visual relationship, since the comic strip author must be elliptic (Durand, 2006, p. 67), discharging everything that is not indispensable to the script. On its side, the art of narration arrays its own discursive methods: from the simplest form of story-telling – one sequence after another, chronologically – up to the alternation between two or more actions, simultaneously developed and represented graphically and textually (Durand, 2006, p. 40).

Amidst the features of the characters' construction, the predilection for the *hero* surrounded by secondary characters (*les faire-valoir*) is conspicuous (Durand, 2006, p. 46); the secondary characters are a sort of adjuvants who valorize the hero, especially due to their opposite personalities, as it happens, for instance, with the famous Asterix and Obelix. The prototypical hero is the classic journalist, detective or adventurer; nevertheless, modern culture moves towards other two categories, revealing two extremes: less stereotyped heroes, closer to reality: writers, teenagers, students etc. and superheroes, with an impeccable moral code and with the precise mission of saving mankind (Durand, 2006, p. 45). Regarding the protagonists, by iconizing them, some symbols belonging to these heroes are established, visually individualizing them and ensuring the continuity of the series.

[17] See Jean-Michel Adam (2009). *Textele: tipuri și prototipuri*, trans. Cristina Stanciu. Iași: Institutul European.

The graphic design also becomes an authentic art. During the contact with the comic strip, the human eye reacts in two steps: first takes place the global perception of the page, followed by the reading from left to right, from top to bottom (Durand, 2006, p. 54). Consequently, the comics illustrator will turn to a series of techniques meant to guide and facilitate the message reception and the construction of meaning. The cropping (classic or modern) and the assemblage of the panels propound a certain reading grid and dose the amount of visual information. The illustrator prefers certain *angles* (frontal, bird's eye angle, low angle etc.), *shots* (overview, medium, close-up etc.) or *frameworks* (wide, narrow, vertical, horizontal or panoramic). The mentioned techniques originate from the cinematic art and they allow the illustrator to take over the director's position, with the only condition of justifying each decision he takes (Durand, 2006, pp. 57-62).

Due to the hybrid status of comic strips, getting through them involves simultaneous reading of both text and image. Two principles are added to the above-mentioned graphic and textual conventions, principles which exclusively target the narrative form: succession and sequentiality (Munteanu, 2017, pp. 14-20). Starting from these premises, several reading strategies can be outlined, specific to multimodal text - and especially to comics - capitalizing the two construction pillars which are inevitable to this type of discourse.

As cultural products, comic strips reply to the imperatives of an audience expecting another type of discourse (faster, more spectacular and mainly visual), built through techniques which are different from the classic ones and defined through a vocabulary that differs both linguistically and visually. The representation code is synthetic, and it is defined by a series of specific elements: the assertion of a visual repertoire of its own, the inclusion of blanks within the text, the demand of the reader's active engagement through fictional exercise. When assuming a didactic sequence meant to introduce students to specific strategies of reading comics the teacher must be aware of these fundamental conventions which allow its comprehension.

2.3. Comics – reading strategies

Moreover, teachers need to be up-to-date with the most important theories in the field of multimodal narratives. These theories state that the comics reader must be active and engaged, as he is enquired to highlight the linkage between the panels. The "reader-spectator" (Fresnault-Deruelle, 1975, p. 129) deciphers a message built mainly by visual language, but bearing an inevitable textual component, which is visually represented, in respect that within the comic strips poetic metaphors are converted into images, while verbal metaphors are represented graphically (Fresnault-Deruelle, 1975, p. 149). Will Eisner observed that the psychological processes which are engaged while reading one word and the ones activated while reading an image are concurrent, for the structures of illustrations and the ones of prose are similar (Eisner, 1985, p. 8). This is not the only remark of this kind; other authors believe that comics possesses textual techniques which are adjacent to the ones of the great literature, and at the foundation of its construction, an epic pattern similar to the one of the folkloric fairy tales can be spotted. To that end, comic strips get closer to literature through their narrativity, their techniques or forms of expression, while the principle of secvential discontinuity of the story accedes them to the cinematic art (Manolescu, 2011, pp. 16-17). The reader's active engagement within the process of configuring the meaning of the message can be accomplished on two levels: the first one targets the juncture of the two semiotic systems in order to understand the message of the text while the second one regards the necessity to add the missing information from one panel to another – and therefore the active implication of the reader (Gardner, 2014, p. 195).

The ensemble of language elements forms a representation code which is consonant with the expectations of an already existing category of readers. They are enquired to reconfigure that part of the narration which remains unexpressed within the spaces between the panels. Most authors consider that the authentic reading of comic strips occurs scarcely at this level. Paradoxically, whereas they suggest a complex visual art, "the essential point of comic books is the blank space […] which divides the frameworks […] the empty space where the mind uncoils the action, the movement, the meaning for itself" (Teampău, 2012, p. 165). The most important stage of the reception of visual narration is accomplished within the reader's imagination: due to this reason, comics becomes an art which offers only two possibilities: increasing the reader's intelligence or denying him the reading process (Frémion, 1993, p. 36). Ion Manolescu (2011) names these blank spaces "significant shortcuts" (p. 16), remarking that the deletion of the ellipses allows the decodification of the image's content and the perception of meaning. For Scott McCloud (1994), the process accounts for the *invisible art* of comics and marks the space where the reader's mind acts, taking two separate images and transforming them into one idea (p. 66). The same vision is nominated by Thierry Groensteen (2007), for whom the meaning becomes clear by reading the blank spaces with at least the same importance as reading the images (p. 112). Theorizing the interception practices of the multimodal text, Jared Gardner (2014) notes that developing these reading competencies implies discipline and time, while the motivation of their assimilation consists of the fact that comics has an elliptic form, whose blank spaces cannot be hidden, a specific narrative form, profoundly different from novels or movies (p. 208).

Regarding the link between the characters and the universe of values, the degree of the identification with the heroes of the story draws the audience's engagement (McCloud, 1994, p. 42). This observation is relevant due to two reasons: on the one hand, comics cannot survive without readers or without a cultural context (Teampău, 2012, p. 147); on the other hand, the hero himself can be perceived as a universal metaphor for the human pursuit of self-consciousness (Teampău, 2012, p. 138). Thereby, on the background of cultural changes regarding the discursive typologies and the configuration of meaning, going through comics allows forming some reading strategies which are specific to the current era, involving, among others, the capacity to synthetize, the managing of the blank spaces and the integration of fictional games within the creation of meaning. In this context, a didactic approach to comics should involve a reading exercise meant to reveal the specific elements of its aesthetic vocabulary – a preparation done by the teacher – and a didactic sequence centered on teaching students how to read, understand and interpret comics – a series of lessons delivered by the same teacher.

3. A didactic approach to comics

3.1. From Harap-Alb to Batman and Căpitanul Ro: a comics reading exercise

First, I propose a brief analysis of a series of comics, noting that they have been selected according to the following criteria: topic, complexity, narrative and visual relevance. Three of these albums belong to famous Romanian artists while one of them comes from the American area. The purpose of this exercise is to outline the specific vocabulary of comics but also to insist on its ideological content, which proves its capacity to deliver messages with large interpretive stakes. This close-up reading exercise helps teachers become aware of the complexity of comics. It can also reveal the necessity of an authentic encounter with the multimodal text, as a first step in their training for a series of lessons focused on reading multimodal narratives.

Therefore, I will start by discussing a comic album[18] that represents an abridgment of a literary narrative. I chose an album entitled *Harap-Alb*[19] whose primary source is a radio

[18] See Mircea Arapu (2014). *Ion Creangă – Harap Alb, roman grafic după o adaptare radiofonică de Vasile Mănuceanu.* București: Casa Radio.
[19] Ion Creangă's tale is actually entitled *Povestea lui Harap-Alb*.

abridgment of Ion Creangă's tale. Although it is proposed as a graphic novel (the boundary between genres isn't clearly drawn, so that a multitude of albums are labeled in libraries' catalogs with both titles – *comics* and *graphic novel*), I focus on the analysis of its textual and visual content precisely because it offers the opportunity to confront the original text and the comic book, highlighting strengths or weaknesses of this abridgment. In addition, the album marks a debut as it is the first comic book written in Romanian by Mircea Arapu. Hence, I foremost note that the author keeps some typical tale formulas, thus proving fidelity to the source text. Also, in this album, the reader finds proverbs or sayings, original verbal forms or other linguistic elements specific to the universe created by Ion Creangă. Among the basic conventions of the comics vocabulary, it is particularly noteworthy the use of bigger characters which emphasize important ideas and the frequent use of onomatopoeias. The artist does not change the original text, but he reduces its size, choosing only what is essential. Thus, from the old lady's advice, he moves directly to the image showing the king's son riding his horse, without reviewing the stages of his preparation for departure.

Visually, I find relevant the constraint of using a small-scale for all the images, imposed by the album's format. Symptomatic is the author's choice for sketches in black and white and the variety of lines in these images. An essential point where classical graphic conventions are overcome is the absence of borders that usually frame a panel, a choice that creates the illusion of a larger space. Neither balloons are surrounded by lines while the pointers are rendered in a unique style. However, although there are no lines to delimit the panels (between three and five on a page), the gutters remain an indispensable element, their role being once again justified. For example, the illustrator omits to show how the hero passes certain trials (picking the salads, killing the deer), being content with only revealing the instructions and leaving the reader to find out how the hero applied them. The fact that the original text is not faithfully observed can be easily noticed in the deletion of some sequences (three trials out of six are visually represented) but this omission can probably be attributed rather to the radio abridgment that served as the true source of the comic strip. It is also worth mentioning how the famous hero's helpers are drawn, depending on the elements that individualize them. Thus, Gerilă wears a hat and a scarf, Flămânzilă is a fat man, Setilă wears a cup instead of a hat, Ochilă has one eye, similar to a Cyclops, while Păsărilă-Lăți-Lungilă is seen as a tall figure, with a dead bird caught at his waist. Although there are some elements of recurrence, they do not, however, acquire the status of symbols. Still, it should be emphasized that, like any other hero, Harap-Alb can be recognized by his clothing, as he wears a traditional suit that the reader can easily identify. The hero's double personality (often used in comics and literature) is emblematic for his initiative journey.

Another *hero to be* is depicted in the comic strip *Ciutanul*[20], signed by Mihai Grăjdeanu, which presents a special, innovative theme, as it illustrates the world of soccer as seen by a character without exceptional qualities, forced to gain his reputation as a hero. We read again about the initiation of a young boy, orphan and marginalized, who aims to a higher social status. I first note, as matters relating to the textual level, that the comic strip is structured into chapters, each of them bearing a title – a kind of a representative motto – and thus paying tribute to the classical literature by their resemblance to the sections of a novel. I also notice the recurrence of the onomatopoeias used to reproduce some noises (*AAH! BUF! CLAP! TUF! TIUUU*!) and the option for the colloquial language. Different visual and textual techniques are used to mark the transition from one activity to another happening at the same time but in different places. For example, the reader can see the soccer field and Dr. Popescu's secret laboratory on mirrored pages which suggest simultaneity (introduced by *At the same time/ Meanwhile…*). When using flashback, the author chooses a different color, not black and white but sepia. The style of these

[20] See Mihai Grăjdeanu, Andrei Toderașcu (2009). *Ciutanul – vol. I*. București: Dacica.

drawings is simple, but the cuts of the panels are eclectic (straight, oblique, horizontal, vertical etc.). Two images gain the status of icons by their recurrence: the sports complex logo and shirt number 10. In fact, the owner of this shirt seems to be – at a first look – the hero of the first volume: Ștefan Dumitrescu is his son's hero, an identity model for whom the sports equipment plays the role that the suit holds for superheroes such as Spiderman, Superman and others. However, the reader receives clues confirming that the "dwarf" Mihai is the authentic hero (starting from the title, which places him in the center of the story, and going on with the doctor's words, considering him an "unique subject"). There are also the typical characters of contemporary narratives: the hypocrite but rich man, the adjuvants (Anamaria, Ionuț, Alexandra) and the evil doctor with his secret laboratory and his experiments involving genetic modification. The open end of the graphic story ensures the continuity of the series and creates suspense through a rhetorical question, written on a background that shows Stefan's emblematic image and succeeded by the promise of the following volume. The author's choices are partly revealed in the appendix where he explains in five pages the *making of* this comic book.

