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## TEACHERS' TRAINING FOR THE NEW ROLES IN TEACHING

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**Abstract:** *Modern changes in school, especially student-oriented instruction, require teachers to play a new role in the teaching process. In order to respond to new teaching challenges, a teacher needs to have various competencies. The aim of the conducted research was to determine teacher's attitudes and opinions about the importance of their new roles and competences for the successful realization of teaching process. The survey was conducted on a sample of 566 teachers both class teachers and subject teachers in Serbia. The Likert's sum scale was applied in the survey. The data were processed using descriptive statistical procedures. The results of the survey show that new roles for which appropriate competencies should be acquired are as follows: planner-programmer, organizational-managerial, motivational, pedagogical-instructive and advisory, evaluation and research. The obtained results can represent a rewarding basis for the creators of educational policies in modeling a quality school and effective teaching that would lead each student to success according to his individual abilities.*

**Key words:** *teachers' attitudes; teachers' competences; teachers' role; teaching process; students.*

### Introduction

In order to accept the new roles that the teaching brings to a student, a teacher needs to have variety of different competences. Under the term of competence, M. Danilović includes a set of knowledge, skills and values, i.e. competences, empowerment, teachers' qualifications for quality performance of their profession (Danilović, 2010). He thinks that the teachers' competence is not only sufficient abilities and knowledge, but also skills and values are necessary. D. Branković believes that the professional competence of teachers has a complex three-dimensional structure and includes:

a) possessing professional, pedagogical-psychological and didactic-methodical knowledge,  
b) practical skills in working with students and teaching process and  
c) positive opinions and beliefs about students and educational process (Branković, 2010). It is obvious that Branković's definition includes the basic elements of the definition of M. Danilović, but it is far more specific and more direct to the teacher's work. Branković says with a reason that the definition of teacher's competences is determined by the new roles of teachers, which in particular refers to the reorientation of the teaching process to the learning process and self-learning. Competency approach is characteristic of personal and operational aspects; he has practical, pragmatic and humanistic orientation. The practical orientation of the competency approach is emphasized in the Council of Europe materials, which emphasize that for the result of education, it is important to know not only what but also how to act (Hutmacher, 1997). This means that a competency approach requires the practical orientation of education and a pragmatic subject-professional approach.

There are several important conditions that determine success in teaching, among which are the quality of teaching personnel, motivation of employees, media-technical equipment of the school, adaptation of curricula, composition of students, quality of teaching process,

practical skills of students, and others. A key requirement for a successful teaching process is the teacher. Therefore, teachers are expected to be competent in the appropriate profession, capable of teaching activity, capable of assessing the essential characteristic of students, capable of establishing stimulus working relationships with students, with internal and external environment, they should have a research approach (Nikolic, 2015: 11). The new role of teachers in student-oriented teaching requires appropriate competencies for the realization of teaching process. The roles are as follows: (1) planner-programmer, (2) organizing-managerial, (3) motivational, (4) advisory-instructive, (5) evaluation and (6) investigator.

### Methodology

The aim of the research was to determine the teachers' attitudes and opinions about the significance of their comments and the roles necessary for the work in the teaching process. The sample of research was 566 teachers from Serbia. In the research, a questionnaire was about the teachers' attitudes and opinions about their competences for the work in the teaching process made on the Likert scale. Answers on the five-step scale are expressed in the range from *very agree* to *very disagree*. On the basis of the obtained results, distribution of the answers of all teachers included in the sample survey was determined. The data were processed by using the SPSS statistical program.

### Results of research and interpretation

The concept of quality school and student-oriented teaching requires competent teachers to realize old and new roles. In coordination with the theoretical basis of the qualitative school concept, the respondents voted on the list of required competences that teachers would have in such school.

Table 1. New roles and competencies of teachers

	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Ability to realize the planning-programming role (annual thematic, monthly operational and daily planning and programming).	566	1	5	3.82	1.321
Ability to realize the organizational role (organization and management of teaching work).	566	1	5	3.81	1.307
Ability to realize a motivating role (stimulate and leading students to success).	566	1	5	3.84	1.328
Ability to realize an advisory and pedagogical-instructive role (knowledge of effective strategies and techniques of referral, counseling and guidance for students).	566	1	5	<b>3.86</b>	1.240
Ability to realize the evaluator's role (strategy of continuous evaluation of all values, not only knowledge, perception of subjective and objective possibilities, daily access into results).	566	1	5	3.80	1.179
Ability to realize a research role (action research).	566	1	5	3.77	1.101



Insight into Table 1:

*New roles and competencies of teachers*, it can be concluded that teachers have differently assessed the importance of their professional competencies. In their opinion, the most important role in teaching process is *pedagogical, instructive and advisory role of teacher* ( $M = 3.86$  and  $SD = 1.240$ ), because a quality school requires students who have to acquire the necessary knowledge and other positive values, in the active and investigative way, where the mentioned roles have the strong support from the respondents. *Motivation role* within the teachers' overall competencies for their realization is also highly assessed by respondents ( $M = 3.84$  and  $SD = 1.328$ ). Students should be motivated, interested in learning, teachers have to encourage them to learn by grades and positive comments. It is important that the comments express confidence regarding the student's possibilities.

This shows that their work and progress are being monitored. When a teacher succeeds in developing curiosity among students, students will learn with interest and pleasure, and in these situations teachers successfully exploit a motivational role.

*The planner-programmatic role* of the abilities involves mastering of the procedures and planning models, the annual thematic, monthly operational, weekly and of course the planning of teaching units which has been highly ranked ( $M = 3.82$  and  $SD = 1.321$ ). With such masterfulness, the teacher ensures emotional security in the classroom, teaching becomes predictable and thus reduces teacher's inconvenience, reinforces his confidence and planning becomes the basis for reflection and assessment of learning outcomes. *The organizational-leadership role* for which it is necessary to acquire the appropriate competences is also highly ranked by teachers ( $M = 3.81$  and  $SD = 1.307$ ). This teacher's role implies the organization of students' independent activities in knowledge and other values acquiring. This role requires new competencies of the teaching process organization, guiding students in independent acquisition of knowledge and realization of established goals of teaching.

*Evaluating role of teachers* in the teaching process is one of the more important one, the key role, for which realization teachers in a quality school have to acquire appropriate competences ( $M = 3.80$  and  $SD = 1.179$ ). This competence is slightly behind the others. Evaluation does not follow every step of student activity. One of the main reasons why the school is not based on systemic basics is the fact that the evaluation does not provide continuous feedback on the students' progress in the teaching process. *The research role of teachers*, in their opinion, is at an enviable level ( $M = 3.77$  and  $SD = 1.101$ ). A quality teacher in the teaching process should highlight ways of modern teaching work, combining the application of effective teaching methods, modern education technology and various forms of teaching. It should also interfere between sources of knowledge and students and it has to plan appropriate changes in teaching process as well as to organize learning which goal is to train learners for self-studying.

## Conclusion

The teaching process requires a high-quality work where students are able to show and develop their abilities, where their creativity will become apparent and where students participate in the teaching process. In order to fulfill his role, a teacher has to have the appropriate competencies. During the research on teachers' attitudes and opinions about the competencies and their roles that are necessary for quality work in teaching process, we have achieved significant results. The respondents answered that the most important teachers' ability is to implement an advisory and pedagogical-instructive role and they gave priority to effective strategies and techniques of counseling and guidance of students. The motivational teachers' role that means encouraging and leading students to success is on the second place.

Respondents think that the very important teachers' role is teaching process planning. On the fourth place they have identified the ability to realize the organizational role in the teaching work. The importance is given to the teachers' abilities of evaluation roles as well as the application of appropriate strategies in the realization of the research role.

It can be concluded that the teachers evaluate differently the importance of their professional competences, but also that the difference is not significant. In their opinion, teachers have to be trained for an advisory and pedagogical instructional role in teaching, and then for the realization and implementation of motivational roles, planning-programming roles, organizational roles, evaluation roles and research roles. The research, therefore, showed that teachers are aware that their roles in contemporary teaching have changed and require new competencies. They prefer the advisory role in this research rather than lecturing, flexible and thematic planning rather than mechanical, internal motivation (curiosity, level of aspiration and motivation for achievement) in relation to the external, managing the teaching process in relation to student management, formative (developing) evaluation in relation to stage evaluation, didactic action in relation to didactic decision making, etc.

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## TIME, SPACE AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** *Outdoor education has become more than a modern type of education, it has become a useful tool that teachers all around the world's educational systems can use on a daily basis. Every day, all around the world, teachers use it in order to develop different competencies, to achieve different educational goals, to complete the traditional methods and also to achieve a healthier educational lifestyle. No matter which is the main educational purpose of outdoor learning, it is important to be used at a weekly basis, in order to achieve the preselected educational purposes. There have been discussions about how outdoor education can be used at its most efficient rate, and regarding to these questions, came this article, that follows the lead of three most basic elements that can create the perfect outdoor education activity at any level: time, space and resource management. The following article, presents a brief theoretical approach to the elements presented above, and how can teachers use them in the most efficient ways.*

**Key words:** *outdoor education; time management; resources; space; efficient;*

### Introduction

From an etymological point of view, outdoor education refers to an organized learning situation, which takes place in the external environment. Activities in outdoor education can often involve travel-based experiences in the immediate environment, by participating in a variety of outdoor adventures and activities, such as hiking, climbing, boating, rope racing or group games. Therefore, outdoor education is based on the philosophy, theory and practices of experiential education.

Outdoor education is a concept that takes into account an entire education program based on experience and practical activity, which takes place outside the classroom, in the natural environment. It is based on the theory, philosophy and practice of experiential education, ecological education and environmental education. It helps people to understand themselves better, to perceive the surrounding world more correctly and, above all, and to gain a better knowledge of the people around them. It is considered a modern learning strategy having strong educational effects having the benefits of developing the innovative spirit, leadership, communication and other aspects of modern life.

The concept of outdoor education draws attention to an education based on experience and practical activities that take place outside of the classroom, and which are aimed at understanding the self, those around and the surrounding world. It is a relatively new type of education, producing long-term effects in terms of mastering complex learning situations and especially developing skills needed for modern life: innovation, leadership, team spirit, communication, autonomy and creativity. In our country, outdoor education belongs to the branch of non-formal education through extra-curricular activities organized outside the school environment, but it is also used in formal education as a learning strategy or as a new type of education. (Șerban, 2014)

### Theoretical foundation

Outdoor education does not achieve its objectives unless it is achieved in a well-defined space and time. There are certain activities that are typical of the internal environment, and some that can be achieved only by using resources from the external environment. None of these aspects should be forced, but a balance must be found in carrying out educational activities so that they reach their maximum efficiency. Outdoor education does not involve performing all the learning activities in the external environment, but only for those that have more benefits if they are carried out abroad.

The interior environment, as well as the external environment, must be seen as a single space, half being represented by the internal environment and half by the external environment, together forming a whole. The problem often arises when the internal environment is given a bigger role, the latter being responsible for hosting all educational activities, and the external one is intended solely for play or recreation. Outdoor education provides learning through the advantage it offers, and should be considered a plus in educational systems.

Specialists who plan educational activities should consider the two spaces as being linked, not as separate spaces, and especially to allow educators to move from place to place, through interchange, using resources and equipment in function of the needs of each student. (Lasenby, 1990)

## **Direction and causes of the problem**

### ***The role of space in carrying out outdoor activities***

Outdoor education, through the various environments in which it operates, offers major educational and recreational benefits, contributing to the harmonious development of the human being. Many believe that the only place where outdoor activities can take place is nature. It offers the most diverse range of materials and natural resources, which are available to everyone, but in addition to the natural environment, outdoor education also uses other outdoor environments, which are as varied and abundant in terms of educational resources offered.

The simplest and most handy form of outdoor education can take place in the school space, on the school grounds or in the school yard. As a rule, teachers claim that they do not have the time or resources to move very far from the school in which they operate. The land or the school yard is the best option in this regard. This is due to the fact that the two spaces are very close in distance and moving different materials from one environment to another can be easily achieved. Also, no special requests should be written to the School Inspectorate or different sheets signed by the parents through which the teacher asks to leave the institution. The disadvantage would be that there is not a great variety of natural resources or equipment specific to outdoor education that could be used in this regard.

Another environment for outdoor education activities may be the village or city space. The two environments offer a wide range of educational resources that can be easily used in outdoor education activities. They are also a good way to make students aware of the space in which they develop socially. The activities related to the outdoor education carried out in the urban or rural space represent bridges between the school institution and the society. The members of the society can observe the efforts of the teachers to get actively involved in the social life, and thus to be involved in the education of the children. Holistic learning is also an advantage of choosing urban or rural space, as a wide variety of disciplines can be combined through this approach. You can use map and compass orientation activities, you can use different buildings to study history, art or architecture, and you can study geography by using maps and comparing them with the different elements that are found on the spot. One can easily study mathematics, arithmetic and geometry, comparing the different geometric forms that are identified in the socio-cultural environment. The new educations find their place in the space of the city or the village, because through the varied resources they offer, one can easily study nutritional education and health education. Nutrition education as well as the different

disciplines that are based on the health of the students, have become fundamental in the present century, because the problem of obesity and stress in children has become more and more significant.

Also the problem of healthy eating as well as different food groups, the nutritional values of the products are curiosities that appear in children with growing age. Students show a high interest in the different diets that would lead to optimal weight and a healthier lifestyle. Certain advertisements seen on TV or on the Internet raise more and more question marks about different food supplements and where they can be found. To this end, visits to pharmacies or naturalistic stores, to medical offices or to nutritionists, may be proposed to explain the uncertainties. There are areas in which the problem of drinking water must be studied in school-age students, because it can represent an interdisciplinary study material. The city or village has a lot to offer in this regard. We propose in this chapter the elaboration and materialization of the numerous activities that support the educational outputs and the use of as many of the places and the instrumental resources offered by the local community. Through education the individual is prepared in the sense of being viable also for the social life, making great contributions in this direction.

The outdoor environment, or the place where the outdoor activities take place, must be organized and chosen in such a way that it is efficient in its use. In this regard, it is proposed to go through some practical ideas, because in organizing the activities related to outdoor education, difficulties may arise in the sense of finding a suitable place. This depends on factors such as: number of participating children, size of available areas, weather conditions, lack of equipment or selection of the appropriate ones from existing ones, choosing natural materials or promoting some of them, establishing contexts or frames in which they will take place. Outdoor education can take place in multiple spaces, from school grounds to historical sites, from villages to cities, in local or national parks, residential experiences in the city or hometown, but also expeditions to other countries, providing a wealth of resources, educational resources waiting to be discovered. Each outdoor learning opportunity gives children and young people the chance to explore new places and share these experiences. Educators can show creativity in the use of local areas, which were not included in the plan made by the teachers.

According to the Scotland's curriculum for excellence in outdoor learning, developed in 2010, there are some questions that help those planning such activities to make the right decision about choosing the most suitable place for learning. These are the following:

- What experiences and goals do the schools address?
- Who can offer guidance on the places available locally and nationally?
- What are the places frequented by other schools or centers?
- What are those places that can be accessed on foot, so that outdoor learning experiences are sustainable and systematic?
- Are the proposed learning contexts motivating enough for the students involved?
- What are the spaces that can be used several times to add essence to the learning process?
- What are the right places to visit in different seasons to reach different ends? (Curriculum for excellence through outdoor learning, 2010)

There are significant benefits to using the school or school grounds for learning. Usually these areas represent the first outdoor space that connects the school as a building and the outdoor area, providing quick access to planned or spontaneous activities, the connection between outdoor and indoor activities being facilitated and immediate. Becoming familiar with the concept of qualitative learning in school through outdoor education means offering opportunities to develop skills and confidence, which will allow the use of outdoor spaces in the future. Children and young people can develop a closer relationship with the school environment they belong to, both during breaks, with breaks, and during hours, by participating

in outdoor activities, without being interrupted. This is important, because the sooner you become familiar with the learning environment they belong to, the more educational experiences will be more effective. Students see the school grounds and courtyards as their own development space, and by using them they are offered opportunities to be administrators of their own learning environment. Although, in most cases, the school grounds were intended for physical education or sports, even breaks between hours, they can be adapted to other uses as well. In the Scandinavian countries, the design of these spaces is done together with the students, starting from their needs and desires, being consulted in this regard, even for the smallest details.

### ***The complexity of the resources used during the activities related to outdoor education***

The most difficult step in forming an educational routine that includes activities related to outdoor education is often the first step, namely the exit from the classroom. The initial planning and preparation very well done, can ease this process. There are some practical recommendations for making the preparation process as efficient as possible:

- Students should have on them all year long clothes and shoes for outdoor activities (made of waterproof but lightweight materials that allow free movement), these being stored on the school premises, always at hand.

- Teachers should initiate short outdoor sessions before lunch breaks, before leaving the students at home or in the morning upon their arrival, thus saving time by using fractions of activities, whether they are even spontaneous, thus accustoming students with spatial diversity and openness, compared to the variety of ways of carrying out educational activities

- Students have prepared a kit with easily accessible outdoor resources, being always prepared for short outings, even if it is decided to follow a spontaneous outdoor activity

- Conducting an assessment of the risk / benefit ratio together with the students of the class who will participate in outdoor activities, thus the informed and involved participants will be able to make better decisions regarding the risk management mode.

- Making some plans for a series of outdoor activities that are directly linked to the work done in the classroom with the participation of the students involved, initially keeping these activities short and simple so that the students get used to the gradual and easy work with the outside

- Outdoor activities for beginners will be represented by different socializing or acquaintance games, carried out in nature, and then, after the students get used to the new environment, they will be followed by learning activities (Outdoor Learning Support, 2011)

Outdoor education increases the value of the equipment and tools used during the related activities, and transforms them into didactic means, they serve a well-defined educational purpose and motivate the attainment of proposed aims.

When preparing the activities, a good leader must foresee the entire course of the moments from which the learning process is formed. The curricular content pursued, the objectives, the aims, the constraints that might arise, the offer of the chosen external environment, but also the needs of the participants must be taken into account. As specified above, most materials are already in the chosen outdoor environment, and a good organizer chooses to supplement them by using other pre-prepared tools. As part of the activities related to outdoor education, students will be asked to choose the materials they need to carry out tasks themselves, usually through the gradual transition from using artificial materials to natural ones. It is expected that they will feel extinguished at first, denying in nature everything they think they need, but during the course, being put in a situation of not having everything offered by the educator, they will develop their creativity and make interesting correlations.

Therefore, there are materials found in nature, materials that complement those found outside and artificial materials that support learning from the outside. Natural materials, such

as sticks, stones, shells and leaves, are open, multi-sensory and irregular. These attributes can be used to create experiences that challenge children in a way that synthetic resources do not always succeed. In addition, they are often naturally available in the natural space. Usually, the educator chooses the space that he / she believes would best serve the purpose and where the most varied materials or tools are needed to solve the task. In a study proposed by the Scottish Government on outdoor education, it can be seen that students who were able to choose between a set of 5 cubes and a set of 5 stones to build a tower, recognize that the challenge is more great was represented by the work with natural materials, and these were the ones chosen by most of them. The questions that started were related to the level of challenge of the materials but especially what were the skills involved in completing the activity. There was also a follow-up activity, in which participants were taken to a place with a lot of natural materials and asked to think of a challenging problem or an investigation for a group of students, using only natural materials. The participants worked in small groups and shared their ideas with the whole group. (Outdoor Learning Support, 2011)

Similar exercises are beneficial because observations can be made regarding the roles of each participating member. The role of the teacher decreases significantly, because the students are the administrators of the space in which they work, choosing for themselves the materials with which they prefer to operate and especially those that facilitate their learning. The discovery and the experience is realized by the fact that the educator is put to organize his activity and not only to participate in it, thus increasing the independence, creativity, communication, critical thinking and especially freedom.

Materials such as stones, sticks, twigs, shells, are not uniform, so their use across different areas or disciplines helps in problem solving, critical thinking and communication development. In natural environments, such as forests or beaches with sand and rocks, the opportunities for using natural materials are part of the learning process and learning approach, as the scale and quantity of materials available increase. (Robertson, 2012)

Children should have the freedom to move different equipment from indoor to outdoor space to complete their learning process as they see fit. At the center of the planning of the physical environment must be ensured the existence of sufficient resources within the reach of the participants, especially if more children join than expected. In one of his studies, McLean demonstrated that the lack of educational resources often leads to conflicts between group members or even the unproductiveness of some. (McLean, 1991) Usually, in outdoor education, a list of materials required for each activity is required, so that there is an overview of what the activity involves for all involved. This does not mean that the list of materials is definitive, but it is desirable to supplement the proposed materials with others, found by participants on the spot.

### ***Ways of organizing and planning time in outdoor education***

In life, as well as in education, time has become a defining constraint. Everything has to be planned according to a defined amount of time, and each member participating in the educational process has to cope with the fast pace of each day in schools. I also know how they divide their time so that they succeed in completing everything they have set as goals, as well as for students who are exhausted under the weight of the disciplines they have to go through after a fixed schedule. Even breaks are scheduled per second, and at the sound of the bell the same process begins again in which students are asked to concentrate and work against time. This cycle is repeated endlessly, if we do not take into account the after-school hours where students have to give high performance and work without stopping. Homework is important, some students participating in meditations or other extracurricular activities, sports competitions or hours in which they can learn languages. Each teacher, in organizing the

instructional-educational activities must take into account the facts presented above, because there is a minimum and maximum number of hours allocated to the study for each age level.

The natural question that follows is about the place of outdoor activities in such a fixed and rigid schedule. Since outdoor education appears as a curricular discipline only in some educational systems in the world, the school institutions that want to implement it in the daily routine of the students, have to adapt the contents and timetables so that the outdoor activities are present as often in the education of the children. Students need a flexible approach to the schedule in that they have to participate as often as possible in learning or play activities with as few interruptions from teachers or time constraints. Participation in frequently discontinued activities induces the inability to focus on a particular task. Instead, if they are encouraged and aware that they have enough time to engage in certain activities, they become more motivated to persevere and complete the tasks they receive. Paley, in one of the studies conducted in this regard, observing the behavior of the students in the working class, concluded that the increase of the time allocated to free play led to more learning-oriented activities, because the students chose to get involved in educational activities, in exchange for the game, without anyone suggesting or inducing it. The students did not choose to use their time for frenetic play, but volunteered for learning activities that started out of curiosity and the need to know each one. (Paley, 1984)

Outdoor education together with its specific activities, due to the lack of space and time constraints, makes the educational-educational process more efficient. The participating students, not being pressed for time, succeed not only in completing the activity started, but in overcoming the barriers encountered, adding more value to the aims pursued, complementing them with new ideas, creativity and innovation. Outdoor activities are usually interdisciplinary and are not divided by hours, the activity having continuity even when returning to classes. The fact that students do not have to be in a fixed sitting position offers a new conception of time. The Early Years Foundation, through the specialists involved, argues that children need time to play and learn, and that practitioners need to be flexible in planning time so that students can pursue a well-defined interest, and if it is necessary, to allow them to come back later on a task. (Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2008) In terms of outdoor education, this can be translated into the fact that students do not have to stand in line and wait to leave for a particular activity, but they can use the outdoor space as an extension of the inner one. Teachers need to organize their time so that each content is covered, and the organizational problems are solved in the shortest time. In one of his works, Jago (Jago, 2002) noted that the more time they had, the more active the children were.

When organizing outdoor education activities, each educator must adapt the schedule so that the contents of each discipline from that day or from that time period can be found in the activity performed. Parents must be notified in advance to be able to prepare if it is a more elaborate activity. For spontaneous activities, there is not much training required in terms of time or content. Usually, the time will be organized so that the departure is made early, preferably in the first part of the day, so that the students have enough time to spend on the road but also at the selected place, and especially for the students to can return to school until the end of the program. Parents should be notified if the children will leave the school, regardless of the duration of the activity that will be carried out in the external environment. As a duration, outdoor education can consist of short activities as a supplement to an hour, used as study strategies with a duration that can vary between 20-30 minutes, as a complex activity of 2-3 hours, in the form of organized workshops in which complex sets of objectives and goals are pursued.

Breaks are short periods of time, between class hours, generally intended for the students to refresh. They also serve to have a snack, to change the classroom, to talk with colleagues about extracurricular activities, to socialize and get to know each other better. The



breaks are too short to reach all the elements mentioned above. A report by the Nuffield Foundation described the fact that schools have been cut from breaks for children since 2006. (Blatchford & Baines, 2006) University teachers and specialists in educational psychology argue that school authorities are trying to maximize time for instruction and minimize learning time. In countries such as Finland, following the educational reform, it is desired to minimize the number of hours and to maximize the rest periods, for the purpose of socialization and recreation. A tired mind cannot be productive. Studies show that there are European schools that offer students the opportunity to take part in additional activities during breaks, before or after school hours. An established benefit of this fact was that the activities made it possible to follow similar interest of the different age groups. In some institutions, students choose to participate in rehearsals or activities of the school choir. This type of activity has enriched the opportunities offered by educational institutions, thus ensuring the students' belonging to the culture and ethos of the school. Also through these activities, the standard of schools in society and their visibility in society increases. At the sport level, the physical activities performed with the class during free hours, have increased the children's participation in sports activities and competitions, thus developing their physical abilities and abilities.

With the advent of new technologies and intense social development, more and more students spend their breaks using smart phones, playing different online games or even checking social media. It is well to remember that every break can be positively benefited by the use of outdoor education activities. These can be realized in the form of workshops, creative workshops, sporting activities, trips, games or household activities, by involving different age groups. These bring new experiences to the child, place him in the situation of finding solutions himself or working with teammates to reach the desired result. As a result of these activities, the students get to love and respect the school institution they belong to, to be involved, even if they would normally be passive in the breaks between hours, to know their colleagues and form educational coalitions, integrating into different groups. In this way, the students will not feel supervised or over-controlled during breaks, but may be involved, at their choice, in different activities. As a result, the delinquency that often occurs due to boredom is observed, and students who were only spectators at the events offered by the bravest or the most popular, may also be participants in the social life of the social micro-group of the school.

### **Recent perspectives**

The most unpredictable component of outdoor education is undoubtedly the weather and weather conditions. This should be seen as normal and operated so that students are not hindered in outdoor activities. Regarding the place chosen for the outdoor activities but especially the design of the area or the work surface, all possible changes of the time that may take place must be considered before engaging in activities. Weather conditions may include extremely low or high temperatures, rain, wind or excessive heat. As we have specified in the previous chapters, outdoor education does not require any force in terms of the degree of use of the related activities, but it comes as a learning aid and complementary to the classroom activities. No organizer of activities related to outdoor education requires attendance at these activities if the weather conditions are not favorable. However, no matter how good the organization may be, the weather may change instantly. It is the responsibility of the organizers to be prepared for such situations, with a well-defined backup plan, so that the participating students do not feel inconveniences and that they can continue their activity as efficiently as possible.

A first step in achieving these goals is to provide protection for the two extreme weather conditions, the cold and the heat. This can be made possible by preparing thick clothing stocks or sunscreen.

The second step can be to protect the space, or to prepare a backup plan regarding the retreat to a protected area of nature. When choosing the space for the activity in progress, the organizer will also pay attention to areas where he can withdraw with the group of participants in case of need. Mandatory, there must be a protected area with more trees or shrubs, regardless of where the activity is conducted. In the Nordic countries, there are areas for outdoor education, which contain wooden shelters, with three walls and a roof, which participants in outdoor activities can use regardless of the weather conditions. This is also the case when the activities take place in the school area, where the teacher must verify very well the environment in which he will work with the students, and decide according to the time of day, which space is best protected from the wind, cold or sun. . An unfriendly environment in terms of temperatures, cold, shade or extreme wind can have negative influences on the concentration level and thus not lead to learning outcomes. Even if outdoor learning takes place in the closest environment of the educational institution, it must be protected by buildings or trees. In the case of choosing a forest, hill or plain area outside the city, students will not be able to concentrate on the task, but will struggle with the weather conditions, if the space does not provide protection against excessive heat. In Germany, the courtyards of educational institutions are built in such a way that they are suitable for outdoor education and spending time outdoors, being directed south to receive as much light as possible, but to have sufficient shade. (Bergard, 1995) An outdoor activity organizer checks the space both at the time of organization and a few hours before the activity, to ensure that the activity can be carried out without problems. Also, the land should be checked for not being too humid, which could lead to slipping or excessive dirt, accidents or the impossibility of being able to carry out the planned actions. (Bilton, 2010)

In order to overcome the obstacles of the time, covered or protected learning areas are the best answer, because as such, students are not required to give up on outdoor learning activities, but can complete them regardless of weather conditions. Parents can contribute financially or materially if the school does not have the opportunity to create veranda areas for outdoor activities, by purchasing covers that can be used as needed. If an activity has already been planned, and is much more complex than going out around the school, it will be canceled until the safety is guaranteed on all levels.

## Conclusions

On the bases of the theoretical approach presented above, as a conclusion, we are going to present the results of a short study, among the teachers from Arad County, on the way time, space and resources motivate the frequency of outdoor education activity use in preschool and primary school in three different geographic areas: rural, urban and urban periphery.

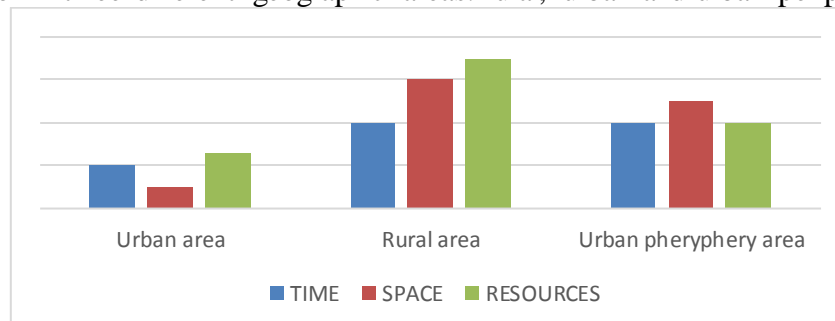


Figure nb. 1. The frequency of elements vs motivation in outdoor education activities

The results show that in urban areas, all three elements are at its lowest levels. This can happen because of the lack of spaces and natural resources. Time was the only element that

was higher than the other two, but comparing with educational institutions that are situated in the rural area or the periphery area, the levels are at their lowest. In the rural area, resources and space level are at its fullest, but time element is also pretty low, but at equal level with the one in the urban periphery level.

No matter the educational institution situated, it is important to have real management skills for all three levels in order to achieve the best results regarding outdoor education activities.

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# THE NEED FOR CHANGE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE PRE-UNIVERSITY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT – A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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**Abstract:** *The school is an organization that through its activity contributes to the development of culture. Any attempt to improve school activity must start from the knowledge of the school culture, as it is manifested at the level of managers and teachers. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the need to change the organizational culture of the state pre-university education institutions, realized through the perception of the teacher in these institutions.*

**Keywords:** *organizational culture; need for change; state educational institutions;*

## 1. Introduction

Organizational culture represents "a specific complex of values, leading beliefs, representations, meanings, and ways of thinking shared by the members of an organization, which determine the ways in which they behave inside and outside the respective organization" (Iosifescu, 2005, p. 42). It is built because of the repeated collaboration between the members of the organization, being created based on the values and beliefs of the individuals that make it up. Among the most important modeling factors are: the manner of leadership and implicitly the style of decision making, the level of formalism, the manner of organization, the policies and almost all the systems that offer value and support to a certain type of activity and a certain type of behavior. The important elements of manifesting the invisible organizational culture are: norms and rules, values, ideals, beliefs, representations. The visible part includes symbols, slogans, rituals, ceremonies, myths, behavioral patterns, jargon and perspectives related to the members of the organization.

The functioning of the organization has both intentional and unintended effects in the direction of maintaining or changing the organizational culture. The changes in the environment require an immediate reaction from the organizations, so that the challenge is not under the influence of "if we need change" but that of "how to change ourselves in order to increase efficiency" (Cameron, Quinn, 2011, p. 9). At organizational level, the change may involve: "changes to the basis of organization's construction, changes of tasks and activities, of the technology used, changes of organizational culture, changes in personnel management, changes in organizational performance and the image that the organization has created itself" (Kurb, 1992, cit. in Bogathy, 2004, p. 283). The organizational culture changes due to the need to adapt the organization to the changes around it or the desire to change the old procedures and identities. Changes in the culture of an organization can occur spontaneously, under the influence of macrosocial changes, emergent changes. Unlike emergent changes, "planned changes are systematically induced and directed to generate a new culture configuration" (Vlăsceanu, 2003, p. 276). The planned change of the culture of the organization involves a series of stages: the critical analysis of the organizational culture, conclusions on the organizational culture and triggering and directing the change of the organizational culture. According to S. Cristea (2009), "the sources of changes in organizations can be external or internal. In order to produce the desired changes, external pressures must be embraced by the

organization, so that culture becomes the essential filter, it can either favor or support change or, on the contrary, block it and distort it" (p. 12).

According to Schein (1985) the change of the organizational culture is very difficult, but not impossible, the success of the change of the organizational culture can be minimal, and the duration is measured in years not in months (cited in Bogathy, 2004, p. 284). According to Tanase (2015), the difficult process of cultural change "most often occurs after one or more problems have been discovered in an organization. In doing so, the result of change should be a positive one, which will bring benefits" (p. 29).

## **2. The specificity of the school as an organization**

E. Păun (1999) defines the school as "an organization that teaches and produces learning. Its specificity derives essentially from the fact that it is invested with the function of producing learning and it structures all other organizational and functional aspects in this direction. What brings the school closer to other organizations is its characteristic of being a teaching organization. What sets it apart is that it produces learning" (p. 76). The unity in diversity of the school culture comprises the relationship between the education system, the ratio between the specific culture of the school as an organization and the subcultures manifested inside and outside at the ideological, managerial, pedagogical, community and psychosocial level. The culture of the school organization is highly diversified, with subcultures sometimes divergent and conflicting. We consider here the managerial culture, the teachers' culture, the didactic culture and the students' culture.

## **3. The evaluation of the organizational culture**

The organizational diagnosis is the process of understanding how the organization works in the present, providing, in the same time, the necessary information for designing the organizational development interventions. The diagnosis involves collecting all relevant information and objective information about current operations, analyzing such data, drawing conclusions for potential changes and improvements (Bazgan, Popa, 2011).

Focusing on the effective organizations, the research made by John Campbell (1974) and his colleagues has covered several critical dimensions, identifying thirty-nine key indicators. Although such a list is useful, however, it is impractical to consider so many dimensions. Realizing this, R. Quinn and J. Rohrbaugh (1983) reviewed the results of several studies on this topic and have determined that two major dimensions could account for a broad range of factors. In their study, the competing values scheme "combines these two dimensions, creating a 2x2 matrix with four clusters" (Tharp, 2005, p. 2).

The first-dimension places the values: flexibility, discretion and dynamism at one end of the scale and stability, order and control at the other end. This means that some organizations focus on adaptation, change and organic processes while others are effective, emphasizing the stability, predictability, mechanistic processes. The second value's dimension is marked by internal orientation, integration and unity at one end and the external orientation, differentiation and rivalry at the other end. Each quadrant defines those characteristics that organizations consider them the best. In other words, "these quadrants represent basic assumptions, beliefs and values. No quadrant is better than the other as no culture is necessarily better than another, but some cultures might be more appropriate in certain contexts than others" (Tharp, 2005, p. 3).

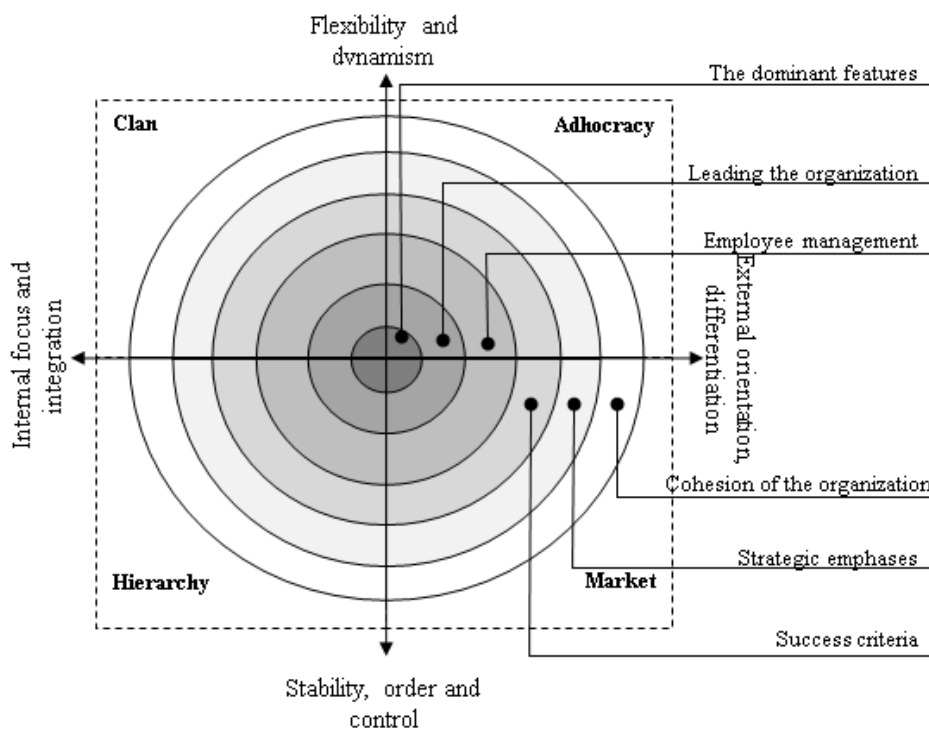


Figure 1. The competing values framework

Cameron & Quin (2011, p. 23) developed an organizational culture assessment tool, briefly referred to as the OCAI. It measures the organizational culture on the basis of six basic organizational cultural elements: the dominant features, the management of the organization, the management of the employees, the cohesion of the organization, the strategic accents and the criteria of success. The elements are related to four dimensions: discretion, external focus, stability and internal focus. Four types of organizational culture result from their combination: clan type culture, ad-hoc type culture, hierarchical type culture and market type culture.

Clan culture (A) is a place where people share a lot of personal information, as in an extended family, offers great importance to employees, promotes team spirit and involvement. Success is defined in terms of customer sensitivity and concern for people. "Organizations that embrace this form of organizational culture are rather oriented towards teamwork, programs that determine the involvement of employees at the expense of rules and procedures or profit" (Hudrea, 2015, p. 71). The organization emphasizes the long-term benefit of individual development, which is of major importance in terms of cohesion and morale.

Adhocracy culture (B) encourages risk taking. It is a customer-oriented culture. The major objective of an adhocracy culture is to promote adaptability, flexibility and creativity. The leader in such an organization is innovative, confident, with a well-defined vision of the future and he shows initiative. The Adhocracy organization is characterized by a dynamic, entrepreneurial and creative workplace. The binder that holds the members of the organization together is the commitment to experimentation and innovation. Success means producing original products and services.

Market type culture (C) emphasizes on competition. It is characterized by constant adaptation to the market, "being oriented to the external environment and having as essential features competence, efficiency and productivity" (Hudrea, 2015, p. 71). It focuses on achieving the goals and it is customer oriented.

Hierarchical culture (D) is characterized by bureaucracy, rules, procedures and responsibility. It is characterized by a formal attitude with many hierarchical levels, focused

on the control and detection of errors. The values for this type of organizational culture are uniformity and efficiency.

Cameron and Quinn's model has a wide practical applicability "because it illustrates, in addition to the dominant organizational culture type and its connection with leadership roles, the efficiency criteria, human resources management roles, organizational vision and mission" (Hudrea, 2015, p. 72).

#### **4. Research methodology**

The purpose of the research is to determine the perception of the members of the organization on the need to change the organizational culture at the level of pre-university education institutions included in the present study. The research method used with predilection was the multiple case study.

##### **4.1. The objective of the research**

The identification of the dominant organizational culture and the preferred organizational culture in the studied pre-university education institutions.

##### **4.2. Research questions**

- ✓ Are there any differences, at the level of the studied pre-university education institutions, regarding the dominant organizational culture?
- ✓ Are there any differences, at the level of the studied pre-university education institutions, regarding the preferred organizational culture?

##### **4.3. Research participants**

The research was conducted in three educational institutions in the city of Slobozia, Ialomița county. Thus, the research involved:

- ✓ 31 teachers, from a pre-school institution, between the ages of 18 and 68;
- ✓ 30 teachers, from a primary education institution, between 20 and 60 years old;
- ✓ 32 teachers, from a secondary school institution, between the ages of 30 and 60;
- ✓ 36 teachers, from a high school, between 36 and 60 years old.

##### **4.4. Research tools**

In this research we used the tool created by specialists Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn (2011, p. 23). By completing this instrument by the research participants, a picture emerges about the manner in which the organization operates and the values that characterize it. The tool is also very useful in determining the ways in which the organizational culture can be changed.

Participants were invited to describe the organization through responses to a set of items. The instrument comprises a total of six items. Each item has four possibilities. The participants divide 100 points in relation to the four alternatives. The total corresponding to the item with the four alternatives must summarize 100 points. After completing the "current" column the questions are repeated, remaining to be completed in the "preferred" column.

##### **4.5. Analysis and interpretation of research results**

Using the model developed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, we conducted an analysis of the current and preferred organizational culture for each of the four pre-university education institutions. For explanatory reasons, we present in more detail the profile of the organizational culture of the preschool education institution.

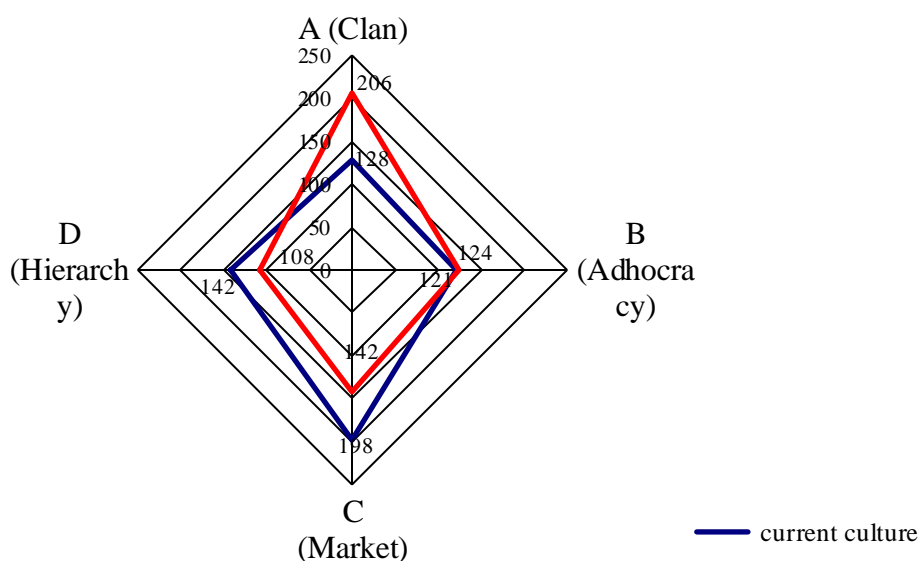


Figure 2. Profile of the organizational culture of the preschool education institution

The data showed that in the studied pre-school institution, the dominant organizational culture is of type C (Market). On the other hand, the preferred organizational culture is type A (Clan). Thus, from the perspective of the teachers in the pre-school education institution included in this study, the premises of changing the organizational culture from type C culture (Market) to type A culture (Clan) exist. This perception can be explained by the increased need for collaboration of teachers, the need for a friendlier organizational climate, which creates the conditions favorable to personal development. The interpretation of this organizational profile can advance the idea of the need to reduce control and to diminish bureaucratic procedures while maintaining customer orientation, adaptability and innovative manifestations.

Synthetically, the results of the OCAI regarding the current and preferred organizational culture by the teachers from the studied educational institutions are presented in table 1.

Table 1. The current and preferred organizational culture of the educational institutions included in the study

Education cycle	Current culture	Preferred culture
Primary education level	C (market)	A (clan)
Primary education level	B (ad-hoc)	D (hierarchical)
Secondary education level	D (hierarchical)	A (clan)
High school education	C (market)	D (hierarchical)

We note that, regarding the organizational culture of the educational institutions included in this study, there are notable differences both in terms of the current organizational culture as well as in terms of the preferred organizational culture. These differences can be explained by several factors: the manner of conducting and making decisions, the different external demands, the different needs and expectations of the educational actors (students, teachers, parents), the diversity of the scientific fields represented by the teachers and, not lastly, the specificity of the activity carried out.