I also review the latest volume of *Batman's Adventures*, entitled *The Court of Owls*[21] as this is a *New York Times Bestseller*, published in the United States in 2017 and translated into Romanian during the same year. This volume is relevant since superhero comics are (still) extremely popular. What distinguishes them is a constant exploitation of their serial character – for decades now, volumes of Batman's adventures are constantly updated, adopting improvements from each author that writes the story or draws the illustrations. This latest edition is remarkable by its realistic style and by an exceptional visual configuration. The subjective narrator is the hero himself, whose discourse is often like a police man's voice. Batman and his collaborators ascertain and report, always looking for clues, almost like FBI or CIA agents. Some changes in this text mark, for example, the presence of a character (normal, black or white letters) or his absence (italic font) as well as the appearance of new voices (that's when the font and color differ according to the camp they belong to: the *good ones* or the *bad ones*). The linguistic register changes according to the status of these characters: the villains have their own slang while the benefactors speak correctly, frequently introducing specialized terms in their discourse (words coming mainly from the field of technology). In addition to the classical way of suggesting the drama of a certain situation (words accentuated by font and color) there are series of words meant to reproduce noises, visible inside the dialogues and resembling rather captions. That's how the author tells us when someone coughs or screams. An innovative strategy proposes the introduction of an electronic information system that provides accurate data about different characters. The language is clear and concise, willing to show only the essential, and the classical narrative construction is transgressed not only by the framing of the story but also by some smart insertions (such as the series of captions through which Allan Wayne's life is depicted, while our hero doesn't yet know all these details; consequently, we can identify here a voice placed above the subjective narrator, organizing the whole story). The suspense is always renewed, both through narrative and visual techniques, as the reader has only the impression of reaching a climax, which will be followed by another climax, without ever reaching a clear conclusion. There are several visual and textual clues that help the narrative to move forward.

The drawings feature realistic lines (much more realistic than the DC Comics' version of *Batman's Adventures* in 1992[22]; although there are some leitmotifs that recur in the two series, such as the banquet or the competition, their visual representation is radically different). In this latest volume, the reader can identify a prevalent chroma, which varies according to the

[21] See Scott Snyder, Greg Capullo (2017). *Batman: Conclavul bufnițelor – vol. I*, trans. Cristian Lăzărescu. București: Art.
[22] See Kelley Puckett, Ty Templeton (1998). *Aventurile lui Batman I: Penguin lovește-n stil mare*, trans. Emil Bărbulescu and Cristian Lăzărescu. ERC Press: București.

alternation of the narrative plans, namely, depending on the hero's double identity. Thus, Batman's city is a dark place while Bruce Wayne's city is bathed in light. The hero's double personality seems to affect the city, causing a double hypostasis of Gotham: lighted, always warm and good or dark, cold and evil. Between darkness and color, the illustrator creates a chromatic but also an ideological game, as such options suggest an axiological interpretation. The images are very dynamic (hence the preponderance of motion lines) and very powerful. Three of them become icons in the narrative: the bat, the owl and Wayne Tower. A full range of perspectives, angles and frames are used to picture the characters' experiences or the events they take part in. There are, however, pages lacking text, justified by the intention to emphasize the power of the visual language. At the same time, there are posters, big pictures, framed on a full page, reproduced in black and white, like sketches or cinematic cuts. A few landscape pictures focus on intense moments and actions trying to break the monotony. These images are followed by some reversed pages which imply scrolling from right to left, thus undermining reading practices.

The ideational content requires a special attention when reading superhero comics. In *Batman's Adventures*, it is shaped around the hero's secret identity which becomes a necessary condition of his status. Thus, over the public image of Bruce Wayne, an important personality of the city, overlaps Batman's mask, recognized only in a small circle of initiates (the loyal adjutant – Alfred, the collaborators – Dick, Jim etc.). The evil character is, of course, an unknown assassin, becoming the reason for triggering a large detective process. If many of the comics' heroes have some characters around them that highlight their features, Batman has more than this: he has a symbol which gives him the opportunity to show his virtues in fighting against evil. Gotham is, therefore, a topos superordinated to all other narrative motifs, seen as the space where the good has to win. In this confrontation, the alternation between different plans and temporalities is easy to assimilate: the reader recognizes essential clues based on conventions (chromatic, clothing, textual discourse). Along with the obvious axiological system in this comic book, I note other two fundamental elements. First, the appeal to mythological sources, invested with new functions. For example, the coin, an ancient symbol of payment to Hades, is replaced by an owl-shaped sign embedded in a character's tooth to mark his adherence to the evil clan. The same register includes the explanations regarding the Athenian owl, now the icon of the same group. Second, probably the most interesting insertion is a plan that resembles a lesson of cultural anthropology on superstition, built through a succinct discourse that provides correct information, justified in the narrative context, proving, in a way, the creative potential of the comic strip. Finally, a series of intelligent lexical and visual strategies make this volume look like a novel or a police film, announcing that the outcome is not authentic nor final.

Succinct, I recall Puiu Manu's comic book, *Căpitanul Ro*[23] (similar to Captain America, the fictional hero released by Marvel Comics), the illustration of a script written by Adrian Cioroianu, historian and University professor. The merit of this comic book is to bring to the scene a specific Romanian superhero through a series of adventures that define and individualize him. Căpitanul Ro has everything he needs to be a superhero, but he also has something different: beyond the Daco-Roman garment by which he can be identified, his story relies on a rich historical background with many references (most of them ironic) to the most famous landmarks of mankind (from the Egyptian pyramids to the World Wars of the 20th century). At the linguistic level, the most surprising elements are found in the dialogues of various characters (either adjutants or opponents), customized according to the geographical area and the historical age where they come from. Thus, Igor always introduces Russian words, the American soldier uses English idioms, the Jews greet the hero with *Shalom* while the

[23] See Puiu Manu, Adrian Cioroianu (2015). *Căpitanul Ro. Vol I: Război în inima Europei?*. Iași: Adenium.

Egyptians use *Inshallah.* The footnotes that the illustrator uses to translate this words or phrases or to provide some historical data are particular items. Moreover, word games are innovative, as behind each character's name lays a mythological, historical or political personality, renamed in an ironic, even parodic register (Nefertiti becomes Fenertiti, for example). Through toponyms, the authors draw a real geography. The whole Europe (and not only) seems to be drawn on the conceptual map of this narrative: from Romania's cities (Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca) to the major European capitals (Brussels, Prague, London). Some clues (especially in the characters' dialogue lines) may suggest intertextual references.

The way the University professor becomes a superhero and the recurring motifs in this type of comics (Căpitanul Ro has a secret lab, where a loyal adjunct prepares his tea while he thinks about possible solutions to save Europe – just as the famous Batman would do in his place) demonstrate that the authors applied a standard recipe, that is, they have assumed a series of superhero-inspired comics. The volume gains its originality by the historical themes it includes: in many points of the narrative, the writer's intellectual formation emerges among the images and text. Although there is an almost apocalyptic view of the dangers that threaten the well-being of Europe, the history is seen with an ironic eye, which does not, however, hinder the tackling of some issues such as nationalism or political extremism, xenophobia or natural disasters. At the visual level, we notice the images of a daily routine: the protagonists watch the news on Pro TV (and the presenter is strikingly resembling Andreea Esca[24]), the hero travels with TAROM[25], an important Romanian airline, the young people talk about Căpitanul Ro on social networks using a specific language. Surprisingly, the hero is a big fan of comic books and, in the middle of the adventure, he gets to a comics festival in Constanța, where a gentleman holds a welcome speech (the initiated reader will easily recognize Dodo Niță[26]). References to mythology are also obvious. Thus, a valuable help is Ana Manola (read Ana, Manole's wife[27]), dressed in a popular costume and wearing traditional shoes. The hero is invested with magical powers by Decebalus and Trajan[28], receiving as a weapon (and symbol) a mace (like any other Romanian traditional hero[29]) and bearing on his armor the images of two entities: the Dacian bear and the Roman eagle. It should also be remembered that the ideological statement mentioned by Umberto Eco is explicitly noted here: "You will have no peace, Captain Ro! You will have to keep the right way of truth, good and respect for others!"[30] (Manu, Cioroianu, 2015, p. 13). Finally, this comic book gains much in originality by the intelligent and savory lines of its characters (for example, the American agent: "Ha! Like any other French, he's late! In the summer of '44, my father liberated France… but the French were late even there![31]" *versus* the Russian ruler: "Only the Russian soldiers were the most punctual, they even wore two watches…"[32] (Manu, Cioroianu, 2015, 41). This way, the authors succeed, through their texts and drawings, to reactivate a series of historical clichés, reading them in a parodic key.

This exercise focuses on comic strips' graphic and textual conventions, showing how they can differ from one author to another, from one cultural area to another. It also includes some interpretive attempts, in order to prove how comic strips' ideological content can deliver

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[24] Andreea Esca is a popular TV presenter since 1995, when she started working for Pro TV News.
[25] TAROM is an abbreviation for Transporturile Aeriene Române.
[26] Dodo Niță is the most important Romanian comics critic.
[27] The authors make some intertextual references: in this case, the text refers to a well-known Romanian myth, where the protagonist is a bricklayer called Manole. He had to sacrifice his own wife in order to be able to built a wonderful cathedral.
[28] Mythological characters seen as founders, Decebalus and Trajan have a very important place in Romania's ancient history.
[29] Usually, the heroes of popular Romanian tales have a mace as a weapon.
[30] Original text: "Sortit vei fi să nu ai liniște, Căpitane Ro! Tu va trebui să ții calea dreaptă a adevărului, a binelui și a respectului pentru ceilalți!"
[31] Original text: "Ha! Ca orice francez, întârzie! În vara lui '44, taică-meu elibera Franța... dar francezii întârziau, chiar și acolo!"
[32] Original text: "Doar soldații ruși au fost cei mai punctuali, purtau chiar și două ceasuri la mână..."

powerful messages regarding human condition. I conclude by noting that such an exercise can help teachers analyze not only the vocabulary but also the universe of comics, thus providing an accurate and global vision on the phenomenon, as part of a wider multimodal culture and as a first step of their preparation for teaching students how to understand the simplest version of multimodal narratives.

3.2. A didactic experiment: initiation to reading comics[33]

In order to test a series of strategies for reading multimodal narratives, I suggested to my students of the fifth grade from "Horea, Cloșca și Crișan" Secondary School in Turda, Cluj county, to set up a couple of meetings focused on reading multimodal texts. More precisely, we spent seven weeks working on comics as part of an experimental research which aimed at revealing the best methods that the teacher can use in order to introduce students to reading, understanding and interpreting comics. These meetings were meant to become opportunities of discussions on comics. But the overall objective of the meetings was finally extended from reading comics to creating comics. The number of students varied from one meeting to another, but it never reached more than fifteen. These lessons had clear objectives, methods and results recorded.

As a teacher, in order to prepare for the first meeting, I had to consult a specialized bibliography, including the studies mentioned above (see section 2). This first step is essential for the teacher as it implies the familiarization with the universe of comics, working on its specific visual and textual vocabulary. The objective of this lesson focused on reading comic strips and discovering their invariants. The lesson was designed as a reading exercise. I first asked my students what they knew about comics so far. They received a list of questions regarding their reading experience and interests (e.g. *Did you ever read comics?*; *You like comics because…/ You don't like comics because…*; *What kind of comics would you like to read: adventure comics, superhero comics etc.?*). The students proved a poor knowledge of this type of multimodal narration. They could only guess some of the similarities or differences between comics and the classical literary text. Moreover, they were lacking the specific vocabulary needed in order to be able to talk about comics. Still, they were attracted by the colors and the graphic conventions of comic strips. Consequently, we read together a couple of pages illustrating Garfield's adventures[34]. This reading exercise's purpose was to show students how to read comic strips. First, they came to know how to talk about what they see in a comics album, using specific terms such as *balloons, panels, onomatopoeias*. Second, they found out that there are two principles specific to the ninth art: the story develops sequentially and in succession, always combining image and written text. Students were encouraged to apply some simple reading practices: scanning the comic strip page from left to right and from top to bottom, providing the information missing from one panel to another (filling in the *gutters* with the missing action) by using their own imagination. At the end of this first meeting, the students were challenged to use all these acquirements in order to accomplish two different tasks: the first one asked them to fill with text some empty balloons on a page containing only images; the second one involved an opposite situation, asking them to draw some images on a page containing only written text (*balloons*). The aim of this exercise was to show students

[33] An intermediate version of this experimental research was presented as a scientific communication in April 2018, at Bucharest Student Letters Colloquia. Another abridged version of this experiment was included into a wider presentation on the history of comics in Romania, in October 2018 (Simpozionul național de didactica limbii și literaturii române, Cluj-Napoca). Both abridged texts will be published in collective volumes, during the year 2019. The full version of the experiment (with all the insights on methods, objectives, models and results, and including pictures illustrating the didactic process) can be found in *Perspective - Revistă de didactica limbii și literaturii române*, anul XIX, nr. 1(35), Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2018, pp. 51-56.

[34] See Jim Davis (2018). *Garfield*, nr. 99-100/2-3, februarie-martie.

once again that comics means bringing together visual representation and written language, two different semiotic systems that become inseparable.

The difficulty level of the comics we discussed in our second meeting was higher. The students read fragments from *The Adventures of Tintin*[35] and *Asterix and Obelix*[36]. The visual configuration of these famous comics is far more complex that the one seen in Jim Davis' *Garfield* series. After the students were remembered all the key concepts already discussed during the first meeting, they were asked to identify them while reading a couple of pages selected from these two comics albums. While reading them, the students were guided through specific questions to find out how these visual or written "clues" are used and the role they have inside the vocabulary of comic strips. Once again, the students were remembered the name of every important element of this vocabulary: *balloon, panel, caption* etc. While reading a Romanian translation of *Asterix and Obelix*'s adventures the students had to identify all these specific elements of the graphic and written vocabulary of comics. Next, they were asked to note down all the key concepts discussed, resumed by the teacher through an interactive lecture. As a follow-up, students met Tintin and his best friend Milou. By reading this comic strip they were encouraged to consolidate all the information already discussed. At the end of such a lesson, as a reflection subject, students can be asked to compare the two types of comics they have read (the so-called "gags", with funny characters and a rather simple plot – e.g. Garfield – *versus* the adventure comics, with classical characters such as detectives, reporters, explorers – e.g. *The Adventures of Tintin*; the teacher can also ask to what kind of comics does *Asterix and Obelix* belong to, trying to help students find its theme and topics – history, community, friendship).

As the first two meetings were focused on identifying graphic and textual conventions of comics, the third one was meant to remember students there is a narrative behind every comic book. In this case, the didactic project focused on the script of a comic book and it allowed debates on superhero comics. The students met Batman and his famous adventures[37], a comic book that I split into three main sections. Inside every section, the pages were disorganized. The students were asked to find the right order of these pages, following recurrent visual and textual clues. They managed to accomplish the task through teamwork. This third lesson proved students that the written narrative text precedes the final graphic version of a comic book. It also gave them the opportunity to remember the essential moments of the narrative sequence, in their simplest version: initial state (equilibrium), transformation, final state (equilibrium). I also note that the subject itself (superhero comics) allowed an exercise of hermeneutics as students can (and should) be encouraged to reflect on a hero's behavior: *What is a hero? Why is it important for a hero to have a strong and perfect moral code? How could I become a hero inside my own community? What international issues would necessitate, nowadays, the special intervention of a superhero?* Moreover, this third lesson had the mission to prepare students for the next session which involved the production of a comic strip.

During the last four lessons, our main objective extended to a new activity: creating a comic book. This task included two different stages: the first one was meant to help students attain an abridgment of a classical literary text transformed into a comic book, the second one pointed at creating an original comic book (writing a short script and transforming it into a graphic representation). One team made by two of my students from the fifth grade and one student from the seventh grade reached great results during this creative exercise. These students were challenged to make an abridgment of I.L. Caragiale's short tale *D-l Goe…*[38].

[35] See Hergé (2005). *Aventurile lui Tintin. Țigările faraonului*, trans. Elly Moga, Irina Manuelescu. București: M&M Europe.
[36] See René Groscinny, Albert Uderzo (2017). *Asterix – viteazul gal*, tras. Ioana Pârvulescu. București: Art.
[37] See Kelley Puckett, Ty Templeton (1998). *Aventurile lui Batman I: Penguin lovește-n stil mare*, trans. Emil Bărbulescu and Cristian Lăzărescu. ERC Press: București.
[38] See I.L. Caragiale (2006). *D-l Goe: (momente și schițe)*. București: Corint.

Initially, they were asked to create one or two pages of visual representation of the story. Their decision to continue working on this project brought them the chance to expose their artwork in Bucharest, during the 6th of June and the 31st of August, 2018.

More precisely, this activity can be designed as follows. Students received the narrative text and they were asked to read it once again. Next, they had to outline in the text those elements which they would choose to transpose in visual language. The teacher had to encourage students – now playing the role of some artists – to take any decision necessary but at the same time to be able to justify each move they make. They became responsible for their work, asking for help just when needed (when choosing plans, cropping panels, making some details visible). The initial goal materialized in two pages of comics but later it was extended to a whole authentic comic book. Students decided to continue working at school and afterwards in order to be able to sign up their comic book for an exhibition in Bucharest. Moreover, as the exhibition's topic was *Stories from Bucharest through Comics*[39], the students added some original pages to their abridgment, illustrating places from Bucharest visited by Goe and his family during their walk from the railway station to the avenue. As a teacher, my role was to guide them and offer them any help they needed (e.g. providing pictures showing Bucharest's streets from the ninth century).

Finally, the experiment proved how seriously these multimodal narratives should be approached in order to get to their real message. One of the most important steps in teaching students how to understand comics consist of reading and analyzing various types of comic strips (as seen above, section 3.1) which make teachers aware of the specificity and complexity of their vocabulary. The second important step is to design a didactic sequence which allows comics reading exercises, followed by discussions meant to show students how to understand and interpret this type of text (section 3.2). Ultimately, learning how to read the simplest version of a multimodal narrative will allow students to reach the next levels of this cultural construction: reading posters, collages, short videos and film. As these visual metaphors surround us in the postmodern society, this initiation becomes important for learning how to understand the culture (and the world) we live in.

4. Conclusions

After the attempt of analyzing a corpus of comics (see section 3.1), we first observe the way the texts confirm both linguistically and visually the categories discussed by the specialists (script, language, specific graphic elements etc.), but also the situations where the basic conventions leave the place to some innovative techniques, both thematically and stylistically, the purpose here being to obtain the originality effect. Afterwards, going through these texts motivates the importance of the reader's initiation in reading comics, an exercise which will allow not only the interception, but also the interpretation of the message proposed by the narration. Starting from this analytical enterprise, we can determine that, apart from the text and the images, comics also possesses an ideational content of its own, like any veritable artistic product. Ultimately, by approaching various and complex themes and by the major innovation within the graphic and discursive construction, these multimodal texts permit the reconfiguration of some narrative motifs and even the creation of modern mythologies.

Designing a didactic sequence which involves some reading strategies that consider all these features may soon become indispensable for the teacher, as comics becomes more and more visible in our contemporary society. As a multimodal discourse, comics demands its own reading practices. The experiment detailed above (see section 3.2) offers just one possible

[39] See Salonul BD *Povești din București în Benzi Desenate*, ediția a V-a, Casa Filipescu-Cesianu, Muzeul Vârstelor, București, iunie-august 2018.

didactic approach to comics, willing to suggest a reference point for teachers facing the challenge of the multimodal "revolution".

The above-mentioned reflections are relevant especially because the relation of mutual determination between comics (as a product of mass culture) and the multimodal narration (as a specific form of discourse for our era) cannot be questioned. On the contrary, it becomes more and more significant within the contemporary society. On the one hand, the multimodal invasion, by its various forms (collages, videos, commercials, cinematic art), encourages the comics' assertion; on the other hand, by assimilating some reading strategies, comics empower the interception and the interpretation of the narrative multimodal texts, in all their diversity and complexity and, consequently, the comprehension of the cultural phenomena of current society. In a postmodernist vision, this dialecticism could eventually impact the cultural trajectories and, even more, it could offer the possibility for the noncanonical texts (such as comics) to leave paraliterature and acquire a new statute. As readers and teachers we have to get prepared for showing students how to understand this cultural environment that they belong to and how to read the multimodal narratives – more and more visible and powerful – that surround them.

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION---TRANSLATING AND RECOVERING THE ETHICAL NORMS OF ALIVE IN LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF ROMANIA, CROATIA, POLAND AND SLOVENIA

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Abstract: The article reflects the main legislative framework and preoccupations for environmental protection and durable development in four European countries: Romania, Croatia, Poland and Slovenia. There it is an analyse around the question: The national legislative low is it constructed on ethical norms and values which should regulate the human behaviour and can be learned in the schools by a young age? The article brings in attention the ethical dimension as solid base for construction of a durable future of Terra life and try to reconnect the moral norms of alive with the legislation which it is not optional as the moral one.

Keywords: sustainable development; environmental education; ethics; human behaviour; life;

I. Introduction

Sustainable development basically means planning economic and social growth and well-being taking in account that such growth does not endanger environment and natural resources for the future generations. The term itself was used for the first time*[40] in today's meaning when it has become clear that overusing and exploiting natural resources, which started with the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century, would lead to threatening the existence of human race itself. The Stockholm Environmental Conference from 1972 is the moment when it is recognized that human activities contribute to environmental degradation, which threatens the future of mankind. A few years later, in 1983, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) started its activities such as a report on environment and the global problems facing the world to the year 2000 and beyond, and proposed strategies for a sustainable development.

The term "sustainable development" began to become very well known only after the International Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), organized by the United Nations in Rio de Janeiro in the summer of 1992. Also known as the "Earth Summit", the conference was attended by representatives of about 170 countries and it led to the draft of the *Agenda 21* that is being used by the United Nations as a tool for promoting the concept of sustainable development.

Sustainable development has become an objective of the European Union, starting in 1997, when it was included in the Treaty of Maastricht; although the reason for such new worldwide concern for Mother Earth might have been selfishly oriented on humans, it has brought together all contemporary scientists and environmental activists to design a new global framework (*Agenda 21**[41]) for maintaining the Life as we know it today.

It is widely considered that the *Homo Sapiens* appeared somewhere between 400 000 and 250 000 years ago. The Earth, however, is much older (4,6 billion years). During its history

[40] UN World Commission on Environment and Development's, Brundtland Commission, Report Our Common Future, 1987.
[41] Action plan of the UN regarding sustainable development produced at Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (*United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – UNCED)*, 1992; 21 refers to the 21st century

a lot of species appeared, dominated and then disappeared, just to mention dinosaurs. Let us be honest, it is quite clear that the human race is just a subtenant on this gentle and hospitable cradle of life. The Earth has been here before us and will be there, after us. *She* is self-sufficient. We are highly dependent on the tuned and greased mechanism called ecosystem, where every living organism has its place and purpose, is dependent and dependable. *" Ultimately – as quantum physics [has] showed so dramatically – there are no parts at all. What we call a part is merely a pattern in an inseparable web of relationships."* *[42]

II. Legislative Framework regarding durable environment and environment protection in four European countries: Romania, Croatia, Poland and Slovenia

II.1. Legislative Framework of Romania

In **Romania** environmental protection issues are imperative to be put in place, especially as a result of the intense local pollution of the environment by factories and agriculture or by overpopulated cities, as well as by the existence of cross-border pollution, which have led to deregulations in the ecosystems and worsening of people's living conditions. Without environmental protection sustainable development cannot be ensured. Sustainable development includes environmental protection, and environmental protection determines sustainable development.

The environmental protection strategy is to be found, through its core principles, in the ***National Sustainable Development Strategy of Romania 2013 – 2020 – 2030***. The document, which was debated and later approved by the Romanian government on 12th of November 2008, follows the methodological recommendations of the European Commission, and represents a joint project of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Development Program through the National Centre for Sustainable Development. The strategy sets out concrete objectives for moving towards a new model of progress – sustainable development – oriented towards a continuous improvement of people's lives and their relationships in harmony with the natural environment.

In this document, the parties involved made sure to note the 'then' current socio-economic state of Romania, as well as its natural capital. Regarding the natural environment, they pointed out important particularities that our country brings forth, such as the fact that in Romania five out of the eleven bio-geographic regions of Europe and 54% of the Carpathians mountain range can be found, 97.8% of the rivers are collected by the Danube which flows for 1,075 kilometres on Romanian territory and a valuable input of plant and animal species that had become extinct or rare in other parts of Europe.

In Romania, environmental protection has emerged as a self-sustaining area in our national politics only in 1991, when the Ministry of the Environment was founded for the first time; in 1992, the first official document setting out the national objectives in this sector was drawn up - "The National Environmental Protection Strategy" – which was updated in 1996 and in 2002. Other fundamental legislation in the area of environmental protection are:

- *Law No. 17/1990 regarding the legal treatment of internal sea going waters, territorial sea and contiguous areas;*
- *Law No. 82/1993 regarding the establishment of the "Danube Delta" Biosphere Reservation;*
- *Law No. 137/1995 on the environmental protection;*
- *Waters Law No. 107/1996;*
- *Law No. 103/1996 regarding the protection of hunting grounds;*
- *Law No. 111/1996 regarding nuclear activities;*

[42] Fritjof Capra: Web of Life; 1996, p.6

- *Law No. 107/1999 for the approval of the Government Ordinance No. 81/1998 regarding the improvement by afforestation of weathered lands;*
- *Law No. 192/2001 on fisheries, fishing and aquaculture;*
- *Mountain Law No 347/2004;*
- *The Forest code (Law No. 46/2008);*
- *Law No. 132/2010 regarding selective waste collection in public institutions;*
- *Law No. 211/2011 on waste management.*

Other Government Ordinances:

- *OU 243/2000 on atmosphere protection;*
- *OU 195/2005 on environment protection;*
- *OG 47/2005 on disposal of animal waste;*
- *OG 41/2007 on marketing pesticides;*
- *HG 1132/2008 regarding batteries and accumulators and their disposal;*
- *OU 71/2010 on sea waters;*
- *HG 1037/2011 on disposal of electric and electronic waste.*

II.2. Legislative Framework of Croatia

One of the first documents voted by the Croatian Parliament which mentions sustainable development was the Declaration of Environmental Protection (1992). It has corresponded with Agenda 21. Designing the legislative framework of sustainable development was one of the objectives comprised in that Declaration which resulted in the ***Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia***. The Strategy was adopted in 2009 and it assumed responsibilities arising from The *United Nations Millennium Declaration* and *Millennium Development Goals adopted* on General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000 taking in account some national particularities such are: protected areas and national parks (8,54% of total territory), the Adriatic Sea protection (35,4% of total territory), 1136 endemic species and social factors like negative population growth.