## 5. Conclusions



The educational institutions studied have a distinct organizational culture. Diversity is manifested both in the dominant and preferred organizational culture. The vast majority of the members of the studied school institutions prefer a different organizational culture than the dominant one in the present. This is one of the most important premises of the need for organizational change.

Despite this perception, the research did not capture the connection between the current or preferred organizational culture and the degree of achievement of the organizational objectives. The limitation to the four educational institutions included in the study leads to the impossibility of generalizing the results.

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## PERCEIVED FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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**Abstract:** *The academic performance of students has been subject of discourse among social scientists from a wide range of disciplines in the last two decades. But unfortunately, very insufficient number of studies in this area has been conducted in Nigeria. This study was undertaken to fill this obvious research gap. Possible factors affecting students' academic performance in Nigerian universities were examined in this study. They were grouped into student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors. A descriptive method was adopted and data was collected via a survey of 400 respondents selected by means of stratified random sampling technique to ensure a balanced representation of age and gender. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, means, t-test and multiple regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. The findings indicated that the major factors affecting students' academic performance in Nigerian universities are student, lecturer and institutional related factors. The study also revealed a significant joint contribution of student, lecturer, institutional and home related factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. Requisite conclusion and recommendations were provided in the light of the empirical findings.*

**Keywords:** *academic performance; students; perceived factors; universities;*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership. It provides the platform for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits and values for productive living in the society (1). As a result of this, education equips individuals with the personal capabilities for survival in and contribution to the societal development (2-3). Similarly, the National Policy on Education (4) shapes the focus of Nigerian universities towards achieving the following objectives: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society; development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments; acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individual to develop into useful member of the community; and the acquisition of an objective view of the national and international environments. Therefore, Nigerian universities are established with the aim of given any student who enrolls a very sound and qualitative education, to be able to function effectively in any environment in which he/she may find him/herself so as to become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization. Nigerian universities are developed to achieve the above objectives through: teaching, research and dissemination of existing and new

information (especially through publication); and service-fostering community service and professional training for the development of intermediate and high level manpower (5). However, the education systems in Nigeria, most especially the universities have been too much confirmed to quantitative expansion trading in the complementary development in educational quality (6). Measures to promote higher education and improve the quality of university education to meet the challenges of a constantly changing environment are often constrained by inadequate financial resources and under-funding. The expansion of the universities in Nigeria, therefore without mankind funds has brought about dearth of other resources and facilities, for instance, unavailable and run-down physical infrastructure, inadequate laboratories and ill-equipped libraries (7-8).

Also, contributory factors to the decline of the university education system in Nigeria are leadership indiscipline and subversion of autonomy, which lead to the erosion of academic freedom (9-10). Thus, the failure of leadership in Nigerian universities is seen in the ethical and leadership indiscipline displayed by a crop of university administrators who have emerged on the landscape of university governance since 1970 to date. According to Akintayo (7), evidence of this can be seen in the high rates of admission racketing, scandals, bribery and graft, victimization, sexual harassment of female students, proliferation of male and female cult gangs, persistent incidence of rape, female prostitution, obscene dressing and soliciting for favors, homosexuality murder, extortion, intimidation of lecturers by students, examination malpractices, rumors mongering and other anti-social activities. These factors are the major causes of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities. Despite the complexity of factors affecting students' academic performance, a number of studies are pointing to the evidence that institutional factors are more associated with poor academic performance of students. It was observed from the literature that students' academic performance is determined by a number of factors. The analysis of these factors is the mainstream of this study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Globally, socio-economic and political developments are increasingly been driven by the advancement and application of knowledge (Education). This explains why education in general and higher education in particular is germane to the growth and development of knowledge and economy (9). The inculcation of academic knowledge, skills and abilities among the students is enhanced through learning and academic performance (10). Academic performance according to Eze, Ezenwafor and Obidile (11), is the outcome of students effort in examinations. It is defines as a student's ability to demonstrate the performance of professional skills or behavior (12). It is also described as the outcome that indicates the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in schools (13). Abdullahi (14) described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below a desired standard. A plethora of studies have been carried out to identify and analyze the range of factors that affect students' academic performance in various levels of educational attainment across the world.

### **Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance**

A cursory look at Nigerian universities reveals that several factors affect students' academic performance in recent times. These factors include:

#### **i. Student Related Factors**

According to Ali, Zubair and Fahad (15), students related factors that affect the academic performance of students include insufficient effort, lack of self-motivation, learning preference, previous and recent academic performance, students' academic attitude and previous school. Udoh (16) alludes to examination malpractice, poor study habits, peer

influence, absenteeism and lack of self confidence. Newsberger (17) listed the causes of poor academic performance of students to include drugs, alcohol, crime, psychiatric or severe family problems and students' indiscipline. Absenteeism, study habits, indiscipline and cultism was established by Odumbe (18) as the major factors contributing to poor academic performance of students. Ukwayi, Lucy, Chibuzo and Underlikwo (19) posited that the use of alcohol and related drinks also influences academic performance among undergraduates. In their study, they reported a significant relationship between alcohol use and academic performance such that a unit increase in alcohol consumption would result in 61% decrease in examination success. Pettit and DeBarr (20) also reported that more consumption of energy drinks-drink that may have alcohol together with caffeine and other active ingredients in its content-was significantly negatively correlated with undergraduate GPA, suggesting that increased consumption is associated with a fall in GPA. Although students give several reasons for taking alcohol including keeping awake and for fun (19), perhaps alcohol drinks negatively affect the GPA by disrupting studies, reducing amount of study time, class attendance and concentration during examination. Issahaku (21) reported that students' attitudes to learning and students' use of social media influence academic performance among undergraduates in Ghana. Perhaps time spent in passive leisure negatively affect students' academic performance. Other student related factors affecting academic performance of undergraduates include persistent incidence rape, female students' prostitution, intimidation of lecturers by students, homosexuality, student's illness, visual or hearing impairment, insufficient sleep, negative youth exuberance and other anti-social activities. From the foregoing it is seen that student academic performance is affected by a good number of personal factors.

## **ii. Teacher/Lecturer Related Factors**

Poor performance or failure in class is likewise influence by lecturer related factors. Commenting on the lecturer related factors affecting students' academic performance among undergraduates, Killen, Marais and Loedoiff (22) allude to poor student-lecturer relationship, poorly coordinated supervisory activities, lack of commitment and poor attitude by lecturers, poor grounding in the subject area, poor teaching methods. Immoral, unethical behaviours and attitudes especially extortion, victimization and sexual harassment of female students was established by Akintayo (7) as lecturer related factors affecting students' academic performance in Nigerian universities. The problem was further compounded by economic and social effects of incessant closure of schools due to ASUU strikes, hikes in fuel price and the global economic recession among other which made the lecturers to extort students. Lecturer's stress was further identified by Womble (23) as a factor that affects academic performance of undergraduates. For students' academic performance to be enhanced, Azer (24) affirms that lecturers need to embody positive qualities such as commitment and passion and must be willing to pass these qualities to their students and peers, provide positive reinforcement to students by giving value to the inputs of students, provide constructive feedback which could help students grow, create a respectful, meaningful and trusting learning environment where open authentic communication can take place, seek and encourage understanding of unity in diversity that could eventually lead to teamwork among students and demonstrate leadership skills and effective teaching craft that could contribute to the overall development of the student and the school.

## **iii. Institutional Related Factors**

According to Alshammari *et al.* (12), institutional related factors that affect the academic performance of students include inadequate libraries, inadequate laboratories, lack of university accommodation, curriculum related factors, inadequate number of lecturers as well as academic policies implemented by the university. Universities in Africa and especially

in Nigeria are faced with the threat of anomie. This is seen in existence norms or even in absence of norms. To be more precise, there is a crisis of ethical values in the Nigerian universities. The situation has degenerated to a stage where virtually every cherished principles, moral integrity and ideal of university life has nearly been eroded, if not totally. In some instances, the general norms and ethical values guiding decent and peaceful but harmonious human interpersonal co-existence are absent altogether (7). The issue of leadership and integrity is central to the crisis in the universities in Nigeria. Thus, the failure of leadership in the Nigerian universities is seen in the ethical and leadership indiscipline by a crop of university administrators who have emerged on the landscape of university governance since 1970 to date. According to Taiwo, 2004 cited in Akintayo (7), this situation has therefore led to corruption, injustice, violence, moral decadence, examination malpractices and general apathy and anomie within Nigerian university system. In Nigerian universities today, there remains a high incidence of political and ethnic conflicts among the staff. There are conflict of interests and goals between university administration and various academic and non-academic unions. There are conflicts between factions of the students' union and organized students fraternity or cult groups. There are evidences that the much needed ethical values, such as dialogue, peace and discipline are lacking in most of the university systems across the nation. All these unethical behaviours and leadership indiscipline in addition to increase in tuition fees, inadequate school hostels, students unrest and incessant closure of schools for months have serious effect on the academic performance of students. Alshammari *et al.* (12) concludes that school facilities affect the health, behavior, engagement and improvement in academic performance of students. Also, Uline and Tschannen (25) reported in their study that school facilities affect lecturers' recruitment, retention, commitment and effort.

#### **iv. Home Related Factors**

Home related factors that may affect students' academic performance include large family size, illiteracy on the part of the parents, poverty, family pressure, socio-economic status of parents, parent illness and death of a family member and lack of support and assistance from family members and friends (26-29). Alshammari *et al.* (12) posit that lack of support from home leads to a downslide or decline in the academic performance of students. Therefore, problems in the relationship such as lack of support and assistance from friends and family members can affect the academic performance of the student resulting to emotional problems, lack of concentration in class and lack of self-confidence. More so, students who lack self-discipline and self-confidence are likely to acquire problem behavior from their peers such as absenteeism, substance abuse and paying less time on their school work which influences their academic performance. According to Brown and Sunniya (30), family break up, parent illness and death of a family member contributed to low performance as it affected syllabus coverage and sometimes led to some students repeating a given grade, class or level. Odumbe (18) established that low family income had a negative influence on students' academic performance.

In line with the literature review, the following objectives and hypotheses were formulated for the study

#### **Objectives of the study:**

- i. To examine the level of perceived factors contributing to poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.
- ii. To examine if there is difference between the opinion of male and female students on factors contributing to poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

- iii. To investigate the joint effect of students related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.
- iv. To access the relative effects of student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigeria universities.

### **Hypotheses of the study:**

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female students on the factors contributing to poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

H<sub>2</sub>: Student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors does not have a joint significant effect on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

H<sub>3</sub>: Student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors does not have a relative significant effects on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted the survey research design to determine the effect of student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on students' academic performance in Nigerian universities.

### **Participations**

Four hundred (400) participants were drawn from four universities, representative of two private and two government universities in Edo State selected by means of stratified random sampling technique to ensure a balanced representation of age and gender. A visit to each university enabled us identify class times and venues where we introduced the study to student. All participants were guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality and the freedom to withdraw from the study at any stage. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire in English language at their respective schools. The administration of the questionnaires took place within a period of three weeks. Permission to involve undergraduate students in the study was obtained from the respective university Dean of student affairs.

### **Data Collection**

The research instrument for the study was the structured questionnaire. This was a modified form of the research instrument used by Alshammari *et al.* (12). This was necessary to better address the new respondents in a different environment. Participants were given up to one week to complete and return the questionnaires. Out of 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 287 were retrieved giving us a response rate of 71.8%. Out of the 287 respondents, 132 were male students and 155 were female students.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected were analyzed using percentages, means, t-test and multiple regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. A pilot study to determine the level of reliability was carried out on 50 students who were part of the study within a time interval of one week. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument as shown in the table below.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics of Variables**

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Students related factors	15	.729
Lecturer related factors	10	.810
Institutional related factors	7	.843
Home related factors	10	.785
Students academic performance	3	.847

The results yield a coefficient of .729, .810, .843, .785 and .847, which satisfied the general recommended level of .70 for the research indicators (Cronbach, 1951). Also, the questionnaire was validated by experts in management sciences. Hence, researchers' satisfied both reliability and validity of the scale.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Information**

S/N	Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Gender of respondents	Male	132	46.0
		Female	155	54.0
		Total	287	100.0
2	Age of Respondents	15-20 years	66	23.1
		21-25 years	108	37.6
		26-30 years	71	24.7
		Above 30 years	42	14.6
		Total	287	100.0
3	Marital status of respondents	Single	186	64.8
		Married	79	27.5
		Divorced	17	6.0
		Widowed	5	1.7
		Total	287	100.0
4	Study level of respondents	100 level	54	18.8
		200 level	72	25.2
		300 level	96	33.4
		400 level	65	22.6
		Total	287	100.00

**Source:** Researchers' fieldwork (2018)

### Gender of Respondents

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents are female which are 155 in number making it a total of 54.0% of the respondents. Male respondents were 132, consisting 46.0%.

### Age of Respondents

Age group of 21-25 years which comprised 108 (37.6% accounted for majority of respondents. The remaining respondents which fall into age bracket of 26-30 years, 15-20 years and above 30years accounted for 71 (24.7%), 66 (23.1%), and 42 (14.6%) respectively.

### Marital Status of Respondents

Most respondents, representing 186 (64.8%) are single 79 respondents are married, this group constituted 27.5% of the entire respondents. Respondents that have been divorced were 17, representing 6.0% of the total respondents, while widowed were 5, which constituted 1.7% of the entire respondents.

### Study Level of Respondents

A total of 96 (33.4%) respondents were in 300 level, while 72 (25.2%), 65 (22.6%), and 54 (18.8%) were in 200 level, 400 level and 100 level respectively.

**Table 3: Perceived Factors Contributing Poor Academic Performance of Students in Nigeria Universities**

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	Students related factors	86	30.0	30.0
2	Lecturer related factors	73	25.4	55.4
3	Institutional related factors	91	31.7	87.1
4	Home related factors	37	12.9	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Source:** From the Questionnaire Administered

In table 3, the results indicated that institutional related factors, student related factors and lecturer (teacher) related factors were the major causes of poor academic performance of students' in Nigerian universities.

### Testing of Hypotheses

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant different between the opinion of male and female students on the factors contributing to poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

**Table 4: Opinion of Male and Female Students on the Factors Contributing to Poor Academic Performance of Students in Nigerian Universities.**

S/N	Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	Cat.T	Crit.T
1	Students related factors	Male	132	4.57	0.53	1.45	1.97
		Female	155	4.60	0.50		
2	Lecturer related factors	Male	132	4.52	0.56	1.63	1.92
		Female	155	4.38	0.52		
3	Institutional related factors	Male	132	4.00	0.50	1.51	1.99
		Female	155	3.29	0.58		
4	Home related factors	Male	132	3.53	0.51	1.64	1.96
		Female	155	3.34	0.57		

P<0.05

**Source:** Authors' Computation (2018)

According to the results presented in table 4 above, all calculated 't' (1.45, 1.63, 1.51 and 1.64) are less than the critical 't' (1.92). The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This means that the male and female students perception do not differ in their expression on the causes of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities.

### Hypothesis 2

H<sub>2</sub>: student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related does not have a joint significant effect on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.



**Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Joint Effect of Student Related Factors, Lecturer Related Factors, Institutional Related Factors and Home Related Factors on Poor Academic Performance in Nigerian Universities**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.997	0.875	0.946	0.489

Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

- a. Predictors. (constant), perceived factors  
 b. Dependent variable: Poor academic performance

**Table 6: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of square	Df	Mean	F	Sig.	Remark
1	Regression	17.230	2	247.519	412.834	.000 <sup>b</sup>	Sig.
	Residual	9.748	283	4.838			
	Total	26.978	285				

- a. Dependent variable: Poor academic performance  
 b. Predictors: (constant), perceived factors

Table 5 reveals a significant joint effect of the perceived factors (student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors) on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. The results yielded a coefficient of multiple regression ( $R = 0.997$  and a multiple adjusted  $R^2 = 0.946$ ). This means that 94.6% variation in poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities is independently accounted for by the student related factors, lecturer related factors, institution related factors and home related factors. The F. statistics of 412.834 in table 6, revealed that the model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant levels. This implies that the joint effect of perceived factors on poor academic performance is significant.

**Hypothesis 3**

H<sub>3</sub>: Student related factors, lecturer related factors institutional related factors and home related does not have relative significant effects on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities.

**Table 7: Summary of Regression Analysis Showing the Relative Effects of Perceived Factors on Poor Academic Performance of Students in Nigerian Universities**

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig	Remark
		B	Std. Error				
1	(Constant)	4.563	1.342		3.1	.00	Sig
	Students related factors	1.217	0.044	0.830	39	0	Sig.
	Lecturer related factors	1.251	0.028	-0.425	7.2	.00	Sig.
	Institutional related factors	3.083	0.030	0.967	29	0	Sig.
	Home related factors	0.067	0.021	0.348	2.1	.00	Sig.
						26	0
					9.5	.00	
					64	0	
					2.3	.00	
					76	0	

Table 7 shows the independent effect of the perceived factors on poor academic performance, expressed as Beta weights, viz: student related factors ( $\beta = 0.830$ ,  $t=7.229$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), lecturer related factors ( $\beta =-0.425$ ,  $t=2.126$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Institutional related factors ( $\beta =0.967$ ,  $t=9.564$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and Home related factors ( $\beta =0.348$ ,  $t=2.376$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) respectively. This implies that student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors significantly and independently contributed to poor academic performance in this study. Therefore, hypothesis three is confirmed.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Factors that could affect students' academic performance in universities were examined in this study. Results amongst others showed that student related factors (insufficient effort; lack of self-motivation; learning preference; poor study habits; examination malpractice; peer influence; absenteeism and lack self-confidence; alcohol consumption and drug abuse; students' use of social media; incidence of rape; female students prostitution; intimidation of lecturer by students; insufficient sleep; homosexuality; students illness, visual or hearing impairment and negative youth exuberance), lecturer related factors (lack of commitment and poor attitude by lecturers; poor teaching methods; poor student-lecturer relationship; extortion; victimization; lecturer's stress and sexual harassment of female students), institutional related factors (inadequate libraries, laboratories and lack of university accommodation; inadequate number of lecturers; leadership indiscipline; general apathy and anomie within Nigerian university system; conflict of interests and goals between university administration and various academic and non-academic unions and increase in tuition fee among others) and home related factors (large family size; family pressure; illiteracy on the part of the parents; socio-economic status of parents; parent illness and death of a family member; lack of support and assistance from family members and friends; poverty and family break up among others). However, the results of this study indicated that perceived institutional related factors, lecturer related factors and student related factors were the major causes of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This finding substantially supports those of Alshammari *et al.* (12); Ukwai *et al.* (19); Pettit *et al.* (20) and Obidile *et al.* (29). The study also revealed that male and female perception to not differ in their expression on the causes of poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This is in agreement with those of earlier researchers such as Bridgeman and Wendler (30); Issahaku (21) and Alshammari *et al.* (12).

The second and third hypotheses which tested the joint and relative effects of student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on poor academic performance of students were confirmed. The results indicated significant joint effect of all the perceived factors on poor academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This finding supports the findings of some researchers such as Womble (23); Mushtaq and Khan (28). The study further revealed significant and independent effects of perceived factors on academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This finding is in partial agreement with the findings of Alfifi and Abed (31).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the present study has contributed to the literature on perceived factors that affect academic performance of students in Nigerian universities by investigating the effect of student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors on students' academic performance. The study have revealed through its perceived findings that student related factors, lecturer related factors, institutional related factors and home related factors has a negative effect on students' academic performance in Nigeria. Findings of this study have implications for educational policy and practice in Nigerian universities. They call for transformed classrooms through innovations in curriculum design

and teaching pedagogy. A transformed classroom is a teaching-learning environment in which lecturers are less doctrinaire about students' curiosity, passion and vision for learning. Another implication is the need for educators and policy makers to acknowledge the fact that learning and performance is not so much about what we do as it is about students' disposition to learning. As result, flexibility will be better than rigidity, emergence and fluidity better than structure and determinism, and a focus on process better than a focus on content. From the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended as follows:

- i. An intervention program has to be carefully planned and implemented by university administrators. As stated by Pinehas, mulenga and Amadhila (32), the assessment will include students' time management skills, study skills, stress management skills, family responsibilities of the student, access to technology and the students' activities outside the school.
- ii. To enhance students' academic performance it is essential to influence students' attitudes and dispositions toward learning, including lecture attendance, participation in class discussion, self-initiated or independent learning, reduction in the use of social media, use of alcohol and drugs.
- iii. Parental education is very essential for students' academic performance. Therefore, Nigerian universities should strive to enrich the horizons of knowledge of ignorant parents and make them realize that education is as necessary for them as for their children.
- iv. The university management in Nigeria should intensify effort to provide effecting learning material and improve teaching methods to enhance students' academic performance. Also, adequate class size should be maintained to encourage academic performance.
- v. Parents/guardians should always support and encourage their wards by equipping them with the quality of necessary materials needed to excel in their academic pursuit.
- vi. The government of Nigeria should vigorously enforce the law prohibiting the existence of cultic organizations in order to eradicate cultism among the students in Nigerian universities.
- vii. The government of Nigeria should further encourage expansion of the existing universities by established more technology-based universities to cater for the problem of unsatisfied social demand for higher education and technological advancement in Nigeria.

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## SOME OF THE SPECIFICS OF MUSIC CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE PRESCHOOL AGE

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**Abstract:** *General characteristics of creative action which are known in the professional literature would be: the ability to use acquired knowledge and skills in new situations, noticing new problems in already familiar situations, finding new functions and ways of using familiar objects, the ability to find new solutions and instruments for a successful planned outcome. Characteristics of creative action, from which we have mentioned just a few, manifest and best develop in non-standardized situations, with a high responsibility of the individual (family and other relevant adults), but also the educational institutions, which is discussed in the paper.*

**Key words:** *creativity; children; preschool age; adults;*

### Introduction

Creativity according to Bruner's opinion can be expressed in relationships towards children, in certain areas, and affective relationships. Namely, according to him all living creatures are capable of being creative. The mentioned characteristic can be stimulated and developed, which does not mean that the creative person must have characteristics of a genius. In a similar way Ned Herrmann expresses his opinion on this topic by believing that creativity could be perfected. *From the moment an individual becomes aware of the power that he/she possesses, the road is directed towards the imaginative. Creativity is based on systematization.* In this sense Herrmann believes that people are divided into:

- the ones who are constantly creative;
- the ones who are sometimes creative, who in moments express creative intelligence;
- the ones who can be creative, but who still have not expressed their creative potential.

Contemporary psychology has defined several phases of the creative process:

- the phase of preparation, when information is collected, the problem is framed and a certain hypothesis is sketched or a general principle;
- the so called *incubation* which can last for a long time and refers to a period of successful and less successful tries;
- the moment in which the solution is found and the ability to comprehensively view the product of creation; here inspiration is expressed, the creator is aware of all of the components and details of his/her undertaking;
- check or a look back; represents the next phase of creating; it is necessary so that possible problems, to which the creator did not pay attention earlier, could be noticed (Činč, 2010b);

Professionals concluded that creativity is possible in preschool aged children. According to Pidcasisti, the results of children's creativity are subjective and have no *functional* value. Child creativity, however, is important as a form of active personality development. For the development of creativity various techniques can be used. One of them is brainstorming. It stresses the importance of imagination in all areas of life and is applicable in many spheres in the problem solving process. The aforementioned technique creates conditions for the appearance of ideas which are spontaneously accepted. Another technique for the development of creativity is synectics. It was promoted by W.J. Gordon and its goal is

directed towards creative problem solving. The starting point is contained in the idea that emotional moments are of greater importance than the ones which rely on the rational. The technique unfolds in two stages:

- the acceptance of everything which is foreign;
- conveying to another what has been accepted;

We can talk about efficient development of creativity only in the cases in which the process goes through the adequate stages:

- formative – presupposes the existence of new situations and the process of adapting to them. For a young pianist, for example, this phase would represent the familiarization with the piano keys.

- normative – when we talk about children, it refers to their socialization and integration, so that unwanted consequences could be avoided;

- the third phase begins when the child notices the difference between him/her and the others, the child strives to diverge from stereotypes and gains more and more self-confidence and faith in one's own actions;

- the final phase presupposes a transformation and a new, special way of living; for the child this phase can be critical because it means a definite separation from the standard and a continuation in an individual, special way.

By directing ourselves towards the research of creativity in the sphere of music, we can conclude that there exist five basic types of creativity. Namely, when we start from criteria based on different levels of creativity expression, we can talk about:

**Expressive creativity** which we encounter in almost every child. In music it is manifested through spontaneous music expression. Anyone who works with music, in their development acquires knowledge and skill, but they have to keep this basic type of creativity as an expression of their needs and urges.

The second form of creativity is *productive creativity* which is on a higher level and presupposes the possession of certain skills and techniques so that creation could be done with ease. It is a phase in which a lot is produced, and it is precisely this feature that the phase is named after. The entrance into this phase presupposes the existence of certain rules which implies the possibility for a negative influence on the further flow of creativity development. Unlike the completely spontaneous expressive creativity, productive creativity presupposes the participation of certain factors which include education. The responsibility of adults in this moment becomes obvious. The adequate action of the family, and especially the preschool teacher and elementary school teacher, can completely determine the road of creativity development. In the individual work with the child, which is the most common in professional music teaching, the professor must take such a stand that the acquisition of technical problems is always in correlation with free expression and the development of creative characteristics. Limiting the teacher to only overcoming obstacles is in no way connected with the meaning of any art sphere.

**Innovative creativity** is characterized by the usage of acquired knowledge; it is manifested through the combination of what has already been learned. Accumulated knowledge and experience, a keen eye and quick wit are characteristics of this type of creativity. It can be adequately developed through a careful selection of content. Whether for professional work with music or elementary music education, it is important for a teacher have the ability to adequately choose the content through which the child will be in the situation to manifest innovation. Musical games, melodic or rhythmic tasks, but also the selection of genres and compositions which enable innovation, are of paramount importance. Stereotypes and the lack of flexibility in music may definitely endanger creativity in this phase. The relation of the teacher must be such that he/she stimulates a certain form of music creativity, the so called *interpretative creativity*. It is characterized by the ability to insert something personal into

generally accepted principles and rules so that they are accepted but simultaneously unique and inimitable. It is the condition for surpassing the average, for the birth of attention worthy content. Real artistic values in the sphere of music gain meaning only in this way. Therefore, the right environment, family, and especially the educational institutions have an enormous responsibility and can influence adequate or inadequate flow of events (Lelea, 2010).

*Inventive creativity* in a certain way represents the highlight of the developmental process. In this phase the person who deals with music is capable of inserting his/her experiences, of contributing through the inclusion of personal principles. This form of creativity, along with *emergent creativity*, usually is not a topic of discussion in the case of gifted children in the early years, but is rather evident in latter development. However, in extraordinary cases it can be manifested rather early (Činč, 2010b).

As we have already mentioned, music creativity in all forms recognizes factors which positively or negatively influence on its development. These factors, as we have seen, can be within or outside of music. The correct relationship of the teacher towards creativity is the most important, since other factors, which are related to influence through various musical content, depend on it. Because of this, contemporary educational institutions are asked not to be inclined to the use of facts only, but to leave enough room for expression and spontaneity.

It is known that abilities develop with time, but it is speculated that some types of creativity do not function in this way. In some areas, younger children under the age of ten are more successful than older children or even adults. It was confirmed, for example, that children in the first, second or third grade are more creative than children in the fourth and fifth grade. However, it has been found that latter creativity rises again in the seventh and eighth grade.

The development of creative abilities up until the sixth or seventh year is faster than the development of intelligence. Latter, memory and the acquisition of finished knowledge, because of the start of school, become central, which again stresses the importance of school and its influence on the development of creativity. At an early age, children are more spontaneous, for them everything is possible and prejudices do not exist. Hence, this explains the lack of stage fright during musical performance at an early age. In the process of maturing and learning this natural background is changes because the child changes his/her opinion towards the environment, values, certain solutions which are presented. The child will later be more and more ready to acquire the criteria of the environment, it becomes more and more sensitive and receptive to its relations and reactions. If the environment, however it may be called, is not ready to accept the child's creative output, if it mocks or undermines the child's creative manifestations, it will surely start to avoid it. The child stops playing, singing and following rhythmic impulses.

Just like in other areas, in music children's spontaneous play has a very important role. On the other hand, conveying the knowledge and experiences of the older generations is also extremely important. A question is posed: How do we keep the spontaneity and openness in the search for the new while we are acquiring new knowledge and experiences? The role of the preschool teacher in this process is crucial, since the contents used have a big capacity for the development of creativity.

According to the beliefs of psychologists, for the development of creativity, especially in the artistic field one more rule is important. Namely, that it is more quickly extinguished on concrete content and objects than in the abstract sphere. Through development children are slowly separated from their wishes. It is characterized by a larger connection to thought. This is when thought becomes the basis for creativeness, and finished solutions and stereotypes become virtually unavoidable. If a person cannot resist a large stream of finished solutions, it can happen that personal opinions in communication with people come into question. Freud, for example, believed that thought must not completely loose contact with the world of imagination which is a source of new and fresh ideas.



Since creativity had been considered as an exclusively hereditary factor, a discussion regarding special methods to improve it was impossible. Therefore, the attempts for a special organization of the educational process had more of a sporadic character. Today, there is more and more talk about a special approach, although there is a long road ahead to its practical application.

Hence, musical, and other forms of creativity output, are conditioned by numerous internal and external factors. The family and the preschool teacher (primary and secondary school teacher) can be considered as external factors although they directly influence the internal factors which concern the relationships and the demands made through practicing certain forms of music. The influence of the preschool, primary, secondary school teacher but also the family and the environment outside of school can sometimes be constricting although the wishes and intentions of the individuals might be the opposite. In such a situation the solution should be sought in the internal and external mechanisms of control in which the wish for positive action has a deciding role. The success of these mechanisms will again be evaluated through the creative results of each individual.

Creativity is conditioned by potentials which each individual possesses. This, however, does not mean that it cannot be developed, but on the contrary, one must work on the development from the earliest childhood.

Creativity can be defined through three components:

- structure of character or creative style;
- creative psychological activity and creative relationship;
- the creativity of the group in which interaction and communication lead to the creation of new ideas, i.e. the creation of creative effect (Lelea, 2010: 70).

Children in essence are creative; their creative output is a generator of new and always fresh ideas. The fact that they express themselves freely in childhood without restraints of any kind is *responsible* for creativity in children. Children are creative through games and play; they are always enriched with new ideas and contain constant creative energy.

The role of the preschool teacher, and later the primary school teacher, in the development of creativity in children is primarily to stimulate positive emotions, develop sensitivity and imagination, develop aesthetic norms. The activities of the preschool teacher should not hinder children's free expression, they should rather follow their creative needs which sometimes are not conventional, do not fit the system framework, but which can considerably contribute to the child's development and his/her further success.

*Music improvisations* have a significant role in the development of creativity. The ability for improvisation, of course, is not equally developed in all children. Improvisations can be directed towards melody or the rhythm, which is even more available in children.

The development of child creativity should be the constant task of preschool teachers and primary school teachers; it must not be suppressed by other posed goals. This is especially important in the work of preschool teachers because it often happens that through the insistence on the acquisition of elementary musical language, especially melody or rhythm, creativity is suppressed, and frequently due to the preschool teacher's inadequate reactions because they lack a creative approach in their work.

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## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

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**Abstract:** *Various professional studies have demonstrated that intelligent use of emotions provides for a good capacity of adaptation of the individual in the social environment. Emotional intelligence ensures the quality in interpersonal relations. It represents the ability to relate to people around us, to control our emotions and to direct them towards the achievement of personal goals. Research has shown that children who have learned to better control their emotions / sentiments turn out to be not only more adept from an emotional point of view, but also more competent in school and in everyday life. This study intends to prove to what extent emotional intelligence influences the school results of pupils from vocational schools (music, arts, sports).*

**Key words:** *intelligence; emotions; vocational schools; pupils.*

### Introduction

The concept of emotional intelligence (EQ) was used for the first time in 1990 by Peter Salovey and John Mayer with the purpose to describe the most important emotional characteristics required to be successful in life (L. E. Shapiro, 2012, p. 25)

Daniel Goleman was the one who made popular the term of emotional intelligence through his work named exactly the same – “Emotional intelligence”.

Cognitive intelligence represents the capacity to learn and operate with various information, data or knowledge and to adapt to various socio-cultural situations. It is measured through the intelligence quotient (IQ). Emotional intelligence represents “the capacity to identify, understand and accept our own emotions and those of the people around us and to manage them with positive results.” Emotional intelligence is measured through emotional quotients (EQ). Cognitive intelligence (IQ) is hereditary, while emotional intelligence (EQ) is mostly developed through contact with the living environment.

Emotional intelligence helps us understand what makes the difference between people who are successful in their social and professional life and those who are unsuccessful, even if all have the same level of cognitive intelligence.

“We all have inside a mixture of IQ and emotional intelligence levels. Still, out of the two, emotional intelligence is the one that gives us more qualities that make us human” (Daniel Goleman, 2008, p. 76). According to specialty literature, cognitive intelligence is rooted in the left hemisphere while emotional intelligence is rooted in the right hemisphere.

The two types of intelligence complete each other. The left cerebral hemisphere is “logical, linguistical and literal, while the right hemisphere is emotional, experiential, non-verbal and autobiographical” (Siegel J. Daniel, Bryson Payne Tina, 2017, p. 35). “The purpose is to avoid living in an emotional flood or an emotional desert” (Siegel J. Daniel, Bryson Payne Tina, 2017, p. 38).

According to D. Siegel, the two parts of the brain must be used in a coordinated way and the two hemispheres must be integrated because mental health represents “the harmonious flow between these two extremes” and thus children will be given better chances “to avoid the borders of chaos and rigidity and to live in the flexible flow of happiness and mental health” (Siegel J. Daniel, Bryson Payne Tina, 2017, p. 41).

In specialty literature, besides cognitive and emotional intelligence, one can find the description of other types of intelligence as well. H. Gardner has elaborated *the theory of multiple intelligences* – this theory is very effective in the identification of various types of skills and their development level. It has multiple applications in the instructive and educational process.

### Methodology

The research was conducted during January-June 2018 period. The test sample was made up of 87 pupils from 6<sup>th</sup> grades of music, sports and arts schools of Timișoara. They were given an emotional intelligence test, adapted by Mihaela Roco (2001), in order to observe whether there is a correlation between the emotional intelligence and the academic one, measured using the general marks and the marks in specialty subjects.

### The objectives of the research:

1. To define the emotional and academic intelligence;
2. To identify the causes and consequences of basic emotions throughout the development of personality;
3. To identify ways to develop and cultivate emotional intelligence during the educational process.

### Hypothesis of the research:

If the emotional intelligence of the pupils grows higher, then so does their academic intelligence.

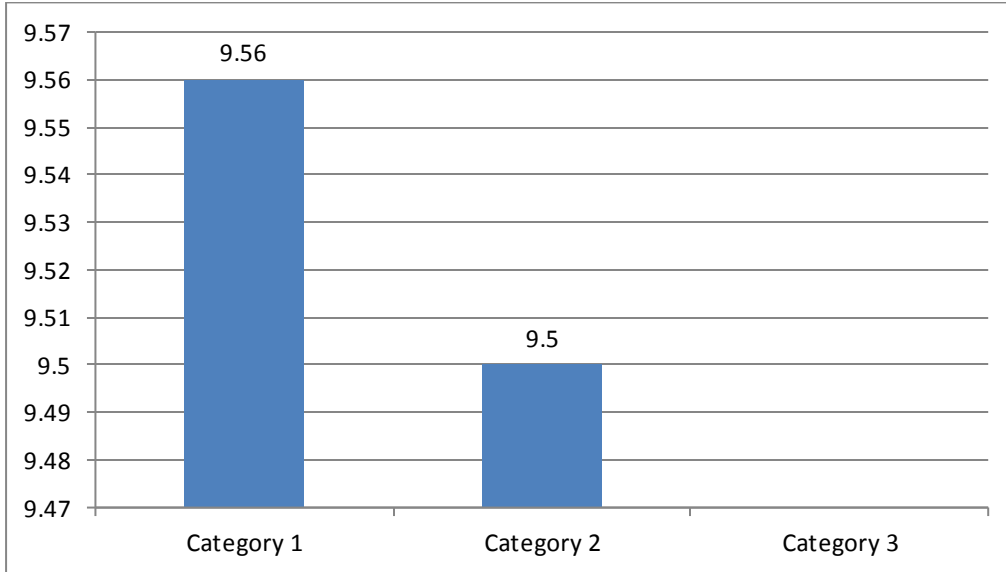
### Results

The internal regulation abilities such as awareness and acknowledgement of one's own emotions as well as the effective regulation of emotional expression during social interactions are very important for positive interactions between colleagues and in participation to school assignments. A strong basis of emotional security helps the pupil take part in learning experiences.

The investigated sample has produced a mean level of Emotional Intelligence of 87,82 (with a minimum value of 5 and a maximum value of 160) and a general mean of 8,79. For the sub-sample from Sports high-school the mean level of Emotional Intelligence was 77,58, the general mean was 8,51 and the specialty mean was 9,54. In this case there was no significant correlation between these variables. The analysis of the EI on the 3 specific intervals shows the following distribution of specialty means:

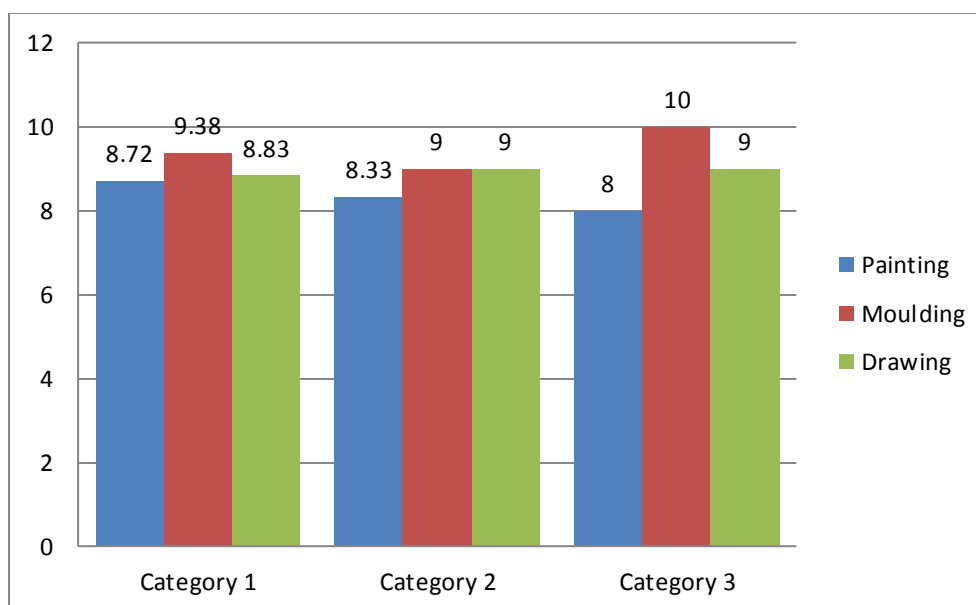
IE_Categories		Mean Sports Specialty
1	Mean	<b>9.5652</b>
	N	23
2	Mean	<b>9.5000</b>
	N	10
3	Mean	-
	N	
Total	Mean	9.5455
	N	33

According to this distribution, we can observe that the specialty mean has higher values for the first category of EI and is going down for the second category, where the EI has higher values.



For the sub-sample from Arts high-school the mean level of EI was 84,23, the general mean was 8,38 and the specialty means were:8,57 for Painting, 9,34 for Moulding and 8,88 for Drawing. In this case there was no significant correlation between these variables (0,496). The analysis of the EI on the 3 specific intervals shows the following distribution of specialty means:

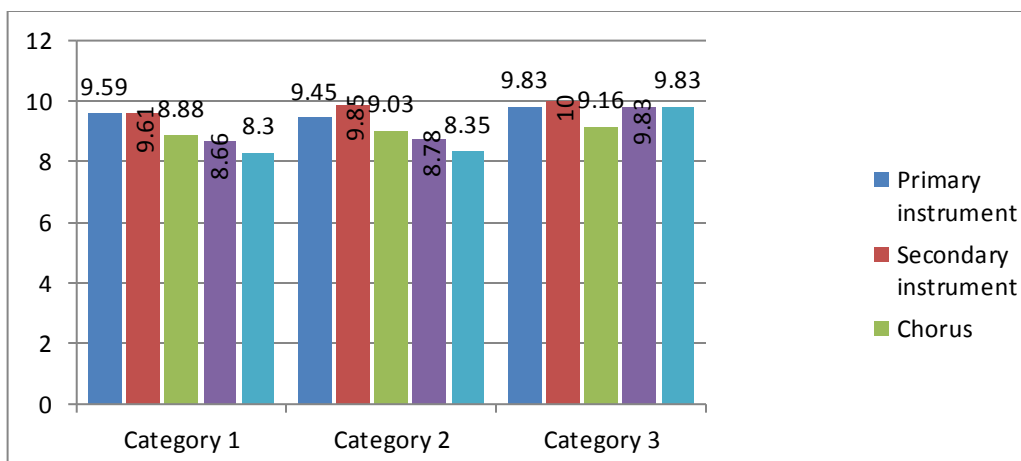
IE_Categories		Mean PAINTING Specialty	Mean MOULDING Specialty	Mean DRAWING Specialty
1	Mean	<b>8.7222</b>	<b>9.3889</b>	<b>8.8333</b>
	N	9	9	9
2	Mean	<b>8.3333</b>	<b>9.0000</b>	<b>9.0000</b>
	N	3	3	3
3	Mean	<b>8.0000</b>	<b>10.0000</b>	<b>9.0000</b>
	N	1	1	1
Total	Mean	8.5769	9.3462	8.8846
	N	13	13	13



According to this distribution, we can observe that the specialty mean decreases for Painting in reverse relation to the IE, but at the same time it is in direct proportion to the specialty mean for Moulding. For Drawing the academic performance remains constant for all three categories of the EI.

For the sub-sample from Music high-school (I) the mean level of EI was 97, the general mean was 9,15 and the specialty means were: 9,55 for primary instrument, 9,74 for secondary instrument, 8,97 for Chorus, 8,81 for Rhythmic music and 8,45 for Theory of Music. In this case there was no significant correlation between these variables (0,286). The analysis of the EI on the 3 specific intervals shows the following distribution of specialty means:

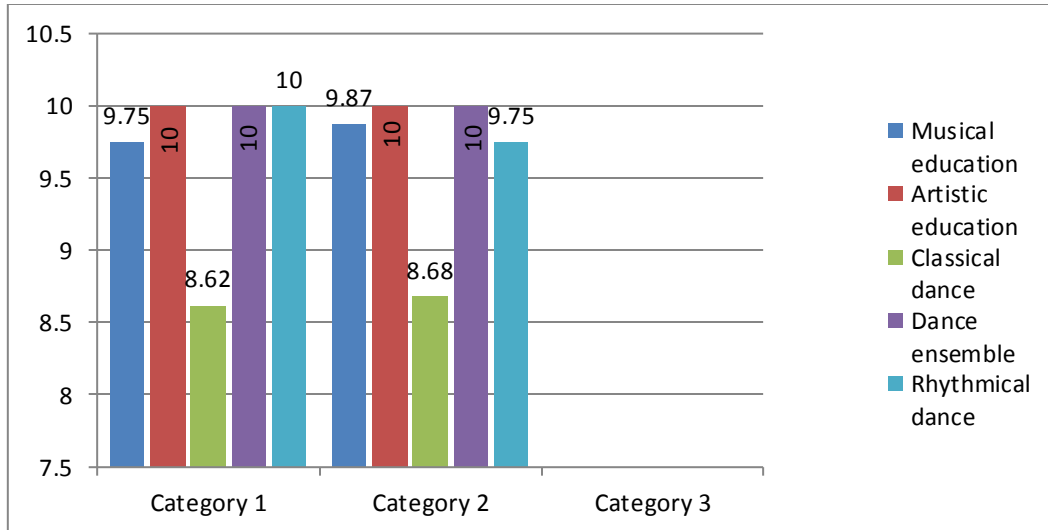
IE_Categories		Mean PRIMARY INSTRUMENT Specialty	Mean SECONDARY INSTRUMENT Specialty	Mean CHORUS Specialty	Mean RHYTHMIC MUSIC Specialty	Mean THEORY OF MUSIC Specialty
1	Mean	9.5917	9.6111	8.8889	8.6667	8.3056
	N	18	18	18	18	18
	Std. Deviation	.73808	.55719	1.57700	1.26025	1.47667
2	Mean	9.4586	9.8571	9.0357	8.7857	8.3571
	N	14	14	14	14	14
	Std. Deviation	.75434	.53452	1.39317	1.06904	1.57417
3	Mean	9.8333	10.0000	9.1667	9.8333	9.8333
	N	3	3	3	3	3
	Std. Deviation	.28868	.00000	1.44338	.28868	.28868
Total	Mean	9.5591	9.7429	8.9714	8.8143	8.4571
	N	35	35	35	35	35
	Std. Deviation	.71149	.53374	1.45492	1.15737	1.49200



All four specialties show an increase in the specialty mean in direct proportion to the values of the EI (with a slight fluctuation for Category 2 of the instrument).