Fundamental legislations in the field of the nature, environmental, air, sea, water, climate and soil protection, waste and energy management, animal protection are:

- *Nature Protection Act, 1994, 2005, 2013;*
- *Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity of the Republic of Croatia, 1999, 2008;*
- *Strategy and Action Plan on Nature Protection of the Republic of Croatia for period 2017-2025; 201;*
- *Environmental Protection Act, 2013, 2013, 2015;*
- *Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, 2009;*
- *Act on Protection against Light Pollution, 2011;*
- *Air Protection Act, 2011, 2014, 2017;*
- *Act on Sustainable Waste Management, 2013, 2017;*
- *Waste Management Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, 2005;*
- *Animal Protection Act, 2006, 2013, 2017.*

Other acts:

- *GMO Act, 2005, 2009;*
- *Water Act, 2009, 2011, 2011, 2013, 2014;*
- *Aquaculture Act, 2018;*
- *Hunting Act, 2005, 2009, 2009, 2016, 2016, 2016, 2017;*
- *Marine Fisheries Act, 2014, 2018;*

- *Act on Renewable Energy Resources and Highly Effective Cogeneration, 2015, 2016, 2017;*
- *Act on Energy Efficiency, 2014;*
- *Act on Forests, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2012, 2013, 2014;*
- *Act on Sustainable Use of Pesticides, 2014;*
- *Act on Fertilizers and Soil Improvers, 2003, 2007, 2013, 2014.*

II.3. Legislative Framework of Poland

Despite the fact that in Poland there has been a growing interest in the issues related to sustainable development, it didn't quickly get one common definition, which could be used in any field of science, but functioned for a long time in a various form in legal, economic and social terminologies. Due to the presence of this concept in various fields of science, at least several dozens of definitions can be found. An important feature of the idea of developing sustainable development is, as the above graphic illustrates, its multi-dimensionality and it is characterized by the common goal - specific social and economic development, leading to the satisfaction of human needs, taking into account environmental determinants. When it comes to Polish legislation, it should be noted that the principle of sustainable development up to the 1990s was foreign to our legal order. In some legal acts, the concept of eco-development began to appear, understood now as the principle of sustainable development. In 1992, the Polish government signed the Rio de Janeiro Declaration on environmental protection. This document contained 27 principles which should guide countries in implementing environmental policy and its development. Another document adopted by Poland was Agenda 21 - an action program focusing on nature conservation, taking into account the role of man in shaping the environment.

One of the first legal acts in which the concept of eco-development appeared was the Act of 7 July 1994 on spatial development, which was replaced by the act of 27 March 2003 on spatial planning and development. The introduction of the principle of sustainable development into the area of national legislation took place through the content of the provision of art. 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, placing the principle of sustainable development in the initial regulations of the Constitution in the chapter entitled "Rzeczpospolita". After this significant change, an amendment to the Act of January 31, 1980 on environmental protection and development was also made. This document currently has no binding force because it has been replaced by the Act of 27 April 2001 on environmental protection. In the act on environmental protection, the concept of sustainable development occurs in many articles. In art. 3 point 50 of the aforementioned Act, one can find a legal definition of the concept of sustainable development. On the basis of this article, sustainable development is one in which there is a process of integrating economic, social and political factors, while maintaining ecological balance in order to be able to meet the most important needs of specific communities and citizens of both present and future generations.

Applying this concept in practice was assumed by the Act of December 6, 2006, which concerned the principles of conducting development policy. The paramount objective of this policy is to conduct such activities that are consistent with the assumptions of sustainable development and its implementation is the responsibility of the public administration bodies, both governmental and local governments. It should be emphasized that the principle of sustainable development is recognized as a constitutional rule, and consequently, it has the status of the highest law and is superior to other legal acts listed below in Poland, such as acts or ordinances.

The most important legal acts regarding environmental protection in Poland are:

- Act of 27 April 2001. Environmental protection law (Journal of Laws of 2008, No. 25, item 150, as amended);
- Act of 3 October 2008 on access to information about environment and its protection, public participation in environmental protection and on environmental impact assessments (Journal of Laws of 2008, No. 199, item 1227);
- Act of 27 April 2001 on waste, (Journal of Laws of 2007, No. 39, item 251, as amended);
- Regulation of the Minister of Environment of September 27, 2001 regarding the waste catalogue (Journal of Laws of 2001, No. 112, item 1206);
- The Act of 18 July 2001 on Water Law (Journal of Laws of 2005, No. 239, item 2019, as amended);
- The Act of April 16, 2004 on Nature Conservation, (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 92, item 880, as amended);
- The Act of 13 October 2005 - Hunting Law, (Journal of Laws of 2005, No. 127, item 1066);
- The Act of February 4, 1994 - Geological and Mining Law, (Journal of Laws of 2005, No. 228, item 1947, as amended);
- Act of 13 April 2007 on prevention and repair of damage to the environment (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1789, as amended);
- Act of 15 July 2011 on the national eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) (Journal of Laws, item 1060).

Matters related to environmental protection are also regulated by a number of ordinances of the Minister of the Environment or regulations of the Council of Ministers, such as: Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 9 November 2010 on projects that may significantly affect the environment (Journal of Laws of 2016 item 71), or the ordinance of the Minister of the Environment of 17 April 2012 on the detailed scope of information on environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental impact assessments (Journal of Laws, item 529).

II.4. Legislative Framework of Slovenia

Emergence of first natural preservation activities in Slovenia dates back to the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century (Hlad, 2002). Although natural scientists, nature lovers and mountaineers have already been warning against excessive harvesting of plants and threats to certain parts of nature, it was that period when first official protection regulations and circulars were issued by the provincial authorities of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. During the World Wars, nature conservation efforts of individuals brought to life a first social organization for nature protection, Odsek za varstvo prirode in prirodnih spomenikov pri Muzejskem društvu v Ljubljani (Department for the Protection of Nature and Natural Monuments at the Museum Society in Ljubljana) in the year of 1919. Their biggest achievement was Spomenica, a document proposing the creation of several protected areas for the protection of plant and animal species, along with caves and cave fauna (Peterlin, Varstvo narave na prelomnici, 1970). Immediately after the Second World War, the first professional service for the field of nature protection was established, but apart from rare exceptions, the area was still lagging behind other nations of the European continent (although, Slovenia was the fifth European country to declare its first national park in 1924) (Peterlin, 75 let po Spomenici Odseka za varstvo prirode in prirodnih spomenikov pri Muzejskem društvu za Slovenijo, 1995).

After the war, Great Britain, for instance, declared ten national parks, which to this day form a core of their environmental protection. Slovenia followed their example just in the beginning of the 1980s. With the rise in economic growth in Slovenia, consequently, there were demands for greater spatial interventions, such as hydroelectric constructions or ski centers.

There was a dispute between the few nature conservation specialists against strong politically supported investors, which attracted the attention of the broader public. With its support, nature conservation point of view prevailed in most cases, which paved the way to establishment of first national parks (Triglav National Park, Cerknica Lake, Planinsko Field) and creation of a systematic legislation in regard to nature conservation. Then the Law on Nature Protection (Zakon o varstvu narave, ZVN for short) was passed in 1970. It was a modern law, comparable to similar regulations across Europe. Sadly, it was poorly implemented and soon replaced by a Law on natural and cultural heritage (Zakon o naravni in kulturni dediščini) in 1981. Since natural heritage pertains only to properties, areas or specific parts of nature with cultural, scientific, historical or aesthetic value, this was actually a step back from comprehensive nature conservation presented in ZVN. After a few years of stagnation in this area, a much needed government regulation came about in 1993. Protected species list significantly expanded and encompassed numerous types of birds along with three great beasts of Slovenia: the bear, the wolf and the lynx. The Environmental Protection Act (Zakon o varstvu okolja, ZVO) has established a comprehensive environmental and nature protection system with one of its foundations being that a man too is a part of nature (Environmental Protection Act, Article 4). Comprehensiveness of this system is visible not just by protection of environment from pollution but it also promotion of sustainable use and protection of natural resources. Additionally, it has created a framework for the systematic regulation of nature protection, which was established by the Law on Nature Preservation (Zakon o ohranjanju narave, ZON) in 1999. This is the actual legislation still in place today and is, along with numerous ratified international conventions, a clear sign of Slovenian involvement in international efforts for nature protection.

Nature protection is, just as numerous other social relations, regulated by legal norms covered by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, the international laws, EU law, and administrative laws on nature protection as well as civil and punitive offense law. Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia dictates that the state has a duty to preserve natural wealth und cultural heritage as well as create opportunities for a compliant civilizational and cultural development of Slovenia. Even though constitution itself does not explicitly pertain to the protection of nature, the latter is still in public interest and the state (with local communities' cooperation) articulates public interest to be regulated in accordance with the law (Law on Nature Preservation, Paragraph 4). To put it simply, protection of natural and cultural wealth in Slovenia is a constitutional duty of all citizens. It should also be mentioned that the Constitution must coincide with international and EU laws and international treaties ratified by the Slovenian parliament. Consequentially, they share the same view on nature protection. Although certain conventions are more general in their nature (Bern, Bonn, Washington, Barcelona or Alpine conventions), the EU still has a quite concrete policy on protection from all kinds of threats to animal and plant kingdom; restricting trafficking, deliberate killing and disturbance of all life, as well as protecting their habitat.

The clearest guidelines however, can be found under The Environmental Protection Act. Environment is precisely defined as that part of the nature, which can be affected by the influence of human activity. Nature is an entirety of the material world and a composition of natural laws of interconnected and interdependent parts and processes. Environmental parts are soil, mineral resources, air and animal and plant species, including their genetic material (The Environmental Protection Act, Article 5). The law clearly defines fundamental principles and actions on nature protection, information and monitoring, its economic and financial instruments, public services and other aspects, connected to nature preservation. The purpose of environmental protection is promotion and guidance of social development, which provides long-term conditions for human health, the well-being and quality of all life, and the preservation of biodiversity. Among the objectives of environmental protection are preventing and reducing the burden on the environment, maintaining and improving the quality of the environment, sustainable use of natural resources, eliminating the burden on the environment, improving the diseased natural balance and restoring its regeneration capabilities.

It should be noted that there is a special attention in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Slovenia to the protection of nature, namely natural values and biodiversity (flora and fauna) and protection of the environment. Special chapter of the Criminal acts against the environment, space, natural goods, from Article 333 to 347 lists criminal offences against protection of the environment, space and in the context of natural assets objects of nature protection. In addition, Article 223 stipulates that damage to a natural value is a criminal offense. Managing matters on biotic diversity and protection of natural values of national importance falls under state jurisdiction and, on a smaller scale, with local authorities.

III. Ethical aspects of human behaviour

The most distinctive difference between humans and other living organisms is the reason. We normally have the sense of morality and usually know the difference between right and wrong. We don't exactly live our lives by looking for answers in books of laws, we are usually not even aware of them. But we do know when we are doing something wrong because we are taught some common codes of ethical behaviour.

Modern civilization, developed around industrialization, has been founded on the idea that man is the supreme master of nature, from which he has to extract maximum benefits**.** **Love of nature** must be an essential component of human behaviour. The environment is the totality of external factors in which humans, animals and plants live. Protecting the environment is a problem that must concern not only environmentalist, but also everyone else. Thus, millennials of harmonious coexistence between man and nature have been forgotten and a new incorrect mentality came to be, where indifference and unconscious aggression towards the environment lead the way.

The new relationship between human beings and the environment is manifested in several ways: in our urban life, but also in the industrial and cultural areas. Man, through his intervention, essentially altered the natural environment, according to his requirements. Through the uninterrupted progress of science and technology, man has manifested his tendency to dominate and exploit nature. The changes these alterations have caused over the last hundreds of centuries far outweigh the natural transformations in millions of years.

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world", said naturalist John Muir. Nature means life, and we must realize that our lives took a turn in the wrong direction, and every second of every day we have to show a positive attitude towards environmental protection and make conscious efforts in helping to reduce pollution. A plastic container thrown to the ground, let alone thousands, can cause unimaginable harm to our natural surroundings; so it would be so easy for each of us to get involved, to help protect and ease the earth from the heavy burden that it has to carry through the negligence and indifference of people. Using less electricity and water would be insignificant for man, but for our planet it would mean an enormous deal. Consuming less meat would mean we could save thousands of hectares of land that should no longer be grown for animal feed, so the earth would be less polluted with all sorts of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides.

The world has become truly aware of the pollution phenomenon only in the mid-20th century, when the consequences of urban smog, acid rain, increased greenhouse effect, thinning of the ozone layer, severe deterioration of the quality of water and soil started to be felt. People became victims of their own actions so they have begun to take responsibility for the environment in which they live.