For the sub-sample from Music high-school (II) the mean level of EI was 98,33, the general mean was 9,04 and the specialty means were: 9,83 for musical education, 10 for artistic education, 8,66 for classical dance, 10 for dance ensemble and 9,83 for rhythmical dance. In this case there was no significant correlation between these variables (-0,059). The analysis of the EI on the 3 specific intervals shows the following distribution of specialty means:

IE_ Categories		Mean MUSICAL EDUCATION Specialty	Mean ARTISTIC EDUCATION Specialty	Mean CLASSICAL DANCE Specialty	Mean DANCE ENSEMBLE Specialty	Mean RHYTHMICAL DANCE Specialty
1	Mean	9.7500	10.00	8.6250	10.0000	10.0000
	N	2	2	2	2	2
	Std. Deviation	.35355	.000	1.59099	.00000	.00000
2	Mean	9.8750	10.00	8.6875	10.0000	9.7500
	N	4	4	4	4	4
	Std. Deviation	.25000	.000	.85086	.00000	.50000
3	Mean					
	N					
	Std. Deviation					
Total	Mean	9.8333	10.00	8.6667	10.0000	9.8333
	N	6	6	6	6	6
	Std. Deviation	.25820	.000	.97040	.00000	.40825

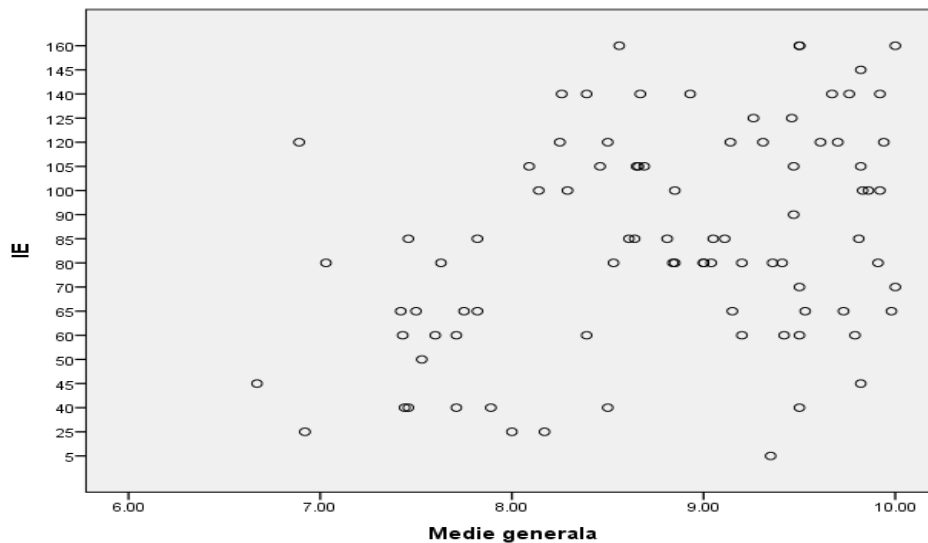


For this sub-sample we have gathered values of EI only for the first two categories. These are also in direct proportion to the specialty mean, except the one for rhythmical dance.

**References:**

For the whole sample (87 subjects) we have found a positive correlation, strongly significant from a statistical point of view, between the emotional intelligence and the academic intelligence (Pearson = 0,350, p = 0,01). This correlation was not also found at the level of each sub-sample (the investigated schools).

The significant correlation from a statistical point of view between the EI and the general mean can be observed in bellow graph:



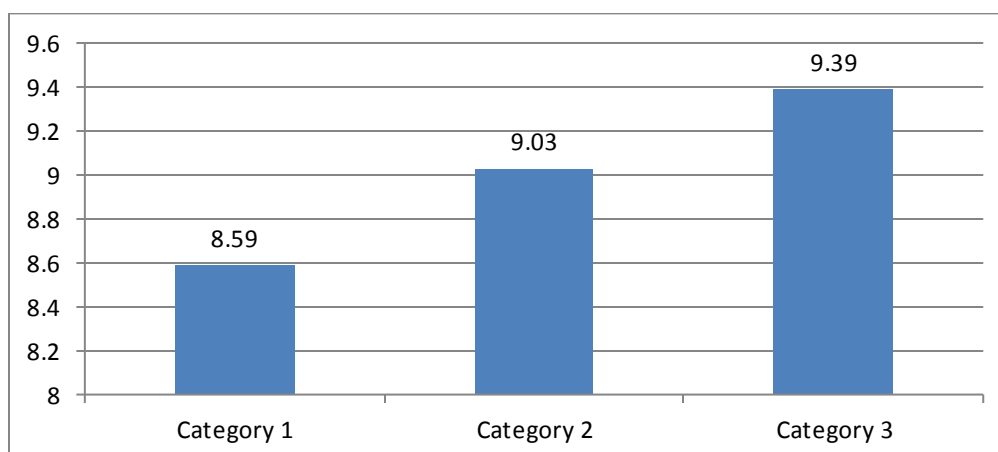
The analysis of the EI on the 3 specific intervals shows the following distribution of general means:

IE_ Categories		General mean
1. under...	Mean	8.5954
	N	52
2. between	Mean	9.0390
	N	31



3. over...	Mean	9.3900
	N	4
	Std. Deviation	.60144
Total	Mean	8.7900
	N	87

We can observe that the general mean increases at the same time with the EI increase. For the first category there is a general mean of 8,59, followed by a general mean of 9,03 for the second category and a general mean of 9,39 for the third category.



- Pupils with a high level of emotional intelligence have also a higher academic intelligence;
- Pupils who manage their own emotions in an effective manner regarding short- and long-term objectives are able to achieve favourable results, which implicitly leads to increased performance;
- Encouragement, fostering and development of intelligence in schools has as an effect an increase in performance.

In Romanian society educational culture and the teaching-educational-evaluation process is mainly focused on the development of academic abilities, while at the same time ignoring emotional intelligence. Measuring with marks the way in which certain information has been learned does not represent a guarantee that the pupil will be able to face the adult life. The development of cognitive competencies is important but not enough.

If pupils are encouraged to develop their emotional intelligence, which also improves their self-conscience, then they improve their self-confidence, they can control their emotions, they can develop empathy, patience and perseverance – all in all their behaviour and intellect will improve and they will also have academic performance. Emotional intelligence should become an important component of school curricula meant to develop emotional competences. A side effect would be an improvement of the educational process and maybe a prevention of bullying behaviour.

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## DIFFERENCES OF MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND MOTOR ABILITIES OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN DIFFERENT KINESIOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES

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**Abstract:** *The study was conducted on a sample of 51 male respondents, members of school sports sections of athletes (N = 15), basketball players (N = 21) from Novi Sad elementary school "Zarko Zrenjanin" and students (N = 15) of the Novi Sad school who do not practice sports, ages 11-12. Measurement of morphological characteristics and motor abilities was performed on them. Using multivariate analysis of variance, it was found that there were statistically significant differences in morphological and motor space. Individual analyzes revealed differences in the medium circumference of forearm, standing long jum, backwardsobstacle course and wide legged seated forwardvariables. The results of the Bonferoni comparison confirmed the existence of significant differences in the medium circumference of forearm variable, between athlete and student in favor of athlete and basketball player and student in favor of basketball player, and that there are significant differences between athletes attending school sports sections and non-sports students in favor of groups of athletes and basketball players, and between the athletic and basketball section students, there are significant differences in the backwards obstacle course and wide legged seated forward variables in favor of the athletic group. Directed physical activity contributes to a greater degree of development of the motor skills of the students who practice them.*

**Key words:** *school sports section; students; extra activity; differences.*

### Intoduction

In order to develop a healthy population, it is necessary to develop exercise habits. One of the possible solutions for improving the development of children is the inclusion in optionalextracurricular school (school sports sections) and extracurricular sports activities (sports societies and clubs), with physical and health education classes. It is well known that the way of life today is characterized by the lack of movement of young people, who now spend more time at the computer, that there are more activities related to sitting, which is why there is an intense need to involve as many children as possible in extracurricular sports activities (Zivicnjak, Zebec, Franke, Filler, Szirovica, Haffner, Querfeld, Ehrich & Rudan, 2001; Breslauer, Maršić i Mesarić, 2004).

For these reasons, it is necessary to gather as much information as possible about the effects of exercise on the health, motor and functional abilities of elementary school students. The aim of physical education teaching is to transform the dimensions of the anthropological status of the students, with the emphasis on the transformation of the dimensions of the morphological, motor and functional subsystems in the teaching

process. Extra sport activity in the form of school sports sections in extracurricular activities also contributes to the development of the child in the morphological, motor and functional space (Breslauer, 2002). Since natural forms of movement are less and less represented in everyday life, children need to be taught just that first, and regardless of the sport activity that the child is engaged in, the most important attention should be given to natural forms of movement, which is not given to different sports enough attention. They need to be more interested in school sections and sports games.

Studies of a similar type were conducted by Breslauer, Delija, Jelenić (2005) as well as Vrbik, Gruic, and Ohnjec (2010) with the aim of determining the existence of significant differences between the respondents of directed school sports activities and children not involved in similar activities and to determine the higher level of motor abilities of children directed physical activity. The results obtained showed that there were significant differences between the groups of subjects in some anthropometric variables (body weight and medium circumference of forearm). Based on previous research by foreign authors on the activities of children in extracurricular school sections, there is an interest of authors in similar work of this type in Novi Sad.

The problem was the analysis of differences in anthropometric characteristics and motor abilities of boys aged 11-12 years, with different physical activities. The subject of the paper was morphological characteristics and motor skills, while the aim of the study was to determine the possible differences in the morphological characteristics and motor abilities of students involved in various sports activities and children who do not practice sports from Novi Sad, aged 11-12 years.

## Method

The sample of respondents for the purposes of this paper consisted of 51 subjects: 15 student members of the school athletic section, 21 students of collective sports (basketball sections) and 15 students who do not attend school sports sections and do not play sports, aged 11-12 from Novi Sad. At the time of measuring and testing, all respondents attended the elementary school "Zarko Zrenjanin", and athletics and basketball are the most represented sports in the school and there are school sports sections from these two sports, which is why they were selected.

Measurement of morphological characteristics that could determine the physical growth and development of children, youth and people implied the measurement of: 1) Body height (mm); 2) Body mass (0.1 kg) and 3) Medium circumference of forearm (mm).

The following standard motor tests were used to evaluate motor skills: I To evaluate movement structuring factors: 1) Standing long jump - evaluation of the explosive power of the legs;; 2) backwards obstacle course - assessment of whole body coordination. II To evaluate the synergistic tuning of the tone: 3) wide legged seated forward - evaluation of the flexibility of the posterior lobe of the thigh.

After obtaining the consent of the principal and the consent of the parents, a complete survey was conducted on the population of children in the fifth and sixth grades of the "Nikola Tesla" elementary school in Novi Sad. The survey was conducted in the classes of physical education and school sports sections in June 2016. The measurements were made in the sports hall of the mentioned elementary school in Novi Sad.

Statistical data processing meant calculating descriptive statistics of anthropometric and specific-motor variables: arithmetic mean (AM), standard deviations (S), minimum values (MIN) and maximum values of the measurement results (MAX), Skewness (measure of horizontal deviation from normal distribution) and Kurtosis (measure of vertical deviation of distribution from normal) of elongation of distribution. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), univariate (ANOVA) analysis of variance and Bonferoni comparison with

significance level  $p \leq 0.0167$  were used to determine the existence of statistically significant differences between groups of subjects in anthropometric and motor variables. In order to determine the existence of statistically significant differences between the groups of subjects in the anthropometric and motor variables, we used the multivariable analysis of variance (MANOVA), the univariate analysis (ANOVA) of the variation and the Bonferoni comparison on with the significance level  $p \leq 0.0167$ .

## Results

The results of the descriptive statistics of the morphological and motor variables (table 1) indicated a similar level of growth of the body in all the three groups of subjects observed through all the three variables analyzed to evaluate both the length of the skeleton (the height of the body) and the volume and body weight (body weight and medial circumference of the forearm). Given that we are dealing with an initial selection of children, at the school level, it can be concluded that it is satisfactory at least in terms of morphological characteristics. Taking into account the average values, it is concluded that the respondents of the basketball section are the highest on average, while the students who do not play sports are on average the hardest, and the students of the athletics school section stand out with the highest average values of the forearm circumference.

For motor variables, regarding the homogeneity of the sample, the same conclusions can be drawn: the subjects of the different groups formed are at a similar level of development of explosive leg strength, coordination and body flexibility as seen within their groups. Skewness and Kurtosis values indicate that the analyzed distributions do not deviate significantly from the normal distribution.

Table 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF MORPHOLOGICAL AND MOTOR VARIABLES

Variable	Group	AM	S	MIN	MAX	Sk	Kurt
Body height (0,1 mm)	Athletes	1576,47	65,11	1489	1671	0,27	-1,27
	Basketball	1620,24	61,07	1505	1735	-0,09	-0,03
	Students	1586,73	69,68	1486	1771	1,10	2,53
Body mass (0,1 kg)	Athletes	445,40	56,80	345	526	-0,14	-1,04
	Basketball	476,81	50,05	353	541	-0,57	0,11
	Students	484,20	84,32	387	635	0,64	-0,95
Medium circumference of forearm (0,1 mm)	Athletes	219,13	10,53	195	230	-1,26	1,12
	Basketball	211,62	10,31	195	235	0,17	-0,17
	Students	199,60	8,38	185	214	0,11	-0,25
Standing long jump (0,1 cm)	Athletes	180,47	14,45	162	210	0,52	-0,63
	Basketball	178,81	10,91	154	200	-0,25	0,45
	Students	163,77	11,06	148	183	0,34	-1,00
backwards obstacle course (0,1 s)	Athletes	147,73	12,78	130	175	0,58	-0,23
	Basketball	176,71	17,31	150	215	0,39	-0,37
	Students	182,93	13,40	150	201	-0,76	-0,28
Wide legged seated forward (0,1 cm)	Athletes	47,67	7,11	37	57	-0,26	-1,26
	Basketball	43,24	4,19	36	49	-0,01	-1,25
	Students	37,67	5,14	29	47	-0,06	-0,76

Legend: MIN - minimum values of the measurement results; MAX-maximum values of the measurement results; Sk – Skewness (inclination) / Kurt – Kurtosis (distribution elongation).

Based on the Wilks' lambda F report (Table 2), it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the subjects of the different groups in terms of their morphological characteristics at  $F = 6.75$ . By the individual analysis of each morphological variable, it is concluded that there are statistically significant variations in the variable (table 2) *The average forearm circumference*.

Table 2. DIFFERENCES IN MORPHOLOGICAL VARIABLES

Variable	Group	F	p	F	P
Body height	Athletes	2,29	0,11	6,75	0,00
	Basketball				
	Students				
Body mass	Athletes	1,61	0,21		
	Basketball				
	Students				
The average circumference of forearm	Athletes	15,05	0,00		
	Basketball				
	Students				

Legend: *F* - univariate *f* test; *p* - level of statistical significance of *f* test; *F* - multivariate Wilkson *F* test; *P* - statistical significance of multivariate *F* test.

Considering the multiple correction procedure of Bonferoni, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in the variable for estimating the volume of the skeleton, the average volume of the forearm, between: athlete and student ( $p = 0.000$ ) in favor of the athlete and the basketball player and of the student ( $p = 0.002$ ) in favor of the basketball player. In the remaining two analyzed variables, no statistically significant differences were observed between the groups of subjects ( $p > 0.017$ ).

Table 3. BONFERONI'S COMPARISON OF MORPHOLOGICAL VARIABLES

Variable	Group	Group	The difference of the AM	p
Body height	Athletes	Basketball	-43,77	0,155
		Students	-10,27	0,981
	Basketball	Students	33,50	0,400
Body mass	Athletes	Basketball	-31,41	0,455
		Students	-38,80	0,306
	Basketball	Students	-7,39	0,980
Medium circumference of forearm	Athletes	Basketball	7,51	0,086
		Students	<b>19,53</b>	<b>0,000</b>
	Basketball	Students	<b>12,01</b>	<b>0,002</b>

Legend: *p* - the level of statistical significance of the Bonferoni comparison.

Based on the Wilks' lambda values (Table 4), it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between subjects of different ages in terms of their motor

skills at  $F = 13.23$ . By analyzing each motor variable individually, it is concluded that there are statistically significant differences in all three analyzed variables (Table 4): Standing long jump, backwards obstacle course wide legged seated forward

Table 4. DIFFERENCES IN MOTOR VARIABLES

Variable	Group	F	P	F	P
Long jump on the spot	Athletes	9,86	<b>0,00</b>	<b>13,23</b>	<b>0,00</b>
	Basketball				
	Students				
Back polygon	Athletes	21,71	<b>0,00</b>		
	Basketball				
	Students				
Wide legged seated forward	Athletes	12,67	<b>0,00</b>		
	Basketball				
	Students				

Legend:  $F$  - univariate  $f$  test;  $p$  - level of statistical significance of  $f$  test;  $F$  - multivariate Wilkson  $F$  test;  $p$  - statistical significance of multivariate  $F$  test.

Considering the procedure for correcting Bonferoni's multiple comparisons, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in the variable for the estimation of the structuring factor of the Jump motion in length from the spot, between: athletes and students ( $p = 0.001$ ) for the benefit of athletes; basketball players and students ( $p = 0.001$ ) for the benefit of the basketball players. In the back polygon variable, between: athlete and basketball player ( $p = 0.000$ ) in favor of the athlete, then athlete and student ( $p = 0.000$ ) in favor of the athlete. In a variable to evaluate the synergistic regulation of tone wide legged seated forward between: athlete and student ( $p = 0.000$ ) in favor of athlete and basketball player and student ( $p = 0.012$ ) in favor of basketball player.

Table 5. BONFERONI COMPARISON OF MOTOR VARIABLES

Variable	Group	Group	The difference of the AM	p
Long jump on the spot	Athletes	Basketball	1,66	0,985
		Students	17,40	<b>0,001</b>
	Basketball	Students	15,74	<b>0,001</b>
Back polygon	Athletes	Basketball	-28,98	<b>0,000</b>
		Students	-35,20	<b>0,000</b>
	Basketball	Students	15,74	0,754
Wide legged seated forward	Athletes	Basketball	4,43	0,061
		Students	10,00	<b>0,000</b>
	Basketball	Students	5,57	<b>0,012</b>

Legend:  $p$  - the level of statistical significance of the Bonferoni comparison.

## Discussion

The reason for the existence of statistically significant differences between athletes and basketball players in the space of movement structuring factors, manifested by the variables standing long jump and backwards obstacle course, can be attributed to the individual preferences of the physical education teachers, but also to the current requirements and opportunities for implementation of the program for these groups of respondents. Also, it should be noted that in the structure of athletic training, especially in the introductory and final part of the training (for the school sports club - athletics section), more exercises are represented for developing flexibility through the use of static and dynamic stretching-tightening in relation to the lessons of the school sports club-basketball section.

In training process technology, the primary creation of an optimal situational training model (Bowerman, Freeman, Vern Gambetta & T.A.C., 1999). The situational model implies that exercises are used in the training process to develop those motor skills that are primary in a given discipline. As the school section was concerned and the respondents are not active athletic competitors, and their age is in the category of "beginners", the situational model is not aimed at just one selected discipline, but is comprehensive. This means that it is geared towards improving the motor skills that are primary in most athletic disciplines. Because explosive power is one of the determinants of success in all activities that require the exercise of maximum muscular strength in a unit of time as short as possible (Newton & Kreamer, 1994), it is an important factor in those activities where it is necessary to exercise grants a great acceleration to the body mass, the mass of some body parts or external object, which implies all the athletic disciplines. Therefore, in the basic training of athletics, more attention is paid to developing the strengths of the lower extremities, which are essential for achieving good results in all athletic disciplines, thus representing vertical, horizontal and combined vertical and horizontal jumps, which cause effects positive on explosive movements, balance and more efficient ability to repeat start accelerations (Ramírez-Campillo, Gallardo, Henríquez-Olguín, Meylan, Martínez, Álvarez, et al., 2015). In addition, maximum load is applied in athletic training very often, depending on the training plan and program, because such load is very effective in the process of developing physical abilities, since it simulates the expression of maximum load as well as during competition (Bondarchuk, 2010), but also as when testing. On the basis of the above, the result is that the athletes in the variable Jump away from the place achieved the best results, ahead of the basketball players. Basketball, on the other hand, requires the manifestation of certain types of power: repetitive and explosive. In the immediate game, specific abilities are manifested that are determined by a high percentage of power: jump, start speed, acceleration, stop and slow, and more. The goal is to perform complex basketball movements with as much muscle force as possible in as little time as possible, and that this can be repeated several times if necessary (Karalejić i Jakovljević 2008). As explosive power is defined as the ability of the neuro-muscular system to withstand relatively high external loads at high contraction rates (Sudarov, 2007), it is crucial in the so-called. explosive activities such as jumps and is an important feature for basketball players (Aşçi, & Açıkada, 2007; Paiva Neto & César, 2005). In this study, it should be noted that the students were focused on the development of different motor skills, which were not examined in this research. However, basketball training technology also develops motor skills that are incorporated into the basketball game itself, such as speed, agility, strength - especially explosive power, etc. However, although in the training process it was very likely the development of the same motor skills, but with different percentages and different means of training, the students who trained the athletics obtained better results in the standing long jump variable compared to students who have coached basketball, although not at a statistically significant level. The reason is most likely that in basketball, the jump itself is performed in different directions, high jumping prevailed. Such a jump represents the ability to exert a large amount of muscular force

in a vertical direction, very quickly in a short time, so training was most likely to develop a vertical type jump, which is most commonly encountered in athletics. Although both studied groups showed a greater explosive force of the extensor muscles of the legs, compared to the students who do not practice any sport, the best results were obtained by the athletes, ie the group that in the training process applied exercises for developing the horizontal jump, which are much more similar to the test of standing long jump, which is equally horizontal. In line with the above, it is a logical explanation that the respondents who attend additional school sports sections are at a higher motor level in terms of explosive leg strength, because they have regular physical exercise (in physical education classes) and additional activities (in athletic and basketball school sections), they strengthen their leg muscles through various exercises applied to the adequate section. Research has shown that a complex training program influences better neuromuscular adaptation and maximum strength and speed of effort, but especially, the combination of concentric exercises, eccentric-concentric explosive exercises influences the rapid generation of muscle strength (Fatouros, Jamurtas, Leontsini, Taxildaris, Aggelousis, Kostopoulos et al., 2000; Jensen & Ebben, 2003; Kukrić, Karalejić, Petrović i Jakovljević, 2009). Regularly toning the muscles and increasing the stimuli in them, training leading to the inclusion of more motor units in the movement, there were also differences in the benefits of athletes and basketball compared to students who do not do sports, which could be expected.

In the second variable for estimating the structure factor of the backwards obstacle course movement, statistically significant differences were observed between the three groups tested in favor of athletes. They were at a higher level of coordination development than basketball players and non-sporting students. Previous experience gained in school sports section classes, higher power levels, richer motor experience have contributed to the fact that there are better results for more active groups of students (athletes and basketball players) than non-athletic students. The contents of the athletics program cover a large motor space. Research done on athletes and basketball players found a significant difference in motor skills. It should be mentioned, in order to plan the contents of the program in extracurricular activities, that athletes have a better expressed repetitive power factor, better mobility, balance and speed, while basketball players have good coordination, speed, mobility and all forms of manifestation of power (Popović, Boli, Stanković, Ochiana, Savić, & Bojović, 2014). This information is especially useful for physical education teachers in schools that run sports departments. The students of the athletics section scored on average better results than the students of the basketball section, which may be due to a better coordination of this group of respondents of the same age and the fact that a greater longitudinality in the basketball players could have made it difficult to pass under the Swedish box in the group of respondents of the basketball school section. Also the fact that they were on average taller, had bigger problems when pushing through the frame of a Swedish crate and moving backwards over an obstacle.

From the earliest childhood, the child develops and acquires the proper sports habits in the years to come. The habit leads to the need for movement and if it is preserved throughout life, it will have optimal effect (O'Sullivan, 2004; Tappe & Burgeson, 2004). Through training, exercising and learning new movements, these two groups of subjects improved their motor skills, which were incorporated into basic motor skills, such as coordination. Greater motor experience and a wealth of movement have contributed to the significant differences between the group of non-sporting students. The result is consistent with the fact that athletes who besides physical education and other sports differ statistically significantly in terms of motor characteristics compared to their colleagues who do not practice any sport (Vuksanović, 1999).

The results of this study showed that there were significant differences between the groups of subjects in one anthropometric variable, Medium Scope of the Forearm, with regard to the type of school sports section in which the students were involved, in favor of groups engaged in athletics and basketball in extracurricular activities in relation to students who do



not practice sports. The mean circumference of the forearm, as a parameter that could indicate the condition and level of training (Breslauer, Maršić i Mesarić, 2004), was more pronounced in students attending sports school sections. Even athletes had higher values of this anthropometric variable than the students in the basketball section, so it can be stated that they are in a better level of morpho-motor status. Racing performance in athletics is influenced by body weight (Kenney & Hodgson, 1985), body mass index (Knechtle, Knechtle, & Rosemann, 2010; Hoffman, Lebus, Ganong, Casazza, & Van Loan, 2010; Sedeaud, Marc, Marck, Dor, Schipman, Dorsey, et al., 2014) and body fat percentage (Hoffman, 2008; Hetland, Haarbo, & Christiansen, 1998) other than skin folds and their sums, and the results are not surprising. It should not be overlooked that a large part of the respondents involved in school sports sections are engaged in the same sports in some of the sports clubs in Novi Sad, and that their dominance in motoring may have been a consequence of long sports.

The results of this research confirm the previous research of Breslauer, Delija and Jelenic (2005) and can be used in terms of better planning of the physical education process implemented in the system of education of elementary school students. Studies of the effects of additional physical education instruction within the school sports society for physical culture in primary school students indicate that the correct methodological shaping of training work results in significant positive transformational effects of anthropological characteristics (Cicović, 2010).

This paper could support anthropological disciplines, and it would be reflected in the analysis of the status of particular anthropological dimensions of elementary school-age children, who are included and who are not included in the kinesiological activity programs. In future studies of a similar type, it would be desirable to carry out longitudinal research on the same groups of subjects so that their further growth and development in the morphological and psychomotor domains could be monitored.

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*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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# CONSTATIVE STUDY REGARDING THE CHOOSING CRITERIA OF THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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**Abstract:** *The paper presents several criteria used by the parents of the kindergarten children before their children registration. They must choose from the multitude of existing kindergartens, the one that best suits their requirements. The research method used was the survey with the working tools: individual interview and focus group. The target group was made up of parents of preschool children from the municipality of Brasov. The research results follow the proposed objectives and hypotheses and are presented on the applied research tools. The ordering of the criteria was based on the results obtained by conducting the study. The conclusions drawn lead to the idea that the choice of kindergarten must take into account certain criteria, but also the characteristics of the child, his needs, his level of development and how he will adapt. With the help of the kindergarten and parents, preschool children will find the key to future success in adapting and integrating schools.*

**Keywords:** *kindergarten; criteria; preschool education; preschool children;*

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to realize an inventory of the kindergarten selection criteria by the parents with preschool children. When comes the time of enrolling the child in kindergarten, parents wonders what would be the best place for him. They must choose from the multitude of existing kindergartens, the one that best suits their requirements. As enrolment in kindergartens is taking place in a short time, the number of institutions in pre-school education is increasing, and the material demands are increasing, the parents are facing great difficulties.

In the past, state kindergartens were the only solution of teaching the little ones. In the present times the situation has changed completely. The state kindergarten began to be replaced with the private kindergarten by the vast majority of parents. The reasons for this phenomenon are diversified: the classes have few children enrolled, the teachers are better prepared, the educational activities are more diverse and attractive, the program is extended and the number of available places is higher.

However, there are also state kindergartens that have begun to diversify their activities. It is not always important that the amount that is paid within a preschool institution, but the child's assimilation capacities, as well as its results that are observed over time.

## 2. State of the art of kindergarten education

### 2.1. Early education - conceptual clarifications

In the broadest sense, education means the process that begins when the human is born and lasts a lifetime. Education aims to achieve the ideal of the human being, expressed by "being and becoming", a dynamic process, but also flexible, adapted to each person.

Preschool age is undoubtedly the educational foundation of all life. Due to their young age, preschool education has a specific character. This period, as care and education, forms the basis of the later life (Golu, 1995).

The family represents the first educational court, through which the child forms his personality and makes his debut on the path of social integration. Socialization is then achieved

through pre-preschool and preschool education. An essential impact on the process of socializing the child is the kindergarten, which contributes to the process of building the personality of the child in one of the most malleable and most vulnerable stages of age. Demonstrating itself as a unitary action, education fulfils its desires through the close connection between the family and the educational environment, respectively the kindergarten (Băran Pescaru, 2004).

The educational services offered by the kindergarten create for the preschool children the necessary conditions for a normal development, allowing each one to follow his personal path of growth and development. At the same time, it offers support for improvement of the psychic and physical potential of each child, for the interaction with the environment, favours the discovery by each child of his own identity and forms a positive self-image (Glava, 2004).

Early education takes place before school age, in order to develop the child's personality harmoniously. Early education should help a child be prepared for a smooth transfer to school.

Early education often focuses on learning through play, based on Jean Piaget's research and philosophy, which argues that play meets the physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional and social needs of children. Learning through play will allow a child to develop cognitively (Butler, 2016).

Early education can be classified as follows:

- Pre-preschool education, addressed to the children between the ages of 1 and 3, also called the first childhood. Generally, pre-kindergarten education takes place in nurseries, day centres or kindergartens. It represents the primary, coherent life experience, being impregnated by the learning of verbal communication.
- The preschool education is addressed to children between 3 and 5/6 years, it is organized in kindergartens with normal, prolonged and weekly program and represents the stage in which the learning and psycho-behavioural deficiencies of the children are detected, ensuring at the same time preparing the child for entry into primary education.

In the context of the world view on the training and development of the child, from a qualitative point of view, early education places its mark throughout the child's life. The enrolment in the kindergarten and the participation in its entire educational path are conditions for a successful school and social integration.

## ***1.2. Synthetic analysis of the role of the parent in the choice of kindergarten***

When it is necessary to enrol in the kindergarten, the parents must choose from the multitude of existing kindergartens the one that best suits their requirements.

Following a study conducted in the online environment, we extracted, based on the testimonies of parents, several criteria for selecting a kindergarten:

- ***proximity to the house*** is a criterion taken into account by parents who have a low availability of time and who prefer to use the reduced distance from home to kindergarten. Sometimes, due to the need to structure their time according to other activities, parents leave in the care of their grandparents or close persons, the task of bringing or taking the child to / from the kindergarten.
- ***proximity to the employment place***
- ***the quality of the teaching staff*** - the professional training, the results obtained, the involvement, the affection manifested towards children
- ***the educational offer*** of the kindergarten, which includes instructional program: educational projects carried out; extracurricular activities (foreign languages, creative workshops, etc.); shows, excursions, visits, walks; the material resources available to the kindergarten (spaces, materials, etc.), human resources, etc.
- ***the recommendation*** is a criterion worth considering, because the recommendation is made from the previous experience of the one who does it and who is satisfied with the services

provided and the evolution of the child. This choice is based on trust, and expectations are mostly confirmed and satisfactory.

- *the value of the monthly fee* is a selection criterion, in the light of the approach regarding the value for money.

- *number of children enrolled in the class*

- *the security of the kindergarten.*

Depending on the time the parents have, they can choose one of the three options: normal program (4 hours), extended program (8 hours) or weekly program (Monday to Friday). Given that the time allocated to the child can only be valorised in the evening, the kindergarten program becomes a decisive factor. This choice is based on the need for compensation, the need to maintain a structured, adequate and varied program even in the absence of the parent. The expectations of the parent refer to the structure of this program (meal, sleep, educational activities, extracurricular activities, trips, individual activities), so that the parental role is fulfilled.

Depending on the material possibilities that parents have, as well as the educational offers of kindergartens, the following options are considered:

- the state kindergartens, with qualified personnel, low costs (only for the payment of food in the case of those with an extended program), but with many children enrolled in a class and often with reduced facilities.
- private kindergartens, with appropriate facilities, diversified activities that are not often found in state institutions, but which impose higher costs.
- "Step by step" kindergartens, which are oriented towards organizing on centres of interest where the child can develop his creativity and develop according to his own choices. The disadvantage of these kindergartens is the lack of continuity with primary education.

The parents of the pre-schoolers have difficulties in enrolling the children, they must respect the registration calendar and they have to choose from a large number of educational institutions. There is a preference for private kindergartens, because the number of children enrolled in the group is lower than in state institutions, the educational offer is more varied and included in the attendance fee, the work schedule and the number of vacancies is higher.

The state kindergartens have begun to diversify their educational offer, including activities that attract the attention of parents/ children and motivate them in their choice. Of interest are the results obtained over time (the skills formed for preschool children).

### **3. Research methodology**

The aspects that make it necessary to investigate the behaviour of parents with preschool children regarding the choice of a kindergarten consist in the existence of a large number of kindergartens in the municipality of Brasov, both private kindergartens and the state kindergarten.

It is necessary for the kindergartens to know the criteria according to which parents are guided in choosing the kindergarten for their children, which are the features that differentiate one kindergarten from another, as well as the effort that they make to bring their children to one from kindergartens.

#### **The research problem:**

- *What are the reasons and criteria for choosing kindergarten in the vision of parents with preschool children?*

#### **Research objectives:**

1. Identification of the opinion of the specialized inspector regarding the criteria for choosing a kindergarten by the parents.

2. Identification of parents' opinion on the criteria for choosing kindergarten according to the following indicators:

2.1 Identify the criteria for choosing kindergarten

2.2 Establishing the importance given to each criterion for choosing kindergarten

**The hypotheses** from which we started are the following:

1. The parents from Brasov with preschool children choose a kindergarten for them according to certain criteria, the criterion of approaching the house being decisive.

2. The professional training of the staff plays an important role in increasing the quality in education.

The topic that is the subject of the research is the identification of the criteria for choosing a kindergarten by the parents of the preschool children.

The research method was the survey, with the tools: interview guide and focus group.

The objective of the interview was to identify the kindergarten selection criteria for the parents of preschool children, from the perspective of a specialized inspector. Therefore, we conducted an interview with the preschool education inspector, Mrs. Necula Gabriela, with a vast experience in education (41 years).

The guide is divided into two sections and contains six open questions. The first section aimed to identify the opinion of the inspector on the criteria of kindergarten choice for parents of preschool children, and in the second section it is proposed to identify recommendations for parents to help them identify the right kindergarten for their child.

The second research tool used is the focus group. This represents a variant of the group interview, focused and structured, in which the participants can get involved in the discussion, either by answering the same question, or by engaging in the discussion generated by launching a controversial idea, or by constructing answers, based on presenting a scenario of ideas, either through brainstorming (Bocoş, 2003).

The focus group guide consists of several sections. The first section presents the topic discussed and the way of working. The participants are then asked to present themselves. The rules to be respected are made known to the participants, as well as the duration of the meeting.

The second section contains the questions that will be addressed to the parents, in order to carry out the research. The questions asked are both open questions, which require answers from the participants, as well as questions for selecting a variant and motivating the choice, but also questions related to personal satisfaction and intervention in the case of a decision-making power. The moderator notes all ideas presented during the discussion, with minimal verbal interventions. The group of subjects is represented by parents with preschool children from Brasov County. For the focus group, the group is consisted of 15 parents recruited on a voluntary basis. All participants fall into the 25-39 years age segment, four men and 11 women. From the focus group volunteers 12 have higher education and 3 secondary education. 11 have one child and 4 have two children.

#### **4. Research results**

The processing of the results obtained after their collection with the proposed research instruments will be structured according to the objectives of the present research.

##### **4.1. Interview analysis**

The interview was held at the Brasov School Inspectorate, in the office of Mrs. Inspector, a comfortable environment, known, which aimed to obtain concrete information on the chosen topic. The interview guide used in the present research is structured, the topic and

the proposed questions are known. During the interview I also asked helpful questions, to clarify the information requested.

At the beginning, the parents' choice of kindergarten was discussed. When asked about the criteria considered by the parents, the inspector listed: the proximity of the house or the working place, as well as the quality of the teachers or the educational offer of the kindergarten.

- *What are the legislative provisions regarding the choice of kindergarten? Is your home account taken into account?*

From a legislative point of view, they have priority in the registration and admission, those that respect the general criteria of separation approved by the Ministry of National Education.

These are: the existence of a document that proves that a child is orphaned by one or both parents, the existence of a brother/ sister registered in the respective school, the existence of a medical certificate for the degree of disability of the child.

In addition, each educational institution may establish specific selection criteria, approved by the Board of Directors and submitted to the School Inspectorate Brasov for approval. These criteria cannot be discriminatory and cannot include pre-registration lists and will only be applied after the general criteria have been exhausted.

- *What is the minimum age at which children can be received in kindergarten?*

According to the specifications regarding the enrolment in the preschool education, the occupation of vacant places is usually done in the decreasing order of the age groups, so for beginner class, the children of 3 years old will have priority. In case the available places cannot be completed, children from 2 to 3 years old can be enrolled.

- *What would you recommend to your parents before choosing the kindergarten?*

The inspector would recommend to parents an overview of kindergartens in the home or working area, knowledge of the legislation regarding enrolment in kindergarten, as well as a comparative study between state and private kindergartens.

- *What information should they have?*

The information that the parents must have are those related to the kindergarten program, the number of teachers / child care persons, information related to the registration procedure.

- *What should parents clarify when they visit kindergarten?*

At a visit of the kindergarten the parent must clarify the notions about the type of existing meal (catering or own food block), the available spaces (classrooms, playground, dining room, etc.) and the knowledge of the Internal Order Regulation or other aspects specific to the unit. A visit to the schools targeted for enrolment is useful, as there may be questions that require a timely explanation or other clarification issues.

Through this interview I proposed to find the opinion of a specialized inspector, with vast experience in the field of pre-school education, regarding these criteria for selecting the kindergarten, respectively the information and the steps that parents must take before choosing the kindergarten.

Analysing the answers offered to the first question, regarding the criteria for the kindergarten's choice by the parents of the preschool children, the inspector confirmed that the proximity to the house is the main selection criterion, followed by the quality of the teachers and the educational offer of the kindergarten.

The legislative provisions approved by the MEN regarding the choice of kindergarten is favourable to the parents who have more than one child enrolled in the unit, as well as single-parent families, families with children who have been certified as disabled or children who are orphans. They have priority regardless of the area in which they live.



From the point of view of the legislative provisions, the children of 3 years old have priority in the enrolment, those between 2 and 3 years can be admitted, only within the limit of the places available.

The recommendations of the specialized inspector are aimed at informing the parents about the aspects related to the registration procedure and those concerning the specificity of each kindergarten.

The inspector's answers verified the hypotheses, according to which the parents choose their kindergarten for the child according to specific criteria, such as approaching the house and professional training.

## **4.2. Focus group analysis**

We present below the data obtained from the focus group application. The activity took place in a classroom, arranged with a large blackboard, for about an hour. It started with a brief presentation of the topic and with the statement of the main rules for conducting discussions.

### *4.2.1 Themes analysis*

*Question 1. Is it necessary for a child to go to kindergarten?*

The first question concerned the introduction in the topic of the participants. All participants consider that it is important for a child to attend the community, from the preschool age laying the foundations of education for the whole life.

*Question 2. How important is it for you to attend a kindergarten by the preschool child?*

The kindergarten has an essential impact on the socialization process of the child, it contributes to the process of building the personality of the child in one of the most malleable and vulnerable stages of age. Some participants admit that the kindergarten is also a place where they feel their children safe, supervised while the parents are at work.

*Question 3. What do you most want from a kindergarten?*

Parents expect from a kindergarten: safety, education, supervision, good conditions. Some expect collaboration and involvement from staff.

*Question 4. What were the criteria for choosing your kindergarten for your child?*

Some of the criteria for choosing a kindergarten are:

- proximity to the house (home). The kindergarten is chosen according to how close it is the proximity to the child's home. Usually this choice belongs to parents who have a low availability of time, sometimes bringing the child to kindergarten even being left in the care of grandparents or other close persons. This choice is based on the availability of the parent, the need to structure his time to be in agreement with all his activities. A close location implies the possibility of easy access to bring the child in the morning and take him at the appointed time.
- proximity to the employment place
- well-trained staff - affectionate, warm, communicative educators, who do their job with passion, dedication and respect towards children
- the educational offer of the kindergarten,
- recommendation.

*Question 5. From the following list of criteria choose the ones that best fit with you. Motivate!*

Each parent presented the criteria considered most important in choosing the kindergarten for their child, motivating the choice. One parent believes that the importance of early childhood education for the safety of ascending to higher education must be discussed, and for this the most important criterion for choosing kindergarten is the qualified, well-trained and constantly improving staff.

Most parents find it important home proximity when choosing a kindergarten, because it is more convenient to bring the child to kindergarten, while others consider that a quality

education is done only in a small group, with few enrolled children, where the educator can handle better each child.

- 9 parents considered the most important criterion house proximity, the frequency of quotation being  $F_i = 0.6$
- 8 parents appreciated the professional training of the educators, with a frequency of  $F_i$  citation = 0.53
- 7 parents appreciated the small number of children enrolled in the group (citation frequency  $F_i = 0.46$ )

The other citation frequencies are:

Food menu diversity: 0.33; working place proximity: 0.26; the interior and exterior appearance of the kindergarten (courtyard, furnishings, facilities): 0.26; Optional activities (extracurricular): 0.13.

*Question 6. If they were to be ranked, what would you consider to be the order of the kindergarten selection criteria? What do you take into account when looking for a kindergarten?*

Following the horizontal analysis we will be able to see how the subjects appreciated each criterion separately, we will be able to calculate average scores for each criterion and we will be able to achieve their hierarchies.

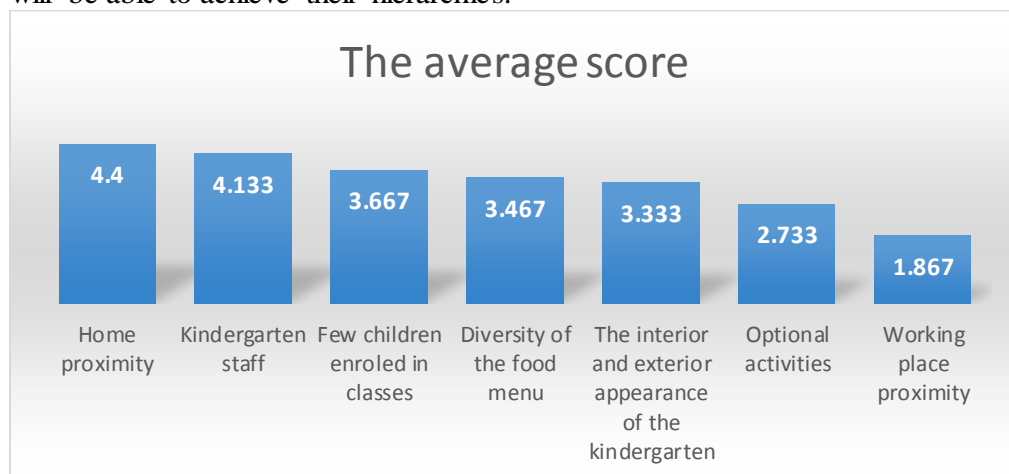


Figure 1 The average score of the criteria

Criteria	Subject															The average score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Home proximity	5	2	5	5	4	5	5	2	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	4.4
Working place proximity	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	4	1.86
Few children enroled in classes	4	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	5	2	2	3	3	2	4	3.66
Diversity of the food menu	5	3	4	2	5	3	4	5	3	2	4	2	3	3	4	3.46
The appearance of the kindergarten	5	5	5	1	1	4	2	5	4	2	1	5	2	3	5	3.33
Kindergarten staff	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	1	3	2	5	4	4.13
Optional activities	3	3	2	4	2	2	4	2	3	1	2	3	2	4	4	2.73

Table 1 The average score of the criteria

Following the analysis of the data captured in the tables and the graph above, the differences between the opinions of the subjects can be noticed.

It was observed that the subjects consider the first choice criterion the proximity of the house (average score 4.4) when they intend to enrol their child in a kindergarten, which further verifies the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis is also verified because on the second place in choosing a kindergarten is the kindergarten staff from the perspective of quality, with an average score of 4.13 points. The second hypothesis was also confirmed by the data obtained from the processing of the interview of the inspector, who considered important the quality of the teachers in a kindergarten (from the point of view of their professional training), which is advisable to be clarified before enrolment.

The following criteria, in descending order of the average score obtained are: the reduced number of children enrolled in the group (average score 3.67), but also the diversity of the food menu (average score 3.47), the kindergarten aspect (average score 3.33), optional activities (average score 2.73) and proximity to the employment place (average score 1.87). *Question 7. How do we know that a kindergarten is appropriate for the child? What are the signs? How is the child's behaviour? (Indicator 2.3)*

The parents considered that they found the right kindergarten if, their own child comes with pleasure in the morning. Parents expect to see the results of the child relationship with the educators, to have a permanent feedback on the child's progress, to see child interaction with other children, adaptation and progress. Parents expect an easy adaptation of the child in this environment and that he/ she will feel good during the time spent here.

*Question 8. What would you change in kindergarten if you had the power to make decisions?*

Only seven participants answered this question. They offered answers such as: extension of the kindergarten program, selection of teachers according to the preferences of the children, vegetarian menus and reduction of the number of children enrolled in the class.

#### 4.2.2. Content analysis

In this analysis we identified a number of themes with the related sub-themes. These resulted from the questions asked to the participants, but also from the answers provided by them.

- Kindergarten attendance: education, easy access, liability, involvement, adaptation, professional preparation, collaboration, availability
- Selection criteria: proximity to the house, optional activities, personal, proximity to the workplace, program, diversity of the menu, aspect, quality
- The suitable kindergarten: freedom, creativity, results, friendship, relationship

#### 4.2.3. Thematic analysis

This analysis aims to find certain statements that express an opposition, a contradiction. Thus, we identified a number of such pairs, in the participants' answers. Although there were conflicting opinions, no major differences were reached.

- Kindergarten attendance
  - education / supervision
  - responsibility / lack of interest
  - monotony / change
- Selection criteria
  - Near the house / employment place
  - Quality / disinterest
  - Staff trained
  - Diversity menu / vegetarian menu

- The suitable kindergarten
  - freedom / constraint
  - friendship / isolation
  - adaptation / maladaptation
  - communication / lack of communication

#### 4.2.4. *Nonverbal analysis*

Participants: There were 15 people between the ages of 25-39 years, 4 male and 11 female. In addition to these, the moderator was present. Other people did not intervene in the elaboration of the responses of this focus group.

The place chosen for the focus group is the kindergarten address, in a relaxed and favourable atmosphere for the chosen theme.

The participants were attentive to the explanations and the rules presented. The analysis of nonverbal has shown interest in the proposed topic, the parents gladly participating in the focus group.

The four present fathers gave a humorous note to some of the answers, which set the mood apart. The moms were serious, involved and sincere in the answers offered.

All participants were actively involved in providing answers, expressed their views and expressed their willingness to participate in such meetings.

#### 4.2.5. *Precision analysis*

Most of the answers were object or partially punctuated, which proves the involvement of the participants in the proposed research.

#### 4.2.7. *Analysis of responses with emotional involvement*

The responses with emotional involvement were sincere. One of the moms presented the dilemma she had about the kindergarten suitable for his child, who had a more difficult and lasting adaptation. He was about to give up, but he had the support of the educators and, with good cooperation, she managed to overcome this problem.

#### 4.2.8. *Conversational analysis*

The conversation between the participants was free, the questions were open and allowed the presentation of personal opinion. Generally, the fathers answered the first ones and they were the ones who had contradictory opinions. Different opinions were accepted and no conflict was reached.

### 5. **Conclusions**

Following the research conducted by the focus group method, it was found that one of the significant criteria in choosing a kindergarten by parents with preschool children is the proximity to the house. Another criteria, almost as important as the first, is the kindergarten staff, who must be well prepared and of a high moral standard, to ensure a model to be followed for children. Other criteria were analysed, the parents considering them as important as the small number of children enrolled in the group, the diversity of the food menu, the interior and exterior aspect of the kindergarten, the optional activities, but also the proximity to the employment place. As proposals, I can mention the need for quality improvement activities in kindergartens, in order to eliminate the discrepancies between those with many requests and those who cannot carry out the schooling plan. These can be: participation of teachers in training courses and of the director in new managerial training courses, retention of beginner educators in the system, initiation of national and international collaborations, partnerships with kindergartens from the county and from outside the county, identifying effective solutions

for the educational monitoring of children with very busy parents, developing and improving the material base, initiating collaborative projects with various companies. Proposals for parents refer to the need for more rigorous information on the human and material resources held by kindergartens before enrolling the child in a preschool unit. The choice of the kindergarten must also take into account the child's personality, his/ her characteristics, the level of development and his / her needs to ensure subsequent success.

Thus, we consider that, when choosing the right kindergarten, parents should take into account several criteria, which should be complementary and lead to the development and preparation for the life of the preschool child.

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## REGULATION DIFFICULTY IN CYBERBULLYING INCIDENTS

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**Abstract:** Emotional regulation refers to our emotional response to a particular situation. It is defined as the deliberate or automatic attempt of a person to influence what emotions to have, when and how to have them and how to express them. To tackle the relationship between helping attitudes and emotional regulation scale in cyberbullying incidents, our project *Hate's Journey*, financed by Erasmus+, 2018-2-ES02-KA205-011733 has designed an online questionnaire composed by some single item research questions, general data collection and tests regarding emotional regulation, internet content awareness and helping attitudes. The hypothesis of this research is that between helping attitudes and emotional regulation scale in cyberbullying incidents there is a curvilinear effect. Research's 206 participants are residents of Latvia in 24.8%, Romania 24.8%, Spain 24.8%, and Turkey 25.7%, 39.8% males and 60.2% females, age mean of  $m=30$  years. In order to test our curvilinear hypothesis, we have used SPSS' multiple linear regression analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects, where helping attitudes scale was the dependent variable for the independent variables emotional regulation. As results show in Model 1 the model that supposes linear relationship, emotional regulation difficulty accounts for 7% of the variance in helping attitudes with an  $F=16.699$  significant at a  $p<.01$ . In Model 2, the model that supposes curvilinear relationship, emotional regulation difficulty accounts for 13% of the variance in helping attitudes with an  $F=16.323$  significant at a  $p<.01$ . Results show that a very high level of emotional regulation difficulties and a very low level of emotional regulation difficulties play an important role in the process of helping attitudes display, acting like a buffering effect. Conclusions on further testing of a moderated mediation effect and implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** cyberbullying, emotional regulation difficulties, helping attitudes, curvilinear relationship

### 1. Theoretical correlates

In a new study, published in 2017 in the Journal of Psychological Bulletin, a group of American researchers showed that we tend to use three broad types of strategies to regulate our emotions. How we manage our emotions influences our physical and mental health, but also our social relationships. Most mental disorders are related to difficulties in emotional regulation.

Emotional regulation refers to our emotional response to a particular situation. Mauss and collaborators (2007) defines it as the deliberate or automatic attempt of a person to influence what emotions to have, when and how to have them and how to express them.

In other words, due to the fact that emotions are malleable, we can control them. We can diminish, intensify or maintain the intensity of the emotion, depending on the goals we have (Mauss et al., 2006). James Gross (2007), a leading researcher in the field of emotions, concludes that one of the biggest challenges of our lives is the ability to control our emotions.

People use different strategies of emotional regulation. The most common are: acceptance, avoidance, distraction, expressive suppression (trying to inhibit or reduce the emotional expression of emotional experiences), mindfulness, problem solving, cognitive reassessment (reinterpreting a situation to change its emotional relevance), rumination (repetitive negative thoughts) or concern. The authors noted that the psychological literature includes many different strategies for emotional regulation, but there is little data on how they relate to each other. They believe that grouping them into smaller categories could provide people with more effective ways and tools to regulate their emotions.

Thus, the researchers analyzed hundreds of studies that reported associations between the different strategies of emotional regulation that people tend to use to manage their negative emotions. They analyzed what their common features were and then tried to group them into much simpler categories.

They have found that people tend to use more strategies in a simultaneously manner. If one of them doesn't work, people immediately move on to the next one. Based on the common characteristics found, they grouped these strategies into three main categories:

- Emotional disengagement,
- Fixation on negative states (aversive cognitive preservation),
- Adaptive commitment.

Emotional disengagement includes strategies such as distraction and avoidance. When people use these strategies they try to feel better by directing thoughts and attention elsewhere, escaping from the present moment.

Fixing on negative states includes strategies such as rumination. When using strategies included in this category we tend to remain stuck in repetitive negative thoughts about personal or self-blame failures.

Adaptive commitment includes strategies such as acceptance and problem solving. When people use these strategies they tend to be flexible and try to feel better, looking for solutions to problems or accepting what they cannot change.

The researchers believe that the most useful strategies are those in the adaptive engagement category, but emphasize that the strategies in the other two categories can be useful in certain contexts. For example, when ruminating, people think intensively about problems and analyze them in depth. This analytical process could help them explore variants and find solutions to those problems.

One of the most anticipated results of emotional regulation is the decrease in intensity and duration of dysfunctional negative emotions. However, there are situations in which the strategy used is unhealthy. For example, some people resort to alcohol or drug abuse as a way to change their emotions and feel better.

Therefore, the way we regulate our emotions has an effect on the way we feel but also on our relationships and activities. A healthy interaction involves adjusting and coordinating our emotions with others in different contexts. For example, it can be helpful if we manage to calm ourselves in a tense situation or to accept the opinion of someone we disagree with. Or, as in the case of present research, we will analyze how the emotional regulation difficulty impacts the helping attitudes display towards the victims involved in cyberbullying incidents.

## **2. Research methodology**

Our research team has developed the Erasmus+ funded project *Hate's Journey*, with the aim of in-depth understand the dynamics of online hate speech among youth from Spain, Romania, Turkey and Latvia. Our research's present inquiry is the identification of the existent relationship between emotional regulation and helping attitudes toward the victim of a cyberbullying incident. In this regard, our team has designed an online questionnaire composed

by descriptive data, specific single item research questions, the emotional regulation scale, an internet content awareness scale and the helping attitudes scale.

Our hypothesis states that our two research variables: emotional regulation and helping attitudes toward the victim of a cyberbullying incident 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 helping attitudes scale was the dependent variable for the independent variables emotional regulation.

Research's 206 young participants are coming from Latvia in 24.8%, Romania 24.8%, Spain 24.8%, and Turkey 25.7%, with an age mean of  $m=30$  years, 39.8% males and 60.2% females. Regarding sample's educational level, 3.9% finished primary school, 1.9% own a professional diploma, 29.1% finished high school, 32% own a Bachelor degree, 29.1% have a Master degree and 3.9% have a PhD. As for professional status, 5.8% are unemployed, 43.7% are students, 1% is volunteering and 49.5% are employed.

An important issue we wanted to address also, was the online time spent by respondents, thus 1% responded with never or hardly ever, 8.7% responded with every week, 20.4% responded with daily or almost daily, 46.6% responded with several time each day and 23.3% responded with almost all the time. Thus the frequent users of internet are net superior over the non-users, with 69.9%.

### 3. Results

Among other instruments that are not part of this research's focus, we have used the 18 items of Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale - Short Form (DERS) (Kaufman, et al., 2015). The instruction was to rate the 18 statements according to how much they resonate with: 1=almost never, 2=sometimes, 3=approximately half of the time, 4=most of the time, 5=almost always. The scoring was done by summing all items scores, taking into account the reversed items, a high value reflecting a greater difficulty in emotional regulation.

The second instrument used was the Helping Attitudes Scale (HAS) developed by Nickell, G.(1998), a 20-item measure of respondents' beliefs, feelings, and behaviors associated with helping. Each item is answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items 1, 5, 8, 11, 18, 19 are reverse scored. The scores for each item are summed up to form an overall score, ranging from 20 to 100. According to the author, a 60 is a neutral score.

Regarding the internal consistency of the DERS scale, we have obtained an alpha coefficient of .828, 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. Our calculated ANOVA with Friedman's Test shows a Friedman's Chi-Square coefficient of 479.036, significant at a  $p<0.01$ , a Grand mean of  $m=2.40$  and a Kendall's coefficient of concordance of  $W = .106$ .

Regarding the internal consistency of the HAS scale, we have obtained an alpha coefficient of .894, 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. Our calculated ANOVA with Friedman's Test shows a Friedman's Chi-Square coefficient of 529.268 is significant at a  $p<0.01$ , a Grand mean of  $m=3.82$  and a Kendall's coefficient of concordance of  $W = .095$ .

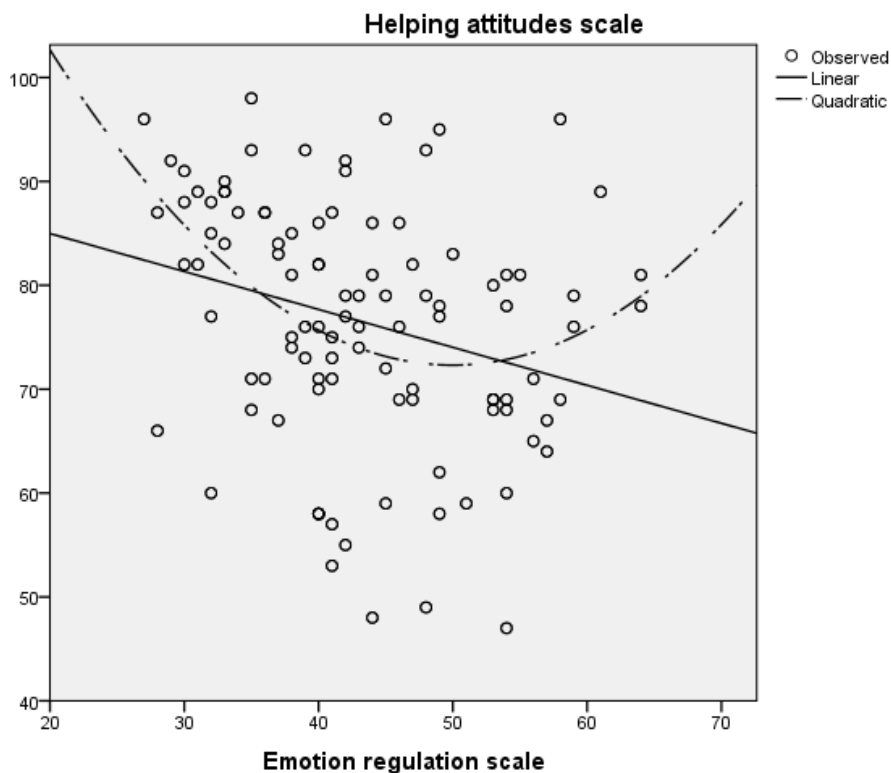
Thus, for testing our hypothesis that states that between emotional regulation and helping attitudes there is a curvilinear relationship, we have used a confirmatory factor analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects. We describe a curvilinear relationship as a relationship 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 (Rad, D., Dughi, T., Demeter, E., & Rad, G., 2019).

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 1 indicates the curvilinear relationship between emotional regulation on the horizontal axis and helping attitudes, represented on the vertical axis. The sample consists of 206 young participants.

**Figure 1 - Linear and quadratic curve estimation of emotional regulation and helping attitudes**



There is a very high correlation between emotional regulation difficulty ( $m=43.22$ ,  $SD=8.85$ ) and helping attitudes ( $m=76.50$ ,  $SD=11.77$ ) of  $r=-.275$  significant at a  $p<.01$ , which methodologically gives us incentives to compute the multiple linear regression analysis (Rad, D., Dughi, T., Demeter, E., & Rad, G., 2019).

In order to test our hypothesis, the present study proposes a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the dependent variable being helping attitudes, and the independent variable in step 1 emotional regulation difficulty, and in step 2 emotional regulation difficulty and squared emotional regulation difficulty.

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, emotional regulation difficulty accounts for 7% of the variance in helping attitudes with an  $F=16.699$  significant at a  $p<.01$ . In Model 2, the model that supposes curvilinear relationship, emotional regulation difficulty accounts for 13% of the variance in helping attitudes with an  $F=16.323$  significant at a  $p<.01$ .

**Table 2.** *The relationship between emotional regulation difficulty and helping attitudes, model summary, ANOVA and coefficients*

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change F	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.275 <sup>a</sup>	.076	.071	11.345	.076	16.699	1	204	.000
2	.372 <sup>b</sup>	.139	.130	10.980	.063	14.817	1	203	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotion regulation scale

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotion regulation scale, sqrtERS

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2149.403	1	2149.403	16.699	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	26258.092	204	128.716		
	Total	28407.495	205			
2	Regression	3935.577	2	1967.788	16.323	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	24471.919	203	120.551		
	Total	28407.495	205			

a. Dependent Variable: Helping attitudes scale

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotion regulation scale

c. Predictors: (Constant), Emotion regulation scale, sqrtERS

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	92.282	3.943		23.402	.000
	Emotion regulation scale	-.365	.089	-.275	-4.086	.000
2	(Constant)	156.654	17.153		9.133	.000
	Emotion regulation scale	-3.375	.787	-2.542	-4.290	.000
	sqrtERS	.034	.009	2.280	3.849	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Helping attitudes scale

All standardized coefficients of Beta ( $\beta = -.275$ ;  $\beta = -2.542$  and  $\beta = 2.280$ ) are significant at  $p < .01$  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: emotional regulation difficulties and helping attitudes is not linear, but curvilinear. The additional incremental predictive capacity of 6 percent, added by including the squared emotional regulation difficulties variable which is accounting for the band in the regression line, indicates that there is a curvilinear relationship between emotional regulation difficulties and helping attitudes.

This curvilinear relationship demonstrates that extreme aspects, extremely reduced and extremely high levels of emotional regulation difficulties, significantly influences the helping attitudes, making the process of helping attitudes display process inefficient. Normal levels of emotional regulation difficulties triggers an accepted level of helping attitudes display towards the victims of cyberbullying, meaning that the process of emotional regulation functions in an

adaptive manner. Thus a very high level of emotional regulation difficulties and a very low level of emotional regulation difficulties play an important role in the process of helping attitudes display, acting like a buffering effect.

### 3. Conclusions and implications

The present study investigated if emotional regulation and helping attitudes toward the victim of a cyberbullying incident are in a curvilinear relationship. The obtained results confirm the proposed hypothesis, meaning that extreme aspects, extremely reduced and extremely high levels of emotional regulation difficulties, significantly influences the helping attitudes, making the process of helping attitudes display process inefficient. Average levels of emotional regulation difficulties triggers an accepted level of helping attitudes display towards the victims of cyberbullying, meaning that the process of emotional regulation functions in an adaptive manner. Thus a very high level of emotional regulation difficulties and a very low level of emotional regulation difficulties play an important role in the process of helping attitudes display, acting like a buffering effect.

This inference gives us methodological reasons to believe that between the two concepts either moderation or mediation interaction processes are obvious. In a further research we will investigate the role of internet content awareness, online time spent and other variables over the relationship between emotional regulation difficulty and helping attitudes.

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## THE COMMUNICATION OF ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS IN SITUATION OF ASYMMETRIC INFORMATION

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the definition of asymmetric information and introduces its importance. Furthermore, there is an examination of how the inequality can be detected in the operation of economic organizations and various markets is presented, as well as its possible effects on an economic operator. An explanation is provided for the disturbances that may emerge in the communication of companies due to the presence of asymmetric information and the possibilities to alleviate these difficulties.*

**Keywords:** *information; asymmetry; loss; structured communication;*

**JEL classification:**D82

**LCC:** HD58.7-58.95

### Introduction

Experts nowadays believe that information has become the most important resource over the course of history, and its importance and value continue to increase with time. Communication that ensures information exchange is likewise considered one of the most important success factors. The importance of the quality of communication processes in businesses can be compared to the conformity of core business processes.

The value of information is mainly defined by how relevant and complete it is, with regards to the communication occurring between the providing and receiving parties.

The topic of the completeness of information raises very interesting questions about rationality: is this a thing that exists?

For instance, the information being examined may be incomplete, or obsolete. Another issue that can be brought up is if collecting the proper information is costly and if, from the perspective of the information requester, we are at the point where the marginal profit is equal to the marginal cost, thus further searching is stopped. Another obstacle could be if the recipient is only capable of taking in a limited amount of information, or if they misunderstand the information provided.

In these cases, we end up with a situation, where the emergence of asymmetric information can be identified during communication: one of the participants in the transaction possesses data/facts/knowledge, which the other party does not. This may result in a loss for the operator with incomplete information and in extreme cases, may result in the restructuring of market conditions.

### Interpretation of information and communication

*The elements, process, limits of information exchange (communication)*

As Móricz (1999) writes communication is the root of every disclosure. And the obligatory participants of the communication process are the sender, receiver, and of course the channel and enables the transfer of the message. Communication may only exist, if the receiver has comprehended and understood the meaning of the message and if they react to it in some manner.

The formula for information reception is as follows (Móricz, 1999):

$$I_1 = I - (V_u + V_m + V_b), \text{ where}$$

$I_1$  is the information received

$I$  is the original information

$V_u$  is the noise, loss of information that occurs on the sender side (e.g. badly worded message)

$V_m$  is the loss that occurs due to the limits of the transmission channel (e.g. misprint)

$V_b$  is the loss that occurs on the receiver side, due to disturbance (e.g. inattention, misinterpreted message due to lack of knowledge).

Noise is a natural phenomenon in communication, the quantity of which has a crucial effect on the success (efficiency) of communication.

One of the most important tasks of communication management is to create the corporate communication system in a way to minimize the losses from these various communication events.

This occurs especially in communication processes involving multiple actors, where the message distorts to such an extent where, by the time of reaching the last actor, the meaning of the original message may just change to its opposite (classic examples to this are the Radio Yerevan jokes, which can unfortunately still occur in real life in a corporate environment, due to a badly organized communication system).

One of the guarantees for noise reduction is finding the appropriate channel for different kinds of information. During planning of communication processes, it is also important to examine the topic of whether the utilization of these channels could be bypassed using alternative channels, and as to what extent could they substitute the solution that was originally planned to transfer concrete information. Furthermore, whether the solutions, that differ from the originally planned process, could cause any losses for the company, and if yes, how much.

#### *Standardization of corporate communication*

“Corporate communication is every type of communicative activity within an entity, that is performed by members of the organization and contributes to the definition and completion of tasks that generate goods”. (Borgulya – Somogyvári, 2011)

The following table summarizes the classification of corporate communication.

**Table 1: Standardization of corporate communication**

Aspect	Type, sphere
Platform	internal
	external
Direction	vertical
	horizontal
	diagonal
Sender – recipient alternation	unidirectional
	bidirectional
Regulation	formal
	informal
Information management	centralized
	decentralized
	decentralized- integrated
Spheres	financial interest groups: sphere of finance
	market interest groups: market sphere

Aspect	Type, sphere
	non-market interest sphere
	sphere of colleagues

Source: *BorgulyaVető, 2010*

The external (outbound) communication between the company and its environment assist with the integration of the company into the social environment, while internal communication enables the organization, control, coordination, inspection, evaluation of work, as well as secure resources, all for the purpose of a common goal within the company. Furthermore, internal communication also serves to facilitate the operation of the company as a social phenomenon. It broadcasts values and norms, plays a fundamental role in developing corporate culture, power structures, organizational roles and working conditions, and also takes part in the development and resolution of conflicts.

Message transfer between the levels of company hierarchy can go downward, upward or diagonally. Downward communication mainly serves to broadcast organizational goals, hand out operational instructions and explanations, impart procedures and rules, provide feedback and communicate any other educational messages. Concurrently, during upward communication, information travels from lower to higher levels. In this case, problems, developmental proposals and reports are transmitted, along with conflict situations being unraveled. The platform of horizontal communication is generally the operative level of the company and usually facilitates the coordination of daily tasks, as well as problem solving. (Dobák – Antal, 2010)

The difference between unidirectional and bidirectional communication is mainly about whether there's interaction between sender and recipient, as well as the timeliness of it. If the recipient does not, or only provides a response to the message with a significant difference in time (e.g. public speeches, instructions disseminated in writing, then the communication is unidirectional, while if the messages flow back and forth (e.g. conferences, staff meetings), then it is bidirectional.

The company creates its formal information channels in accordance with its organizational structure, which results in a strong connection with the chain of information, that is usually called the "chain of command". Compliance with this is heavily dependent on culture, as on some places this principle is followed rigidly or loosely. However, during formal provision of information, the use of informal communication channels, created via a network of friends and interests, often seem like more efficient and faster solutions.

Communication may be performed centrally, in which the owner of the company is in possession of all information. This solution is only sustainable up to a certain company size, as after a while the owner cannot hope to manage all the information. At this point, the communication tasks are distributed, and the managers of different company functions will be responsible for the communication within their areas. Thus, decentralization is established, which may lead to disruptions due to a lack of coordination. A solution to this could be integrated corporate communications.

Other classification aspects may also include separation via sphere, as corporate communication may be financial, market or other non-market (performed together with the public), as well as an activity performed with colleagues.

## **The emergence of asymmetric information in literature**

### *The theory of limited rationality*

As previously mentioned, the issues with research into the completeness of information and the existence of rationality propose very similar questions, therefore I find it justifiable to mention what is written regarding the function of the "homo oeconomicus", the

rational man in neoclassical economic sciences, and the “true” human function, that operates with limited rationality.

According to the neoclassical theory, the rational man (consumer) is fully informed and is therefore in possession of every bit of knowledge that is relevant to the decision. Its preference system is predictable, stable and consistent, supported in the background by the constant need to validate its own interests. Every decision made is directed towards maximizing the attainable yields and its decisions are completely independent from expectations.

Upon researching the processing of information in man, Herbert Simon came to the discovery, that the opportunities, time and capacity of the cognitive person are still limited. However, limitless number of criteria may be assigned to the limitless amount of information pertaining to the decision. Consideration of all this is not possible in within the limited human information processing system previously mentioned, or rather, it can only be realized by omitting the rational evaluating/processing system.

The following quote keenly encapsulates the theory of Simon, regarding the man with limited rationality.

“The man with limited rationality: Humans is guided by emotions in their decisions, alternatives are examined to a satisfactory level. After the decision made on an emotional (irrational) basis, they will place it within a framework of rationality. Therefore, the decision is not rational, but rationalized.” (Komor –Mihály, 2011)

#### *The emergence of asymmetric information in economic theory*

Mirrlees, who received a Nobel prize together with Vickrey in 1996, for contributions to the economic theory of motivation through asymmetric information, mainly dealt with the issues of optimal taxation throughout his work, and many definitions and methods of analysis within the topic are associated with him.

Mirrlees defined the essence of the debate on optimal taxation using mathematical methods. According to this, the state, as an organization devising social and economic solutions, attempts to develop a tax system, where the maximums of the market balance and social benefit functions overlap each other. The model assumes the existence of information asymmetry, defines tax in relation to income, considers employment availability to be flexible, and regards the prosperity of people as equal, rather than their income. The theory supposes two cases of asymmetry, private information and moral risk (see: principal-agent problem)

Rothschild and collaborator Stiglitz were primarily concerned with insurance concerns in the event of asymmetric information. The initial hypothesis was that the insurance company cannot recognize whether the insured person is low or high in risk, therefore the low risk people must undertake the same excess, which discourages high risk people from reporting themselves as low risk. (Rothschild – Stiglitz, 1976)

Like the issue of insurances, the issue of asymmetric information also comes up regarding pension plans (Simonovits, 2016). In this case, the definition of life expectancy is not obvious: while the person knows their own life expectancy (health status), the government obviously cannot know it on the level of the individual. At the same time, the monthly annuity set depending on the retirement age and life expectancy. According to the proposed solution, in order to eliminate information asymmetry, the contracts offered should provide no incentive for those with longer lives to pick contracts designed for those with shorter lives (and vice versa).

Akerlof and Shiller, in their 2009 book ‘Animal Spirits: How Human Psychology Drives the Economy, and Why It Matters for Global Capitalism’, question the mainline economic theories, accepted to this day, which posit that the decisions of people make, are based on a rational point of view, taking every available information into account and completely shutting out all emotions. According to the pair of authors, irrational behavior is

typical of humans in both the booming and declining periods of the economy. The former is characterized by excessive trust, while the later by excessive skepticism. In their opinion, a possible method of climbing out of the crisis is exerting a gentle, leading control and influence over the “animal spirits”, meaning human psychology – like trust, fear, corruption, malice, integrity – in the form of state involvement.

Another book by Akerlof and Shiller, *Phishing for Fools*, deals entirely with the examination of the mechanic during which the economic and social actors become the sufferers and users of deception and manipulation in everyday life. According to them, two types of “fools” exist: the psychological and the information fool. Psychological fools are people whose emotions have triumphed over the rule of logic, or who perceive the world incorrectly due to cognitive distortions (optical illusion of thoughts). Information fools are people who act based on information used to deliberately mislead them (see: the case of Enron stockholders).

Akerlof elaborates in another analysis, that the poor-quality goods (“wrecks”) can ruin the markets of good quality products, due to the fact that the customers are unaware (or possess only partial information) of the quality of the product/service they wish to purchase. Therefore, when they make their decision, they will be unable to see the difference between a good and bad quality product, and the good quality, for which customers would likely pay more on the market, will not be able to exert its market influencing effect. As a result of decisions made time and time again with the circumstances above, the good and bad quality products will sell for the same price on the market, which will ultimately result in the higher quality product getting displaced from the market. *Contra selection* will occur, meaning that the bad quality product will displace the good quality from the market. (Hirshleifer – Glazer, 2009)

Stiglitz and other prominent economists believe that the self-regulation of the market does not work properly, in part because market operators possess market information at unequal rates and this inequality cannot be decreased. According to Kahnemann, however, this is compounded by the fact that the behavior and decisions of market operators are not rational, they are influenced by numerous biases, distortions and heuristics. Stiglitz simplified all of this by saying: “the reason that the invisible hand seems invisible is that it is not there”.

In the absence of the invisible hand to regulate market conditions, others must take up regulating, and with regards to macro processes – as said by others, including Stiglitz in the economics of inequality, or Piketty examining the function of capital in the 21st century – either nations or supranational organizations must take up the mantle.

The market dominance of companies may also stem from the possibility, that customers are not aware of the prices and quality. If customers only possess a limited amount of information, then a seller may obviously obtain additional revenue through a simple increase in price, as customers do not have any basis for comparison and the price used will be higher than the total informed competitor prices ( $p^c$ ). It follows, that if there are many well-informed consumers on the market, it would not be worth to raise the price above  $p^c$  for any company, however, if the number of well-informed customers is relatively small, the company may raise prices without needing to lose a lot of customers. All of this leads to the realization, that informing the customers leads to a decrease in prices. On the most well-known model to illustrate the above is the tourist trap model, which means that tourists must account for the cost of searching as well as the price of the product, while the purchases of the many, well-informed locals, with zero search costs, can have a price decreasing effect across the whole market, all the way to  $p^c$  levels (Carlton – Perloff, 2003)

### **The forms of asymmetric information in the operation of enterprises**

The shareholders (owners) usually do not take part in the daily business of companies. Most of their decision-making powers are handed over to managers, who are capable of uniformly representing the interest of the sometimes sizable ownership, however,



this also presents a problem in which the ownership and management are separated from each other, as the owner stays clear of the majority of business decisions, while the managers are not owners of the company. As there is no alignment of interests between owners and managers (e.g. maximize profit or revenue?), this solution may result in friction. This issue is often called the agency dilemma, or principal-agent problem.

Based on experiences, the shareholders (owners) can make the company operate according to their interests. This requires enough monitoring solutions, as well as management payment system, designed in accordance with owner interests. (Andor, 2018)

In their January 2018 paper, *Clarity Begins at Home: Internal Information Asymmetry and External Communication Quality*, the authors revealed, that internal information asymmetry most likely causes financial losses for companies, due to things such as incorrect forecasts or accounting inaccuracies, as well as due to external communication issues of the company.

The phenomenon can be detected especially in large conglomerates, in which internal information is divided across many organizational levels and divisions. The bigger the difference is between how informed the various levels (such as top managers and division leaders) are, the greater the possible problem it could cause, too.

There can be many reasons for the emergence of information asymmetry between leaders acting on different levels. Such as the availability of properly processed and organized business information for top managers, regarding all units under their control. However, the division leaders may possess information of such nature, that their transfer is made impossible due to the strictly binding business processes. The aspects of self-assertion within the organization may also prevent managers on lower levels from providing comprehensive information to top management. In general, it can be said that while top managers have more information regarding the corporate-level plans of the company, the unit managers possess established information regarding investment opportunities.

Another paper (*The Effect of Board Independence on Information Asymmetry*) examines the correlation between the independence of the upper management - for which one of the most important tasks is the protection of investor interests - and the information asymmetry that emerges among the shareholders.

It has been confirmed, that the growing independence of the members of the top management leads to a decrease in the information asymmetry between shareholders and vice versa, furthermore, the more frequently broadcast business reports and even more so, greater coverage regarding the analysis of business results both lead to the decrease of information asymmetry.

### **Possibilities to decrease the disturbances (losses) due to asymmetric information in the operation of companies**

Complete (total) awareness is obviously not possible, but as market and business actors, we must make efforts towards this, so we can exercise our interests in the most efficient manner possible. (Carlton – Perloff, 2003)

One of the most efficient, although most radical method of decreasing information asymmetry is to rethink the business processes. This solution is also a method (Seidmann – Sundarajan, 1997) that can fix the asymmetry of task distribution, which can also be linked to information asymmetry. However, it is also worth examining, whether there are any practical opportunities to manage the growing asymmetry, one that would cause less of a shock.

Based on the treatment methods, suggested by the literature, for problems arising from asymmetric information between market operators, let us link the cases to communication situations within the company, as follows.

1. Market situation: A possible method of avoiding information inequality on the market, is to demand sellers to reveal certain information. This would most likely pertain to the price and quality.

Corporate communication situation: In corporate communication, this can be enforced if the receiving party submits predefined expectations towards the sending party, thereby providing a framework for communication, minimizing its level of freedom.

2. Market situation: By providing a guaranty or warranty, the sellers provide a reliable way of transmitting the information to their customers, that their products are of good quality.

Corporate communication situation: In business operations, incentivizing the use of written instead of oral information, particularly information documented (by its nature) in the corporate information systems can provide a similar guarantee regarding the reliability and completeness of the information, for all operators working within the organization.

3. Market situation: Product liability laws provide additional assurances to customers, regarding the fact that the sellers cannot overlook their specific responsibilities.

Corporate communication situation: The upper management requirement system used in companies must be extended to the requirements for information completeness and information transmission processes, and the effectiveness of these must be verified.

4. Market situation: A good reputation may provide additional assurances when judging the quality of a product offered, since a business that expects its customers to return will strive to market good quality products.

Corporate communication situation: Adding the evaluation of communication performance to the evaluation criteria of employees is recommended. This way, we can indirectly contribute to the development of communication quality within the company.

5. Market situation: An independent inspection by external consultants provides objective results, regarding the quality of the product.

Corporate communication situation: The completeness (validity) of information received during operation may be verified, by asking another colleague about the same thing, one whose interests differ from the original sender, but are still related to the matter in some way.

6. Market situation: Standards provide a metric or scale to evaluate the quality of a certain product. While the certification is a report or statement of fact, that the product fulfills the quality required by the standard.

Corporate communication situation: The use of a system that evaluates (validates) the quality (information completeness) of information, communication templates and quality of solutions may assist with determining the standard of communication within the organization - from a business viewpoint - thereby assisting with objective decision-making, that is based on facts.

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## AGGRESSIVENESS AND VIDEO GAMES AT THE STUDENTS FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** *Aggressiveness in students is a phenomenon that teachers, colleagues and parents increasingly have to face. In an attempt to explain the etiology of aggressive behavior, we started from the premise that video games that children play can influence their aggressive behavior in the direction of augmenting aggressive behavior. The theoretical foundations of this study are from the theories of aggressiveness theories and its causes to students. We also mentioned some types of video games, divided into two categories - with inherently aggressive content, with potentially or non-aggressive content. The group of subjects consisted of 35 students from primary school. Two tools were used to collect the data - a video game questionnaire and the Buss & Perry questionnaire to identify students' aggressiveness levels. As a result of the statistical processing of the data using the T Test, it was found that those students who use explicitly aggressive games also develop more aggressive behaviors. The other category of students, who consume non-aggressive games, show fewer aggressive behaviors. Thus, we can use as a measure to reduce aggression in those students the replacement of games with high aggressive potential with some non-aggressive ones.*

**Keywords:** *aggressiveness; video games; students; causes of aggression;*

### 1. Theoretical premise

#### 1.1. Forms and causes of aggression

Aggressiveness is formed and develops from an early age. The aggressive behaviors of children can manifest themselves from the infant stage when they express their anger. Later, in small childhood, aggression manifests itself in conflicts with the elder ones, especially with same-sex ones. During primary school, boys begin to show aggression in physical form and females in an indirect form. In the next stages the expression of aggression is diversified, being influenced by many internal and external factors.

Stanley Greenspan (2015) states that those children who are more aggressive need more sensory information from the environment than other children. They react less to sensations, which is why their intensity should be higher: loud noises, touching, etc. These children try to get to know the world and meet their needs. However, the author states that this rule is not valid for all children, because some of them can react intensely to external sensations and even to their own emotions. Aggressive children can be authoritarian and can manipulate others. If they do not get what they want they react with aggressiveness.

The causes of aggressive behavior in children are numerous and diverse. These include: aggression in the family, poor economic conditions, unstable environment (parental divorce, parental death, unstable affective climate), school environment (inadequate disciplinary measures, labeling, non-objective assessment, etc.) self-inflicted self-image, disbelief in one's own person), the image of media aggression (long exposure to violence leads to desensitization

and to the promotion of promoted models), the legal system (in some countries the legal framework regarding youth violence is permissive), (lack of communication and relations with the community, lack of belonging to a group, lack of motivation for success in life, thus integrating into an aggressive group will ensure the sense of belonging and hope for success in the future), racism, social stratification (discrimination of some individuals or groups may lead to aggression) (coord: Jigău, Liiceanu, Preoteasa, 2006).

Other factors influencing children in aggressive behaviors are those related to the individual, such as: antisocial attitudes, personal history of aggressive conduct (research shows that the authors of violent acts are victims of such conduct), tobacco, alcohol or drug use, low empiricism, impulsivity (the tendency to act, without predicting the outcome, which is also involved in solving the conflicts through aggression, often physically), insufficiently developed self-control (low control or lack of control allows aggressive impulse to manifest itself), attitude towards life (is conditioned by the way students perceive in relation to their peers, it is done by social comparison, they present a state of resignation, pessimism, states that they accept things they cannot change) and the self-image (at aggressive children have a lower level of self-esteem than non-aggressive children) (coord.: Jigău, Liiceanu, Preoteasa, 2006).

Children can manifest their aggression by: hitting other children or adults, wounding, slapping, throwing and hitting with various objects around them, pulling hair, tripping others, intimidating those he considers inferior to him, ignoring, marginalization, indifference, threats, visual confrontation, insults, etc. A certain aggressive behavioral manifestation often found in schools is also bullying. Bullying and cyber-bullying is an aggressive behavior repeated with the intention of harming others in order to gain power and control in a group (Rad, D., Dughi, T., Roman, A., & Ignat, S., 2019).

## 1.2 Video Games

Playing is a part of virtual, digital life that allows temporary detachment from the real world and the problems faced by individuals, and entry into a world that offers pleasure, certainty, problem solving, and an immediate reward for your own actions from the game. From the study "Satisfaction of Virtual Life", published in 2011 by E. Castronova and G. G. Wagner, it follows that the satisfaction in virtual life created by a game is almost equal to the one resulting from finding a job by an unemployed person. So virtual life offers emotional rewards, but on the other hand determines the limitation of real-life satisfaction by comparing with virtual life (Chatfield, T., 2016).

People choose video games according to their interests and preferences. Most games have decor elements and a fairly simple story in which the player performs a certain action. The interest of people of all ages for video games has increased their number and diversified them. Video games are classified based on the action that players must do, not on the design elements, the pretext or the story of the game.

According to the purpose of the video game there are (Chatfield, T., 2016):

- Advergimes - designed to advertise a product or event;
- Art games - aim at catharsis, as well as painting, literature, drawing, etc. and do not follow the playful character of the game;
- Casual games designed to create immediate pleasure to help players quickly detach themselves from the real world through simple tasks that do not require the player's extensive knowledge and can be played anytime and anywhere as they do not consume much time;
- Educational games - aiming at enriching or strengthening knowledge, promoting science, social change and problem solving; is used both in the school environment and in other environments;
- Exergames - aiming at stimulating and promoting physical movement in a fun way;

- Video training games for virtual training - aiming at practicing motor skills and abilities; for example: surgeons can practice their precision with the help of specially created video games. Another criterion for classifying video games is the participant's play task. Depending on this, video games can be:

- Action games - Train hand and eye coordination, but also reaction speed, challenges are typically of physical nature where the player controls most of the action;

- Platformer - The action of the game is placed in a simple decoration, usually in a two-dimensional world, where the player directs a character among various obstacles, such as walking, jumping, climbing, shooting, opening gates to reap rewards and move to the next level;

- Shooter - are action games in which characters use firearms to shoot down and kill enemies; the effects of the games are realistic enough, promoting violence. These games usually have multiplayer functionality, which allows users to play with friends, thus increasing the interest in the game. It also gives players the opportunity to "look" in the environment in which they play behind the character and through his eyes. These types of games are among the most bought video games;

- Fighters - is a category of fighting action games that have violent scenarios where players battle with one or more enemies, using in particular hands and feet, but also surreal movements;

- Racing - games that represent racing with different means of transport, generally with machines which, in general, violate the laws of physics;

- Adventure Games - do not focus on looks, content and story, but on exploration and problem solving, and require the player's attention and memory. This category excludes action and does not engage in motor skills and visual-motor coordination;

- Interactive movies are games with pre-recorded sequences in which players make decisions instead of characters, so they decide the way the character follow;

- Three-dimensional real-time adventures - is an augmentation of adventure video games that give the player the ability to move around in space and respect the laws of physics;

- Tycoon - players are at the head of an organization and aim to organize it so that it is successful, using all the resources at their disposal;

- Strategy Games - requires the player's strategic thinking to aim the objectives set by the game and involves achieving with a given number of actions or moves.

Studies have shown that trimming video games has beneficial effects on children if the time spent is not very high and if there is no substitution between real and virtual interrelations. The fact that children can create identities and idealized social circles in video games is a major attraction for them. But if it remains only at this level there is the risk of dysfunctional, inappropriate behaviors that may take the form of isolation, anxiety or aggression. This latter aspect is also of interest to us in this study, the main objective being to identify the extent to which video games inflate aggressive behavior into elementary school students.

## **2. Research methodology**

**2.1.** The aim of the study is to highlight the influence of video games on aggressiveness in young school children.

**2.2. Hypothesis:** The type of video game influences the level of aggression in small students, meaning that students who play inherently aggressive games have a higher level of aggression than those who play potentially aggressive or non-aggressive games.

### **2.3. The variables involved**

Independent Variable (I.V.): The type of video game that schoolchildren play predominantly, which can be: action, platformer, shooter, fighter, racing, adventure, tycoon or strategy;

Dependent Variable (D.V.): The level of aggression in children.

### **2.4. Methods of research**

„In order to carry out the research "Influence of video games on aggressiveness in children of elementary schoolage", we used the method for the investigation of the field of video games and on the other hand a psychometric method, Buss-Perry Questionnaire, for determining the aggressiveness level of the participants. Thus, to measure the psychological variables investigated, we used the following tools:

- The video game questionnaire regarding video games that are played by young students;
- The Aggression Questionnaire, AQ or BPAQ, A.H. Buss and M. Perry, 1992

The video game questionnaire regarding video games that are played by young students.