In our daily life, we waste a lot of things such as plastic, paper, etc. We can start to recycle these wastes instead of throwing them in garbage bin. We can categorize them into non-recyclable and recyclable products and throw them in the corresponding waste basket or send recyclable products to a recycling company. We ought not to buy a plastic bag every time we go grocery shopping, instead we should carry a reusable bag and save both money and the environment.

The previously mentioned usage of less electricity is easily doable. We just have to turn off all appliances that we are not using and replace all of the inefficient ones. Another way to save energy is to use fans instead of air conditioning systems which use a great amount of electricity. If we do need to use air conditioners, then we should make sure that we set the temperature to an inconsiderably lower temperature than the outside one and check and make sure all the windows are well-sealed.

Nowadays, a vehicle is becoming a basic requirement for traveling and transportation. In fact, vehicles are one of the main reasons leading to air pollution. One of the best ways to protect the environment is to walk or ride the bike instead of driving the car or motorbike for short trips. It not only helps us reduce air pollution but also helps us get more exercise and enjoy the fresh air. For long trips, using public transportation such as bus or train is another good way to help prevent air pollution, but one of the most important ways to help protect the world we live in is by education. Education plays a crucial role in raising awareness of environmental challenges and shaping the attitudes and behaviours that can make a difference. Recycling and sustainable consumptions should be topics of discussions in classrooms all over the world. Raising awareness and developing eco-aware future generations can only lead to a cleaner and safer environment.

There are a lot of questions...Why do people buy breeder dogs instead of fostering shelter ones? Instead of giving shelter to animals desperate for love and care, we encourage holding animals for breeding. We must be aware that animal breeding has profit for its purpose and in most cases that is before the animals' wellbeing. Respecting the life and its dignity cannot be limited to humans only. **It is a universal value.** Thinking that we owe to respect only peoples' lives lead us to a very obscure path of playing games with this value. It leaves space for distorting its meaning and to apply it differently, according to the moment. We are already doing that with human lives: wars with a lot of civilian victims including children, euthanasia of terminally ill people, abortions of malformed foetuses. We have already come to the stage that we play Gods with human lives, deciding who is worth of living and who is not. What will be next? And it will be next.

When we learn to estimate the life worthiness' of these categories, some others will appear, and we will accept them more easily. In this light **we should reconsider the value of life as we see it today and learn to respect life as the ultimate value**. Buying and eating certain fish like mackerel during the close season or protected and endangered date-shells, we encourage their fishing. If we stop doing that, there would not be a market for such illegal activities. We should warn authorities if we witness such activities. People usually do not react on these things but we should, it IS our responsibility. Turning the blind eye to the actions which we might think are not our responsibility, we are sending the message that we agree with them. Our silence means approving. That way we all become victims of the small group of abusers who rule our street, school, neighbourhood, town and world. Deciding to protect others, we decide to protect ourselves. Choosing to walk somewhere or ride a bike, you choose to keep you fit and strong, and your environment would be healthier for you and your family. We must promote healthier and more economic lifestyle. The care for environment is not only that, it is a care for yourself. Turning off the lights and water taps makes you more responsible for managing your money and not only environmentally friendly. **We must develop better consciousness about our everyday actions taken for granted.**

To manage your waste efficiently (to recycle) means that less waste would pollute the food you eat. Choose to ignore products in plastic or out of plastic because it is poisonous for all living beings. We must be more responsible towards producing waste, think carefully what we buy and why we buy it. **We must reconsider our role as consumers**. In addition, we have right to know how to manage our waste. Buy seasonal fruits and vegetables at a local market; it is not normal to grow tomatoes in winter, they are artificial and full of pesticides. That way you support local food producers and choose to eat healthy. We must be more aware of what we eat as malnutrition is a trigger for diseases. **We should respect our body more** and not put in it garbage food. **Treat other people with respect**: good relationships, social and communication skills are the basis for your own mental happiness. The way you treat others says a lot about you. If you are full of anger, bitterness and aggression, your whole entity suffers and you end up tired and exhausted. We should remember that all people are equal and you should give them the same chances and opportunities to prove themselves. **We must choose to discourage corruption** whenever you can, and by corruption we mean not only political corruption or bribing, but corruption of words, thoughts and relationships. Once you choose to lose your integrity, to lie or be dishonest, it always leads to more and bigger lies and dishonesties.

The last but not the least, **we must help people in need**. Don't turn your back and pretend they don't exist. Being them responsible or not for their present state, no man can call himself a man if he chooses the sick, old, ill, poor and helpless are not of his concern**. If we are not responsible for other people's lives and well-being, then we fail in humanity.**

IV. Recovering ethical norms in the national framework regarding durable development and environment Protection-Comparative analysis in four countries: Romania, Croatia, Poland and Slovenia

IV.1. Comparative analysis in Romania

The *Environmental Protection Law* declares that the state recognizes the right to a healthy and well balanced environment for any person, guaranteeing to that end that anyone who wishes to have access to environmental quality information should be able to do that. The law proclaims the protection of the environment as an “objective of major public interest”, and as the basis of its regulations it uses “the principles and the strategic elements that lead to a sustainable development of the society”. The framework law then goes on to list the basic principles: the principle of cautiousness in decision making (Article 3 a); the principle of prevention of ecological risks and damage (Article 3 b); the principle of conservation of biodiversity and of specific ecosystems (Article 3 c), and the principle “the polluter pays”.

Risk prevention constitutes the main purpose, the essence of environmental protection. Prevention can be seen from two perspectives: the prevention of production of harmful pollution and limitation or disposal of the damages after the pollution has taken place.

The law goes on to define biodiversity as the diversity of all living organisms that come from aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as the ecological complexes they comprise, and it also encompasses diversity within species. The ecosystem is seen as a dynamic complex of communities of plants, animals and micro-organisms and their living environment all interacting in a functional unit. The biodiversity and ecosystems are specific to a certain natural geographical region and must be preserved by all the available scientific and technical means, including the legal means provided by the norms of this environmental law.

The last principle the law focuses on expresses the idea that the pollutant - the "polluter" - that is, the person causing environmental damage, will be responsible for his actions whether or not his act is punishable or not.

The *Water Law* from 1996 states that water represents a renewable yet vulnerable and limited natural resource, an indispensable element to life and society, a raw material for productive activities, a source of energy and a way of transport, a determinant factor for the preservation of the ecological balance and as such is an integral part of the country's patrimony. Its protection, revaluation and sustainable development of its resources are actions of general interest.

The main purpose of the Water Law is to ensure a continuous conservation, development and protection of all water resources, as well as the ensuring of a free water flow. The Law goes on to add that all waters in the country must be protected against any form of pollution and modification of the characteristics of their resources, of their banks, or basins.

Other principles mentioned are those of conservation and protection of the aquatic ecosystems found in the country's waters and the ensuring of a clean drinking water supply to the population as well as public sanitation.

The *Mountain Law* declares that the Romanian mountain area constitutes an economic, social and environmental territory of special national interest. The main purpose of this law is the conservation of landscapes and biodiversity, as well as development of economic activities specific to this area.

The law proposes the optimal capitalization of agricultural, fish, forest, energetic, industrial, tourism and cultural resources, existing on the territory of a village or town or in a certain mountain area. All this should be done in such a way as to not upset the ecological balance and without degradation of natural environment.

Another objective mentioned in this 2004 law is that of offering stability to the inhabitants already living in the mountain areas but also favouring the settlement of young families there. In order for that to happen and to help the citizens living there the state must improve the services provided for the mountain population by offering them vocational training in such areas as of tourism and agro-tourism.

The Waste Management Law establishes the necessary measures to protect the environment and human health, by preventing or reducing the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste and by reducing overall impacts of resource use and improving the efficiency of their use. The law follows the waste hierarchy set by the European Union and states that organizing the collection, transport and disposal of municipal waste is one of the obligations of local public administration. It is also mentioned that waste prevention could be achieved by application of "clean technologies" in waste generating activities and it could also be valorised by reuse, material recycling and energy recovery.

IV.2. Comparative analysis in Croatia

Nature Protection Act prescribes preservation of natural balance, harmonization of human activities with natural balance, providing sustainable use of natural resources without vital damaging of nature. It prescribes that each person's responsibility is to contribute to biodiversity preservation and to use natural resources running the sustainable principle. Nature protection is each person's obligation. However, natural resources can be used for economic or commercial use, even those which may have significant negative influence on nature.

There are usually no public debates (as it is not prescribed) before issuing licences for such activities. Drinking water resources are not protected by law. Protected areas are run by Public Institutions and their Councils, which members are usually chosen from governing political parties which leaves a lot of space for non-ethical decisions.

It is strictly forbidden catching, killing, disturbing and harassing protected species as well as destroying their habitats. It is forbidden possessing, transporting, selling and trading protected species. It is obligatory to report any accidental catching or running over protected species, but there are exceptions to this rule. Also there are exceptions in rules dealing with protected species in cases when it is in the interest of the specie and/or its habitat without clear explanation of what such cases might be.

The law prescribes responsibility for any case of deliberate or accidental ecological damage but the punishment for such acts are fines, and not imprisonment, which assumes less responsibility. It is the duty of the government to promote nature protection through public informing. However, there might be prescribed confidentiality of data concerning the level of nature protection, and that we cannot call the act of public interest. Also there are not prescribed activities concerning education for nature protection (meaning formal or non-formal education).

Animal Protection Act ensures that no animals are breaded in a way that can cause pain, suffering or fear. It applies to all vertebrates, but not to fishing. In some cases, it is permitted to use electro shockers and electrical fences to control motion with animals breaded for production. It is forbidden to train animals for fighting or to organize animal fighting or dog races. However, this excludes traditional bull competition. It is also forbidden to breed animals for fur production. Animal and pet owners cannot neglect animals or abandon them (it is a felony). It is forbidden to cut ears and tails to animals, or other vulnerable part of the body. This excludes animal testing. However, animal testing is under the supervision of the Ethical Committee. Breeders of animals for production must ensure that the food quality and quantity corresponds to animals' needs but it is not defined by law the kind or quantity of such food, which subsequently can be compromised. All animal breeders must be registered and trained but it is not defined clearly how they should be trained. Animal breeders should not breed animals that are not sexually mature or healthy. All counties must provide at least one animal shelter and it is forbidden to euthanize sheltered animals if not conditioned by an animal's suffering due to illness. Governmental bodies must build public awareness, particularly the young, about animal protection but it is not prescribed how or to what extent.

Act on Sustainable Waste Management predicts measures for reduction of waste production, which, strangely, does not apply to waste waters. Waste producers must pay for their waste management but they pay flat rate, not for the quantity of the waste. Waste must be separated but this still does not apply to households or small businesses. Commercial producers must introduce as much as possible return packaging but it is not prescribed to what extent nor there are measures for encouraging it or penalties if they don't. There is, however, charge for return packaging (for consumers) but only for some glass and plastic bottles, nothing more. Local government are obliged to ensure annual public educational and informative activities about efficient waste management but it is not specified to what extent or whom should they inform or educate.

Act on Energy Efficiency has the purpose of sustainable energy development and production. However, there are few examples of good practices on national level, particularly those that include sun and wind energy potential, which we have in abundance. The level of informational activities and national awareness campaigns on sustainable energy are insignificant.

Family Act prescribes, among others, the responsibility towards parents and elders on the care to prevent neglect, which is a new addition. It contains measures for prevention of violence, particularly children and women, and in the last years there have been highly visible national campaigns aimed at raising awareness about intolerance towards violence against women. On the other hand, Istanbul Convention has not been ratified yet in Croatia by the Parliament. The reason for that lies in very influential conservative right-wing lobbies, including the Catholic Church, which deny the implementation of gender ideology comprised in the Convention (particularly Article 14).

IV.3. Comparative analysis in Poland

The contemporary branch of normative ethics defines the tendencies and possibilities of making changes in the existing traditional relations between man and nature. At this point, environmental pedagogy plays an important role, which treats nature as a priceless value and disseminates this assumption in the didactic and educational process.
In the environmental ethics of the many trends one should distinguish the two: anthropocentrism and biocentrism.

The anthropocentric approach, which is also called homocentric, assumes that man is the main reference point in solving ethical dilemmas, therefore, we only have moral obligations to people. Therefore, nature should be protected only for the man's own sake, which is the moral norm of this direction, and nature is only an instrumental value.

Opponents of this approach believe that this model of thinking has contributed to the ecological crisis in the world. The bio centric model is against the traditional domination of man in nature, justifying that man is not in a privileged position in the biosphere. In this version of environmental ethics, the human species is just one of many elements and the moral norm is the good of the entire biosphere. Supporters of anthropocentrism criticize biocentrism for reducing man to an ordinary element of nature, like other animated creations, and not treating it as a superior value. In response to such accusations, the proponents of biocentrism point out that only man has the ability to distinguish good and evil, which is why he has a great responsibility for deeds, including those caused to nature. After all, people have destroyed much of the natural richness of life and only they can fix it.