The questionnaire is addressed to children of elementary school age who play video games. It includes six free-to-answer items, but also multiple-choice items related to video games played by the participants. In the first part of the questionnaire, the subjects complete their data regarding their age, gender and class in which they are students. The task of the participants is to answer questions in the allocated space or to try the answer that suits them, in the items where there are multiple answers.

The first item is an introductory question: "Do you play video games" that has a short answer: "yes" or "no". The condition to participate in the study is the "yes" answer. The next two free-answer items target a research variable, that is, the time that the participants dedicate daily to video games. Thus, item 2 "at what times of the day you play" sends the participant with thoughts about daily moments and activities in which video games are played so that the next item can clearly state how much he spends daily for this activity.

The last three items are to investigate the variable: the type of video game that small children play predominantly. Item 4 asks students to list the five games they play. In item 5, children name and describe their favorite game, being a free-answer item. Here too, the participants, who are elementary school students, make a representative design for the game described. Through the drawing he makes, the type of play is highlighted. In item 6, students have the task of framing their favorite game in one of the categories, which are the types of video games. The name of each type of game is written together with a brief characterization of the game so that the participants can easily fit and clarify their favorite game in a category of video games. From these last three items, there is a predominant type of video games that the participants are accessing.

The Buss and Perry aggressiveness questionnaire has been used in numerous studies, being an easy to apply psychometric instrument. The task of the participants is to carefully read each of the 29 statements, and to determine the extent to which they characterize them on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means that the statement does not characterize them at all, and 5 signifies that the statement characterizes them very much. Scoring is done by adding the scores awarded by the participants, given the indirect quotation for the two items. The increased end score indicates a high level of aggression.

In the present study, the variable investigated is the level of aggression, so the general score obtained by participants in the Buss and Perry Aggressiveness Questionnaire will be taken into account.

## **2.5. Group of subjects**

For this study we selected 35 young school children from the Iratoșu Gymnasium School in Arad County. Those children are students in primary education, age being one of the selection criteria. Another criterion for the selection of participants was to play video games. Most schoolchildren play video games, except for students who do not have access to them because of the lack of computers, other technological means or lack of internet.

Of the 35 small children, 17 are boys and 18 are girls. Their age is between 7 and 11 years, being at the age of the elementary schooling stage. The average age of the participants is 9.6 years. All participants in the study play video games daily, to a lesser or greater extent.

The shortest time spent on video games by a participant is 10 minutes, and the maximum time dedicated to video games by students participating in the study is 300 minutes, equal to 5 hours.

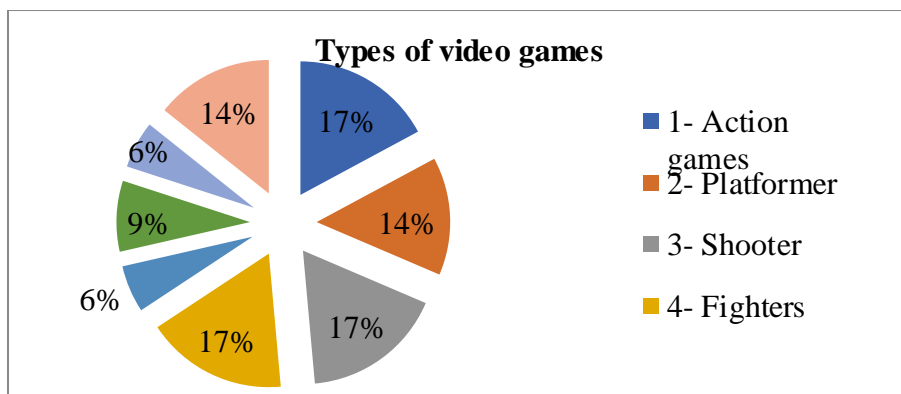
**2.6. Results of the study**

One of the variables of this study is the time spent daily by elementary children to play video games. The minimum time is 10 minutes and the maximum is 300 minutes. Of the 35 participants 17 are playing video games daily for one hour or less; 10 participants play between one hour and two hours; 4 are playing between two and three hours; 2 students play between three and four hours; and 2 play video games daily between four and five hours. The average time that students spend daily playing video games is 108.57 minutes, which is (without 3 seconds) 1 hour and 49 minutes.

**Table no. 1** Scholar’s daily time spent playing video games  
**Time spent on video games, expressed in hours**

Time (hours)	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
1 hour	17	48,6	48,6	48,6
2 hours	10	28,6	28,6	77,1
3 hours	4	11,4	11,4	88,6
4 hours	2	5,7	5,7	94,3
5 hours	2	5,7	5,7	100,0
Total	35	100,0	100,0	

Another important aspect of the research is the type of video game that students play predominantly. There were 8 types of video games identified, which can be seen in figure no. 1. The most attractive types of games for participants in this study are: action games, shooter games, weapons-fighting, and fighters that involve body battles. Each of the three categories of video games is preferred by 17% of the participants. The least accessible video games for young schoolboys are "tycoon" games, which involve the organization and leadership of an organization, a city, and "racing" games, involving racing with means of transport, generally vehicles. Each of these is preferred by only 6% of the study participants. Platform games and strategy games are played by 14% of small children. 9% of participants prefer adventure games. In figure no. 1 you can see the percentage of participants grouped according to the type of video game they prefer and play mainly as described above.



**Fig. 1.** Percentage of participants ranked according to the type of video game they play predominantly



For analyzing hypotheses and clarity of data, we divided these types of games into two main categories according to the aggressiveness they are promoting. Thus, we have obtained: the category of inherently aggressive video games, consisting of "shooter" and "fighters" games which, by their nature and gaming tasks, imply the manifestation of physical aggression in the virtual environment and the category of potentially aggressive video games and non-aggressive games, which include all other types of video games, because it does not directly request or requires the player to show aggressive virtual behavior to a small extent.

Inherently aggressive video games are played by 12 participants, while potentially aggressive video games are preferred by 23 of the study participants, as can be seen in table no. 2. In the present study, we will use the concept of inherently aggressive or potentially aggressive video games with reference to the category that includes all related game types, depending on the level of aggressiveness promoted by them.

**Table no. 2** Frequency of participants according to the category of video game they prefer  
**Video games categories**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
1- Inherently aggressive video games	12	34,3	34,3	34,3
2- Potential aggressive video games	23	65,7	65,7	100,0
Total	35	100,0	100,0	

The last variable that we will present in this part of the paper and which has a leading role in this research is the level of aggressiveness of the participants. Table no. 3 presents the general data on the scores obtained by the small students in the Buss-Perry Aggressivity Questionnaire. In this questionnaire, the general level of aggression is between 29 and 145 points.

Participants in the study achieved scores ranging from 51 to 119. In order to obtain the overall aggression score, physical aggression (PA), verbal aggression (VA), anger (A) and hostility (H) were measured. In the following table we can see for each of them, the subscale tested, the minimum value or score, the maximum score, the average, but also the standard deviation. The minimum value for general aggression is 51, while the maximum value is 119. The average score for the overall level of aggression is 80.46.

**Table no. 3**  
**Participants' level of aggressiveness**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
PA score (Physical aggression)	35	11	43	23,31	8,439
VA score (Verbal aggression)	35	7	22	15,09	4,266
A score (Anger)	35	10	30	19,34	5,023
H score (Hostility)	35	11	36	22,71	6,215
<b>Aggressiveness general score</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>80,46</b>	<b>18,108</b>
Valid N (Listwise)	35				

**Hypothesis 1:** The type of video game influences the level of aggression in elementary school children.

To verify the validity of this hypothesis we used the T test for independent samples. The two groups of independent subjects are: the group of small students who play inherently aggressive video games, and the small group of students who play potentially aggressive video games. In table no. 4 it can be noticed that the average of the overall aggression scores obtained by children playing inherently aggressive video games is higher than the scores of those who access potentially aggressive video games.

**Table no. 4** Statistics of elementary school groups, which predominantly play a certain type of video games, given the general level of aggression

Group Statistics					
	Type of the video game	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
Aggressiveness general score	1- Inherently aggressive	12	93,08	16,925	4,886
	2- Potential aggressive	23	73,87	15,206	3,171

As can be seen in Table 5, by applying the T test, a coefficient  $t = 3.299$  was obtained, significantly at a significance threshold  $p < 0.01$ . The average of the overall aggressiveness scores of schoolchildren who predominantly play aggressive video games is 93.08, while the average of the overall aggression scores of schoolchildren who predominantly play aggressive video games is 73.87; the difference between the two averages being 19.21. Between any two participants in the two groups (children playing inherently aggressive games and those playing potentially aggressive games), there is no difference in aggression lower than 7.08 and above 31.34, as aggression scores obtained by participants ranges between 51 and 119.

This confirms the first hypothesis of this research; the type of video game is influencing the level of aggression in elementary school students. Children who predominantly "consume" aggressive video games, such as "shooter" and "fighters", have a significantly higher level of aggressiveness than those who access mainly potentially aggressive or non-aggressive games, such as action / adventure, platformer, racing, tycoon or strategy.

**Table no. 5** T test results for independent samples, depending on the type of video game that participants play predominantly

Group Statistics					
	Type of the video game	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
Aggressiveness general score	1- Inherently aggressive	12	93,08	16,925	4,886
	2- Potential aggressive	23	73,87	15,206	3,171

## Conclusions

The results obtained from the data analysis generally confirmed the hypotheses of the proposed research, the third hypothesis being only partially confirmed, which supports the

general hypothesis of the study "The influence of video games on aggressiveness in elementary school children". The results also led and contributed to the objectives of the proposed research.

The type of video game preferred by young schoolboys influences their aggressiveness. Children who are mainly playing inherently aggressive video games such as "shooter" or "fighters" have a higher level of aggression than children who play low aggressive video games such as adventure games, action, "platformer", racing, "tycoon" or strategy.

One of the limitations of the study is that other factors that could influence the aggressiveness of elementary school children, such as their environment, family type, family climate, social-economic family conditions, etc. have not been taken into account.

Also, for greater accuracy of data, it would have been advisable to have a larger number of subjects. The larger number of participants would have favored obtaining more specific data, and more accurate results.

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## BILINGUAL STUDENTS SELF-REGULATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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**Abstract:** *Bilingualism is a controversial and ever expanding phenomenon. In this study, the performances and strategies of self-regulated learning of two distinct bilingual groups, natural bilingual students and educational bilingual students, were compared. The information of the quantitative and descriptive research was obtained by the survey method. The instruments were three questionnaires: one adapted from Ryan & Collin's (1989) Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-A) and two from the authors' set of Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ). The results of the research show that the effective use of self-regulation strategies for learning helps bilingual students obtaining significant academic performance due to the management of these strategies.*

**Keywords:** *sequential and simultaneous bilinguals; self-regulated learning; academic success;*

### Introduction

Nowadays, learning two or more languages is no longer a novelty in a world where migration has become an extremely common phenomenon, thus expanding and promoting linguistic diversity by means of technology. The topic of bilingualism, under its various forms, has been frequently discussed in the literature. Therefore, from a social point of view, research shows that in the early twentieth century, in France, a person who spoke two different languages fluently was associated with migration and was considered inferior to the linguistic majority (Irvine, 1998; Garcia, 2006). From an educational point of view, things were no different as students were punished for using a foreign dialect or accent in speech and, in schools, different rules were imposed to prevent the use of minority languages (Young, 2010).

In the literature, bilingualism has generally been associated with terms such as "cognitive confusion" (Vygotsky, 1962), "semantic weakness" (Benevelli, 2010) or even, language disorder, often leading to school failure. In recent years, however, it has been shown that this "linguistic upheaval" is actually just a normal manifestation of the child as a reaction to the accumulation of verbal stimuli that flow concomitantly upon him.

The views on the theme of bilingualism thus gravitate towards positive aspects, focusing on the cognitive flexibility of the bilinguals, on their control and execution functions, on their attention and self-management of problems (ASHA, 2015), on extended socialization and a strong impact on shaping identity (Tódor and Desgi, 2016).

However, the most important benefit of bilingualism, increasingly noticed by researchers in recent years, is that it can be an indicator of school success or even a factor in school performance (Peal and Lambert, 1962). From this point of view, recent studies on the topic of bilingual students illustrate under the form of comparisons between monolingual and bilingual students the fact that the latter achieve significantly better school results than the former when they resort to self-regulated learning strategies, such as careful management of time devoted to learning, selection of personalized learning methods, and proper organization of space for learning activities (Ardasheva, Wang, Adesope, & Valentine, 2017; Freihofner, Smala, & Campbell, 2016).

The controversies and the diversity of the specialized studies carried out on this topic represented the impulse of placing the process in the more elaborate frame of a current

scientific research, in which the emphasis would be laid on the comparison based on the use of self-regulated learning strategies of two groups of students with different forms of bilingualism (simultaneous bilinguals who acquired two different languages simultaneously, from birth, and sequential bilinguals who learned the first language within the family, and the second one in school).

The theoretical foundation of the research is based on the self-regulation model developed by Zimmerman (1998), made up of three elements: self-reflection, planning, and performance control, which illustrates that self-regulation is a true, constantly evolving cyclical process. The author insists on the connection between self-regulated learning and school success, drawing attention to the importance of the variables involved in regards to the management of time spent with learning activities, the use of learning methods and to the establishment of a learning goal or a feeling of effectiveness.

### **Purpose of study**

Starting from the premises of the specialized literature, the aim of the paper is to compare simultaneous bilingual students with sequential bilingual students in order to establish a relation between their level of self-regulated learning processes and their school success in Romanian educational environment.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The general hypothesis assumes that the use of self-regulated learning strategies represents an instrument for achieving school success in Romanian language, especially regarding simultaneous bilingual students. This hypothesis can be discussed under two different headings which claim that:

H1. We assume that there are significant differences between simultaneous bilingual students and sequential bilingual students, regarding the use of self-regulation strategies for learning.

H2. We assume that sequential bilingual students achieve better school results in Romanian language, compared to the natural / simultaneous bilingual students.

### **Methods**

The research method employed in this study is the survey, which attempts to highlight the strategies of self-regulated learning of bilingual students, the linguistic background of the students, as well as the school climate. The method is addressed to a numerically significant sample (173 bilingual students).

### **Participants**

The target population is represented by a number of 173 students enrolled in the cycle of Romanian middle school education (grades V-VIII), aged between 10 and 15 years (Figure 1. Ethnic structure of the group). This group was also divided into two distinct groups, chosen nonrandomized, taking into account the ethnicity of the groups, as follows: Group 1 (G1) was composed of a number of 72 Romanian students (they successively acquired Romanian (L1) at home and German (L2) at school and Group 2 (G2) was made up of 101 students, ethnic Hungarians (they acquired Hungarian and Romanian in natural context, simultaneously).

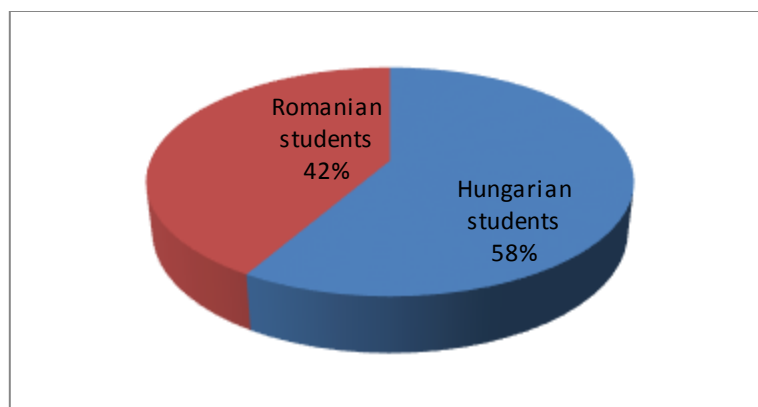


Figure 1. Ethnic structure of the group

### Research tools

The survey method uses a number of three questionnaires: one adapted from Ryan &Collinn's (1989) Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-A) and two from the authors' set of *Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ)*:

*The questionnaire meant to identify the level of self-regulated learning of bilingual students'* - developed according to the SRQ-A model (Ryan &Collinn, 1989).The questionnaire comprises 16 items (7-step Likert scale in which 1 is not true, 7 is very true) and is created to identify the methods or strategies used for more effective learning.

*Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L)* - developed by Collinn (1989).The questionnaire consists of 33 items with 7-point Likert scale responses, as well as closed and open answers, and its main target is the description of the students' language performance. Also, the questionnaire aims to describe the linguistic evolution of the student and draws the distinction between L1 and L2, at the level of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

*The Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ)* - adapted from Ryan &Collinn's (1989) model.The questionnaire comprises 15 items with 7-step Likert scale responses (1-strongly disagree, 7-strongly agree), and aims to analyse the environment wherethe learning activity takes place andto identify the stimulating factors of learning.

### Findings and Results

To verify if there are differences between the two groups of subjects regarding the performance at the Romanian language subject (common language for both groups from birth and 20% covered in school by both groups) under the influence of self-regulated learning strategies, we used thenonparametric statisticalMann-Whitney U Test for two independent samples and for the normally distributed, quantitative variables, it was applied the Independent – Sample T test.

Regarding the variable of self-regulated learning strategies, the dispersion of results across the whole variable indicates significant differences of  $p = 0.00$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the median ranks of the results of the two groups of participants, resulting in a significant Mann-Whitney U coefficientvalue, where  $U = 3050.500$ ,  $z = - 1.804$ ,  $p < 0.05$  (Table 1. Differences between groups in terms of strategies of self-regulated learning). Therefore,sequential bilinguals students had lower results (Mdn = 4.7) compared with the results obtained by simultaneous bilingual students (Mdn = 5.06).

Table 1.Differences between groups in terms of strategies of self-regulated learning

Self-regulated learning strategies	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp.Significance level (Sig.)

G1	78,87	3050.500	p<0,05
G2	92,80		

To test the first hypothesis, we transformed 5 of the most representative items of the questionnaire regarding the identification of the level of self-regulated learning, into independent variables, which constitute subscales of the self-regulation questionnaire. Thus, subscale A verifies the frequency with which the bilingual students from the two groups resort to tutoring to enhance their learning. Subscale B involves identifying the extra-time intervals that bilinguals spend with the language acquired.

Subscale C identifies the situations in which bilinguals resort to solving tasks in the second language, with external assistance. Subscale D verifies the frequency with which the bilinguals use Internet sources with text translation functions in solving the tasks in the second language. Subscale E involves identifying situations in which bilinguals repress certain behaviours in order to maintain constant attention.

According to the results of the research, sequential bilinguals resort more often to after-school tutoring in order to self-regulate the learning activity ( $M = 4.20$ ), compared to simultaneous bilingual students ( $M = 3.01$ ), the differences being significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Regarding time management and planning in learning, simultaneous bilingual students from G1 present a higher average of the answers ( $M = 4.89$ ), as opposed to sequential bilingual students ( $M = 4.29$ ). From the point of view of self-regulation by requesting external assistance, the statistical results indicate that G1 has a lower average ( $M = 3.79$ ), as opposed to G2 students with an average of  $M = 4.60$  (Table 2. Differences between groups in terms of self-regulated learning strategies).

In terms of self-regulation through the use of the Internet, we also found out significant differences ( $p < 0.01$ ) between the two groups, where the G1 median is only  $M = 3.86$ , compared to the G2 median which is at a value of  $M = 4.55$ . In terms of self-regulation by means of attentional control, the results are again in favour of G2 with an average of  $M = 5.40$ , G1 presenting an average of  $M = 4.89$  ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 2. Differences between groups in terms of self-regulated learning strategies

Items SRQ-A	Participants	Mean	SD	T	df	Significance level (p)
After-school tutoring	72	4.20	2.37	3.47	171	0.00
	101	3.01	2.09			
Time management	72	4.29	1.98	-1.38	171	0.04
	101	4.89	1.82			
Request for external assistance	72	3.79	2.10	-2.74	171	0.00
	101	4.60	1.77			
Internet use	72	3.86	1.77	-2.48	171	0.01
	101	4.55	1.84			
Attentional control	72	4.89	1.76	-1.95	171	0.04
	101	5.40	1.61			

Hypothesis 1 is confirmed by indicating that in fact, bilingual students naturally resort to more

strategies for self-regulated learning, as opposed to sequential bilinguals, where self-regulation by means of after-school tutoring prevails.

As far as the second hypothesis of the research is concerned, the dispersion of results on the variable regarding performance at the Romanian language subject also indicates significant differences  $p = 0.00$  between the means of the results of the two groups, ( $t(161) = 2.55$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 3. Differences between groups regarding the performance at the Romanian language

Groups of participants	Number of participants (N)	Mean	SD	T	df	Significance level (p)
Sequential bilinguals (G1)	70	8.40	1.40	2.55	159	0.01
Simultaneous bilinguals (G2)	91	7.69	1.74			

The data obtained in the research showed that hypothesis 2 is confirmed, proving that sequential bilingual students have higher grades in Romanian language subject ( $M = 8.40$ ), compared to simultaneous bilingual students ( $M = 7.69$ ). Despite the fact that Romanian comes with a common lexical background for both groups since birth, the statistical differences are significant with  $p = 0.00$  (Table 3. Differences between groups regarding the performance at the Romanian language).

According to the results of the research, simultaneous bilingual students resort more often to self-regulated learning strategies (time management, requesting external assistance, use of websites with text translation function, attentional control), as opposed to sequential bilingual students whose main strategies are tutoring hours. Thus, we can infer that sequential bilinguals rely on external support for self-regulated learning, while the others most often resort to strategies of independent work, research, and discovery.

On the other hand, regarding the performance at the Romanian language subject, the results of the research indicate that although both groups know this language from birth and both groups study it in proportion of only 20% in school, sequential bilingual students achieve better school results in this discipline. However, we note that, despite the differences between the groups' average, simultaneous bilingual students do not score low school results, their average being 7.72, compared to that of sequential bilinguals, which is 8.70. In this case, however, we can say that the use of self-regulated learning strategies represents a considerable support in obtaining good school results.

### Limits

Regarding the application of the research tools, difficulties can be encountered regarding the degree of understanding of the questionnaires statements by the participating students. This is why it is very important to ensure the continuous presence of at least one translator during the entire activity of applying the instruments.

Moreover, the construction of the questionnaires indicates that their length can eventually lead to fatigue, monotony or the tendency to provide answers without reading the entire statement, which, in turn, leads to false answers.

At the same time, the analysis of school success in terms of school results declared by the participating students through the questionnaire does not prove the truthfulness of these results in the absence of direct consultation of the students' grades.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the research offer new pedagogical perspectives in working with bilingual students. According to these results, it seems that the form of bilingualism indeed influences the need to use less and less self-regulated learning strategies for second language acquisition. Thus, simultaneous bilingual students use more self-regulated learning strategies in the study of the second language due to the need to balance the language skills of the two languages acquired simultaneously in childhood, while sequential bilinguals, who already have a well-founded first language, can easily focus on the second one without having to constantly resort to self-regulation strategies.

Regarding the school results at the Romanian language subject, common to both groups, even if sequential bilinguals achieve better results, with averages between 9 and 10, the results of simultaneous bilinguals are not insignificant (average between 7 and 8), which proves that the frequent use of self-regulation strategies is, however, a considerable tool in achieving a good to very good level of success in the second language proficiency. This also proves that bilingual students are not students with speech disorders, but students capable of self-regulation and capable of achieving significant school results.

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## AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** *The study aimed at determining the availability of library and information resources for inclusive education of visually impaired primary school pupils in special education centres in South East Nigeria. The population of the study was 129, comprising 125 pupils and 4 librarians in 4 special education centres in the zone. One research question guided the study. Three instruments used for data collection were observation checklist, focus group discussion and interview. Data collected with the checklist were analyzed using frequency counts while responses from pupils and librarians were analyzed qualitatively. The findings revealed that the libraries of the special education centres under study lacked information resources in different subject areas and in alternative formats readable to visually impaired pupils. The result also showed that available resources in alternative formats were old editions of textbooks. Based on the findings, the study concluded that South East Nigeria lacked information resources in alternative formats of Braille, audio and ICT for the inclusive education of visually impaired primary school pupils. It was recommended among others that the government should make information resources available in alternative formats of Braille, audio and digital in all subjects taught in special education centres in South East Nigeria.*

**Key words:** *special education; centres; information resources;*

### Introduction

Wehmeier(2000), refers to the word 'inclusive' as including a wide range of people. He also gives the meaning of education as a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills. In the light of these definitions, inclusive education is the type of education that involves all category of learners. In other words, it is the education that cuts across all category of learners, both normal and physically challenged like the visually impaired learners. This implies that every learner is carried along irrespective of his or her physical condition.

Visually impaired pupils are pupils with vision loss that adversely affect their educational performance. They are pupils with vision impairment that cannot allow them to read in a conventional way as others using their sight, hence they use other senses like sense of touch and sense of hearing to acquire information and knowledge. Friend (2009) opined that 'visually impaired' is a general term used to describe people who are partially sighted or completely blind. However, the Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002, broadly defined a visually impaired person (VIP) as someone who is blind, partially sighted and whose

eyesight cannot be improved by corrective lenses to allow them to read without a special level or kind of light, who is unable to either hold or manipulate a book or move the eyes to be able to read easily. In other words, any person who is not able to read in a conventional way is visually impaired.

Children with visual impairment need to acquire education that will make them independent, self-reliant and contributing members of the society. This can only be achieved by means of education which is facilitated through the provision of library and information resources for teaching and learning. Except information resources are repackaged in alternative formats that visually impaired pupils can access, they will remain cut off from the world of information and hence deprived of education.

Given the importance of library resources in the educational development of an individual, what is the availability of these resources in libraries, especially in developing countries like Nigeria? Library resources constitute the totality of the library holdings, which include print and non-print materials in various formats and ICT resources, with which the library meets the information needs of users. Majority of library resources are in print. Since the visually impaired cannot access information in print, there is need to repackage information in a format suitable to them, that is, in alternative formats. Alternative formats include Braille, audio/talking materials, large prints and ICT resources. Adetoro (2010) asserted that information materials can only become usable to persons with visual impairment when they are transcribed into alternative formats.

Traditionally, people with visual impairment read Braille, audio books and large print books produced by specialized libraries for the blind. Efforts are made by libraries to provide these alternative formats of information resources commercially or locally. Braille resources are materials written in Braille. Braille is a system of reading in which embossed impressions or raised dots are used to represent letters and numerals, these are read by touch. It is made up of six raised dots contained in three cells. Combination of one, two or more dots represents a letter, word, sentence or phrase. Braille resources are very good for users who are totally blind, but more useful to the young, who learn it early and have more sensitive fingertips. Braille is the true literary equivalent of reading and writing, and literacy is fundamental to a successful education, career and quality of life. To achieve independence, blind and visually impaired children need to be taught Braille, since early Braille education is crucial to literacy, and literacy is crucial to employment (Ryles, 2004). On the other hand, tactile picture books with Braille play an important role in supporting the development of reading skills. They are picture books read or perceived by touch. Skold (2007) opined that a blind child is not exposed to "sign-reading" in the same way that a sighted child is and that opportunities must be provided to acquaint a blind child with similar skills. The researcher further stressed that using tactile picture books is one way to develop these early literacy skills. Tactile picture books introduce Braille to a blind child at an early age. This early introduction is necessary. Again she stated that for many children with visual impairment, the reading of a tactile picture book is their first experience with a picture and an introduction to the pictures they will later meet in school books.

Audio/talking resources are audio versions of books, newspapers or articles. They could be recorded on cassettes, CD-ROM, DVD and on the Internet. Books, newspapers, magazines and other information resources could be recorded on tapes for the visually impaired. Such resources are utilized by sense of hearing. When audio resources are played, visually impaired users listen and access information. Audio resources are very important and are preferred by the majority of the visually impaired, especially those who met their impairment at an older age. Hence, it becomes necessary that libraries serving the visually impaired should enrich their audio collections. In view of this, information resources not available in audio form could be taped locally by such libraries. On the other hand, large print

materials are materials written in large fonts. This could be done manually or electronically with screen magnifying devices. Large print and magnifying devices enlarge reading materials to various sizes that enable people with low vision to read. They are very good for partially sighted users.

In addition to older formats, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has opened new areas of reading, participation and activities for people with visual disabilities. This is why Ansari and Zuberi (2010) noted that print media are no longer the only primary means of information storage and delivery, as information can be digitized and delivered electronically. The visually impaired can now have access to computer programmes, Internet and digital resources using Braille displays, screen magnifying monitors, screen magnification software, screen readers and speech synthesis. These electronic aids are also known as assistive or adaptive technologies. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) defined assistive technology as "software or hardware that has been specifically designed to assist people with disabilities in carrying out daily activities". ICT has helped to reduce the digital divide between the sighted and the blind by providing information on their desktops. ICT facilities are highly flexible and provide great scope for usage by persons with vision impairment. Assistive technologies play a very important role in helping visually impaired persons access and use information. For instance, JAWS Pro Talking Software is used for conversion of a normal personal computer into a talking personal computer to enable the blind to operate computers independently including Internet access. Also, the Talking Typing Teacher Pro is specially designed talking typing tutorials for the blind with complete guidance and practice lessons for learning keyboarding skills and developing typing speed in a systematic manner (Koganuramath and Choukimath, 2009).

Availability of information resources is a key factor in library services. The availability of information resources in the library implies that information resources are in the library for immediate use. The importance of availability of information resources for the visually impaired cannot be over emphasized. This is why Eguavon and Eniola (2007) stressed the need for the development of library and information services to the visually impaired in schools. They stated that since their curriculum is not in any way different, the library should be adequately equipped to meet the needs of individual students including the visually impaired.

The importance of making information resources accessible to the visually impaired is now realized by different countries. Information resources for the visually impaired must be transcribed into alternative formats before they are made available for use. However, the use of alternative formats by visually impaired is limited by availability (Adetoro, 2011). The extent to which information resources are utilized is of paramount importance in librarianship. Visually impaired pupils are encouraged to make use of information resources that the library acquires. Ajobiewe (1999) opined that the provision and use of alternative formats such as Braille, large prints, talking books and the availability of reading aids, volunteers and transcription services in libraries serving persons with visual impairment in Nigeria will go a long way in making information accessible to the blind and partially sighted. It is believed that the availability of various alternative formats of information resources will greatly enhance their utilization. Ogba (2000) reported that visually impaired users of the Imo State Library Board visit the library section for the visually handicapped to use and borrow Braille books, moon type, talking books on cassette, large print periodicals and books.

There is a link between availability and utilization of information resources in the libraries. This is why Adetoro (2011) concluded that availability of information materials in libraries has a positive relationship with their utilization. This implies that the extent of utilization of information materials in libraries is determined by availability. In other words, library users can only use what is available in their libraries, including visually impaired

users. Various alternative formats of information resources are used by the visually impaired based on their availability. In their study, Adetoro and Atinmo (2012) discovered that Braille materials enjoyed high frequency of use among the respondents. They noted that Braille was the most utilized format because it was the most available format in all the libraries they studied.

### Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to determine the information resources available for inclusive education of visually impaired pupils in South East Nigeria.

### Research Question

What are the information resources available for inclusive education of visually impaired pupils in South East Nigeria?

### Method

The design adopted for the study is descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 129 respondents, comprising 125 visually impaired pupils in the special schools under study and 4 librarians of these schools. There are five states in South East Nigeria. This zone has four special education centres which are located in Umuahia, (Abia State); Isulo, (Anambra State); Opefia, (Ebonyi State) and Oji River, (Enugu State). Instruments used for data collection were observation checklist, focus group discussion and interview. Observation checklist was used to collect data on the resources available in the libraries in terms of quantity, while the focus group discussion was used to obtain data from pupils and the interview was used to collect information from the librarians.

Data collected with the checklist were analyzed using frequency counts and presented in tables.

Responses from the pupils and the librarians were analyzed qualitatively and integrated in the presentation.

### Result

<b>Table 1: Textbooks Available for Visually Impaired Pupils</b>											
<b>Braille</b>											
English Lang.	-	43	34	-	210	4	215	23	459	70	529
Mathematics	-	49	18	407	176	4	359	25	553	485	1038
Igbo	-	-	-	-	24	-	71	-	95	-	95
Agric Science	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	9	-	9
Health Edu.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Studies	-	-	8	98	231	-	280	-	519	98	617
CRK/CRS	35	997	-	97	22	917	-	157	57	2168	2225
Arts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Computer	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	-	35	-	35
Civic edu.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Home econs.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Basic Sc.&Tech	-	-	13	18	124	-	144	-	281	18	299
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1,089</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2839</b>	<b>4847</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>1,124</b>		<b>693</b>		<b>1,721</b>		<b>1,309</b>		<b>4847</b>	

Table 1 above shows the availability of textbooks in various subjects. It reveals that the libraries of the special schools under study have textbooks in different subject areas. However, it is obvious that they are lacking textbooks in some subjects. It can be seen from the table that Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) or Christian Religious Studies (CRS) has the highest number of textbooks, numbering 2,225. Out of the 2,225 textbooks, Abia has 1032, Anambra 97, Ebonyi 939 and Enugu 157. Core subjects of English language and Mathematics also have reasonable textbooks. Mathematics has a total of 1038 textbooks, out of which Abia has 49, Anambra 425, Ebonyi 180 and Enugu 384. English language on the other hand has a total of



529 textbooks, made up of Abia 43, Anambra 34, Ebonyi 214 and Enugu 238. Next is social studies with a total of 617 textbooks, out of which Anambra has 106, Ebonyi 231 and Enugu 280. Table 1 also shows that basic science

and technology has 229 textbooks, consisting of Anambra 31, Ebonyi 124 and Enugu 144. As can be seen from table 1, some subjects like Igbo, Computer and Agricultural Science have scanty collection of textbooks, while subjects like Health education, Home Economics and Civic Education have no textbooks at all.

Fig1 Torn Braille Bible

The availability of textbooks by formats, that is, print or Braille is also shown in table 1. It can be observed from the table that the total number of textbooks available in the centre libraries is 4847, consisting of 2008 print and 2839 Braille texts. These textbooks cover primary 1 to 6; whether print or Braille.

Table 1 indicates that all the libraries had reasonable Braille collections in Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK). Majority of the Braille collections were Bibles, that is books of the Bible. They were mainly Braille Bibles donated by foreign philanthropists. Due to the voluminous nature of Braille texts, it is not possible that all the books of the Bible will be transcribed into one volume, but into 66 volumes representing each book of the Bible. The implication of this is that in a situation where a library does not have all the books of the Bible in its Braille collection or where the ones available are old, worn out or torn, it does not have the complete Bible. This was the situation in almost all the libraries visited. Some of the Braille Bibles were worn out and torn. Fig1 shows one of the librarians showing a worn out and torn Braille book of the Bible. The group discussion also revealed that some of the libraries did not have the complete Bible. In one of the groups, a pupil lamented that he had not been able to find Psalm 115 in his library when he said "I have being looking for Psalm 115 in the library".

It can also be observed from table 1 that mathematics is another subject whose Braille collection is a little bit high. This was due to the fact that the centre in Anambra state got supply of Braille textbooks in mathematics, social studies and basic science and technology from UBEC (Universal Basic Education Commission) in 2012 as can be seen in fig 2. This gesture was based on request, according to the librarian.

Braille textbooks in English and Mathematics (Macmillan English and Mathematics) were old and worn out, their dots have become faint and the contents did not rhyme with current texts (New Macmillan English and Mathematics) in use in schools. Discussions from the groups also showed that the textbooks were old editions, as one of the pupils from a group said "they are teaching us with old modules". In agreement with this, one of the librarians during the interview noted that the Braille Macmillan English and Mathematics sent to them by Nigerwives long ago were worn out and old; stressing that new Macmillan textbooks were not available.



**Fig. 2 Braille Collection in Anambra State Supplied By UBEC**

Table 1 equally revealed that a large number of available textbooks were in print form. These print textbooks were of little or no benefit to the

pupils because they could not explore them to get the information therein. The researchers were made to understand that the reason for this was because some of the state governments normally send print textbooks to these centres as is the case with normal schools, especially in English language and mathematics. Since Braille is the major format for teaching and learning, it is expected that textbooks should be provided in Braille. If this is done, pupils can go to the library and use them independently.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The result obtained from the observation checklist revealed that the libraries of the special education centres under study lacked information resources in different subject areas and different types. They lacked Braille textbooks in almost all the subjects taught in the schools, including core subjects. The few available were old editions. This was as a result of limited provision of information resources.

The implication of this is that the pupils could not utilize the library resources for their educational development. Since parents cannot afford the cost of provision of these resources, pupils are left to learn with inadequate resources. In other words, inadequate provision of resources is likely to be consequential to poor learning.

Also, inadequate provision of Braille textbooks in core subjects like English language and mathematics, (where pupils are expected to be given exercises to do at end of the lesson),

implies that they are given few exercises or none at all. Although these subjects were the subjects in which provision was done to a little extent, much needs to be done.

The result of the observation also showed that the libraries of the schools under study lacked information resources in alternative formats readable to the pupils in subjects taught in the schools. The major format in use in all the schools is Braille. However, Braille collections in subjects taught were scanty, and sometimes non-existent. The implication of this is that the pupils have difficulty in learning.

Equally, it was evident from the observation that neither audio resources nor ICT resources were available. None of the libraries under study had audio materials like talking books, recorded tapes, radios, tape recorders, and so on. ICT resources and facilities were also lacking in the various centre libraries. Except for computers, necessary software and hardware such as VERA, Zoomtext, that would have helped visually impaired pupils to access and use information were not available. If audio and ICT resources were available, they would have supplemented Braille resources.

The result is in line with the findings of Adetoro (2011) which indicated that the majority of information materials for visually impaired persons in libraries are not available. Also, the present study agrees with the findings of Eskay and Chima (2013) which revealed that the library lacks most of the materials that can be accessed by visually impaired persons. It also collaborates with Atinmo (2000) who observed that facilities in schools for visually impaired handicapped is scanty; and Babalola and Haliso (2011) who asserted that there were no Braille books in all the academic libraries they studied. Again, the result of the study affirmed the finding of Singh and Moirangthem(2010) which indicated that less number of course books in Braille and less number of course books in audio were the major problems confronting visually impaired students. Lack of information resources will greatly impede teaching and learning in the centres, thereby hampering the realization of the goals of inclusive education of visually impaired pupils, that is, to become independent and self-reliant. Since the information resources are not available in alternative formats, visually impaired pupils are not fully carried along in educational development. They seem to be cut off from the world of information.

## **Conclusion**

Considering the importance of alternative formats of information resources to the visually impaired, their availability in libraries for visually impaired pupils becomes imperative. From the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that South East Nigeria lacks information resources in alternative formats for inclusive education of visually impaired primary school pupils.

## **Recommendation**

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

1. Information resources should be provided in alternative formats readable to the visually impaired pupils. Efforts should be made to provide resources in Braille, audio or ICT formats in all the subjects taught in the schools.
2. The Federal Government or state governments concerned should endeavour to provide different types of information resources and in different subjects areas so that pupils will have variety of information resources for personal development.
3. The state governments should increase their subventions to the centres so that there will be enough fund to produce some of the information resources locally.
4. The state governments should provide basic learning equipment for visually impaired pupils, like Braille facilities, type writers, thermoform machines, audio and ICT facilities.



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## ANALYZING AND SUPPORTING THE WELL-BEING THROUGH EDUCATION IN AN INTERCULTURAL-SOCIETY

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**Abstract:** *The paper is the result of a long term observation and of my personal experience put in the context of a in-depth reflection, based on the documentation focused on the theoretical aspects involved understood and connected among them. The leading role of education, in connection to heredity and background, for the complex process of developing the human character is put into the context of the new manifestation of migration nowadays, at the beginning of this new millennium. This role is considered in connection with the processes of enculturation, acculturation, and cultural adaptation in the context of changing the status of an emigrant to the status of an immigrant. The specific issues of migration nowadays are briefly but openly approached. The way in which education is involved in each of the mentioned processes is synthetically presented. The paper opens routes for further development of reflections upon the educational priorities in the years to come. Even if it is an already debated issue, the core topic of this paper seems to become crucial these years when new faces of migration appear to be a priority of humanity concern. The paper tries to suggest that proper formal education, well designed, creatively and effectively implemented and carefully assessed and managed can support in a positive way the synergy of informal and no-formal education in different contexts of human lives. This synergy can be the fundamental of genuine well-being, even if this concept itself is strongly subjective.*

**Key concepts:** *migration; emigrant-immigrant; enculturation; inculturation; education as a leading actor; multicultural society; intercultural education; well-being;*

### **1. Migration as an ongoing, complex, and dynamic phenomenon during the first decades of the third millennium**

This decade of the third millennium came with an interesting and nuanced meaning of some core values of humanity as multiculturalism and intercultural education, enculturation, acculturation, migration with its wings emigration and immigration, cultural adaptation, and well-being.

It is an issue of courage to try to understand the meaning of these concepts by reading different definitions of them in the literature. Their meaning is interesting nuanced, sometimes contradictory, other times intimately connected but rarely in the same way.

It isn't the intention of this paper to present an exhaustive portrait of these definitions. The core focus of this paper is on the education and its role within the nowadays society, a society where the connections among the meanings of these concepts have a specific dynamic.

Why education? Because of a perennial motive, perpetually present in the evolution of mankind: the permanence of education as an informal, nonformal, and, later, the formal process of influence on man, along the phylogeny understood as the human's development along the times, and the permanence of education as a leading factor of the genesis of human character.

Niculescu R.M. (2015) speaks about parts of the causes of nowadays migration process distinguishing between two main categories of determinant factors, called in terms of *push and pull factors*.

Usually, or better saying, initially, people live within the society where they were born and have been educated. The dynamic and the speed of communication within nowadays society create an interesting phenomenon: migration.

People born and educated within a national background are tempted to experience life within another national context. Step by step this movement among different countries and nations determined the development of multicultural societies within the border of each country where come or where from leave people. "Push factors" could be objectives and subjective ones. Objective factors are certainly connected to the economic level, the country development in terms of health, education, service systems. These aspects are put in connection with the individuals' levels of aspirations and expectations, which represent the subjective factors.

On the other side, new countries, other than the native ones, seem, or really are, more developed and offer better opportunities, subjectively perceived or real. These are "pull factors".

## 2. Connected aspects involved by migration

The people become emigrants when they wish and act in order to leave their native country. This emigration process can occur for some people at maturity for others (usually, members of the adults' families) at childhood. The development as humans of these emigrants is led by *education* within a given *social and geographical background*, and starting with the base offered by *heredity*. It is important to highlight the leading role of education for this personogenesis process.

Even in this millennium, unfortunately, the educational process within the formal context is significantly different from a country to another. Different are the influences of culture, tradition, ancestral patterns upon the way of being designed and implemented the formal education in different parts of the world.

Thus, the *enculturation* process, seen as the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values<sup>1</sup>, gives a specific nuance to each personality developed within the context.

The moment of the turning of an emigrant into an immigrant living in another country than the native one is a very important one. There are a consistent number of theories describing and theorizing the complex aspects of this moment. An emigrant turned into an immigrant seems to pass a short period of euphoria, until the moment of confronting with the real life of the new country, seen now as a host where the immigrant must be properly integrated, as a professional, citizen, as a human living in a new context. This new context was previously seen in the happiest case as a tourist. The newcomer feels for the first time the huge difference between being tourist or reader about another country and the status of a candidate to an active integration within it.

Different people traverse this moment in very specific and individual ways, strongly influenced by an important number of aspects. On one side a significant influence has the way which the newcomer's national origin is perceived, very different in different countries. On the other side, the dimension of the immigrants belonging to the same nationality of origin and the relations among these people, and of them with the multitude of the other immigrants living in the same country are other important factors of influence for this turning moment of an emigrant into an immigrant.

The initial moment is followed by a sinuous trajectory, with ups and downs, both in terms of insertion in work, and insertion and social integration, both of them with an equally sophisticated emotional accompaniment.

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-webster definition <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/enculturation>

The next steps are essentially determined by the philosophy of the host country, by the dominant model of ethnic relations in which a nation-state's constituent ethnic groups act and relate to each other.

Two important models are described by the literature; they are usually named as Melting Pot or the Salad Bowl models. A consistent number of combinations are to be found in different parts of the world. The core difference between these two models (largely discussed and debated, especially in the USA) is connected to several concepts as: assimilation, adaptation, influence in the context of a complex process, the process of acculturation.

**Enculturation** is almost a natural process considered as the very first familiarization to a particular culture. It begins right after the birth as a necessary process that often occurs without or with a natural formal educational influence. It is the process of learning and adapting from own culture. Sandesh Adhikary (2018)

**Acculturation** as a process occurs only when two or more cultures meet. In the immigration process, the culture of the newcomer meets with the culture of the host country (already influenced by other cultures within the multicultural society).

Together with Sandesh Adhikary (2018) I say that acculturation involves a process of learning, adopting from the other's culture, and adapting to the other's culture.

The two mentioned models look at the process of acculturation through different eyes. The melting pot model emphasizes the necessity of assimilation of the culture of newcomers by the culture existing in the host country. In this case, the acculturation can be seen as a process by which one's culture becomes subsumed by others. The Salad Bowl model shows that the assimilation is not necessary, because each culture should keep its treasures, features even if suffer influences from other cultures and has influences upon other cultures, as long as they coexist within the same space (geographical and social).

Reality shows a wide palette of situations. Not all the immigrants suffer the same influences even if they enter within a society functioning based only on one of the two mentioned models.

The adult immigrants are strongly influenced by their own enculturation process, scrolled before leaving the country. In addition, the newcomer status, especially during the declining moments of integration increases the need for anchoring and keeping of the culture they come from.

It is not the same situation with the children who start in the new context more a process of enculturation than an acculturation one. This quasi-enculturation process is influenced by the effort of the parents to preserve the cultural roots. This type of influences leads to a nuanced palette of results. (fig.1)

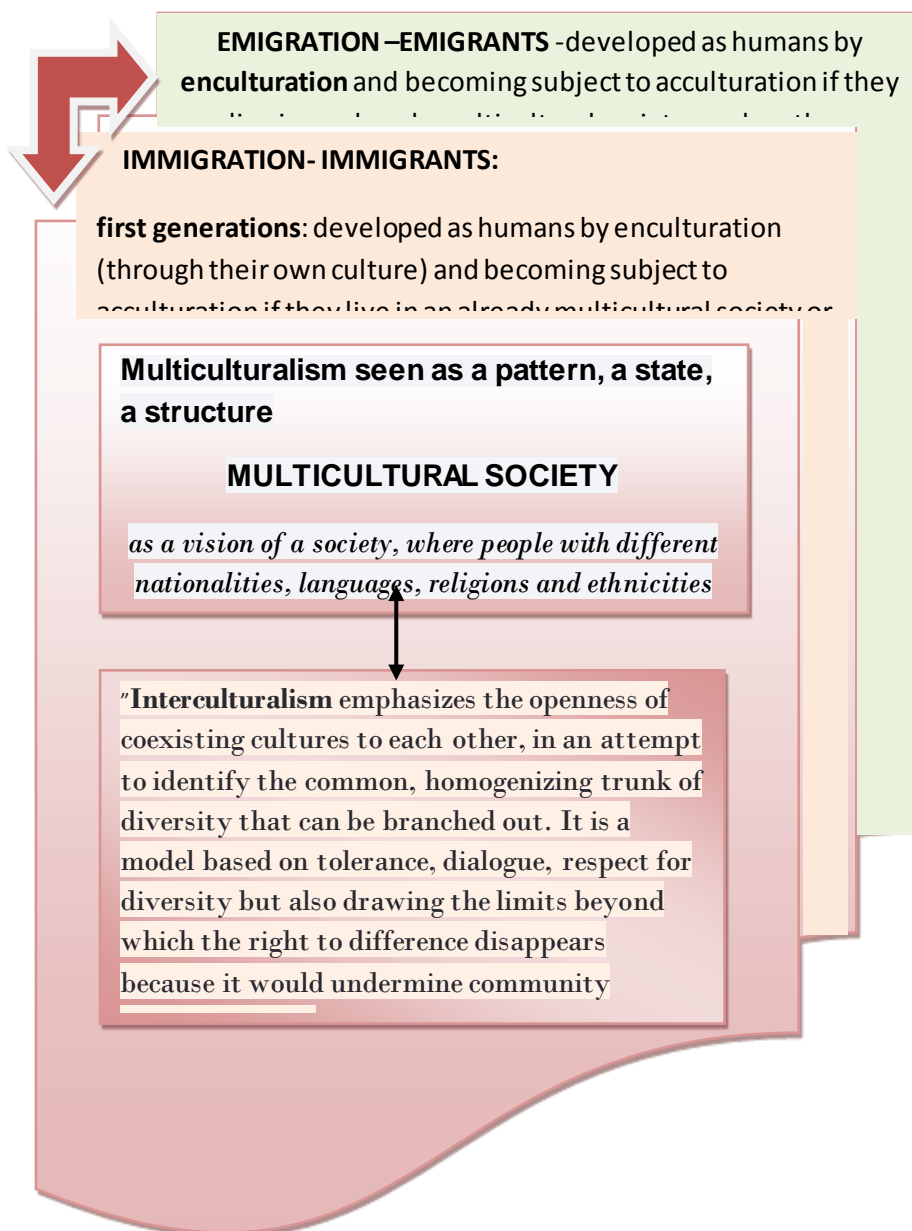


Fig.1 Connections among concepts

1. Ciolan A. Multiculturalism vs interculturalism/ <https://www.zf.ro/ziarul-de-duminica/cand-aud-de-cultura-vii-multiculturalism-vs-interculturalism-de-alexandru-ciolan-7730103>

2: the process by which a human being acquires the culture of a particular

As previous papers highlighted (Niculescu R.M., 2013; Niculescu R.M., 2015, Bazgan M., Niculescu R.M., 2016) the *cultural adaptation* to a new national, social, geographical context is a complex process, passed in a very individual and specific manner by each human being.

The *cultural adaptation* generally understood as an ongoing, evolutionary process is the process that put the individuals in the situation to modify their personal habits and customs, developed during the enculturation process in order to fit into a particular new culture. This adaptation is done in very personal manners, strongly influenced by the specifics of education along the enculturation process and along with the acculturation one, as well, for each person.

No matter how personalized is this process the common aim of all the human individuals is to find the desired wellbeing. But this wellbeing is also a very subjective concept.

The subjectivity is a normal status because each human (even if one talks about twins) has a unique given by birth feature (as a result of heredity put in individual intrauterine life, and of the very personal moment of birth), and further, an unique evolution influenced by background and education. What is really important is that the mechanisms of education are able to correct or to substitute deficiencies of the background or of heredity.

The presented reflections tries to suggest that proper formal education, well designed, creatively and efficiently implemented, carefully assessed and managed (both in enculturation process and in acculturation one) can support in a positive way the synergy of informal and no-formal education in different contexts of human lives, with positive results for the well-being of the human communities.

### **3. Wellbeing -a concept with wide and nuanced features. The specific role of education as a leading factor for determining the nuances**

Even if it is difficult to find a consensus around a common definition of wellbeing, there are some core aspects that find a kind of general agreement. Thus, wellbeing appears to include the presence of positive emotions and moods (satisfaction, happiness, etc.), and a total or partial absence of negative emotions (dissatisfaction, sadness, etc). A person who estimates himself /herself as satisfied with life, who judges his/her one life as being positive is considered as a person appreciating her/his wellbeing.

This paper tries to highlight the role of education during the enculturation and the acculturation process (if it is the case) in determining the nuances of the wellbeing perception.

Firstly it is important to distinguish between the role of education in the enculturation and, respectively, acculturation process.

In the enculturation process, the education (formal, no-formal and informal) acts somewhat naturally. The children, and further, the teens, and young adults develop their personality based on their own heredity, influenced in a very different manner (motivating or with braking effects) by his/ her own familial, social, economic background and strongly influenced by the educational factor. This educational factor itself is the result of an interesting and particular synergy of the formal education system with the specific offers of the no-formal education within a concrete national context, and, very important, the informal education factor strongly involving the national level of culture and civilization.

Secondly, for the adults turned from emigrants into immigrants a process of adult education starts. Many western countries from Europe or from the American continent specifically organize courses focused on helping the newcomers' integration. They are involved in a complex process of acculturation.

Thirdly, the newcomers' children are integrated into the new country school system with specific support aiming to make the process as easy as possible. These children (preschoolers,

students in primary school, teens or even young adults enrolled in post-high school education) are involved in processes of enculturation and acculturation acting together, with a dominant of one or another according to the moment of their ontogenesis moment.

An interesting emotional struggle is done between the wish of the family to see their children adapted to the new society and the need for preserving the cultural roots.

Observing a number of immigrants coming from different parts of the world within Canadian society, during more than nine years (an occasional or an intentional observation) a conclusion arises: *the younger the emigrants migrate (especially the early years of childhood), their linguistic, school, social integration in the new context is made easier. But at the same time, their parents have to make more effort to preserve the cultural values of their home country, even by resorting to education formulas non-formal within the origin community. The adults appear to live a strong frustration; they feel a kind of removal of their children of origins.*

#### **4. Wellbeing for everybody as a condition of a society living in harmony**

A strange phenomenon is more and more present within the borders of Europe (especially), but also of the other countries where the phenomenon of migration has reached higher levels. Unfortunately, the concept of *political correctness* determines a hide of the real feelings under the veil of silence, a silence which doesn't solve the issues, maybe even aggravate them.

Starting to the statement, without any doubt, that each person in this world has the right of preserving the original cultural, religious values, I do believe that this right is for everybody, both hosts and guests, both people belonging to the host countries and immigrants, to the same extent.

Nobody has the right to impose their values on others. This is valuable for the models that ask for assimilation of the newcomers but is also a truth for the reversal way. Unfortunately, the reality of the last years highlights the tendency of a reversal of the assimilation model: there are categories of immigrants appear as intending to impose their values to all the people surrounding them, natives or people who came previously of them. Interesting is the lack of reaction from the latter. Tolerance, understanding, love are concepts with two routes, with equal partners. Within each one family, religious community, national community the values are to be preserved, but in the commonplace of the wide society the balance, the common sense, the mutual understanding must be respected by everyone.

This is the only way to survive in peace in a world more and more multicultural. Otherwise, the recrudescence of extremism could be an unwanted consequence, with extremely dangerous effects upon human society as a whole

And, once again, education can be a leading actor: education for interculturality. Intercultural education should be understood as a complex process of mutual acceptance and value of what has, as specific treasures each person in this world; it means education for genuine mutual respect. All these are issues to be attentively considered and reconsidered in the wide philosophy of education of the third decade of the new millennium with peculiar effects on intercultural education, and finally upon the well-being of the human society as a whole.

The education must become an important tool, a field, an action to preserve the complex treasures of mankind's values.

New approaches of curricula reforms, of how to develop a strictly necessary competence of nowadays, the intercultural competence, all these are the directions to be approached, clarified and developed according to the real life of human society in its complex dynamic.

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## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN RECOVERY OF COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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**Abstract:** *Communication is one of the main tools for the life in society of the human being. Difficulties in communication lead to interpersonal problems and disorders of adaptation in society. This is why these difficulties must be taken seriously and corrected from an early age. Worked in the team (social worker and educator) with a group of 32 children identified as having communication difficulties after starting the small group in kindergarten. As working methods were used didactic games, role-playing games, storytelling after images, storytelling. The activities were carried out daily, in addition to the normal day program. The experiment lasted two months after which the ability to communicate with preschoolers was again appreciated. The obtained results show that teamwork and the choice of appropriate methods lead to the improvement of the communication capacity of the children. The recovery was greater in girls than in boys.*

**Keywords:** *kindergarten children; communication; communication difficulties; recovery;*

### Theoretical framework

The thematic approached is important because it is considered that the processes of human communication are fundamental in the organization of any social grouping. They are the basis of humanization, of the cultural, spiritual, psychological construction of people and have ensured and permanently ensured the transmission of social experience.

Human communication is an exchange of meanings and refers to the transmission and circulation of information between people, from impressions and orders, to living and judgments with a precise purpose through which behavioral changes in individuals are obtained (Giblin, 2000).

Through communication are expressed thoughts, feelings, wishes, intentions, experiences, receive and give information. From the dynamics of these exchanges, through learning the man builds himself as a personality. The ability to communicate represents a premise of the process of building interpersonal relationships and social integration

Communication and language are the basic elements through which the human behavior and personality are developed and expressed, marking their valences and the level of expectations of the individual in the system of integration in the society through which the maximization of the socio-cultural potential is pursued. This process starts from birth and evolves according to the native dowry, but especially in relation to the environmental conditions, more or less favorable, so that communication and language introduce differentiating notes between different people and contribute to the definition, as a whole, of the psychological profile of man. From early childhood, the acquisitions in this field occur in stages or in stages, and their quality and quantity constitute the foundation stones for the construction of human becoming (Verza, 2009).

In the classical definition, communication is the process of transmitting information from one source to one or more receivers (Mocanu, Leanca 2010). Another definition emphasizes that communication is a particular form of the exchange relationship between two or more persons or two or more groups (Chelcea, Ivan, Duduciuc, 2013).

Essential for good communication are the following aspects: the relationship between individuals or groups; the exchange that takes place, ie the transmission and repetition of information; changing the behaviors of those employed in communication (Turk, 2009).

In any communication, a code is used, which is a sign system which means something, that is, by which an informational message is transmitted or received. For the communication to be efficient, the sender and receiver must know the same code.

The contents that are transmitted during the communication can be of several types:

- *informational content* - images, ideas notions are conveyed;
- *affective-emotional content* - the communication allows the manifestation of the affective behaviors (acceptance, rejection, concordance, etc .;
- *motivational content* - transmits needs, aspirations, ideals, appeals to action;
- *volitional content* - it is initiated, it is triggered, it activates or it spoils the activities, it manifests resistance to efforts (Panisoara, 2004).

The difference between sensory and intellectual or semantic signaling is realized in humans, which uses conceptual level meanings, constructed using a complex system of codes that is the language.

Communication is at the same time, relationship and process, having certain characteristics:

- *completeness* - is given by the difference between the amount of information issued and the actual one transmitted to the recipient; the smaller the difference, the more complete the communication.
- *promptness* - is measured by the necessary time between the moment of issuing a message and the moment of receiving it. A communication is considered prompt if the messages it carries can still be used to reach the goal
- *fidelity* - expresses the degree of correspondence on content elements between the message sent and the actual message transmitted and received by the recipient (Gurlui, 2009).

After the spatio-temporal complex in which the communication takes place, it can be direct (face to face) or indirect, when there is a mediator interposed between the transmitter and the receiver (Enea, 2019).

Communication plays many roles both in relation to the individual and to the group. Among the roles of communication in relation to the individual are mentioned:

- *personal discovery* - during the communication the man learns about himself and others, he discovers himself, especially through social communication that counts in relation to others and, finally, he has a role in evaluating his own person;
- *discovery of the external world* - communication gives a better purpose; understanding of external reality, objects and events (Floyd, 2013).
- *establishing meaningful relationships* - through communication, one gets the opportunity to establish and maintain close relationships with others, because people feel the need to be appreciated by others;
- *changing attitudes and behaviors* - communication, especially that achieved through the media, excels in its ability to change human attitudes and behaviors;
- *play and fun* - communication is a means of relaxation, making jokes, feeling good with others (Amado, Guittet, 2007).

The following are some of the communication functions in relation to the group:

- *the productive-efficient function* - it allows the accomplishment of the tasks, especially in the situation in which they involve a high degree of cooperation between the members of the group, being essential for reaching the set goals;
- *the facilitating function of group cohesion* - a group is born and subsists by communication. The cessation or disruption of communication results either with the death of the group or with the appearance of serious dysfunctions (Gavreliuc, 2006).

- *the valorization function* - almost identical to the one encountered at the individual level; through communication, the group affirms its presence, it is highlighted, it reveals its importance, its originality, it justifies its existence (Abrisc, 2002);
- *the resolving function of the group's problems* - the communication saves the honor of the group, and when the group degrades or goes through difficult periods it can be used as a therapeutic means; sociodrama is the best example in exemplifying this function (Muchielli, 2005).

The communication is carried out on three levels:

- *the logical level*, that of the words that comprises 7% of the communication
- *para-verbal level* (tone, volume of speech speed) - comprising 38% of the total communication act
- *non-verbal level* - facial expression, body position, movement that accounts for 55% of the communication process (Turk, 2009).

*Verbal or oral communication* is the message transmitted through words. In this type of communication the level of expression, the phonetic side of oral communication, the structure of the lexicon, the level of grammatical and literary expression are sought. It is done through language, which is why a good development of the language and a rich lexical baggage greatly helps interpersonal communication. In cases where the language is insufficiently developed and the lexical vocabulary is poor, communication difficulties are common and may have various consequences: misinterpretation, misunderstanding of message, withdrawal, isolation.

*Para-verbal communication* is represented by the way words are spoken, using the features of the voice. In other words, the para-verbal communication refers to the tone of the voice, the speed of speech, the rhythm and inflections of the speech, the intensity, the volume of the voice, the pauses, the underlining, other sounds produced (onomatopoeia, groan, grunt, sigh, laugh). Usually the para-verbal supports the verbal message and shows the nature of the relations between the sender and the receiver. Para-verbal elements can accentuate part of a message, sweeten a command or affectively color the transmitted content (Moldovan 2015).

*Nonverbal communication* is the physical behavior (body language) that accompanies speech. It can be intentional or unintentional. It is a constant presence in the preschool child and is strongly represented by expressors, regulators, illustrators, emblems, adaptations (Toma, 2018). Of the most well-known ways of manifesting nonverbal communication, gestures are one of the most important means of giving access to a person (Chelcea, 2005). Gestures can be classified into three categories:

- *autic gestures* - which have no connection with communication, but which betray a certain affective state of the individual (Duvernois, 2015).
- *common gestures* - raising fingers in the classroom, for example, or gestures used in greeting formulas;
- *symbolic gestures* expressing approval, indifference, enthusiasm (Reiman, 2019).

### *Communication in kindergarten*

Preschoolers' communication is simple. Especially with regard to the little ones, they communicate in a few words, the sentence being used later and installing due to the exercise, in the kindergarten activities.

Also, many of the preschoolers, due to poor expression, have certain inhibitions in communicating with the adult. Many times they are afraid that they do not know how to answer, and other times it is difficult for them to say what they want, even if they know the answer. At the basis of an efficient communication that does not lead to blockages, there are several conditions. One of these would be the communication initiative, which consists in having the courage to express an attitude towards the event and in assuming the responsibility of our

feelings and desires and not to hide the expression of feelings of fear of possible negative repercussions. To encourage the initiative of communication between the child and the educator, it is necessary to listen to what the child wants to say and not to disregard the child due to his lack of experience. For an effective communication it is preferable to treat the child from the position of equality, it is good for him to feel that he is being paid attention, that there is always a visual contact and a posture indicating the listening, that he has no more to do with it. be afraid because he says what he feels and wants. In other words, to feel that there is respect for his person.

The child communicates permanently with the educator and vice versa, enriching his vocabulary, becoming more refined in expression and communication.

Important in the accomplishment of the tasks and objectives of the preschool education are the qualities and competences of the educator. Through everything she understands, through her personality, the educator represents a model for the child, a support for the family, a cultural factor to her community. In order to fulfill her role as much as possible to the dialogue partners, the educator must communicate.

Dumitrana (2001) mentions a series of attitudes, frequently encountered, that not only inhibit or diminish the efficiency of communication, but predispose the emergence of conflicts and implicitly of the blockages refers to:

*Threat*

Consequence: - the main concern of the child will be not to make mistakes, he will not have the courage to solve it if he is not sure that the result is positive; thus fear, lie, intolerance appear.

*Criticize*

Consequence: - the child's receptivity to the opinions issued by the educator decreases and thus indifference is born.

*Labeling*

Consequence: - if the statements are repeated frequently then the children will be followed by this idea; in their subconscious they will be convinced that they are as they were labeled and thus the inferiority complex appears.

*Indifference*

Consequence: - the child will try to draw attention to it even through negative facts.

*Irony*

Consequence: - decreases the confidence of the child in his own strengths and towards the educator and seeks appreciation elsewhere; thus the distance appears.

*Dissatisfaction*

Consequences: - her enthusiasm and motivation for school tasks decrease and thus passivity appears.

*Raise of voice*

Consequences: - this form of "communication" may attract the depreciation of the educator.

*Humiliation*

Consequence: - the educator is not a reliable man, he makes you laugh in front of the others; the child will learn to hide the truth and thus the distrust of the others appears.

Adopting such attitudes leads to decreased communication efficiency and sometimes predisposes to conflict. The negative consequences may occur sooner or later, but in order to be prevented it is good to pay special attention to communication both in school institutions and in the family environment. From here comes another feature of the preschoolers' communication or their attitude when they have to express something, namely, the timidity of the verbalization. Not only that they have a poor vocabulary, but more, they need to be encouraged, approached with tact and skill. In fact, for this reason, most of the activities carried

out with them are done through the game; we, the educators play theater with them, in order to make some progress, both in cognitive, and verbal, communicative level. Sometimes the little preschooler is more timid in expression when it comes to the group (Enea, 2019).

The child learns to communicate in the family, in the general social environment, but especially in the educational and educational activities organized institutionally. In the kindergarten, the educator must cultivate and strengthen the status of interlocutor, partner of the child towards his / her own becoming and allow the child to progressively construct the positive image of self, in a favorable and appropriate climate for his own expression and successful interpersonal communication. Therefore, balancing the cognitive balance with the affective and the motivational must be a constant of the trainer's activity. In the process of training the preschool children the ability to communicate, the educator must prove his communicative competence. His expression should always be correct, clear, stimulating, encouraging and never be offensive, inhibiting, annoying, irritating, reproachful. The area of information that he has mastered in relation to the communication process should be as comprehensive as possible (Gurlui, 2009).

Didactic communication, as well as general human communication, is subjected to numerous and varied disturbances. An extended analysis of them and a rigorous systematization of them gives us Salavăstru (2002) in one of his works. The author classifies these disturbances as follows: - a. Blockages determined by the characteristics of the person engaged in the didactic communication (the teacher on the one hand, the student on the other); - b. blockages determined by the social-value relations existing between the participants in the didactic communication relationship; - c. blockages determined by the particularities of the field in which the didactic communication is carried out. Didactic communication plays a decisive role in the development and efficiency of the educational act. It constitutes a premise of the success of the pedagogical acts, but also a purpose of them, because, a general objective of the education is the formation and development of the communicative competence of the preschoolers.

### Hypothesis and objectives

The main objective of the research was to recover the communication difficulties found in preschool children. In this sense, the following working hypothesis was formulated:

**H:** *It was assumed that there are differences between boys and girls in terms of acquiring socializing skills and language development.*

### The studied lot

A number of 32 children between 3 and 4 years old were enrolled in the kindergarten. Of these, 15 are girls and 17 are boys, 21 are Romanians and 11 are Roma. As for the type of family of origin, 17 come from organized families, 9 come from organized families but with strained relationships and the remaining 7 come from disorganized families. From this presentation it appears that there are differences between the socio-cultural environments from which children come that have repercussions on the development of their communication and language. As the research aims at gender differences, the structure of the group studied from this perspective is oriented in table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1. Lot structure by gender

Gender	number
boys	17
girls	15

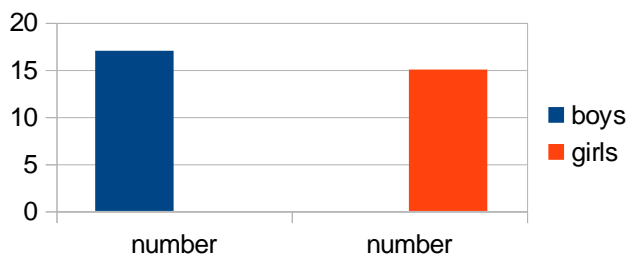


Figure 1. Lot structure by gender

## Methodology

### Methods

They were used to correct and recover the communication difficulties, methods specific to the educational act in kindergarten.

*The talks after the images* make a significant contribution to fixing and specifying the children's consciousness, in activating the vocabulary and in forming a correct and coherent oral expression: "How do we take care of the flowers?". a correct grammatical form.

*Story* - The child may acquire information from true events or truths presented in stories, stories, fairy tales or ballads.

The small class uses a *simple story*, not loaded with comments, without many episodes. Gradually move to larger stories. The child must know all the words and expressions used in the story or be told the unknown words during the story, otherwise there is a risk of memorizing words whose meaning he does not know and assigning them wrong meanings.

The contribution of the *conversations* to the formation of social communication skills, to the respectful dialogue between the partners, to the mutual exchange of messages should not be neglected.

Role-playing games are simulation games in which children become actors of social life, they are replicas games according to a proposed scenario, but with obvious linguistic effects from the point of view of the dialogue between the 'small actors'. A particular aspect of role-playing is dramatization. It has an activating character, taking over some of the spectacular effects of the scene. It can be organized on exact, textual replicas, based on creative replicas or on the spontaneity of 'actors'.

### Conducting the research

An initial assessment of the degree of communication difficulties of the children was made. It followed the actual part of the experience in which he worked daily for two months with the children. The work consisted of using the methods mentioned above. We worked in the team of social worker-educator to fully cover the number of children with communication difficulties and to be able to provide the sustained assistance needed for each child.

The final evaluation was made after the passing of the two months of activities supported with the children, in order to be able to evaluate the progress that they have achieved.

## Results and discussions

The initial evaluation was made one month after the beginning of the school year, after the educator could figure out the level of communication of each child. The level of communication capacity, the situation obtained at the initial evaluation by sex is shown in table 2 and figure 2.

**Table 2 The ability to communicate based on gender at the initial assessment**

Communication ability	boys	girls	Total
good	0	1	1
medium	1	3	4
weak	16	11	27
total	17	15	32

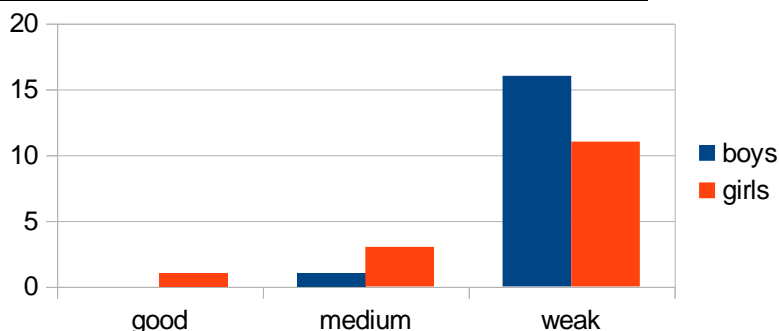


Figure 2. The ability to communicate based on gender at the initial assessment

It can be seen from the table and figure that girls have a higher number of subjects that fall into the good and medium categories (1 and 4 respectively) and a smaller number of subjects who fall into poor communication (11). The boys have no case with good communication, but they have one with average communication and 16 with poor communication. We could say that most boys have poor communication skills (16 out of 17 subjects). During the research, we worked with children with communication difficulties for two months. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the stories were used after the images, the talks, the role-playing games. These activities were supported daily by educators and social workers to ensure continuity in the work of recovering communication difficulties. After the passing of the two months, a final evaluation of the children's communication skills was made. At the second assessment, made after completing the program of developing the ability to communicate and enrich the vocabulary, the situation changes significantly. The results of the final evaluation for the communication capacity can be seen in table 3 and figure 3.

**Table 3**  
The ability to communicate based on gender at the final evaluation

Communication ability	boys	girls	Total
good	8	12	20
medium	7	3	10
weak	2	0	2
total	17	15	32

It was found that girls no longer present any subject in the poor communication category, the vast majority of the subjects being after attending the program, in the good

communication category (12 subjects). In the category of average communication we have included two cases. It turns out that the girls managed to enrich their vocabulary faster and with more words during the two months of the special program. Their communication was much easier, managing to share ideas, emotions, participate actively in the group's activities and get involved in solving the situations proposed by the educators.

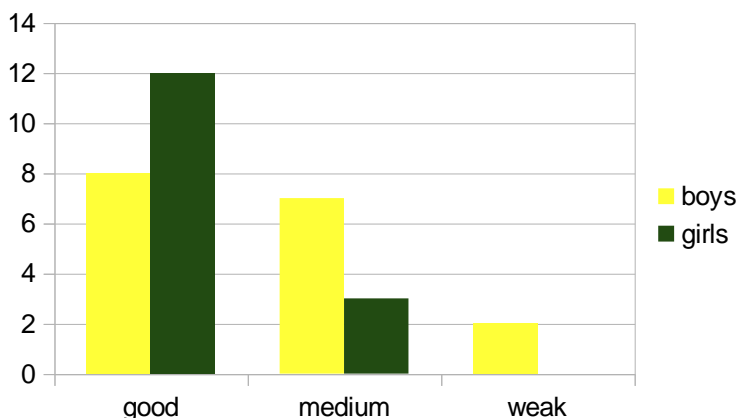


Figure 3. The ability to communicate based on gender at the final evaluation

The boys present an approximately equal number of subjects in the categories of good communication and medium communication (8 respectively 7 subjects), proving that they have also made progress in enriching the vocabulary and in developing the communication capacity. But their pace is a bit slower, so we still have 7 cases in the category of communication with girls who have only 3 subjects in this category.

The boys also have 2 subjects who remain in the category of poor communication and who, as I mentioned during the paper, have speech disorders of a speech-language nature requiring specialized help.

To highlight more precisely whether the difference between boys and girls is statistically significant, in terms of communication ability, the averages were calculated and using the t-test the difference between the means and its significance was established. The results obtained are presented in table 4.

**Table 4.**  
**Meaning of the difference between the average between boys and girls for communication capacity**

	Boys average	Girls average	t	p
Values	2,86	3,79	2.77	0.01

The value obtained for t shows that there is a statistically significant difference at a significance level  $p = 0.01$ , between boys and girls in terms of the evolution of communication skills.

All the results presented in this sub-point justify us to affirm that hypothesis 3 formulated by us at the beginning of the research is confirmed: there were gender differences regarding the recovery of communication difficulties ( $p = .01$ ).

**Conclusions:**



Recovering the difficulties of communication with preschoolers is a team work (educator, social worker) that must be carried out in a sustained way, taking into account the individual psychological characteristics of the children, the particularities of the age and the degree of communication difficulty it presents. In recovering from these difficulties, storytelling, communication, role play can be used as methods.

The results confirm that there are statistically significant differences between boys and girls in terms of the rate of communication skills development and vocabulary volume.

We believe that this type of research must be continued and developed in order to find the best methods to recover the communication difficulties in children, thus contributing to a good future integration in their society.

**Acknowledgement:** We hereby state that the subjects involved in our research were informed about the voluntary character of participation in this research, about the understanding of information and of that fact that withdrawal from research is possible at any time without negative consequences upon the participant. The research complied with all ethical research standards, the research participants/participants' guardians giving their consent to participate in the research.

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## PARENTS COUNSELING FOR IMPROVING THE CAPACITY OF SOCIALIZATION OF THEIR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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**Abstract:** *Social networks are gaining more and more users among adults and adolescents. Socialization is not done anymore, nowadays face to face, but online. One of the major effects of this phenomenon is the socialization difficulties that preschool children have when entering kindergarten. The purpose of the present research is to improve the socialization capabilities of preschoolers, using as a method the counseling of parents. The counseling process lasted two months and have been approached topics related to parent-child relationships, parent's identification of the child's stimulation needs, ways of meeting these needs, parents' involvement in the children's games, parents' collaboration with the kindergarten represented by educator and social worker. The intensity of the difficulties of socializing the children was appreciated at the beginning and the end of the experiment. The results show that if the parents are more involved in the activities of the children following the counseling by the social worker, then their ability to socialize will see significant improvements.*

**Key words:** *preschool children; socializing difficulties; parents; counselling;*

### Theoretical frame

IT technologies have grown rapidly lately, and online social networking has gained a large number of users. The Internet and smartphone becomes necessary tools in our daily activities, for professional activities and recreational purpose (Tudorel et al., 2018). More and more adults are adept at this mode of communication on the one hand due to lack of time (working hours from 9am to 5pm covering most of the day) on the other hand because it is easier to stay home and talk with whom you want, rather than getting ready to go out to meet someone. Digital applications allows people to use the internet, email, and video games directly on their smartphone (Vintila et al., 2018).

The use of these networks, besides the imminent dangers of knowing all kinds of strangers about whom you only know what they want you to know, also implies multiple negative effects on children. Parents drastically reduce their activities with their children and the time they spend together. In the short time that remains after the completion of the professional program and the necessary household activities, they prefer to stay on social networks, instead of playing with children or reading or explaining different things. Many times they do not even answer the children's questions, which remains with a series of unknown and unexplained things.

It is known that at this age children learn most things through imitation and identification. They will tend to mimic the behaviors of their parents (ie to stay on the phone or computer) and will identify with the parents' behavior, considering that this is the correct one. As a consequence, more and more children are no longer going out to play with the block neighbors, but are sitting in the house in front of the computer, playing all kinds of games or in front of the TV watching cartoons. The literature show that adolescents with a lack of social support or poor social and familial relationships, tend to isolate themselves, feel lonely and depressed, therefore they will search for online support in the virtual environment (Tudorel &

Vintila, 2018). All this causes the child to live in an imaginary, fictional world, which, can be very easy to confuse with reality.

Socialization is a social process in which the human being goes through several successive stages in a framework of permanent interaction. Through socialization, the following are transmitted and structured:

- *communication modalities*: linguistic, symbolic, expressive (non-verbal) coding systems;
- *social models of behavior* based on functional norms considered as values in a certain culture;
- *instrumental sets* (ways of knowing, learning etc.);
- *possibilities of interpersonal relationships* as forms of behavior characteristic of group life;
- *motivational-affective modeling* of the individual ([www.rasfoiesc.com/educatie/psihologie](http://www.rasfoiesc.com/educatie/psihologie)).

The vast majority of authors agree that, in a general sense, socialization is an assimilation of social experiences (knowledge, norms, ideals and roles) that essentially influence the formation of the person's capacities of action, their conceptions determining the development of personality traits, social intelligence, personal and collective motives and aspirations.

Complex social behaviors are assimilated through social learning modalities, which are located in continuation of imitation, such as identification. Identification is a process of knowledge and learning that seeks to explain how the child learns new behavior, social roles, or how he or she can develop internal control and awareness. Identification is a fundamental process in the socialization of the child, which incorporates rules, behavioral styles that transform them into a way of being appropriate, so that they are not subjected to isolation or even social exclusion (Mureșan, 1980, p. 105). The child's purchases are based on the openness to the world which offers an orientation to the world and to the world, outlining the limits of the subsequent receptivity of the person building the first universe of the child that identifies with the reality, reality that will be subsequently internalized (Stănciulescu, 1996, p.102).

Summarizing it can be said that socialization forms the education of the child, allows the transmission of knowledge and ensures the formation of the qualities necessary for social life. At the same time, it contributes to the control of instincts and needs and to the formulation of aspirations and ideals.

The process of socializing the child is multidimensional, contradictory and independent. In the path of the integration of the individual in the social life, two major phases can be distinguished, namely: primary socialization (which is done in the family) and secondary socialization (in kindergarten, school and other social institutions). In all societies, the family is the primary factor of socialization of the child. It is the framework in which the psychological and social needs of the child are met and in which the whole cycle of growth and development takes place. In this way, the family becomes the first integrating community that conditions all subsequent purchases of the child.

*Primary or basic socialization* allows learning the rules of conduct, norms and values that can be learned at a young age and which constitute the informational and affective baggage of any individual (Schifirnet, 1999, p. 101). Primary socialization is deeply affective, unlike the other forms of socialization, secondary and continuous, which are oriented towards affective neutrality. During the early childhood, socialization has a strong maternal character. The initiation of the child in the human life, the learning of the language, the acquisition of the values and the ways of becoming independent are realized in the relationship with the mother (Munteanu, 2009). The mother is the first model from which the child learns skills and acquires knowledge.

The family is the most important socialization environment, the place where the first social behaviors are formed (Breaz, Iovu, 2018). From this point of view the family will fulfill the function of socialization in four specific situations:

- *the situation of moral education* - is based on the relations of authority with the help of which are transmitted to the child the moral rules that must be learned. Through the family, the child acquires the first notions regarding duty, interdiction and responsibility, thus contributing to the formation of a generalized moral conscience (Baron, Byrne, 2004).

- *the situation of cognitive learning* - through which the child learns the system of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for coexistence in society (Bonchiș, 2002).

- *the situation of employing imagination* - which contributes to the development of anticipatory thinking and creative abilities (Dughi, Ropotă, 2018).

- *the psychological communication situation* - which contributes to the development of the specific human affectivity necessary for achieving a mental and moral balance (Voinea, 1993, p.62).

If it is analyzed the formation of the child's personality, it can be seen that the socialization process is intentional, through which the child acquires desirable behaviors necessary for coexistence and integration into society. By transmitting guidelines, the child can become a human being in a social sense, because he internalizes the formative models exercised by parents. Socialization will develop constant features in the child through which he will acquire his own identity in relation to the others, and the family is the place where this process takes place. The psychic traits that socialization develops are not innate, but are acquired from the first years of life (Petrea 2018).

The fundamental instrument of socialization and its content is the language through which the child receives patterns of behavior that can be applied immediately or subsequently useful for everyday life. Socialization cannot be achieved without language, which is learned by the child from adults and which becomes his most important tool in relationships with others. Through language the child can act on others, he / she can acquire new knowledge and the skills necessary for a good accommodation in the environment (Rotărașu, 2019). If at first they were meaningless, words gradually become understood through their constant association with a particular object, phenomenon or action. Learning the terms means acquiring a vocabulary that includes varied knowledge, parents' life experiences as well as the society to which they belong. Through language parents can communicate to the child various emotional states, feelings and emotions.

The development of the language goes in parallel with the development of the thinking and the child tends towards an increasingly complex organization of thinking that will help him later to explain his phenomena of reality and to solve the problem situations that he will face in his life. From intuitive thinking, the child will arrive at language through thinking capable of formulating deductive or inductive reasoning (Schaffer, 2010).

The acquired knowledge will be harnessed with the help of appropriate skills and skills, which are also initially formed in the family, as the parents involve the child in the fundamental forms of activity specific to each age: play, learning and work (Verza and Verza, 2017). The structure and manifestation of aptitudes are strongly influenced by the favorable character of the family environment expressed through education, stimulation, valorization and appreciation. By stimulating the parents the child will gain not only sensory-motor skills (necessary in actions with and on objects), but also intellectual skills (which allow him better adaptations and the possibility of managing social situations correctly). Primary socialization includes besides the cognitive side also the affective side, which is equally important for the psychic balance of the person. The child identifies himself emotionally with the people around him, especially those who have a special significance for him, taking on roles and attitudes that he internalizes thus laying the foundations of future roles he will play in society (Vernon, 2006). The advantage of primary socialization lies precisely in the fact that it is realized in the family in an atmosphere full of affection which facilitates both the transmission and the acquisition of social values and norms. The positive role of the family in the process of socializing the child

is given, in particular, by the affective nature of the relationships that exist in the family and which constitute a background of safety and security for the child so necessary for its harmonious maturation. Affective factors are of great importance in this process giving rise to a determinism of the future trajectory of the child.

Although the role of the family changes as the child grows up his or her responsibilities do not diminish in intensity, as the other socializing agents involved subsequently, continually emphasize their importance. Over time, the attitude towards parents changes and moves from the affective-symbolic approach to other relationships required by the developmental stages that the child goes through. But he will always feel the need of a family as support in the dramatic stages that he must go through during puberty and adolescence (Bonchiş, 2002).

Through primary socialization, a symmetry between objective and subjective reality is reached, although this is not total. The content of what is learned, the order of learning and the program after which the learning takes place differs from one society to another, from one culture to another.

The identification of the child with the significant persons in his life is semi-automatic. The world appears to the child as a real and social world according to what others define as such. Piaget speaks of moral realism, that is, the way in which the child considers the rules and values imposed on him as real and necessary and believes that he must respect them in all conditions (Piaget, 2005).

In childhood, self-awareness is formed as the child realizes that he is the one who is involved or performs different actions. Based on the relationships he has with those in the family, the communication with them and the experience gained, the child acquires a personal identity and the feeling of permanence of this identity. This feeling is essential for adapting to subsequent changes and avoiding personality disorders that may occur in childhood and adolescence (Smith et al. 2010). The inability to acquire their own identity will cause the child to become a troubled youth, a social victim, frustrated and lacking in perspective (Tinica, 2004; Dickel, 2015)

The society, through the family, has a special influence, the child being fully culturalized in the family, in relation to the society in which he lives. The family lays the foundations of the future personality, pursuing an individuality based on harmony. Parents transmit values and beliefs, conceptions of the world and life, knowledge and habits and, in particular, language as a communication tool. The evolution of the child's personality results from the integration of all these meanings, criteria, symbols or action modes ( Furtună, 2007).

Taking into account the rules of the society, the family lays the foundation of the child's adaptation for its proper integration in the psycho-social field. This integration will result from the formation of a totality and mental unit (Breaz, 2018). By means of the competition between the external environment and the internal environment of the child, a full development of his / her abilities and characteristics is reached, to a construction of his own that defines him as an individual. The child's behavior will become typical and unique, specific to a balanced personality.

### **Objectives and hypothesis**

The main objective of our research was to improve and develop the socialization capacity of preschool children. In this sense, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**H:** *if the parents are more involved in the activities of the children following the counseling by the social worker, then their ability to socialize will register significant improvements.*

### **Methodology**

*Lot.* In order to make up our lot, we studied the children from the small group, who one month after the beginning of the kindergarten were labeled by educators as having socialization

difficulties. Out of 74 children enrolled in the small group of the 2018-2019 school year, 32 presented difficulties of socialization in different degrees. These were the group of children with which it was worked and the research was carried out. Of the 32 children, 17 were boys and 15 were girls. It was worked with the parents of children with socialization difficulties, forming a counseling group of 43 parents (for some children both parents participated).

The type of family of children with socialization difficulties is shown in table 1 and figure 1:

**Table 1. Type of family of origin**

Type of family	Nr of children
organized	18
organized with problems	6
disorganized	8

From the perspective of the type of family, the vast majority of children come from organized families (a number of 18 children) and 6 children come from organized families, but currently have couple problems. Only 8 children come from so-called disorganized families. We use the term so-called because we have two children who are from single-parent families (their mothers have never been married and do not want to do so).

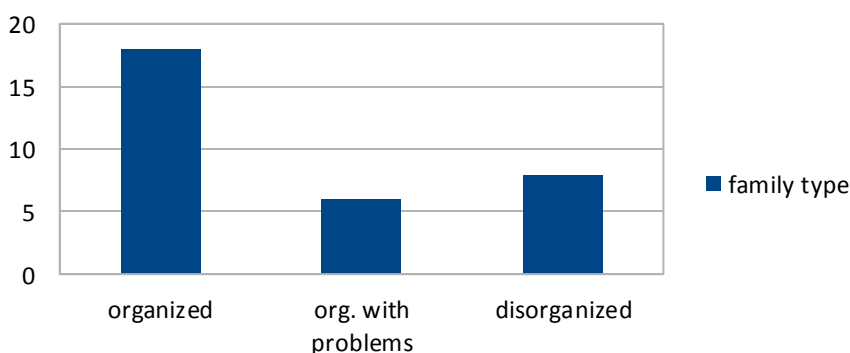


Figure 1. Type of family of origin

*Method*

Parents benefited from 8 counseling sessions (one per week), which addressed topics related to parent-child relationships, parents identification of the child's needs for stimulation, ways to meet these needs, parents involvement in children's games, parents' collaboration with the kindergarten represented by the educator and the social worker. Parents were asked to assess their children's progress after two months. Of course, parents' assessments are more subjective, given that it was their own child's assessment

**Results and discussions**

To verify the hypothesis, parents were asked at the beginning of the counseling sessions to evaluate on a scale from very little to very much, how much they are involved in the children's activities and how much time they spend with him daily. The results of this assessment are visible in table 2 and figure 2.

**Table 2. Parents' appreciation of their involvement in the child's activities before counseling**

Degree of involvement	nr. parents
very little	15
little	8
medium	7
a lot	2
verymuch	0

It is observed that most parents spend very little time with their child. This fact can be explained on the one hand by the working hours of the parents (most work from 9 to 17). In this way, until they get the children out of kindergarten, it is from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm and by the time they get home, they have to give the children dinner and go to bed to wake them up the next day. On the other hand, in the short time that they spend with the family, parents tend to share with each other the events of the day and make plans for the next day, so discuss more with each other and less with the child. Parental fatigue also speaks its word when it comes to, in particular, getting involved in their games or when they are patiently tested due to the many questions a child constantly asks.