An important model of practicing ecological ethics is also the theocentric trend, which requires consideration of all relations between human moral activities and nature, with reference to God as the creator of nature and the cosmos. Following this path of thinking, nature has value for God, who has not only created it, but maintains it in existence, hence the natural environment should be treated in terms of a specific good. Destruction of nature as a result of a consumer lifestyle means, therefore, to defy God and do evil.

After a short description of the most important trends in the eco-ethics, one should consider which of them should be a reference point for political initiatives for introducing sustainable development. As shown by the examples of policies of some rich European countries that protect their own country or individual regions by directing atmospheric pollution or selling radioactive waste to other countries, extreme anthropocentrism cannot be an appropriate ethical model, conducive to the implementation of sustainable development. Such a model, being the result of short-sighted ecological policy, leads to even greater degradation of nature. Moderate anthropocentrism, showing nature protection as an instrumental value, leading to the preservation of human life and health, may also prove to be ineffective, because most people consider as right only what is convenient for them, and this inevitably leads humanity to destruction. The total rejection of anthropocentrism and the adoption of only a bio centric hierarchy of values, however, can lead to radical solutions that may prove disastrous to humanity. Biocentrism therefore seems to be a trend too far from sustainable development. Summing up, on the basis of sustainable development, attention should be paid to the things that these two different positions combine - the need to protect nature and care for human welfare. Both trends are consistent with the fact that man is responsible for the state of nature, and that only he can fix this unfavorable condition. It seems that the third theocentric trend, the least considered, could overcome the problems and controversies of the two opposing positions, because it emphasizes the uniqueness of man in nature and sees in the beings of nature values in relation to God who gave the earth to man as its administrator.

People must respect nature as a whole, together with all its parts, meaning to feel awe towards its perfection and universality. We should take from nature only what is necessary for mere existence, and, in a perfect world, recover it. If we cut off one tree, we should plant two new ones. We should plan our activities and actions respecting the need for nature preservation. The profit we expect from our businesses should never be more important than the environment. We must build awareness of the importance of biodiversity and be more active in protecting our rights as citizens on healthy environment. We should participate more eagerly in corresponding campaigns because it is our responsibility.

IV.4. Comparative analysis in Slovenia

Third article in the Constitution of Republic of Slovenia states that Slovenia is a state of all its citizens. Concerning conservation of nature that implies that duty for its protection lies not only with the state, but with individual citizens as well. It is therefore a duty of everyone to do their part in this effort, in accordance to the laws, orders, recommendations as well as their morality. It is evident that the state must take the instrumental approach to nature protection; it is after all a legal entity with an obligation to the word of the law. However, there is also the realm of legitimacy, of doing the right thing, which is most often represented by the people, organizations or local authorities. Their micromanagement of the immediate environment often stems from themselves, at the expense of their time or resources, but with potential success of their efforts, also resulting in common wellbeing. It is imperative then, that beneficial actions of individuals and civil initiatives are openly recognized, since they are taking care of an area of intrinsic, where there are no visible advantages, an area where the state with all its other responsibilities strays only rarely. Many of these individuals who share the same views on nature protection are members of different non-governmental organizations. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food there are 236 environmental NGO's in a country with just a little over two million citizens. Their functioning would not be possible without public funds on a national and European level, which is a clear sign of tackling both aspects of nature protection.

There have been two recent cases, where their joint efforts are clearly evident. The United nations have declared May 20th to be the World Honey Bee Day on the initiative of the Beekeepers Association of Slovenia. Hopefully this is another step in recognizing the importance of bees. There is a quote, commonly attributed to either Einstein, Darwin or Maeterlinck as…If the bee disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to liv… (Bonnie Taylor-Blake, Ray Girvan, 2017). Another recent case is the governments' uncharacteristically progressive change of the Constitution, with newly added article 70, stating that everybody has the right to drinking water as well as water sources not being market goods. How well this change is actually implemented is still a matter of debate, since more than half best water sources are privately owned through concessions by foreign conglomerates (Mekina, 2015).

Natural sources and private ownership along with their judicial predispositions are delicate subjects, latter perhaps keeping better pace with the march of progress than the former. Slovenia, being a member of the European Union, would be directly impacted by two controversial trade agreements in 2016, TTIP and CETA. While their contents were being kept from the eyes of the public (and even those who were voting on it), certain details were leaked.

The biggest controversy was "investor protection" clause, allowing corporations to sue governments for taking action to harm their business (Harten, 2016). For instance, should a corporation feel states' policy on environment protection is holding them at an unfair disadvantage they could be liable in court. While the first round of negotiations was unsuccessful, modified version of CETA is now temporarily valid since 2017. This could be a variation on shallow environmental movement when referring to positive aspects of trade deals: CETA agreement does not provide for significant convergence in the area of product regulation (technical, sanitary, product safety standards) between the EU and Canada. Consequently, the effects of a reduction or abolition of customs duties between the EU and Canada in trade in goods are simulated only (Jože P. Damijan, Črt Kostevc, 2015).

A phrase “Human Alienation” was introduced in the middle of the previous century. Industrial, or modern, era resulted in submission of nature to man and first clear signs of excessive use of nature. Current, postindustrial, or postmodern, era is characterized by dispersion of dualisms (man versus nature) and origins of egocentrism (Oršanič, 2013). Firstly, man is a product of nature; a man has come out of nature. Secondly, it has and still does depend on nature and its functioning, and thirdly, the state of nature is increasingly dependent on man (Schedl, 1997). Humanity is recognizing its place and its co-dependence with nature. While alienation is most commonly addressed in a sociological context, the topic here is nature and ecology. In this regard, alienation in Slovenia is really not that much of a problem. Granted, its citizens are a part of postmodern society that is largely part based on technology, there is however, still a cultural background of “escape into nature”. The reasons for it are a rather recent rise to tertiary and quaternary sectors of the economy, where non-urban and rural way of living is still not quite a thing of the past (in 2005, 51% of all inhabitants lived in urban areas, which is much less than Europe’s average of 72%) (SOER, 2018); as means of escape from the postmodern society or a temporal “change of scenery”; and last but not least, simply because Slovenia’s diverse and pristine nature offer innumerable way and opportunities for leisure time.

While alienation from nature does not seem to be much of a problem in Slovenia, sustainable development however, and especially climate change very well could be. There has been a recognized great potential for sustainable development, which can be used for a new development momentum by the strengthening of environmental, social and economic capital, moreover; in political rhetoric it is even considered the only way to go. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning is preparing a framework program for the transition to the green economy based on wealth of natural sources and high level of education and training of people.

An article Sustainable development is right up Slovenia’s street (Trajnostni razvoj je Sloveniji pisan na na kožo) on Delo newspaper’ is carefully optimistic: it labels capitalism as an obsolete system and politics being unable to follow the alternative. While there are other available options, they are not taught at the universities. Again, it stresses Slovenia’s position as a biodiversity hotspot of Europe with quite the opposite problems as the rest of the world, which struggles with the loss biotic diversity over climate change. Economic development should turn from ever-increasing use of raw materials, energy and building up space, especially with Slovenia being among twenty most privileged countries in the world in terms of natural capital, mostly due to water, forests, geographic diversity and possibility of using wide range of renewable sources. Self-sufficiency could be maintained by cleaning 10 percent of overgrown agricultural land, along with better development strategies (Tavčar, 2015).

Even though NGO’s published a vision of sustainable development of Slovenia and additional three years since the article was published, first signs of any major progress still remain to be seen.While Slovenia currently lacks an overarching climate strategy, the government has engaged in numerous policy areas with the goal of reducing the country’s climate impact. Slovenia’s emission pattern is markedly different from those of other Central and Eastern European EU Member States, in that it was the only one who had to make specific efforts to reach its Kyoto target. Slovenia’s mitigation efforts have focused particularly on renewable energy development and energy efficient buildings and appliances, though recently the transport sector has begun to receive more attention from policymakers (Lena Donat, Andrew Eberle, Eike Karola Velten, Matthias Duwe, 2014).

Climate change is not yet problematic in as a clearly visible impact on environment in Slovenia (this of course does not mean it is not affected by it), but rather as an attitude of passiveness and inability. It is difficult, of course, to lead a green policy when national deficit towers over the distribution of profits and green energy might not be as green as it seems at a first glance. Slovenia is nevertheless trying to walk abreast with countries with ever-higher percentages of renewable energy sources, with 22% of its energetic needs coming from RSE and striving to reach 25% by the 2020 (Inštitut Jožef Štefan, Statistični urad, 2015). Slovenia's diverse countryside provides opportunities to harvest water energy, but on the other hand, hinders the use of wind power with its specific requirements. Solar power is on the rise, helped by the government grants, but it will pose another problem in the future, with the disposal of worn out solar panels. There was quite an outcry among the Slovenian public, with the construction of another block to Šoštanj thermal power plant. While the project turned out to cost far more than anticipated, people were collectively against building another power plant running on coal. The most energy in Slovenia is generated by thermal power – 36%; followed by nuclear power 35%, hydroelectric power with 27% and lastly, a mere 1% by solar power. Overall, Slovenia still has a long way to go in its transfer to greener energy and taking its part against climate change.

The most noticeable and constant change has in last 40 years has been a rise of average temperature by 1,7°C. While precipitation, evaporation and solar radiation have been fluctuating, they have not been significantly deviating from the measurements taken in the past.

V. Conclusions

In the past, the reasons for the protection of plant and animal species have often been expressed as anthropocentric; species were protected in particular because of their direct utility. In the new nature protection systems, they have been upgraded with the awareness that each species with its unique and unrepeatable genetic fund, which has been shaped through millennia, is a unique and unrepeatable value and has the right to be conserved as a value in itself. Finally, it began as a reason for the protection of animals, and to a lesser extent plants, taking into account the awareness that the creatures of other species have equal rights to life and survival (Ferry, 1998). A man has a moral responsibility of respecting this right. In addition to the general protection of plant and animal species, which presupposes the basic standard of society's relation to plants and animals, meaning banning of extermination, threats or deliberate destruction without justifiable reasons, there is also a particular protection of plant and animal species. This protects mainly endangered and internationally protected species in order to maintain, improve or at least not worsen their status. These are defined by the IUCN Red Lists of Threatened Species. They are based on a unified method for determining the degree of threat to species. Red lists have been passed in 2002, but their beginnings go back the 1960s, being founded on works by an English scientist Peter Scott (The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, 2014).

While these two types of protection seem nominally separate, they are in fact, two sides of the same coin. There is a distinction between instrumental value and intrinsic value. The former is the value as means to further some ends, whereas the latter is the value of things as ends in themselves regardless of whether they are also useful as mean to other ends (Jamieson, 2002). For example, a plant may have instrumental value in its healing properties. However, if the plant also has some value in itself, independently of its prospects for furthering some other ends such as human health, or the pleasure from aesthetic experience, then the plant also has intrinsic value. Because the intrinsically valuable is that which is good as an end in itself, it is commonly agreed that something's possession of intrinsic value generates direct moral duty on the part of moral agents to protect it or at least refrain from damaging it (O'Neill, 1992).

While the issue of nature preservation is presented clearly and vocally in the public, people are still not treating it as an actual threat. The reason for that might be human indifference to events that are yet come to pass, disconnection or even unawareness of the problem, or even as a failure of environmentalist movement in relaying their message. Whatever the reason, humanity's efforts so far have not been sufficient, as it is clearly shown by the disappearance of marine life, rising water levels, lack of drinking water, destruction of biological habitats, extinction of animal species, extensive coral bleaching, not to mention the rise in global temperatures. Nature exploitation continues to happen in spite of overwhelming destruction; therefore, it must have its reasons. These reasons are at the moment they prevailing over nature preservation efforts, which is why they must be identified in order to determine next course of action taken by the nature conservationist and general public alike. There is a gap between the ecology and the industry and each side continues to follow their doctrine, with no hope of reconciling their separate objectives. Perhaps the time has come for the both of them to step out of their trenches and start cooperating. Ecological agenda of protection as well as constant industrial progress might very well be impossible to implement with nothing left to protect or no one left to make progress.

Although the national legislative framework on nature protection is very detailed and comprises all important European Directives, as well as ratified global Conventions, the actual implementation of Agenda 21 is very slow and we lag behind other EU members. Public interest in decisions regarding using natural resources is not a national priority. The level of public informing on these questions is poor, and the citizens and communities are kept aside. If not for some ecological groups, some controversial decisions about natural resources would have passed without people even knowing about them.

Although the Animal Protection Act is a progressive one, there are still some issues that are not perfect for animals, like those concerning breeding animals for production. It is widely known that such animals are fed mostly on artificial nutriments, given steroids, antibiotics and other substances to improve lactation and grow them bigger. This issue is important also because food produced this way can have negative impact on consumers' health. Consumers are usually not aware of what they eat, and they believe the producers, but they should know exactly where their food comes from. Consumers rights are still in the background, not taken seriously by consumers, or producers, or the Government.

The next problem is still existing corruption with judicial power leading. If we want laws to be respected we must ensure their implementation, particularly in the fields of illegal, harmful and corrupted activities. Without this there cannot be improvement in raising individual or collective responsibility. Corrupted behaviour of any kind is deeply incorporated in the mind-set. Values like integrity, honesty and trustworthiness are rarely discussed or formally taught, and **should be**!