None of the parents is very involved in the activities, does not play enough with the child, does not answer all the questions and generally does not spend enough time with the child. Some of them have classified themselves in the category of medium and long because on the weekends they spend more time with the child. But it is not enough to be a weekend parent to have a good child development from all points of view.

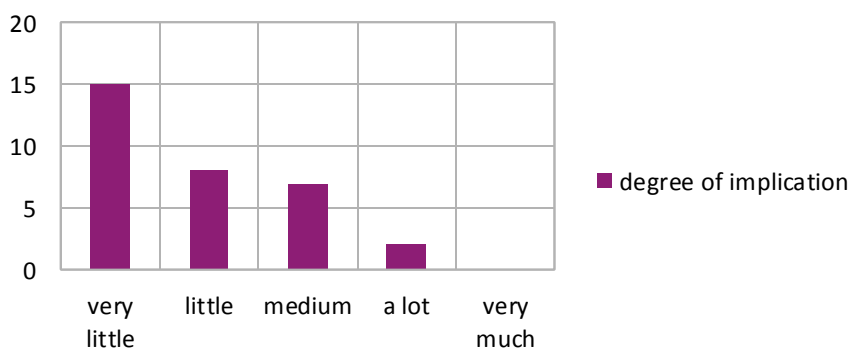


Figure 2. The degree of involvement of parents in the activities children before counseling

Children stay in front of the television, in cartoons or play on their parents' phones or tablets, thus becoming isolated in a world of their own which, at this age, is very easy to confuse with reality. On the other hand, let's not forget that most of the things the child learns at this age are based on imitation. If a child sees his parent always with his eyes on the phone or tablet or computer, then he will learn the same thing: instead of socializing in the real world, he will socialize online and will not know how to handle in face-to-face situations

This is why parenting has focused on all these aspects of family life, which need to be reviewed and solutions must be found to be resolved and to help the child develop optimally. Out of the 8 counseling sessions, two were held together with the children, the parents participating in the activities that the social worker organized together with the children.

In addition, in order for the child's time to be appreciated to be less subjective, parents were asked to note daily how much time they spent playing with the child or talking to him.

After the two months of counseling, in which the parents' participation was very good, proving to be interested in the discussions, a final assessment of the time spent by parents with the children was made. Table 3 and figure 3 show the degree of involvement of parents after counseling.

**Table 3. Parents' appreciation of their involvement in the child's activities after counseling**

Degree of involvement	nr. parents
very little	1
little	2
medium	7
a lot	12
verymuch	10

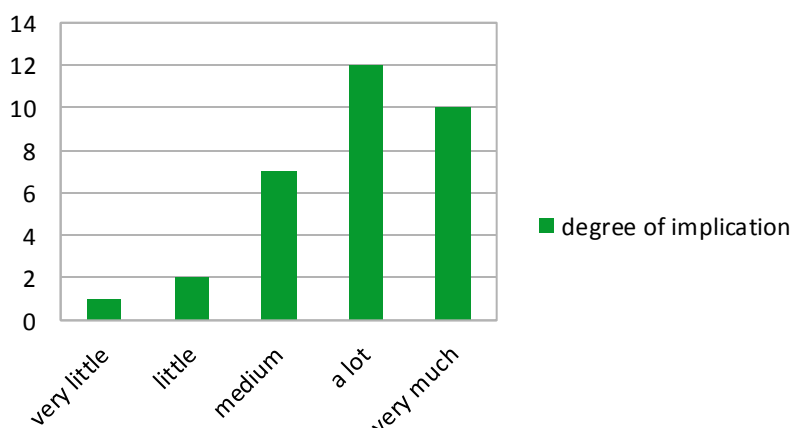


Figure 3. Parents' appreciation of their involvement in the child's activities after counseling

In order to visualize more easily the change that took place in the attitude and involvement of the parents, we present comparatively the two assessments before and after counseling in table 4 and figure 4.

It is extremely encouraging that following the counseling the parents understood what their importance is in achieving an adequate and quality socialization of their child. They endeavored, as far as possible, to become more involved in the child's activities: they drew together, they built or they played with figurines and dolls, they went to the playground together, they read stories, some even have tried to tell them riddles in order to achieve a vocabulary enrichment.

**Table 4. Parents' appreciation of their involvement in the child's activities before and after counseling**

Degree of involvement	of	before counseling	after counseling



very little	15	1
little	8	2
medium	7	7
a lot	2	12
very much	0	10

Parents have begun to realize the important role of time spent with their children in their harmonious development.

Thew is only one parent, after counseling, who also falls in the category of very low involvement in the child's activities. It is about a family where the father is a TIR driver and therefore, he is away most of the time, staying at home only between two races, and the mother works as a factory worker, in three shifts and actually does not have the time to stay with the child. Usually the child stays with the available people in the extended family and they do not always deal with him properly. However, the mother - who has attended 3 counseling sessions out of the 8 - states that she is looking for a new job where she can work only for an exchange and thus have more time to spend with the child.

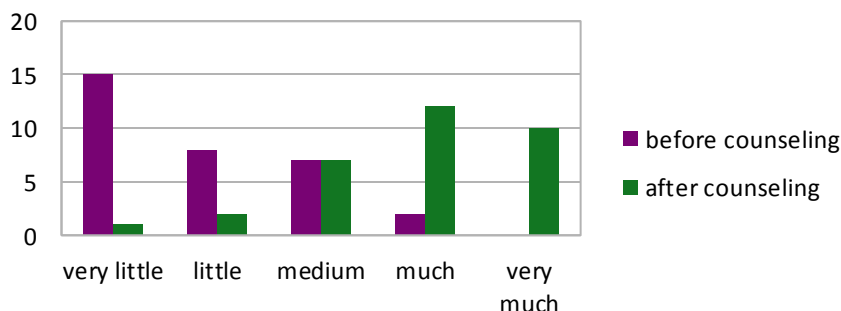


Figure 4. Parents' appreciation of their involvement in the child's activities before and after counseling

The socialization difficulties of the children were evaluated initially, before the beginning of the parents' counseling and at the end of the 8 counseling sessions. The comparative data between the first and the second evaluation are presented in table 5 and figure 5

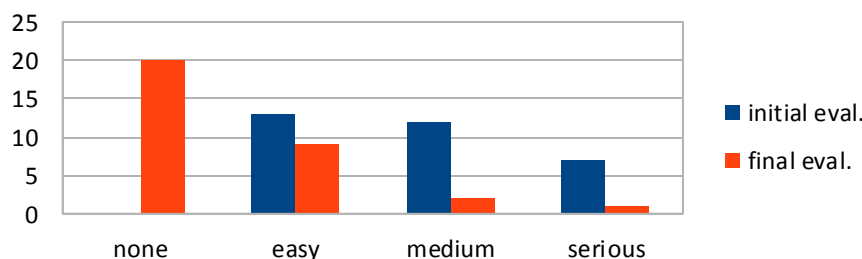
**Table 5. Intensity of socialization difficulties compared to the two assessments**

Intensity	Initial eval.	Final eval.
none	0	20
easy	13	9
medium	12	2
serious	7	1

The graph that presents the intensity of the socialization difficulties is extremely suggestive: if at the initial evaluation we had no children in the batch without socialization difficulties, at the final evaluation we have 20 children who do not present socialization difficulties. Of course, at the initial evaluation it was normal to have no children without difficulties since the criterion of selection of the children in the batch was precisely the presence of the difficulties of socialization.

Serious difficulties are present only in a child who has major speech problems related to speech therapy. We hope that following the speech-language exercises with the specialist he will be able to improve his communication too.

Figure 5. Intensity of socialization difficulties compared to the two assessments



Corroborating the data obtained from the assessments made by the parents on their involvement in the child's activities with those obtained on the socialization difficulties that decreased much after the two months of experiment, we can say that *the hypothesis* formulated at the beginning of the research *is confirmed by the practical reality*: the greater involvement of parents in the child's activities lead to increased socialization skills and better communication.

### Conclusions:

Parents' difficulties in correctly managing the time they spend with their children and in particular how they spend this time has negative influences on their harmonious development, affecting, first of all, socialization skills and communication skills. That is why more and more children have difficulties in socializing with different intensities and low communication skills when entering kindergarten. Research has addressed this problem, and the research has mainly focused on remedying the intensity of socialization difficulties in preschoolers

It was worked with the parents of the children, in a counseling program that included 8 meetings, two of which were held in joint activities with the children. It has been assumed that if the parents are more involved in the activities of the children after the counseling by the social worker, then their ability to socialize will register significant improvements. the weekly observance of the counseling meetings with the parents was followed by a second assessment of the socialization difficulties. Education opportunities for families could increase the chance to understand how to manage it (Goian, 2013). However, specialists should use specialized language with caution, as this can create a barrier between the professional and the client, sharing or receiving meaningless messages (Goian, 2010).

The hypothesis was confirmed by the results obtained: following the counseling the parents became more involved in the child's life and activities and as a result there was a favorable evolution of the ability to communicate with children and a decrease of the socialization difficulties.

We consider that this type of research is a first step for future research in the field, research that has an interdisciplinary character and that will lead to concrete solutions to avoid the difficulties of socialization in the preschool children and, implicitly, in the adults of tomorrow.

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## REVENGE AND IGNORANCE AS WEAPONS OF HATE SPEECH

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**Abstract:** *The year 2019, among some positive aspects, reflects some worrying aspects. Among them, the most harmful seems to be hate speech. Present at all levels of society, both in Romania and in the world, hatred brings with it the rejection of difference, negativity, violence and aggression. To tackle psychological sources of hate speech, our project Hate's Journey, financed by Erasmus+, 2018-2-ES02-KA205-011733 has designed an online questionnaire composed by some single item research questions, general data collection and tests regarding emotional regulation, internet content awareness and helping attitudes. The hypothesis of this research is that the revenge thinking pattern and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech are powerful predictors of future online perpetrator pattern of hate speech. Research's 206 participants are residents of Latvia in 24.8%, Romania 24.8%, Spain 24.8%, and Turkey 25.7%, with an age mean of  $m=30$  years, 39.8% males and 60.2% females. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict the online hate speech perpetrator pattern. As results show, revenge thinking pattern ( $B=0.365$ ,  $SE=0.082$ ,  $Beta=0.317$ ,  $t=4.452$  at a  $p < 0.001$ ) and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech ( $B=0.233$ ,  $SE=0.076$ ,  $Beta=0.219$ ,  $t=3.076$  at a  $p < 0.005$ ) are significant predictors of hate speech perpetrator pattern. Conclusions and implications are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *hate speech perpetrator pattern; revenge thinking pattern; ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech;*

#### 4. Theoretical correlates

We still have a surprisingly vague idea of what it really is for all our enthusiasm to fight hatred. After all, one word tells us less, not more. Hate is much less dynamic than racism, or prejudice, or anger, or even mere indifference to others.

There's hate everywhere. Human beings are generalizing about everybody and everything all the time, ahead of time. It can even be hard-wired to a large extent. From a historical point of view, it was a matter of survival. And even now, feeling a loyalty seems unthinkable without feeling a disloyalty, a sense of belonging without a sense of unbelonging similarly. They are beings of a social nature, thus we are all supposed to be collaborating. That is why we are also disassociating. And while it would be comforting to think that one could happen without the other, we actually know it doesn't happen.

Just as there is possessive love and selfish love; family love and friendship; romantic love and unrighteous love; passion and reverence, affection and obsession, so there are shades of hate. There is the hate that fears, and hate that feels nothing but contempt; there is hate that expresses power, and hate that comes from powerlessness; there is revenge, and hate that comes from envy. There's hate that has been love, and hate that's a strange expression of love. There is hate of the other, and fear of something that reminds us of ourselves too much. There is the hate of the oppressor, and the resentment of the victim. There is hate slowly burning, and hatred slowly fading.

We consider that hates are often very different phenomena from one another that they have very different psychological complexities, and by not seeing them as variations of the same phenomenon at all they could be better understood (Citron, D. K., 2014). For example, there is the unfashionable distinction between rational hate and irrational hate. We have become accustomed in recent years to talking about hates as if they were all similarly indefensible, as if some hates could never be legitimate or necessary.

Hate is not rational like many other human emotion, but it typically has its reasons. The hate residing from knowledge is very different from the hate residing from ignorance. It is actually a cliché the fact that prejudice is always rooted in ignorance, and can be overcome by familiarity and sensitivity.

Thus, the term of hate speech encompasses any form of expression that propagates racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, incites, promotes or justifies these manifestations, including intolerance expressed as aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, any discrimination and hostility against a minority, immigrants or refugees (Daniels, J., 2008). In other words, hate speech can be described as a form of speech which involves a interpretation regarding other people's religion, gender or ethnicity (Djuric et al., 2015). Usually hate speech can aim to denigrate and marginalize other individuals in front of a group or an entire society (Waldron, 2012).

Freire's (1974) theory brings the concept of literacy as a process of socio-cognitive emancipation, adult's literacy being a complex process of liberation. Therefore many individuals could express themselves and have a subjective opinion. This opinion can sometimes be built on hateful patterns which may result in hateful expressions (i.e. hate speech).

In recent years hate speech had an increasing popularity online, on social media platforms (Schmidt & Wiegand, 2017; Banks, 2010).

Hate speech should not be seen as a phenomenon that occurs exclusively online. The disinhibiting effect and the possibility of addressing a large audience, however, make the Internet a favorite platform for hate speeches.

Hate speech can manifest itself directly, for example through concrete incitement to hatred, and indirectly, for example by spreading untruths. There are several types of content, victim groups, models, and hate speech patterns (Gagliardone, I., Gal, D., Alves, T., Martinez, G., 2015).

Hate speech is expressed through different types of content and language. Content types include the deliberate spread of fake news and conspiracy theories, stereotype confirmation, assimilation (generalizing), but also instigating acts of violence or dehumanization (Cherian, G., 2016). The linguistic models are insulting by derogatory names, a visual language through placid images and the clear opposition we versus them.

Hate speeches are published on different communication platforms. These can be blogs, online forums or social networks or even so-called "hate sites" created specifically for this purpose. They appear more directly in the form of emails and / or private messages. In addition, hate speech can also occur in online games, music or videos.

Words and images are deliberately used to denigrate or marginalize other people. Frequently, certain fears are deliberately amplified, which can particularly intimidate children. This can stimulate fear and rejection. There is a feeling of aggression against those belonging to a group discredited and described through the prism of prejudices.

## **2. Research methodology**

Research's 206 participants are residents of Latvia in 24.8%, Romania 24.8%, Spain 24.8%, and Turkey 25.7%, with an age mean of  $m=30$  years, 39.8% males and 60.2% females. Regarding sample's educational level, 3.9% finished primary school, 1.9% own a professional

diploma, 29.1% finished high school, 32% own a Bachelor degree, 29.1% have a Master degree and 3.9% have a PhD. As for professional status, 5.8% are unemployed, 43.7% are students, 1% is volunteering and 49.5% are employed.

An important issue we wanted to address also, was the online time spent by respondents, thus 1% responded with never or hardly ever, 8.7% responded with every week, 20.4% responded with daily or almost daily, 46.6% responded with several time each day and 23.3% responded with almost all the time. Thus the frequent users of internet are net superior over the non-users, with 69.9%.

The hypothesis of this research is that the revenge thinking pattern and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech are powerful predictors of future online perpetrator pattern of hate speech.

### 3. Results

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict the online hate speech perpetrator pattern (*Have you ever treated someone in a hurtful or nasty way?*) (**DV**,  $m=1.75$ ,  $SD=0.13$ ) based on their: previous revenge thinking pattern (*It is OK to send hateful or degrading messages against someone online if they start to attack you, your friends or family first*) (**IV<sub>1</sub>**,  $m=2.01$ ,  $SD=0.98$ ) and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech (*Hate speech online is just words.*) (**IV<sub>2</sub>**,  $m=1.96$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ). This function investigates the degree to which selected independent variables (**IV<sub>1</sub>** – **IV<sub>2</sub>**) predict the dependent variable **VD**, hate speech perpetrator pattern. A significant regression equation coefficient was found ( $F = 27.885$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .216. Hate speech perpetrator pattern equals to  $0.557 + 0.365(IV_1) + 0.233(IV_2)$  where **VD** is coded as 1=No, 2=Yes, in person (face-to-face), 3=Yes, online, 4=Yes, both in person (face-to-face) and online and **IV<sub>1</sub>** and **IV<sub>2</sub>** are coded as 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree.

As results show, revenge thinking pattern ( $B=0.365$ ,  $SE=0.082$ ,  $Beta=0.317$ ,  $t=4.452$  at a  $p < 0.001$ ) and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech ( $B=0.233$ ,  $SE=0.076$ ,  $Beta=0.219$ ,  $t=3.076$  at a  $p < 0.005$ ) are significant predictors of youth hate speech perpetrator pattern.

**Table 1.** Regression analysis results for predicting the hate speech perpetrator pattern

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	.464 <sup>a</sup>	.216	.208	1.008	.216	27.885	2	203	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hate speech online is just words., It is OK to send hateful or degrading messages against someone online if they start to attack you, your friends or family first.

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.655	2	28.327	27.885	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	206.219	203	1.016		
	Total	262.874	205			

a. Dependent Variable: 21. Have you ever treated someone in a hurtful or nasty way?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Hate speech online is just words., It is OK to send hateful or degrading messages against someone online if they start to attack you, your friends or family first.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.557	.174		3.198	.002
	It is OK to send hateful or degrading messages against someone online if they start to attack you, your friends or family first.	.365	.082	.317	4.452	.000
	Hate speech online is just words.	.233	.076	.219	3.076	.002

a. Dependent Variable: 21. Have you ever treated someone in a hurtful or nasty way?

Altogether, in the computed equation presented in Table 1, selected independent variables  $IV_1$ - $IV_2$  account for 20% variance of the youth hate speech perpetrator pattern, with both revenge thinking patternignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech being significant predictors.

#### 4. Conclusions and implications

The present study investigated if the revenge thinking pattern and ignoring attitude towards the negative effects of hate speech are powerful predictors of future online perpetrator pattern of hate speech. The obtained results confirm the proposed hypothesis. These results suggest that if an individual is enveloped by a thinking pattern built on revenge and if the level of ignorance is high (regarding the negative effects of one’s actions), then there is a possibility of the individual to engage in a form of hate speech.

Hatred and hate speech cannot and should not be in a free society. The lines between hate and prejudice and between hatred and opinion and between opinion and fact are so complex and blurred that any attempt to build legal and political firewalls is a futile and illiberal undertaking. We know by now that hate will never vanish from the collective consciousness of mankind. After decades of educational initiatives, it is a fact that hate is not simply induced by ignorance, but a collective inducing aspects (King, R. D., Sutton, G. M., 2014).

Society has made a lot of progress, but after all it is idealistic to expect that hatred, in all its diversity, can be eradicated in an increasingly diverse society. This is perfectly illustrated by the gap between tolerance and toleration. Tolerance is hate eradication and toleration is coexisting with it.

Every manifestation of discrimination in some cases serves a useful social function, it allows natural conflicts to be articulated incrementally; it can steam off conflict by words rather than actions: a human recognition of our need for distinction, without a full capitulation.

Unless a victim can be psychologically injured, a perpetrator cannot wound psychologically. And it can never be given that immunity to hurt; it can only be achieved. Hatred will never be eliminated in spite of all our rhetoric, hate can only be overcome.

People are affected by hate speech in different ways. Raising young people's awareness of this topic may mean keeping an interaction full of respect and appreciation for one another (Waldron, J., 2012). Anyone facing hate speech on the Internet must not only transmit digital competence, but also be informed about discriminatory structures in analogous life.

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## LACK OF TRAINING - CAUSE OF THE LAG BEHIND

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**Abstract:** *This work is a continuation of a previous one in which we identify the problems faced by high school students and the factors - educational realities that make learning progress difficult and lead to the lagging behind. This time we set out to identify the causes that lead to these realities. The hypothesis from which we have left seems to be the result of a lack of training in school activity as a result of the fact that most of the hours are carried out by frontal activity. For the validation of hypotheses, we tried a research approach, using the interview method, by administering a questionnaire, a batch of 537 high school students and direct observation, during 73 special inspections to obtain the first degree.*

**Keywords:** *frontal activity; lack of training; guided individual activity; mutual reading; analysis of small group workload;*

### 1. Introduction

In a previous study, we have tried to identify the problems faced by high school students and the factors - educational realities, making learning progress difficult and leading to lagging behind.

Major problems have been identified: functional illiteracy, malfunctions in the process of thinking, and lack of interest and motivation for school learning. Educational realities, the factors mentioned by the students and the questioned teachers leading to the lagging behind were:

- the issues mentioned by the teachers are:
  - large gaps in previous years' acquisition;
  - attitude of low indifference and motivation for learning;
  - basic intellectual skills (precised reading, writing, counting);
- aspects that make it difficult for students to learn are:
  - the large amount of knowledge taught at each discipline, which leads to overloading;
  - accentuated by teachers on the theoretical part of learning, to the detriment of the practical-applicative character;
  - inappropriate dosing of the required effort, subsistence or overload.

### 2. Description of the research

This time we set out to identify the causes that lead to these realities.

The hypothesis from which I left is the following:

The lagging behind in learning is the result of a lack of training in school activity as a result of the fact that most of the hours are carried out by frontal activity. This hypothesis was suggested by the empirical idea that most of the school learning activity is done through frontal activity, which implicitly leads to a lack of training of a consistent part of the number of pupils in a class.

Frontal activity makes a small number of learners involved in authentic learning, particularly those with sustained activity, those who are leaning towards intellectual activity

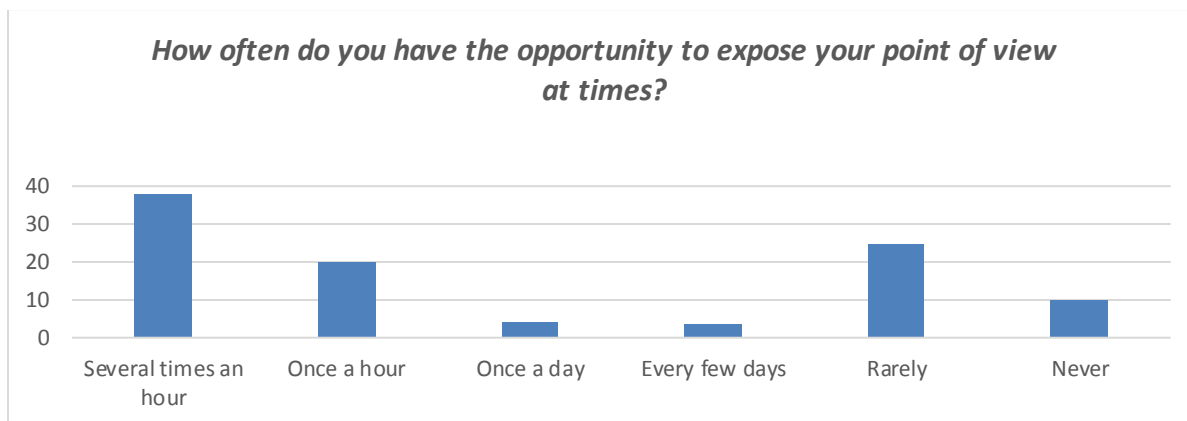
and with high learning potential. The others become inactive viewers of activities carried out by a small number of colleagues.

Hypothesis suggests that if students are not trained in school activity and only physically participate in classes, mental processes will be in the situation where, instead of evolving, it is possible to incite or at most to stagnate. Lack of involvement generates boredom and automatically, lowers interest, and secondly, lack of involvement, the sense of inutility leads to the loss of self-esteem and the full potential. Prolonged this situation will make the pupils come to helplessness learned, a situation that can only be overcome with the additional support of those around us: teachers, colleagues, mentors, tutors, etc. The student alone will be totally helpless.

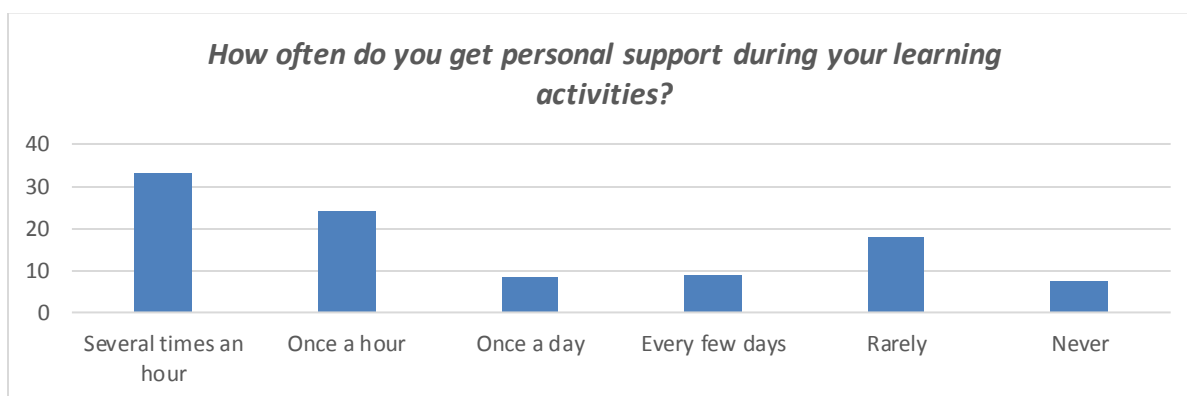
The direct observation of the activities and the interview were used as a research method, by the administration of a questionnaire.

The information gathered during the 73 inspections for obtaining the first degree did in 13 counties and the municipality of Bucharest and the administration of the questionnaire was used to 537 high school students, which included some of the questions regarding the possibilities of involvement in the activity of learning.

The questions and answers were as follows:



1. 34.8% of students surveyed have the opportunity to participate very little in classwork.



2. 25% receive rare or none-personal support.

The answers given by pupils and the observation on the occasion of the special inspections carried out for obtaining the first degree, 73 distributed in 13 counties and the city of Bucharest, and the ARACIP evaluations carried out in 61 school institutions, of which 42 high schools, confirm that the teaching activity is dominated by the activity in which the teacher

exposes knowledge and involves a small number of pupils in the teaching activities, dominating those with high potential and availability for school activity. Only 15% of the assisted activities combine in a steady and balanced way the front-to-the-front and the group-independent activity so that each student has the opportunity to participate through personal effort in the learning activities.

### **3. Techniques for involving each pupil in the learning activity**

To increase interest and motivation, the need to increase the participation in the learning activity of all pupils, not only a few, those who have a sustained rhythm in learning, solving school tasks, those with an increased need for affirmation, we propose some working techniques that create a learning context that puts each student in the position to participate through personal effort and with the possibility to have the necessary support for the realization of learning: Individualized Activity, Mutual Reading and Small Group Workload Analysis .

#### ***3.1. Individually directed activity***

In order to enable individual activities to be carried out, in the case of learners with slow learning or knowledge gaps, take the following steps:

- a. The pupils will follow (without writing, only by proposing to understand the approach) the demonstration made by the didactic framework, using the voice-thinking protocol (step-by-step explanation while demonstrating);
- b. Students will follow (without writing, only by proposing to understand the approach) the demonstration made by a colleague on the board;
- c. Everyone will work individually (using the voice thinking protocol) under the supervision of their colleague. Then the roles change. He will work every two exercises each;
- d. Everyone will work individually with the opportunity to ask for help from the teacher or colleague, two exercises;
- e. each will perform the activity individually, without support, two exercises;
- f. In a group of 4/5, students perform self-evaluation, each reading what others have done, what results they have achieved.

The number of exercises students perform at each stage may be different, depending on their complexity and the time needed to accomplish. Exercises from the book or from a workbook that the students receive at the beginning can be used.

#### ***3.2.. Analysis of small group workload***

When workload involves individual work, especially for a problem that is more difficult to understand or is more complex (it has many data, it involves multiple connections, it has more operations) we recommend that after the explanation for the better understanding of the task and the problem solving, the pupils discuss at a small group level to identify the keywords, to clarify the steps, the steps, the issues that can raise problems and only then to start individual work.

#### ***3.3.Mutual reading***

Mutual reading is a pedagogical concept that designates a work technique that can be used in school learning after each sequence of independent activity, with the aim of:

- a. to share with colleagues from the small group the way of solving individually;
- b. to express, at the level of the small group, the way of solving a problem, his own opinion, a personal opinion;
- c. a first assessment of the learning outcomes by confronting the solutions, opinions, opinions of others.

#### 4. Perspectives

Following the use of Guided Individual Activity, Mutual Reading, Small Group Task Analysis over time, psycho-pedagogical reflections made with thousands of learners from the project framework: Mentored for rural teachers, Studium, After-school Professionals, teachers involved in the preparation for obtaining the didactic degrees, future teacher students, the conclusions of the focus groups organized during the pedagogical circles, the mentor teachers' working sessions, for each of the three techniques we have established several advantages:

*Advantages of guided individual activity there are:*

- tracking the demonstration, without copying the exercise, makes the focus point only on the steps, the work algorithm, without losing certain explanations or important elements due to copying the exercise on the board;
- we all know that the worst retention rate occurs when we explain, what we do. The protocol of voice thinking and the answer that students give to their colleague are educational contexts that make this technique possible;
- Time multiplies. At the same time, in the sequence of activity in pairs, half of the class staff work in parallel;
- students with low self-esteem, have the courage to ask their colleagues if they have not understood something; there is no the same reservations and fears they have in relation to the teacher and to the whole class.

*The advantages of the task analysis in the small group there are:*

- for those with learning potential, the exercise of the explanation is a possibility of attachment, learning;
- for those with low potential for hyperkinetics, the explanation and discussion in the proximate space will have an increased impact on the teacher's explanation, which was done somewhere in the space that did not attract enough attention.
- In the small group, students with low self-esteem have another courage to ask if they have not understood something; there is no the same reservations and fears they have in relation to the teacher and to the whole class.

*Advantages of mutual reading there are:*

- each student has his / her time, in which he / she is listened to by colleagues. It will feel useful and important, which will contribute to the development of self-esteem;
- It takes little time and ensures the participation of each student in the activity. Nobody is excluded;
- each has its own moment of expressing the personal point of view, of its own way of solving. A first evaluation is carried out. Provides the possibility of displaying the learning outcomes of each student. Some of the errors are identified by confronting responses, opinions, and shared ways of solving;
- Differences of opinion, different ways of solving, give the pretext of group discussions on the subject;
- Provides multiplying time. At the same time, in the classroom, by matching the intensity of the voice to the specifics of work in the small group, pupils speak in a number equal to the number of working groups. If we use classical front-end activity to evaluate individual activity outcomes, some students, 2-3, share their views, achievements; usually those who finish first. The risk is that, as a matter of course, a large number of students will not even carry out the exercise for individual work because they know they will not be listened. Under these circumstances, for many of the students, that time is a lost one because they did nothing.

## Conclusions

As a result of these data, we consider that the main cause of functional illiteracy, lack of interest and motivation and dysfunctions in the processuality of thinking is the lack of training of students, which, step by step, causes the accumulation of gaps, the feeling of impotence and the detachment of a number quite a large number of students of what would have been natural to be daily concern and constant responsibility - their own development.

Guided Individual Activity, Mutual Reading and Small Group Workload Analysis are techniques that are used every hour several times, ensure each student's participation by personal effort in learning, provide the necessary training for each person's evolution, acquire the level of mental activity required overcoming functional illiteracy, and then resulting in progress in the functioning of thought processes, hence progress in learning and then increasing interest and motivation for school activity.

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## CC PLATFORM - A DIGITAL INNOVATION AND COLLABORATIVE TOOL FOR TEACHERS. ASPECTS OF ITS IMPACT IN ROMANIA

**Prof. univ. dr. habil. Dorin Herlo**

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**Andrea del Pilar Giraldo Sevilla**

**Expertise France, coordinator of Consumer Classroom European Project**

**Abstract:** *At the end of the Consumer Classroom project, an impact assessment was carried out on some categories of people involved in education - students, future teachers, teachers, university teachers who train the future teachers, experts from the human resources centers or the training of the teaching staff. Thus, two activities were proposed, in two university centers in Romania. The result was that the CC platform is conducive to users - students, teachers and other categories - and it would be good if they addressed the primary cycle students as well.*

**Key words:** *Consumer Classroom e-learning Platform; its impact in education;*

### **Introduction**

The Consumer Classroom project is a European Commission (EC) funded collaborative platform and multilingual website for teachers across the EU, launched on March 2013. Therefore it is a tool that provides a response to the new approaches towards consumer education.

Consumer Education is a sub-theme under Education for Sustainable Development. Thus, it is the preparation of individuals through skills, concepts and understanding that are required for everyday living to achieve maximum satisfaction and utilization of his/her resources in a sustainable way.

It consists on an interactive open multilingual platform for the on-line community of teachers of between 12 to 18 years old European schools and other stakeholders across Europe (experts in education or consumer issues, parents, etc.).

This initiative is a link between the Digital Agenda for Europe and the multiannual Consumer program as well as a link among the SDG4 (Sustainable Development Goal 4) on Quality Education, SDG12 on Responsible Consumption and Production and SDG13 on Climate Change action.

This platform is therefore part of the EC’s active policy funded tools and is aligned with 2 main axes of the EC work in terms of Education for Sustainable Consumption:

- a) the CHAFEA (Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency) and DG (Directorate-General) for Justice and Consumers Program and
- b) the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

It plays a key role for both programs to achieve the following objectives:

1. knowledge-enhancing aspects of consumer empowerment;
2. the development of 21st century skills and competences;
3. innovating and modernizing education and training; and
4. open education.

This collaborative tool helps teachers and experts sharing experiences and creates joint projects with other teachers and experts, as well as with their students. The main objective of this aspect is encouraging inter-school multi-disciplinary projects and also offering teachers the opportunity to become a consumer education expert using the tools provided in this website.

Taking full advantage of the latest web technologies and community based Internet usage, Consumer Classroom provides ready-to-use teaching resources on a wide range of consumer education themes. Each school subject has elements on consumer education - from Literature, Mathematics or Financial Literacy to Home Economics, Sciences, Information and Communication, Sustainable Development, Social Media and Internet Safety and Languages – providing the necessary pedagogic tools to include this thematic area in the teachers' curricula.

The platform aims to provide better coordination and synergies with national efforts within the area of consumer education and provides a database with teaching/pedagogical resources on consumer education and its subthemes. Its main goal is to promote an understanding of the structures and systems within the market and to provide the necessary insight to develop citizens into responsible and intelligent acting consumers. In particular, it seeks to encourage Consumer Education in European secondary schools. Based on this, Consumer Classroom could develop diversified information and material resource base for teachers, for universities, for practice schools, etc. in order to contribute to teacher professional development.

In an increasingly globalised world that is currently facing environmental challenges, this will be an opportunity to explore the role of digital tools to provide teacher training on digital competences and thematic open resources, and to promote awareness and understanding regarding Climate Change and Consumer issues in order to have a positive impact, the civil society's role in the environment, climate change and the market. Awareness on Consumer rights and issues is crucial in order to ensure protection, confidence and social responsibility.

Romania, by "Aurel Vlaicu" University from Arad, specific by Educational Sciences, Psychology and Social Work Faculty, represented by Prof. dr. Dorin Herlo was part of the CC Project from the beginning. Taking into consideration that University prepares the future teachers for secondary schools, the interest for this project was great. But "Aurel Vlaicu" University has had the objective to share all the achievements from the project with all Romanian Universities with Educational Departments and with a lot of Secondary Schools and other beneficiaries/stakeholders from Romania.

In these terms it was interesting to observe at the end of the project, what the impact of it was, and for this reason two Focus groups were prepared and two Workshops in two Universities ("Aurel Vlaicu" from Arad and "1 Decembrie 1918" from Alba Iulia) for the teacher students and their professors.

## Methodology

- The objectives of the Focus Groups and Workshops were:
  - i. how to effectively use ICTs in Education by teachers in the Classroom and explain the importance of teaching Consumer Education;
  - ii. illustrate how to effectively use Consumer Classroom and
  - iii. a discussion on what are the teachers needing in the current digital tools for the further development of the Consumer Classroom Platform.

In Alba Iulia University the event was moderated by Prof. dr. habil. Dorin Herlo ("Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, National Team Leader of Consumer Classroom European Project), during of 4 hours the workshop and was structured as it follows:

- Presentation – 20/25 minutes): <https://vimeo.com/297051312>
- Focus group discussion:

- **Scenario:**

The participants are from around the globe. A digital revolution is happening and the education is impacted by digitization, machine learning, artificial intelligence and robots. The needs of the education systems have completely changed, even more so than today.

- **Objectives:** the participants will be able to

- Share their feelings/thoughts/reactions towards this tremendous change in the education sector and teaching practice.
- Imagine which tools/initiatives/ideas could save them from an increasing gap between digital skills and the transformation of teaching and learning

- **Activities:**

- ✓ In groups of 5 (1 assistant professor or associate professor and 4 teacher students) - 25 minutes:
  - ❖ Identify the difficulties to adapt to the changing needs and associated contextual challenges.
  - ❖ Imagine innovative tools/initiatives/ideas to identify/anticipate digital skills needs of future classrooms and students
- ✓ In groups of 5 (1 assistant professor or associate professor and 4 teacher students) find and write the answer to the following questions - 20 minutes:
  - ❖ What is the added value of e-learning and ICT platforms to encourage the transformation of behaviours
    - (i) the gap on digital skills and
    - (ii) the digital transformation trends in teaching and learning?
  - ❖ How these digital tools could help teachers adapt to these rapid changes? Transformation in teaching practice. Transformation in learning: Students today are different.
- ✓ Each of the participants please go through the platform [www.consumerclassroom.eu](http://www.consumerclassroom.eu) (in EN or RO) to form an opinion about what Consumer Classroom is providing? - 20 minutes)
- ✓ How is Consumer Classroom responding to current Consumer Education needs?
- ✓ What are the stakeholders missing?
  - **Methods:** exposure,
  - heuristic conversation,
  - demonstration,
  - exercise,
  - group work,
  - computer assisted training,
  - online evaluation,
  - ppt presentation

At “1 Decembrie 1918” University from Alba Iulia was 20 participants

At “Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad it was organized at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Psychology and Social Work, a complex activity with the title “Focus Groups & Workshop: Consumer Classroom Platform, Digital Innovation and Collaborative Tools for Teachers curated by Andrea del Pilar Giraldo Sevilla - Expertise France, Project Leader of Consumer Classroom European Project and Prof. dr. habil. Dorin Herlo – “Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad, National Project Coordinator of Consumer Classroom in Romania.

- **Topics**

The main topics within the presentation were the following:

- Consumer Education definition and context:
  - Active citizenship due to Internet (not online or offline but online)
- How Consumer Classroom responded to consumer education policy needs
- Consumer Classroom: Addressing national and EU needs; transversality of the Consumer Themes with Curriculum Subjects; Rewarding innovative and creative use of ICTs with students (InterSchool Competition); Promoting collaboration.
- Changing in learning (traditional generations vs digital generations)



- EdTech Revolution in Teaching
- How digital platforms could help teachers adapting to rapid changes
- Teachers required competences for the use of ICTs

- **Methodology**

Taking into consideration the time for this workshop, there was sufficient time to apply a methodology that could provide quantitative and qualitative results during the workshop itself and after.

During the workshop, it consisted on an interactive presentation software mentimeter mixed with the Wallace methodology for the creative thinking, creative problem-solving and inventive design challenging participants with problem based situations.

At the same time, the sessions were recorded with the approval of the participants in order to verify the participants behaviours and exchanges as well as double-checking the outcomes and conclusions of the workshop.

Concretely the following methods can be recalled:

- Ppt presentation,
- Wallace methodology,
- critical thinking,
- dialog,
- exposure,
- heuristic conversation,
- demonstration,
- exercise,
- group work,
- computer assisted training,
- online evaluation (from mentimeter and consumer classroom typeform)At “Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad was 18 participants.

## **Results**

At “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia

- Highlighted participants identified
  - students from psycho-pedagogical module,
  - assistant professors
  - and associate professors
- Discussion topics
  - a) Tremendous changes in education today, due and IT impact. Difficulties and opportunities
  - b) Imagining a future classroom, with teachers, students and tools which interact for an authentically learning (transformative learning)
  - c) The impact of CC project on yourself
  - d) How is CC platform responding to current consumer educational needs
  - e) Stakeholders missing from the CC e-learning platform.
- Main outcomes
  - 1.1. All knowledge defines us like human being and the IT facilitate us to reach a lot of information. But all these information must be selected for being transformed, by understanding, into knowledge.
  - 1.2. Respect and develop each personality involved in education process means also the well being of the learners into the learning process.
  - 1.3. Due to the IT tools the learners can have a tremendous access to the other cultures. It's important to have an open, flexible and well done mind for deducing the real values of our culture and of other culture for the proper interactions between them.

That is possible by education (f2f or/and distance)

- 1.4. It needs the digital equipment be adequate to nowadays evolution; it's requested from the teachers to know to interact with the IT devices; it's needed that teachers change their approach to the students by responsabilising them and raising their autonomy and respect for well done task; it's needed to familiarize the students who came from villages, where they don't have access to the last technology, with the new technologies.
- 2.1. The classroom will have walls with touch screens that can connect everybody with everyone; the teachers will be somehow hologram; students will have the possibilities to learn from everywhere (from classroom, home, outdoor or...)
- 3.1. The joy to be enrolled on the CC platform because there are so many resources, different opinions and points of view about teaching and learning.
- 3.2. Presentation of consumer education topics by different type of subjects and from different cultures' point of view is an example of good practices for integrative learning.
- 3.3. The possibility of the participants to know more, how to use the platform as a future teacher.
- 4.1. The CC platform responds to the modern society needs, being an interactive way to have new information, well structured and it can be easily and anytime used by the teachers and students.
- 4.2. The CC platform improves the teachers and students perspective on consumer education, opening widely the eyes of users, in different fields.
- 4.3. The CC platform facilitates to the users to work in groups and to make practical things, related not only with the National Curriculum, and deliver modern and creative ways to teach.
- 4.4. The CC platform can also be easily used in teaching different languages, because it can adapt the given materials to teach students concepts from different areas of study.
- 5.1. The most important missing group is that of primary school pupils.
- 5.2. Can be attracted to express their point of view the producers of goods and services providers
- 5.3. Should involve many more countries.
- Synergies and partnership/networking opportunities
  - The debates were very fruitful, with great synergy, the participants having the floor at their disposal, for presenting their thoughts
  - The participants were willing to respond to the two online questionnaire
  - Professors from the Educational Department promised to share more the CC platform into the Alba County Schools.

At "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad

- Highlighted participants identified
  - Students from bachelor and master study program in educational sciences,
  - Assistant professors,
  - Teachers and
  - Counselors at Arad County Center for Psycho-pedagogical Counseling and
  - the Principal of Teacher Training House from Arad County
- Discussion topics
  - Conception on consumer education;
  - The role of an e-learning platform in lifelong learning;
  - The biggest challenge in Digitising Education in Romania;
  - How the digital tools could help teachers adapt to their students and the classroom?

- Main outcomes

**Participants conception about Consumer Education**

What words come to your mind when you hear about Consumer Education?



„Consumer education” has been defined in many different ways, clearly demonstrating the complexity of the issue, as well as the difficulty to implement education programmes in schools and for a wider audience. Approaches to consumer education also differ throughout all Member States; consumer education strategies are not well defined in most countries.

Challenging Romanian participants with their own conception of Consumer Education provided a clear basis about their understanding of this subject and their level of awareness. They were asked to define Consumer Education in 2 words maximum. Indeed the three most popular responses were concerned with: responsibility, future and awareness about the impact of consumer choices.

Still, skills and competences (i.e. knowledge, skills, critical thinking) have a second role according to the responses received. This was therefore one of the topics to further orient our work during the workshop.

**What is the most useful role that an e-platform should play to promote lifelong learning?**

**Ranking**



The Consumer classroom project is developed within the Objective II of the Consumer Education Programme, more specifically under item “Enhancing consumer education as a life-long process with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers”.

The two main objectives were the following:

- a. to improve information and raise awareness of consumer rights and interest;
- b. to build a knowledge and capacity for more effective consumer participation in the market.

Taking into account the responses provided, the participants situated knowledge on Consumer Education in the fifth position above the six possibilities provided. They considered that for their teaching practice an e-platform such as Consumer Classroom there should be a priority

- (i) to build a community of practice,
- (ii) the promotion of learner centered active pedagogy using the necessary tools, providing training to teachers and identifying the resources and methodologies needed, and
- (iii) a platform that could provide teacher training and professional development.