Traditional values like traditional families and morality have been compromised with the rise of economic independence. Sexual liberties, common-law marriages, same-sex marriages are some of the categories which were condemning and contemptible here some 20 years ago. Conservative groups are on their knees. Denying the ratification of the Istanbul Convention is their last desperate attempt to recover the dignity of Life that once existed. Although their insistences interfere with some basic human rights, still, it is quite disturbing that the illusory freedom enabled by the democracy, leads to more moral decadency.

To sum up, the key problems would be the lack of formal education, non-transparency, slow implementation of sustainable development strategies and traditional values. There's a lack of strategic educational and informational activities concerning sustainable development. On formal level, there is still not a viable strategy of education on nature protection and sustainable development at schools. Education for sustainable development should start as early as pre-school, and should be obligatory. There is a prescribed school curriculum of the so-called Citizenship Education as a cross curricular subject but its implementation is poor and not evaluated. To raise responsible citizens, it is necessary to start from here. Today's students are future citizens and, hopefully, local, national or world leaders. If we want them to be responsible and make ethical decisions, we must educate them now for that…

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METHODS AND STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE CORRECT WRITING

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Abstract: *Writing is one of the fundamental acquisitions of any 1st grader. It represents the shift from the status of" illiterate" to" literate"; learning to write is the foundation of a child`s thinking thinking. It enhances the acquisition of knowledge, communication skills, writing being also an important aspect as writing is in close connection to reading. This study is an attempt to clarify certain issues related to the implementation of efficient methods used to develop correct writing skills, to the explanation of some methodological uncertainties starting with the communicative-functional model used in learning Romanian. The experiment focused on the manner the 1st graders enhance writing.*

Key words: *writing, methods, strategies, competence*

1.Stages in learning correct writing

1.1.The pre-literate stage. The pre-literate stage prepares pupils for writing. The contents and the capacities of this stage are: writing graphic elements practiced in preschool education aligned with the requirements of primary education; writing new graphic elements.

Before studying the training of the above-mentioned capabilities, we identified the left-handed pupils or those who only tend to write with the left hand. These children are allowed to write with their left hand, so that they develop freely and naturally, respecting their anatomic-morphological and psychic constitution[43]. Preparing pupils for writing involves the formation of the following correct skills: correct body posture in the desk and during writing; keeping the pencil and pen correctly in the hand; keeping the correct notebook and body position; executing the necessary movements for writing graphic elements and letters. The correct position in the desk used for writing activities requires: to stand straight, without leaning the chest on the desk; keeping a distance of 3-4 cm between the chest and the desk; high seat; straight back position with shoulders at the same height; the forearms on the desk, the right hand for writing, the left hand for support; the distance between the eyes and the book or notebook is about 30 cm; the light source comes from the left.

Explanation and demonstration were important in order for pupils to have the correct position in the desk. We warned pupils about the consequences of a wrong position in the desk – spine deformation. Correct position of the fingers and the pen: the pen should be held between the fingers: thumb, middle finger and pointer, light without tightening it. We explained tactfully, demonstrated them and corrected the pupils who do not hold the pen correctly. In order to keep the pen correctly, I prepared a variety of exercises to relax the small muscles of my hand: tightening and loosening fingers, moving fingers (plouă, ninge, stoarcem rufele, cântăm la pian", and singing the song „Ne jucăm, noi ne jucăm").
Notebook and body posture have to be constantly corrected.

In the pre-literate stage, pupils face different situations that are meant to prepare them for writing letters: drawing simple forms: tree, flowers, apple, mug, etc; drawing, writing graphic elements: ovals, semi ovals, sticks, hooks, etc..

[43] Anton Ilica, *Metodica limbii române*, Editura Universităţii „Aurel Vlaicu", Arad, 2005, p. 58.

The stages of a lesson in the pre-literate stage are:

- Intuition of graphic elements;
- Modelling the graphic element (wire, plasticine);
- Teacher`s model writing on the board;
- Writing in the air, on the board, in the palm (with the pen closed);
- Writing the graphic element on the board;
- Writing in the notebooks (three times);
- Checking writing;
- Going on with the writing;
- Drawing after the written graphic element;
- Writing graphic elements after dictation.

In practicing the writing of graphic elements, we take into account the age of young pupils who have just started kindergarten and get tired quickly, get bored, feel the need for movement, and therefore we should combine the writing of preparatory graphic elements with movement and play. In other words, pupils write by playing and play by writing. In this respect, they are encouraged to draw, for example, a "robot" using the graphic elements studied, to mold plasticine flowers (based on the graphic elements studied), to take part in the "most hard-working team" contest (cutting and gluing of graphic elements to complete a drawing). Knowing the particularities of the pre-literate period is essential because the way the objectives have been achieved influences the learning of writing as well as the reading during the literate period.

1.2. The literate period. The literate period extends until the end of the 1st grade. It is a fundamental stage in learning writing because now is the time when pupils learn how to write letters, words and sentences. Learning writing and reading at this stage is conducted through special activities based on the textbook, using the following didactic moments:

- teaching sounds and corresponding letters, reading words;
- reading sentences and whole texts;
- writing letters, words, sentences;
- linking the entire reading and writing activity to speech development activities[44]

The contents and the aimed capacities in the literate period are the following:

- letter intuition and writing;
- integrating letters into word;
- writing the alphabet;
- writing words and sentences.

Learning writing is a more complicated process than reading because „writing requires besides knowledge of letters, phonetics and complex combinations of phonetic and graphic elements also their graphic, correctly and easily handwritten reproduction”.[45]

Based on these needs sprung from learning writing:

- the pupil is careful when associating the sound with the corresponding letter and marks correctly the elements and the letters;
- the pupil pauses when writing letters, the connections between them, raises the pen and makes discontinuous movements;
- the pupil writes unevenly, with tilting and different font sizes;

[44] Anton Ilica (coord), *Didactica învăţării limbii române şi a lecturii în învăţământul primar*, Editura Universităţii “Aurel Vlaicu”, Arad, 2007, p.94.
[45] *Ibidem*, p.96.

- the pupil writes slowly, with many useless movements.

Correct notebook position, appropriate use of the pen, proper coordination of hand movement, the association of sounds with the letter or the group of letters in writing letters or groups of letters are very important in the enhancement of correct writing.

Writing activities should be correlated with reading activities to engage pupils in the activity, to prevent boredom and monotony in the learning process.

The stages of a reading and writing integrated lesson were:

Lesson I

- selecting sentences;
- sentence analysis (words, syllables, sounds);
- pronunciations of the new sound;
- examples of words with the new sound;
- presenting the capital letter on various supports;
- intuition of the illustration;
- reading groups of words;
- intuition of the handwritten letter;
- writing the handwritten letter in the notebook:
  - model writing the letter on the board and explaining every hand movement,
  - pupils write the letter on the board,
  - writing the letter in the air, on the desk, in the palm (with the pen closed),
  - writing preparatory exercises (hand muscles warm up),
  - writing the letter 3-4 times,
  - checking the written letters,
  - going on with writing letters.

Writing words

Lesson II

- Reading the text;
- Copying exercises, transcription of sentences;
- Speech development exercises;
- dictation.

The teacher`s role is extremely important in teaching writing. Besides guiding the pupils in learning how to write letters, words and sentences, teachers also have to correct their writing mistakes as they occur to prevent bad writing habits.

1.3. The post-literate stage. The post-literate stage takes place throughout the 2nd grade. During this stage, pupils practice the writing skills acquired in the literate stage at a higher level of complexity. In the post-literate stage, pupils work at text level. Such activities involve decoding the text, understanding its content, text reception, practicing speech acts. As the curriculum for the post-literate stage does not allocate special classes for writing, pupils can be trained to develop their writing skills during reading classes (according to interdisciplinary vision): „It would be good if during reading and writing lessons in the post-literate period, teachers alternated writing with reading to create a balance between one activity and the other”[46].

[46] Ioan Șerdean, *Didactica limbii şi literaturii române în şcoala primară,* Editura Aramis, Bucureşti, 2002, p.129.

We want to highlight the contents and capacities specific to this stage:

- copying handwritten small and capital letters;
- copying words and sentences;
- transcription of letters and words;
- transcription of poems and parts of texts;
- dictation;
- auto-dictation.

In the post-literate stage, writing involves some specific elements: keeping the correct position at the writing table; keeping the pen and notebook correctly; transcribing texts, writing the letters, words, sentences correctly; writing by dictation: words, sentences, short texts; the auto-dictation of learnt poems; the creation of words and sentences by pupils, the auditory control of words by whispering the terms the pupils write. Through these exercises, pupils begin to automate their writing. The right writing skills are acquired through copying, transcribing, dictation exercises. Pupils can be stimulated during the post-literate stage to solve writing exercises such as copying an idea, writing the answer to a question, deciphering crosswords, transforming direct speech into indirect speech. Also, in the writing process, it is intended to observe the correct spelling and punctuation rules. Writing during the post-literate stage is done on Type II notebooks and various texts are used in lexical, orthographic and punctuation, using continuous writing by copying, transcription, dictation.

1.4. Improving the process of writing is closely related to the following types of writing: copying, transcribing, dictating, self-reading, homework writing. Copying, transcription and dictation are exercises that underlie the correct writing skills.

Copying is the imitation of writing a hand model. Before copying, pupils are reminded of the correct writing position and attention is drawn to compliance with graphic rules. The initial form of copying is a mechanical one, the pupils copy mechanically, "drawing the letters"; trying to write as beautiful as possible, they literally copy the text. From mechanical form, copying evolves to self-dictation. Children read the words and then dictate them. In copying conditions, due to the reduced number of handwritten texts in the textbook, teachers use handwritten boards or can write the forms on the blackboard. Copying ends with self-checking by re-reading each word and making the necessary corrections.

Transcription is the handwriting of a written text in print letters. Transcription is a more complex process than copying. Transcribing does not mean to imitate, but involves reading the word, memorizing it, and converting it into handwriting. Transcription involves: reading and understanding the word, phonetic analysis, composing words and sentences from the letters of the alphabet, checking the order of words and syllables. The quality of transcription is to be understood in terms of: graphic and aesthetic aspect, spelling, rhythm and timing, writing speed. Verification of transcription is done by reading it aloud and comparing the handwriting with printed text. Transcription exercises contribute to the formation of a reading field of at least one word, the formation of correct writing, the accentuation of the consciousness of reading and writing.

Writing homework is an exercise meant to practice writing at home, individually without being under the teacher`s incidence. The 1st graders should not be burdened with homework precisely because they need teacher guidance as much as possible and must strive for individual work without being “pushed from behind”.

A more complex exercise than transcription and copying, ***dictation*** involves writing without a model (handwritten or printed) Thus, pupils will have to link the auditory image of sounds, words, sentences and texts to the graphic image. Dictation involves: listening, memorizing, understanding, writing and repetition. Dictation exercises can be of two types[47]: dictation with prior explanations to prevent mistakes; dictation without prior explanation (control). The following will be dictated: letters, syllables, words and sentences. Dictation implies a clear, correct pronunciation by the teacher in a suitable rhythm with proper intonation and the exclusion of jamming elements (steps, noise, music, etc.).

The stages of dictation:

- reading of what is going to be dictated;
- repletion with the purpose of memorizing;
- re-reading/dictation according to logical units;
- writing by the pupils;
- self-assessment by checking correct spelling
- teacher`s assessment;
- teacher`s remarks (grading).

Self-dictation demands the pupil`s full attention, who does not see or hear the text as when performing copying, transcription or dictation, but must dictate him/herself out of memory. Due to its complexity, self-dictation is rarely used in the 1st grade and more in the following years, especially as a result of memorizing poems or a piece of prose.

2. Research methodology

2.1. The objectives of experimental research

We want to present a synthesis of writing in the 1st grade because writing is an essential activity for 1st grade pupils and for any individual. There is a interdependent relationship between writing and reading as learning a letter is anticipated by learning the corresponding sound, and writing the letters involves reinforcement of that sound, helping the student to distinguish it better during reading. In learning writing, the phonetic method, the analytical-synthetic method has positive effects just like the global method, by selecting and using the educational means that play a role in the ascending evolution of learning writing and the use of improvement measures for a quick and efficient acquisition of writing with minimal effort.

Conducting the experiment

We have started from the following hypothesis in our experiment:

Work hypothesis: If writing is one of the most important acquisitions of a first grade children, then the teacher`s constant concern should be directed towards identifying the most appropriate strategies for learning writing. Pupils may experience various learning difficulties. Then the teacher identifies and adopts the appropriate measures to overcome them; The more independent learning activities, the methods and the techniques are, the more and more effective writing becomes.

The research objectives are: O1- to adopt the correct writing posture; O2- to hold the pen correctly in their hands; O3- to write letters, syllables, words and sentences correctly; O4- to copy correctly words and sentences; O5- to transcribe correctly words and sentences; O6- to write correctly letters, words and sentences after dictation; O8- to write correct sentences with the given words; O9- to put the words in the correct order to form sentences.

The experiment was applied throughout the 1st and 2nd semester (September to March) and consisted of the following stages:

- **stage I: initial evaluation** (information on the skills and abilities that children have when coming to te kindergarten, their family background) – 2 weeks;

[47] Ibidem, p.184.

- **stage II: conducting the experiment** (using different methods and techniques to teach correct and efficient writing) - 5 months;
- **stage III: final evaluation** (pupils` final results);
- **stage IV: processing data** (result analysis, comparison between the results of experimental and control class) - 2 weeks.

The place where the experiment took place was Primary School.

The sample consisted of 40 1st graders with ages between 6-7, 20 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group.

The content sample is represented by the requirements of learning writing in the 1st grade, the reference point being the school curriculum for the Romanian language.

Initial evaluation (20.09-1.10). In order to acquire a correct and effective writing, we started from assessing the capacities and skills with which children come into from the kindergarten. Initial assessment has a major role in learning writing, because in this way we are aware of the pupil`s level of training.

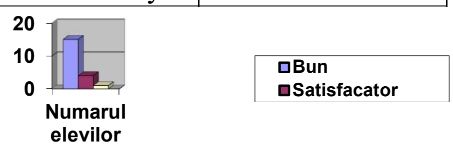
After the initial evaluation that was made using conversation, systematic observation and writing, we found out the following:

The results above are highlighted in the following charts:

:

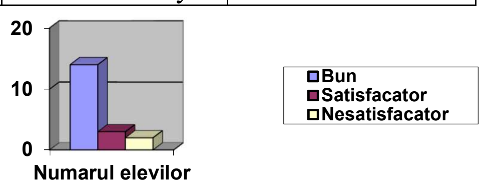
Initial evaluation. Experimental group

No	Results	No of pupils
1.	Good	15
2.	Satisfactory	4
3.	Unsatisfactory	1



Initial evaluation. Control group

No	Results	No of pupils
1.	Good	14
2.	Satisfactory	3
3.	Unsatisfactory	3



The results of the initial evaluation revealed by the above table highlight the importance of the kindergarten. From the experimental class, 5 pupils did not attend the kindergarten at all, which was also revealed by the results of the initial evaluation, and in the control class 7 pupils had fluctuating frequency.

Applying the experiment

After the initial evaluation, we have conducted the experiment throughout the pre-literate stage (acquiring graphic elements that prepare writing) and a part from the literate stage (learning to write letters, binding letters into words and then sentences).

The experiment consists of two stages:

-1st stage (typical for the pre-literate stage) aimed the acquisition of writing preparatory graphic elements;

-2nd stage (typical for a part of the literate stage) aimed the learning of correct writing of letters, words, sentences.

Stage I . The starting point of this stage are the results of the initial evaluation. As a consequence of not having the correct position when writing (eyes too close to the notebook), the incorrect holding of the pen (grasping it with the whole hand), the inability to orientate in the notebook space with most pupils (they did not attend kindergarten regularly or not at all), the first step of the experiment refers to the learning of the above-mentioned aspects. In this respect, we used methods such as: explanation, demonstration, exercise-game, conversation, observation, and as materials: pen, colored pencils, cartoons, type I notebooks, drawing sheets, worksheets, whiteboard, chalk, etc. These elements continue to be practiced during the second period of the experiment, which, in addition to the above mentioned elements, was aimed at acquiring the correct writing of the graphic elements that prepare pupil to write letters (the oblique line on one and two spaces, the baton, the loop, the hook, the oval, the node), sticking to the lines of the notebook.

We used methods such as: explanation, demonstration, exercise, conversation, observation, modeling, and materials like: type I notebooks, pencils colored pen, pen, cartoons, drawing sheets, plasticine, watercolors, coated paper, scissors, glue, wire to teach pupils correct and clean writing of preparatory elements. Students have been assigned not only to write preparatory graphics, but also to model, cut, paste, draw.

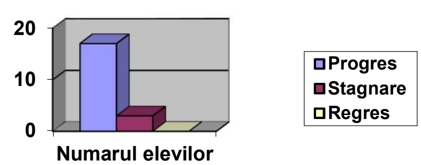
Stage I ended with an evaluation which aimed the correct body position, correctness in holding the pen, the ability to write within the copybook limits, correct repetition of graphic elements, correct writing of graphic elements after dictation. The results can be highlighted as follows:

Experimental class

The final evaluation results from the 1st stage are highlighted by the following charts:

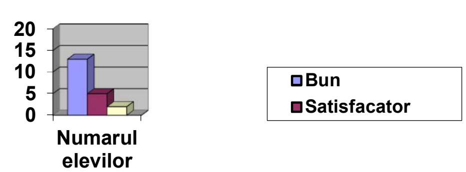
Final evaluation results – stage II

No	Results	No of pupils
1.	Progress	17
2.	Stagnation	3
3.	Regression	0



Control class

No	Results	No of pupils
1.	Progress	14
2.	Stagnation	3
3.	Regression	2



The evaluation system referred to the following descriptors:

VG – correct writing of graphic elements in the copybook by repetition and dictation;

G – correct writing of graphic elements within the limits of the copybook with errors at writing after dictation;

S – some errors in terms of writing within the copybook limits and errors at repetition and writing graphic elements after dictation.

2nd stage involves a part of the literate stage and aimed to learn writing letters, words, sentences. We have identified some substages in learning how to write letters words and sentence. We grouped letters into 4-5 groups of letters and ended this stage with an evaluation.

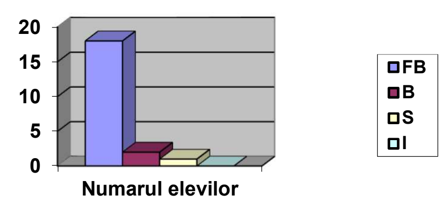
Substages: I- letters from **a** to **U**;
II- letters from **i** to **O**;
III-letters from **c** to **L**;
IV-letters from the group **ce** to letter **S;**
V- letters from **p** to group **Ci;**
VI – letters from **d** to **â**;
VII-letters from **b** to group **Ge**.

The evaluation tests at the end of each sub-stage followed the correct reproduction capacity of a letter according to the given model, with correct alignment in the spaces and the line of the notebook; copying, transcribing words and sentences, writing the words and sentences after the dictation. Representative in this sense are the evaluation tests at the end of the learning units **Cu alai de frunze moarte** and **Ca un roi de fluturi albi.**

Unit: **Cu alai de frunze moarte**

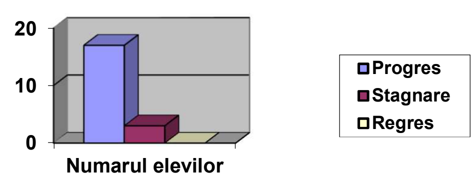
Experimental class

No	**Final score**	**No of pupils**
1.	VG	18
2.	G	2
3.	S	1
4.	I	0



Control class

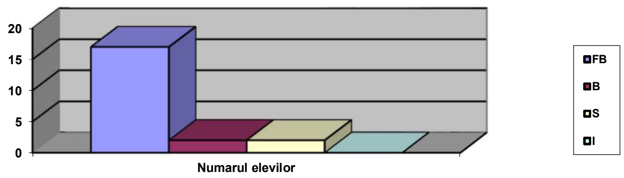
No	**Results**	**No of pupils**
1.	Progress	17
2.	Stagnation	3
3.	Regression	0



Unit**:** *Ca un roi de fluturi albi*

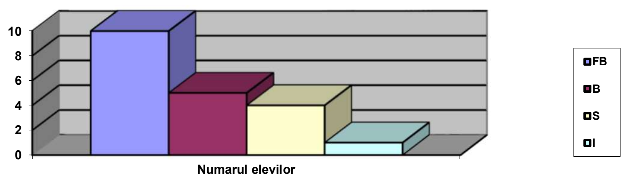
Statistics based on final scores
Experimental class

No	**Final score**	**No of pupils**
1.	FB	16
2.	B	2
3.	S	2
4.	I	0



Control class

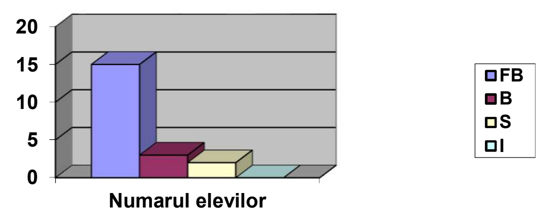
No	Final score	No of pupils
1.	VG	10
2.	G	5
3.	S	4
4.	I	1



Unit: *Şcolărei şi şcolăriţe*

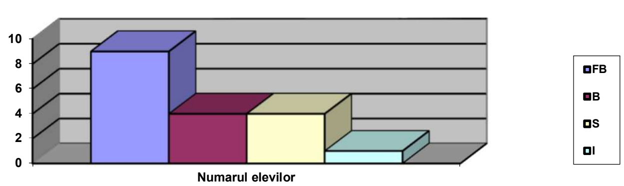
Experimental class
Statistics after final evaluation

No	Final score	No of pupils
1.	VG	15
2.	G	3
3.	S	2
4.	I	0



Control class

No	Final score	No of pupils
1.	FB	9
2.	B	4
3.	S	4
4.	I	1



Thus, at the unit, **Au ruginit frunzele** we used as teaching methods: phonetic method, analytic-synthetic, explanation, demonstration, conversation, exercise-game, problematization, modeling with emphasis on the phonetic method, analytic-synthetic; and as materials: special notebook, type I notebook, large alphabet, letters, alphabet, chips, pictures, pen, cards, worksheets; the main place being occupied by the alphabet.
At the learning unit, **Ca un roi de fluturi albi** the methods used were: phonetic method, analytic-syntactic method, global method, explanation, demonstration, exercise, conversation, modeling, problem-solving; the focus being on the global method. The materials were the same with emphasis on the large alphabet.

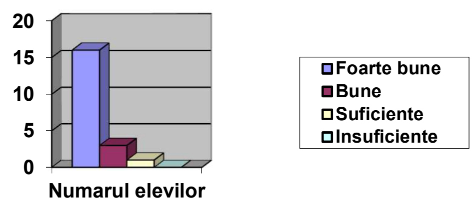
At the unit **Vine, vine primăvara,** the emphasis we placed on the phonetic, analytical and synthetic method as well as on the global one, and as materials we used a variety of charts (the association of word and image or sentence and image, ordering words in a sentence, associating handwriting with the typed form and vice versa, filling the blanks, writing sentences based on images or using given words) adapted to the students' abilities. Thus, the better students received evaluation sheets according to their level, and the weaker ones received worksheets adapted to their maximum level.

III.4. Analysis and interpretation of experiment data

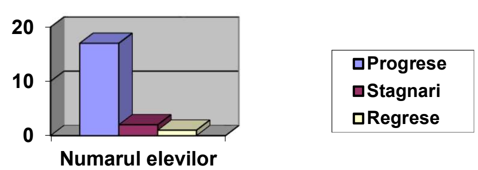
We observe the following after carefully analysing the pupils` scores:

Experimental class

No	Results	No of pupils
1.	Very good	16
2.	Good	3
3.	Sufficient	1
4	Insufficient	0



No	Evolution	No of pupils
1.	Progress	17
2.	Stagnation	3
3.	Regression	0

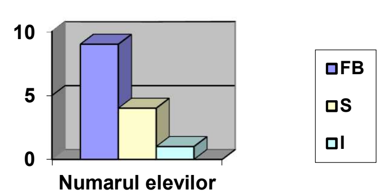


- We observe that there are 16 pupils with very good results; 3 pupils with good results; 1 pupil with weak (sufficient) results; 17 pupils with progress,0 pupils with regression and 3 pupils with stagnation.

The results of the control class are as follows:

Final statistics– control class

No	Scores	No of pupils
1.	VG	8
2.	G	4
3.	S	5
4.	I	3



No	Evolution	No of pupils
1.	Progress	12

2.	Stagnation	5
3.	Regression	3

We notice that the results are weaker than the ones scored by the experimental class. The reasons for this difference are: the passive family background of most pupils, poor school attendance, impossibility to obtain all required materials, individual alphabetizer, pen, notebooks (major financial shortcomings).

III.5. Conclusions

The experiment, its results and the possibility of comparing them induces us the idea that learning to write implies a continuous search of methods and their adaptation to our educational needs. In learning writing, the concerns should aim the children`s progress. Therefore, we had to assess constantly the children`s progress and diagnose the level reached by pupils in order to make effective corrections and improvements. Students can be enrolled at the age of six without any risk of "sacrificing" their childhood, but writing is an extremely complex skill that is easy to learn if well motivated. Under the conditions of this competition between handwriting and computerized writing, a certain retention of calligraphic writing is not excluded. The quality of being aesthetic and correct provides writing with a new quality, literacy. Writing is the prerequisite for making progress on the path of knowledge (the accumulation of new information), again coming in direct relationship with reading. Due to the obvious importance of writing, a careful analysis of the writing process is required.

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