***What is the biggest challenge in Digitising Education in Romania? (describe in one word)***



This question-challenge was the one that incited the greatest interest and discussion with different points of view among the participants. We could observe the following trends:

- ICT related issues: lack of tech resources (x4)
- Educational methodology issues: assessment tools, video instruction, tools for kids attention, school content – curriculum content (x2),
- Competences/Skills: emotional health (x2), human relations education
- Classroom issues: lack of respect (x3)
- Structural issues: well vs worse prepared teachers, lack of teachers, Educational System instability (x2)

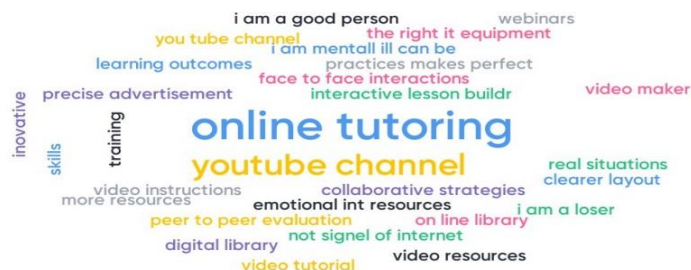
Based on this the most voted challenges to which Consumer Classroom could provide responses are:

1. Lack of tech equipment/resources: Here it was told that the fact that the Inter-School Competition’s prizes consisted on IT Equipment not just encouraged but it is very helpful for Romanian schools.
2. School content – Curriculum content
3. Assessment tools/video instruction/More interactive tools: this could be foreseen in the further development of the platform
4. Teachers’ skills development: Consumer Classroom could provide basic training for teachers and resources for teachers to improve their competences. It was suggested that Consumer Classroom could provide a diploma for teachers that have finalized these lessons or training.

***How these digital tools could help teachers adapt to their students and the classroom?***

## Tech/Digital Solutions

Mentimeter



The most popular solutions of the participants are:

1. online tutoring
  2. Youtube Channel that could be related with video lessons or tutorial
- Synergies and partnership opportunities
    - The activities were very fruitful, with great synergy, the participants having the floor at their disposal, for presenting their thoughts.
    - The groups interactions were very strong and the results very useful in their forming for the teaching job.
    - The participants were willing to respond to the trainers' challenges for the mentimeter questions and as well for the two online questionnaires.
    - Participant's students from Serbia and Moldova Republic promised to share their experience and the CC platform to professors and colleagues from their countries.
    - Assistant professors, teachers, counselors at Arad County Center for Psycho-pedagogical Counseling and the Principal of Teacher Training House from Arad County have committed themselves to promoting the platform in their activities and to all their colleagues from secondary schools in Arad County

### Conclusions

It is observed from "main outcomes" that the ideas from the activity are pertinent and the platform will play a much larger role in the future activity of the participants.

Teaching by using an e-platform such as Consumer Classroom should be a priority to build a community of practice, the promotion of learner centered active pedagogy using the necessary tools, providing training to teachers and identifying the resources and methodologies needed. A platform such as Consumer Classroom that could provide teacher training and professional development is needed.

Finally, another conclusion is that the platform should address as well to the teachers and the pupils from primary school.

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Offline Promotion Report; National Promotion: *Workshop on Digital Innovation and Collaborative Tools for Teachers*, SC 2015 86 03, Reporting in line with requirements of Task 4 – Offline Promotion - Dorin Herlo; Andrea Giraldo-Sevilla

## COMMUNICATION IN THE MEDIA INFORMATION SOCIETY

**Regis-Mafteiu ROMAN, Assoc. Prof. PhD.**  
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**Abstract:** *The article performs a analysis of communication. Speech, natural communication, epistemological discourse translate self-referential analysis into a paradigm. The quest for fundamentals is transposed into fallacious and improvable statements which are placed in an absurd field. I have already proven the fact that the human mind and thought acts in a binary manner. This idea belongs to the psychology of conformity. Consequently, communication is simplified both culturally and in terms of civilization. Obviously, we have not evolved much culturally or in axiological terms since the Antiquity. The result is today`s society which is ideologically-unethical, morally-unaesthetic, competitively-equal or properly-false etc. basically, a phenomenological analysis of the fundamentals of speech is enough to understand the current humanity.*

**Key words:** *communication; epistemological discourse; etich; morallity; argumentation;*

I would like to add another definition to the more than 300 already existing ones (Ripp, 1998: 217). It is a definition that belongs to a simple but efficient function in terms of understanding the social grounds of speech. By analysing the implicit social fundamentals, I suggest an axiomatic approach of the idea that speech carries in its inner structures the grounds. Self-reference is indifferent to linguistic families and it reveals itself by means of three implicit cases that can be found in proto-languages and are specific to human nature: conformity, the desire to overcome conformity, and both of them guided by intentionality. Conformity would find its correspondence in natural speech, which is schematic and binary with linguistic clichés as sublayer. Linguistic clichés are used by any manner and any communication species, irrespective of the speaker`s status and role and irrespective of the most commonly used argumentations. These argumentations have mostly a cognitive nature or on the contrary, an affective one. From politeness statements to wooden language and passing through axiological ideas, the humanities are part of the repetitive act, spoken or written with an unacknowledged lightness. We are totally free to utter imitations that we accept but only if we consider paradoxically or stupidly, that they have a certain amount of originality, semantically or at least stylistically interiorized. Only the meaning and the infinity of interpretations bear the mark of individuality, subjectivism and the common man`s unique way of being.

By its nature, conformity has a binary nature (Roman, 2007: 290-299) of acceptance or rejection, true or false, good or bad, knowledge or lack of knowledge, existence or inexistence etc. which are based on the reflexive schematic character of humanities. Life is mostly regarded in an alternative manner. We constantly need to make choices, we place ourselves between me and the other, between Ego and nature, between time and space, disintegrative ontogenosiological stability and instability. Binary schematism is an innate construction but also a cultural construction that reached its peak in the manifestations of historical reasoning in the modern age. In this respect, we can make reference for a epistemic exemplification to the fundamentals of cognitive psychology, to the computer metaphor and even to the development of calculation machines, etc. If we assessed speech, we would fall into its specific trap, therefore we only note that it exists. The opposite, the desire to overcome conformity is something different from any non-systemic status. It reveals a sort of existential indignation or even rebellion. The intention of going beyond any unspecific breakage is shown so that the

difference between the self and something else is equalised or shaded off in a new manner. The binarity is replaced by a multitude of polymorphic meanings. It is not only about a trivial Hegelian synthesis like the bound between thesis and antithesis which is based on duality and pre-set prejudices. Nor is it about symbolic writing, namely ideographic writing which involve dual conventionalism assumed culturally and civilizational.

Going beyond conformity describes the intention of reaching one form or another of creation through a pre-or post-Wittgenstein open notional game that can be associative or epistemic, etc. Or, in other words, ludic attitudes become epistemic, i.e. pretty serious, inviting to an initiatory baptism of new notions. Overcoming conformity contains, therefore contradiction, contrariety against a pre-existing language, or the need to impose specific notions concerning reality or thinking, which tend to expand mostly at intentional level due to the lack of such notions. The dynamics of cultural acts, crystal works, more or less perfect, paradigmatic or historical research theories bear the authors' intentionality as implicit initiation. The most frequent conflicts, misunderstandings, reasoning errors, structural-semantic crisis emerge at this point. Hermeneutics, empathy, comprehension are tools of sadness to be found everywhere and we tend to overcome them all the time, at least, fractionally. Overcoming conventionalisms can bring about irritation or it becomes casuistically unhealthy. Moreover, counterarguments can be found in the same binary thinking, which is typical for traditional and pragmatic logics. Fixed ideas, conventionalism are stronger than alternative, new statements. Social crowd psychology has proven it statistically. Social innovation needs hundreds of years to be accepted by the society. Intentionality embraces the nature of individual subjectivity. The way a person lives in a Heideggerian manner in language is a defining tool in terms of relative onto-gnoseological truth, reduced mainly to phenomenological anchors. Many studies and authors have tried to argue about the existence of a type of objective, unintentional, neutral speech. These beliefs understood as David Hume refers to them, have emerged as consequence of modernity and binary thinking, of the delusion about the existence of a pure (neo)Kantian reason, and even about the existence of unintentional and potential speech. These ideas have been referred to briefly in U. Eco's studies on metaphor, or in P. Ricoeur's paradigms of interpretation, etc.<sup>2</sup> However these unjustified attitudes impel the man in a utopic world and end up being overwhelmed by the impoliteness of certain ideals or forms of absolute unprovable potentials. Integrative linguistic analyses are demanding but do not transmit anything different from the modern ones. However, they are so frequently used that become obsolete because of their binary reception and interpretation. Dual dichotomies and perspectives are only the same reductionist manner that continues the state of incompleteness. For instance, the quarrel of universals remains a methodological non-sense in projection and potential analyses as nominalism reveals more than it is able to do and realism is limited to its own sufficiency that renders subjective incompleteness. Both tools are necessary to an equal extent for speech analysis when we take into account the degree of involvement in textuality and subtextuality, simultaneously. *In essence, communication is, ab initio, the minimal form of manifestation of subjectivism and each individual's subjectivity staged by historical, concrete cultural symbols.* The definition has been reduced to a synthetic, elementary statement that makes reference to any type of communication without taking into account the interlocutors' ethical, axiological and status premises. It comprises simultaneously natural and epistemic communication as there is no strategic difference between them. Only socially hierarchical roles bring about stupefaction, yet the differentiations belong exclusively to the semantic classes used by the interlocutors. Cognitions, associations and transfers concerning the relation between words and meanings are

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<sup>2</sup> There are so many examples that we would have been unable to refer to all of them; the selected ones are only for practice and inference purposes

not as varied as believed at a hereditarian level. Education is the consequence of current historical policies, remaining in the same inconstant sadness in the end.

One first strengthening re-argumentation can refer to the speaker or the sender of a message. The limitations of Wittgenstein's thinking are also the limitations of the language used. Similarly, the principle bears away vice and reasoning errors that exist in the inner structure of thinking. Intentionally, conservatives oppose conventional changes, the novelty bringer seeks a way of re-understanding things and mediating them. The conflict which arises is relatively irreconcilable as there is the same semantic indeterminacy that emerges with translations from a language into another. The compromise is tolerated. Secondly, the virtual interlocutor, fundamental by relation to extreme cases, can be placed on the same level. In easier words, both scientists and common men relate to the same perceptive scheme: binary or multivalent! This happens because the initiatory baptism and summed up or synthetic recognition of a varied number of notions, smaller or bigger, does not stand for a maximal assessment grade or individual value in terms of the reasoning values that we have analysed. It only stands for adaptation to the process of recognition, namely of understanding notions through old or new perceptive richness that has been used only for social segregation such as trivial power games. Different social roles and statements of interlocutors with a different social status are always placed under the category of authority's sophism. It is not a criterion of truth the fact that a superior, educated ego, a value state something but the independent judgement and the judgement assumed by the Ego. The Aristoteles correspondence with facts is another cliché of the naivety of humanities as facts are mostly interpretative, therefore they are historically subjective and not subjective as positive, disinterested universe. The third argumentation can be made as we understand that communication has always an ethical implicit basis. However, ethics depends on the degree of indoctrination and on the values, called absolute that guide it. Absurdity has an utopic nature as a perpetuum mobile. It exists only in informative experiences and experiences formalized by the modern intentionality. For instance, many generations have worshiped the idea of pure Kantian reason, namely the German idealism that used the policy of superior state reason not to the detriment of the individual but of the social groups with implicit adverse effects. We refer to the theoretical core of communism that does not realise today, in democracy the ethical hostile consequences of humanities. It is explainable why the old continent is self-defined through unified forums like practicing a meritocracy dictatorship within closed groups. At least, this is the way it is self-characterized.

Forth, in any act or form of communication, the most important part is the message itself. It is important how it is transmitted, the binary or tertiary correspondence with the truth, the pragmatic productivity but among all these, the most important part refers to intentionality. The work, the process, the final phenomenon that reality focuses on without being actually uttered. I say „Hello!”, aiming at something conscious or on the contrary!, I describe a metaphor (Battistini & Guaragnella, 2007: 445-466), or an intentional paradigm (Grady, 1999: 100) or a vulgar politeness form. Any of them share an intentional state that brings about something, define a proper notion or a fake, improper, indifferent one. Unselfish communication does not exist at any level because it is not a mere instrument of anchoring in the informal mundanity. It is an instrument used to possess an universe considered hostile at the beginning in a conservative perspective. We answer in the same manner, we double our own limitations with a finite similar gender because we cannot overcome binary, no matter what we do.

In argumentative terms we can exemplify by a multitude of philosophical, linguistic, philological, logical, psychological, anthropological etc. studies that refer to the apparent neutrality of discourse and speech as objective, instrumental and secure genders. Discussions are held on metalanguage, self-reference as a (un)human and necessary or (un)knowable



universe that exists in ideal and static worlds, untouchable universes, global semantic systems thrown into the ideal, into Nirvana, about autistic worlds that use disabled communication, completely unserious and hilarious exercises to such extent that they do not even deserve citation. For instance, pragmatic approaches on communication focus on a judgement according to which “there are no universal interpretation issues but rather particular ones that can be solved with normal research techniques” (Habermas, 2000: 27). These ideas have been overcome in the 70s by introducing into the academic world the paradigm of interpretation as effect of: relative authority of logical positivism, the development of phenomenology, of philosophical hermeneutics and critical theory, of structuralism (anthropological, linguistic and sociological), of socio-biology and eco-biology, of belief in the possibility of finding an explanation to civilizational universal traits „rather through human being`s nature than through rational infrastructure of knowledge, action and human language, namely of the culture itself (Habermas, 2000: 28). Language has been regarded from the beginning as a form of power<sup>3</sup>, of persuasion, influence and manipulation of the other real and not abstract, inborn or potential, nothing more than a deliberate induction in error, that sometimes we try to change out of interest. The message is no longer important, only the transmission medium as formula of complete denigration of communication, as we find out in the Anglo-Saxon literature. Propaganda receives a major explicit role as it addresses to a growing number of people. Lie is elevated to virtue, as the alternative is minimized and mocked! I did not say that the truth is an alternative nor that it isn't a choice! Knowledge, epistemology, science that developed gradually are circumscribed to this phenomenon of accepting primary axiological statements, irrespective of their field: mystical, religious, ideological etc. In this respect, it is an utopia not to imagine the existence of an objective, neutral universal language, without taking into account the rhetorical implication of influencing the other through intentional means of communication. Not even by using a wooden language in direct communication can we transmit neutral messages, even if there isn't a state of intentionality and conscious persuasion from the interlocutors` side. This characterization re-describes an initiating foundation of language as manner of manifestation and not as theoretical and theorized gender which indicates a minimalist form of subjectivity. Language through humans becomes a form of domination, of power, going beyond the causes and forms of manifestation or cultural species by gender, conscious or not, belonging to each individual through a formal analysis of the effects of subjectivism. Archetypally, language means persuasion, influence, community power not only collectively subliminal. As language is not inborn it cannot be a unconscious dream common to all humanities.

In the fifth case, when going from subjectivism to individual subjectivity, different languages transpose in translation and their understanding in syntactic, semantic and pragmatic terms. To a larger or a smaller extent. In terms of communication reference, the difference is insignificant. Inadequacies, lies, sophisms are kept according to the same algorithm. In natural language, they are more easily recognized, being easy and common to everyone. Empirical analysis is an explicit attribute of the entire society. But in language of type II<sup>4</sup>, the case of meritocrats, elite, epistemologists, when formally analysing the judgement errors it is possible but not compulsory to recognise them. It is a criterion common to a smaller community and not to the entire society. The efforts, even if they are less visible to the great mass of people, affect everyone to the same extent. Reduced to representative, initiating schematism as elementary foundation of language, admitted or not admitted errors do not differ according to

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3 We find the idea at Claude Lévi-Strauss *Tristes tropiques*, Paris, 1965, for whom the main and primary idea of discourse, *of written communication is to ease enslavement*, reduced to written language, unnoticed the importance of social interception of texts, their latent effect by releasing them into society is used by J. F. Lyotard, *Condiția postmodernă*, Editura Idea, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, pag. 11.

4 According to Noam Chomsky`s classification

the speakers' social role. The understanding of communication basis is not a differentiated analysis but on the contrary, it tries to grasp the common place of manifestations. Consequently, it is the same thing if we communicate directly and send the same message using neologisms specific to a scientific field, to a vocational or elitist one. The clothes differ but the representations are the same. The idea of communicational conformism is identical when uttered by a common man and by a scientist. The clichés are the same, differences emerging only in terms of frequency of fashionable statements and number of receivers. The opposite of communicational conformism, the denial of social clichés or of restraint communities that make us think about uniqueness, stylistic formulas, creativity through creation are developed on identical rational, associative, contradictory and contrary that build something like an open critical thinking. In this last case, one should mind the professional deontology of the one who brings novelty as immediate ethical fragment. An analysis of immediate, superficial and explicit causes should be performed as well as of intermediary, virtual and implicit effects.

In conclusion, we can say that linguistically we are close to the statement in which we play with nothing, or we should call it<sup>5</sup> a constant variable of apparent language. Clichés do not stand for anything. However, today, philosophy is sentenced by our present society not to talk about anything. It has become a positive, binary discourse used by the socio-humanities if they accept a sort of parallel or imaginary reality (sentenced to disappearance by the humanities) and a negative discourse if they deny this post-physical relation (positivism and pragmatism). But, it is immoral to imitate and state at the same time, that you are original! Moreover, is it moral to state that you have overcome imitation? Generally, the conformist man, the man of clichés imitates himself through a phenomenological another, through the hermeneutical self or through a historical-cultural model. Man as novelty and new provider tries to impose the same quasi-reality, which is socio-conceptually related. However, he is still a piece of reality! The individual imitates and reproduces as faithfully as possible the natural phenomenon, believing that it is different or that it exceeds him. He behaves as if he were not a piece of reality! The last judgements show that at semantic level, the issue is intuitively paradigmatic due to the process of denying self-reference or due to the inability of solving what we naturally accept as the universe of unprovable statements or the universe of tautologies. Ironically, in the human semantic field, both universes are accepted according to the binary nature of the universe. But, any universe considered necessary leads to the emergence of new immoral consequences – because in both cases, the subject is placed in a position of structural and ontological incompleteness up to the point he ascertains his own fundamentals.

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5 We make reference to the constant Heideggerian effort of building nothing or to the question: why rather the Being than Nothing? to propose phenomenology and philosophical hermeneutics.

# STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE CONTINUOUS TRAINING PROGRAM CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT - EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

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**Abstract:** *The present impact study was made on the basis of the reports of the training sessions, within the training program Classroom management - efficient strategies, accredited by us in collaboration with the Didactic Corp House Sibiu. The purpose of the investigation was to assess the extent to which the training program was an answer to the individual needs of professional development. The tool for assessing the impact of the training program was sent to the trainees after the completion of the training program. The answers were received from 48 teachers. The research findings indicate that teachers use frequently for classroom management, the following techniques: students' empowerment, followed by relationship techniques and techniques for inducing the idea of acceptance in the class. Also, difficulties in classroom management and in the application of the specific working tools, are registered, firstly regarding the management of students with behavioral difficulties, followed by conflict management and by communication with students and parents. Teachers affirm that in approaching the class from a managerial point of view, they use firstly the power of reference alongside with the power of the expert and not lastly, the power of the resource. The investigated teachers build and maintain positive relationships with all the students, especially by demonstrating their interest in the students and their problems, followed by the use of equitable behaviors to stimulate learning and then by rewarding the cooperating students. In order to accommodate students with behavioral difficulties in the classroom, the subjects of the study indicate the following strategies that they use with increasing frequency, in the following order: reward, arranging desks, use of work areas, use of music, preferential place and punishment. Also to manage students behavioral problems, teachers tend to use mainly symbolic awards and the answer cost.*

**Keywords:** *classroom management; teacher training; teaching skills; professional development;*

## 1. Introduction

Perhaps no other aspect of teaching is as important for teachers, regardless of whether they are beginners or experienced, as classroom management activities. Classroom management is a complex set of organizing behaviors, initiated by the teacher, in order to create and maintain a climate, in order to reach the teaching objectives. Of course, the main objective of these behaviors is to facilitate the learning activity of the students. As such, the organization of the class can be considered one of the fundamental tasks, and perhaps the most difficult, that the teacher performs in school. So that teachers can act appropriately in different teaching situations, certain classroom management competencies are required: teaching skills, psychosocial skills, communication skills and organizational skills.

## 2. The importance of developing teachers' classroom management skills

In the social education system, teachers must interact with those they educate, establish cooperative relationships with students and their parents and other stakeholders of the society. They not only educate in the classroom, but through each relational contact with children and parents, they carry out work based on growth, development and guidance.

Also, the activity of the teachers is carried out in relation to people who have training needs. From this derives the need for maximum responsibility for the behaviors and interventions of the educator. The teacher relies in the classroom management action, mainly on his own perception and interpretation of the teaching situations, as well as on his own beliefs regarding the modalities of action. An important role in the organization and management of the class is the subjective appreciation and expectations of the teacher's success. (Schönbächler, 2008).

A significant body of research also shows the fact that classroom organization and behavior management competencies, significantly influence the persistence of new teachers in the teaching career (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Teachers who have problems with behavior management and classroom discipline, are frequently ineffective in the classroom and they often report high level of stress and symptoms of burnout (Berliner, 1986; Browsers & Tomic, 2000; Espin & Yell, 1994).

Although the importance of effective classroom organization and behavior management is widely acknowledged by teachers, many new teachers report inadequate training and little assistance from colleagues and supervisors in establishing positive and productive classroom environments (Baker, 2005; Siebert, 2005).

Teachers educators consider that the ongoing professional programs in classroom management are effective if they are taught with adequate supervision in a real classroom context (Siebert, 2005).

### **3. Research objectives**

The impact study was made on the basis of the reports of the training courses within the training program Classroom management - efficient strategies, accredited by the Didactic Corp House Sibiu, for a period of 3 years, with 54 hours, 13 transferable professional credits and by having as target audience, preuniversity teachers. The present impact study aims to identify the skills development level of the former students, involved in the training program Classroom management - effective strategies. The impact of teachers continuous training was pursued, through the implementation of methods and practical activities, adapted to the particularities of each student involved in the activity carried out in the classroom. The purpose of the investigation was to assess the extent to which the training program was an answer to the individual needs of professional development.

### **4. Research methods and subjects**

The impact study questionnaire was applied to the teachers group who participated in training during the accreditation of the program. The tool for assessing the impact of the training program was sent to the trainees after the completion of the training program. The answers were received from 48 teachers. The impact questionnaire applied to the subjects, is made up of 10 items, 9 objectives with response variants, respectively with 5-point Likert scale evaluation and 1 subjective item with free answers.

### **5. Research findings**

The results are presented as percentage for each answer variant. In estimating the impact of the training program *Classroom management - effective strategies*, we took into consideration as being significant for our research, the evaluation point 5 (to a great extent) and the evaluation point 4 (to a large extent) of the Likert scale. For the other items we have

presented the frequencies and percentages on each answer variant and we consider as relevant for our study those answers that reach over 50% of the allocations.

For the quantitative analysis of the impact study carried out on the participants in the training program, we consider it relevant to present the percentages for each answer variant, for both evaluation point 5 (to a large extent) and evaluation point 4 (to a large extent) ).

Item Answer options	Evaluation scale / Answers				
	5 To a great extent	4 Largely	3 Moderate	2 To a small extent	1 To a very small extent
	%	%	%	%	%
Assertive communication	41.66%	41.66%	14.58%	2.08%	0%
Emotions management	47.91%	19%	6.25%	6.25%	0%
Conflict management	39.58%	47.91%	10.41%	0%	2.08%
Observation of other efficient teachers	31.25%	43.75%	16.66%	6.25%	2.08%
Reframing	14.58%	43.75%	31.25%	8.33%	2.08%
Monitoring your own thoughts	47.91%	35.41%	15.50%	4.16%	0%

Table No. 1 Restructured and applied self-management strategies

Thus, according to impact assessment of the continuous training program *Classroom Management-effective strategies*, most teachers investigated (N = 48) answer that they have restructured and applied the following self-management strategies: assertive communication 41.66% (to a very great extent), respectively 41.66% (largely); emotions management in proportion of 47.91% (to a great extent), respectively 19% (largely); conflict management 39.58% (to a great extent), respectively 47.91% (largely); observation of other efficient teachers in proportion of 31.25% (to a great extent), respectively 43.75% (largely); reframing in percentage of 14.58% (to a great extent), respectively 43.75% (largely); and monitoring of their own thoughts in a proportion of 47.91% (to a great extent), respectively 35.41% (largely).

Therefore, the most frequently selected response variants are, first of all, conflict management, followed by assertive communication and monitoring of one's own thoughts.

Referring to the classroom management techniques used frequently by teachers, we identify that 41.66% used to a great extent rules, consequences and routines, whereas 39.58% used largely these techniques. Then 39.58% of the research subjects applied to a great extent techniques for identifying the students' expectations, whereas 45.83% applied this techniques largely. 41.67% of the questioned teachers consider that they induce to a great extent the idea of acceptance in the classroom, whereas 43.75% applied this techniques largely. In terms of techniques for empowering students, 70.83% of the teachers answered that they apply them to a great extent, while 22.92% largely. Regarding the relationship techniques, 50% of the teachers indicate that they used them to a great extent, while 41.67% largely.

Item Answer options	Evaluation scale / Answers				
	5 To a great extent	4 Largely	3 Modera te	2 To a small extent	1 To a very small extent
	%	%	%	%	%
In class management I use:					
Rules, consequences and routines	41.66%	39.58%	14.58%	4.17%	0%
Identifying students expectations	39.58%	45.83%	12.50%	2.08%	0%
Inducing the idea of acceptance in the class	41.67%	43.75%	14.58%	0%	0%
Techniques for empowering students	70.83%	22.92%	4.17%	2.08%	0%
Relationship techniques	50%	41.67%	6.25%	2.08%	0%

Table No. 2 Applied classroom management techniques

Therefore, the most frequently selected response variants are, first and foremost, techniques for student empowerment, followed by relationship techniques and techniques for inducing the idea of acceptance in the class.

Regarding the item that concerns the difficulties experienced by teachers in classroom management we find out that organization of a climate conducive to study and intellectual activity is a difficulty to a great extent only for 4.17% of the teachers, while 16.67% think it is largely a problem. Then 8.33% of the questioned teachers consider the implementation of a rules system, as being difficult to a great extent, respectively 16.67% to a large extent. Regarding the communication with students and parents, 12.50% of the teachers consider that they have difficulties to a great extent, respectively 16.67% largely. As far as accepting the behavioral differences, only 8.33% of the respondents claim that they have difficulties to a great extent, respectively 18.75% largely. Then 14,58% of teachers participating in the training program, considered that they have difficulties with managing students with behavioral difficulties in a very large extent, while 22.92% to a large extent. Conflict management is also a problem for 8.33% of teachers in a very large extent, while 25% say that they had difficulties with this aspect in a large extent.

Item Answer options	Evaluation scale / Answers				
	5 To a great extent	4 Largely	3 Moderat e	2 To a small extent	1 To a very small extent
	%	%	%	%	%
I encountered difficulties regarding :					
Organizing a climate conducive to intellectual study and activity	4.17%	16.67%	25%	18.75%	35.42%
Implementation of the rules system	8.33%	16.67%	8.33%	35.42%	31.25%
Communication with students and parents	12.50%	16.67%	16.67%	35.42%	18.75%
Acceptance of behavioral differences	8.33%	18.75%	25%	31.25%	16.67%
Management of students with behavioral difficulties	14.58%	22.92%	27.08%	25%	10.42%
Conflict management	8.33%	25%	22.92%	25%	18.75%

Table No. 3 Difficulties in classroom management

As a result, analysing this item we found out that teachers have difficulties in classroom management first of all in managing students with behavioral difficulties, followed by conflict management and by communication with students and parents.

Another aspect of the impact assessment, focused on the degree to which the trained teachers appreciate the usefulness of some classroom management tools. Thus 20.83% consider it useful to a great extent, respectively 33.33% to a large extent. Then 29.16% reported that they appreciate in a great extent the usefulness of the questionnaire - how my students perceive me, while 33.33% to a large extent. Regarding the card for behavioral self-monitoring, 29.17% of the teachers reported its usefulness to a great extent, and 29.17% to a large extent. The parents card is appreciated to a great extent by 31.25% of the teachers, respectively to a large extent by 39.58% of those investigated. The assessment card for students with behavioral difficulties is considered by 45.83% of the participants to be very useful and by 39.58% to be useful. 18.75% of the teachers consider that the behavioral correction essay is useful to a great extent, while 35.42% reported it to a large extent useful. Finally the contract between parent-teacher-student is highly appreciated by 20.83% of the teachers in a great extent and by 20.83% to a large extent.

Item Answer options	Evaluation scale / Answers				
	5 To a great extent	4 Largely	3 Modera te	2 To a small extent	1 To a very small extent
	%	%	%	%	%
I appreciate the usefulness of the following tools for classroom management :					
Daily check table for teachers	20.83%	33.33%	25%	18.75%	2.08%
How my students perceive me - questionnaire	29.16%	33.33%	22.92%	12.5%	2.08%
Card for behavioral self-monitoring	29.17%	29.17%	22.92%	14.58%	4.17%
Parents card	31.25%	39.58%	20.83%	6.25%	2.08%
Assessment card for students with behavioral difficulties	45.83%	39.58%	6.25%	4.17%	4.17%
Behavioral correction essay	18.75%	35.42%	18.75%	20.83%	6.25%
Contract between parents-teachers-student	20.83%	20.83%	12.5%	14.58%	31.25%

Table No. 4 Tools for classroom management

Thus, the teachers involved in the impact study of the training program, especially appreciate the usefulness of the following classroom management tools: first the assessment card for students with behavioral difficulties, second the parents card and third, the questionnaire-how students perceive me.

The next item refers to the kind of power used by teachers in approaching the class. As we can see from Table No.5, 2.08% from the questioned teachers use physical power, to a great extent and 8.33% to a large extent. 31.25% of the teachers indicate that they use the resource power, to a great extent and 33.33% to a large extent. Then, 16,67% consider that they approach their class/classes frequently to a great extent, by using the reference power, while 52.08% have the same approach to a large extent. The expert power is applied to a great extent by 16.67% of the questioned teachers and to a large extent by 52.08% .

Item Answer options	Evaluation scale / Answers				
	5	4	3	2	1

In the approach of the class/ classes I use frequently:	To a great extent	Largely	Moderate	To a small extent	To a very small extent
	%	%	%	%	%
The physical power	2.08%	8.33%	0%	10.42%	79.17%
The resource power	31.25%	33.33%	27.08%	8.33%	0%
The reference power	16.67%	52.08%	27.08%	4.17%	0%
The expert power	16.67%	52.08%	27.08%	4.17%	0%

Table No. 5 The kind of power used by teachers in approaching the class

Therefore, the questioned teachers affirm that in approaching the class from a managerial point of view, they firstly use the reference power, alongside with the expert power and not lastly, the resource power.

As for how teachers involved in the impact assessment, build and maintain positive relationships with all students, the results for each answer option, is presented in Table No. 6, 77.08% of the educators build and maintain positive relationships with all students, to a great extent, by expressing their interest in students and students problems and 18.75% do this, to a large extent. Another option to optimize teacher students relationship is by using fair behaviors to stimulate learning. 60.42% do this to a great extent, respectively 33.33% to a large extent. Then, 66.67% consider it appropriate to a great extent, to provide constructive feed-back to the wrong answers given by the students, while 20.83% adopt this relating pattern to a large extent. Rewarding the cooperating students, is another way of positiv relating to students. 62.50% of the questioned teachers consider that they apply this technique to a great extent, respectively 27.08% to a large extent. Finally, punishing the opposing students, is considered by 31.25% to a great extent and by 18.75% to a large extent, to be an appropriate relationship strategy.

Item Answer options	Evaluation scale / Answers				
	5 To a great extent	4 Largely	3 Moderate	2 To a small extent	1 To a very small extent
	%	%	%	%	%
I build and maintain positive relationships with all students through:					
Expressing interest in students and their problems	77.08%	18.75%	2.08%	2.08%	0%
Use fair behaviors to stimulate learning	60.42%	33.33%	6.25%	0%	0%
Providing constructive feed-back to the wrong answers given by students	66.67%	20.83%	12.5%	0%	0%
Rewarding the cooperating students	62.50%	27.08%	6.25%	4.17%	0%
Punishing the opposing students	31.25%	18.75%	29.17%	20.83%	0%

Table No. 6 Building and maintaining positiv relationships with students

Therefore, the research subjects build and maintain positive relationships with all the students, especially by demonstrating their interest in the students and their problems, followed by the use of equitable behaviors to stimulate learning and by rewarding the cooperating students. However, it is interesting that 50% (cumulating the evaluation point 5 with the evaluation point 4) of the questioned teachers, consider that by punishing the opposing



students, they manage to build and maintain positive relationships with all the students. On the one hand, we consider this aspect, as a consequence of the frequent use of punishment to change students' behavior, and on the other hand, due to a lack of students' feedback about teachers' relating way.

Another questionnaire item concerns the classroom management strategies used by the trained teachers, to accommodate behavioral problems students in the classroom .

<b>To accommodate students with behavioral problems in the classroom I apply:</b>	<b>Answers (f)</b>	<b>Answers (%)</b>
Preferential place	23	47.91%
Arranging school desks	35	72.91%
Use of work areas	25	52.08%
Use of music	24	50%
Punishment	8	16.66%
Reward	38	79.16%

*Table No.7 Classroom management strategies used by the trained teachers, to accommodate behavioral problems students*

As Table No. 7 shows, how the questioned teachers apply different strategies, in order to accommodate the students with behavioral problems in the classroom, in the following order: 79.16% the reward, 72.91% the school desks arrangement, 52.08% use work areas, then 50% use music, 47.91% use the preferential place and 16.66% the punishment. We note, once again, that although the punishment is not used to a great extent, it is still a strategy that some teachers adopt, to facilitate the accommodation of students with behavioral difficulties.

The next item focus on how teachers manage students behavior problems. The answers are shown in Table No. 8.

<b>For managing students behavior problems I use with increased frequency:</b>	<b>Answers (f)</b>	<b>Answers (%)</b>
Symbolic reward	45	93.75%
The answer cost	45	93.75%
Group contingency	21	43.75%
Family contingency	14	29.16%

*Table No. 8 Managing students behavior problems*

First of all, the symbolic reward together with the answer cost are considered to be the most effective techniques for managing students' behavior problems, because 93.75% of the teachers claim to apply them. The group contingency is used by 43.75% and the family contingency only by 29.16%. Therefore we can conclude, that for managing students with behavioral difficulties, teachers tend to apply individual intervention strategies.

The last questionnaire item concerns the aspects particularly appreciated by the students of the trained teachers. Being a subjective item, the answers are very varied, as can be seen in the table below.

<b>My students have appreciated with fondness</b> ..... <b>(present the answers)</b>	<b>Answers (f)</b>	<b>Answers (%)</b>
Arranging the classroom and the school desks	1	2.08%
<i>Bringing students closer</i>	7	14.58%
<i>Expressing interest in students problems</i>	9	18.75%
<i>Assertive communication</i>	8	16.66%

Behavior monitoring sheet	2	4.16%
<i>Symbolic reward</i>	15	31.25%
Praise in front of the group	2	4.16%
Fairness	4	8.32%
Delegation of responsibility	4	8.32%
Collaborative relationship with students	5	10.41%
Establishing a set of rules	2	4.16%
The teaching methods	2	4.16%
The way I managed small behavioral problems in the classroom	1	2.08%
Appreciation of positive behaviors	1	2.08%
Emotions management	1	2.08%
Use of music	2	4.16%

Table No. 9 The aspects particularly appreciated by the students of the trained teachers

We choose to describe here only the answers with a relatively higher frequency, such as: the symbolic reward, that is mentioned by 31.25% of the teachers, expressing interest in students and their problems with 18.75%, assertive communication, indicated by 16.66% of the educators and bringing students closer, reported by 10.41% of the teachers.

## 6. Conclusions

Following the impact study, we conclude that the questioned teachers have restructured and applied to their work, following self-management strategies: conflict management, followed by assertive communication and monitoring of their own thoughts. Regarding the techniques used frequently in the classroom management, teachers indicate in particular, techniques for student empowerment, followed by relationship techniques and techniques for inducing the idea of acceptance in the class. Then, difficulties in classroom management and in the application of the specific working tools, are registered, firstly regarding the management of students with behavioral difficulties, followed by conflict management and by communication with students and parents. The teachers involved in the impact study of the training program *Classroom management - effective strategies*, especially appreciate the usefulness of the following tools: first the assessment card for students with behavioral difficulties, then the parents' card and also the questionnaire-how students perceive teachers.

Also the questioned teachers affirm that in approaching the class from a managerial point of view, they use firstly the power of reference alongside with the power of the expert and not lastly, the power of the resource. The investigated teachers build and maintain positive relationships with all the students, especially by demonstrating their interest in the students and their problems, followed by the use of equitable behaviors to stimulate learning and then by rewarding the cooperating students.

In order to accommodate students with behavioral difficulties in the classroom, the subjects of the study indicate the following strategies that they use with increasing frequency, in the following order: reward, arranging desks, use of work areas, use of music, preferential place and punishment. Also to manage students behavioral problems, teachers tend to use mainly symbolic awards and the answer cost.

Last but not least, the aspects that the students of the trained teachers particularly appreciate, are: the symbolic reward, followed by expressing the interest for students problems, then the assertive communication and the establishment of a collaborative relationship between teacher and students.

Therefore, we consider that the main focus of the investigation has been reached and the training program has been an answer to the individual professional development

needs of the preuniversity teachers. The classroom management is and will remain a challenge for every teacher, in a society that is constantly changing, focused today mainly on competition, efficiency and performance.

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## EARLY EDUCATION: FROM THE DESIGN OF THE CURRICULUM TO THE TRAINING OF LATER SKILLS

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**Abstract:** *The holistic approach of child development involves constantly considering and paying attention to all areas of child development and promoting and practicing child-centered education and global development, in the context of interaction with the natural and social environment. This perspective required the introduction of early education, both as a policy and as an educational practice in the national education system. In the present study, we propose a brief review of analyzes of the significance of the concept of early education, presented by international bodies and detailed in important legislative documents, international and national. From the perspective of adapting the curriculum to the characteristics of today's child, we identify the principles that indicate the fundamental values of the design of educational activities and the main documents, which detail the curriculum for early education in Romanian education. We propose an analysis of the curriculum design documents from the perspective of the practice of behaviors (starting from the development areas targeted in the Curriculum for early education and detailed in The fundamental benchmarks in the learning and development of the child from birth to 7 years) and the training of competences that appear later.*

**Key words:** *early education; curriculum; skills;*

### Introduction

#### 1. The systemic approach to early education

The early education is constituted in a pedagogical approach that covers the interval from birth to 6/7 years, includes, according to the Law of National Education (Law no.1 / 2011, with the subsequent modifications and completions), art.23, (a): the level of pre-preschool (0–3 years) and preschool education (3–6 years). At the same time, the Law of National Education no.1 / 2011, with the subsequent modifications and completions, in chapter IV, art. 67 (1) stipulates the following: "National curriculum for early education is focused on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of the children, respectively on the early correction of any developmental deficiencies". (<https://legea.net/legea-educatie-i-nationale-1-2011>)

According to the Methodology of organizing and operating the nurseries and other pre-preschool early education units, approved by H. G. no. 1252/2012, the units in which pre-preschool education services are offered are nurseries or, as the case may be, the kindergarten or day center (in case that pre-preschool education groups are set up in these units).

Early education involves a stage in which deep transformations and fundamental acquisitions take place in the development of the child. We identify the first documents from the World Conference in Jomtien (1990), in which the importance of early education is emphasized, and the objective of the Conference is Education for all. Thus, it is emphasized that learning starts from birth and runs throughout life. Also, the conference brought to the fore the need to correlate the fields of health, nutrition and hygiene, social protection with the sphere of education, an education based on the concept of cognitive and emotional development of the child, which aims to maximize and optimize the context of its potential. Thus, early education thus becomes the first stage of preparation for formal education, preparing the child's

entry into the compulsory education system around the age of 6/7. (Module 1 Early education and specificity of preschool child development, p.7)

Stan Liliana, 2015, proposes an analysis of the conceptual evolution of early education within the actions of international organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, OECD) that launched the idea of early education, but also promoted, favored concerns and measures for its application and, at the same time, argues the presentation of a set of initiatives for the affirmation of early education at national level, of the national legal framework regarding children, the respect granted to them and the respect of children's rights and the structuring of a set of initiatives for the affirmation of early education.

The distinctive notes of early education formulated in the curriculum for early education are: the child is unique and his approach must be holistic (comprehensive in all aspects of its development); young people recommend an integrated approach to early education services (care, nutrition, education); the adult / educator, at the level of the didactic relationship, appears as a mature play partner, who knows all the details and rules that must be followed; the activities carried out within the educational process are real opportunities for situational learning; the parent is the key partner in the child's education, and the family-kindergarten-community relationship is decisive ("Curriculum for early education, 3-6 / 7 years", M.E.C.T., 2008).

The holistic approach to child development involves constantly considering and paying attention to all areas of child development (physical development, health, language and communication development, cognitive development and socio-emotional development) and promoting and practicing focused education on the child and its global development, in the context of the interaction with the natural and social environment.

## **2. Arguments of adapting the curriculum to the characteristics of today's child**

The adequacy of the whole educational process to the particularities of age and individual represents an important goal promoted by the international and national educational institutions and from the perspective of the early education, being concretized in typical expressions: The individuality of each child should be recognized and, therefore, each child should be treated according to their needs. Each child must have equal opportunities to play, learn and develop, depending on his or her potential.

At the same time, at the base of the elaboration of the Curriculum for early education, we identified the principles that indicate the fundamental values of designing educational activities: The principle of child-centered education (knowledge, respect and enhancement of the child's uniqueness, needs and characteristics); The principle of respecting the rights of the child (the right to education, the right to free expression etc.); The principle of active learning (the creation of learning experiences in which the child participates actively and can also choose how the activity unfolds); The principle of integrated development (through an integrated approach of activities, multidisciplinary / interdisciplinary); The principle of interculturality (knowledge, recognition and respect of national and other ethnic values); The principle of fairness and non-discrimination (development of a curriculum that will also ensure opportunities for development of all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or socio-economic status); The principle of education as an interaction between educators and the child (dependence of the education results on both parties participating in the process, both on the individuality of the child and on the personality of the educator / the parent). (,Curriculum pentru Educația Timpurie, nr. 4.694/2.08.2019, pp. 4-5)

## **3. Curriculum characteristics for early education**

The curriculum is a tool to optimize the educational experience of children. This document establishes the pedagogical framework to support the development of children in a

holistic way, through educational and caring practices that allow children to reach their full potential, while also allowing educators to personalize their approach according to the interests, needs and potential of each child. („Curriculum pentru Educația Timpurie, nr. 4.694/2.08.2019, p. 4)

The main documents that detail the curriculum for early education are: the education plan and the program for early education. The curriculum for early education represents the main curricular product and constitutes the essential regulatory component of the curriculum for early education, the official, normative and mandatory document that sets out the overall organization of the teaching-learning-evaluation process, for each age level and type of educational specific to the period related to early childhood. The document is presented in schematic form, comprising all the learning activities for each group and age level, the number of hours per week for each category / each type of activity, in order to be able to provide for all the children in all the state pre-school and preschool units and individuals from country, access to the same type of education and equal opportunities in development and learning. („Curriculum pentru Educația Timpurie, nr. 4.694/2.08.2019, p. 6)

The school program for early education considers and values the curricular paradigm focused on competences and bases the educational steps on the child and on his learning activity as a process, respectively on acquiring behaviors that ensure the premises of the development of the key competences later. Taking into account the particularities of the development of the child up to 6 years, it is not proper to use the concept of competence, understood as an integrated set of knowledge, skills and attitude.

The school syllabus details: the scheme of designing, on annual subjects of study, of the thematic activities / on experimental fields and the content of the annual subjects of study. Also detailed is the daily program for kindergartens with normal program, extended-weekly program:

Time landmarks	Free-choosen games and activities	Thematic activities	Routines and transitions
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The option to use the key competences as benchmarks in establishing the training profile for pre-university education represented an important educational policy decision promoted by the Law of national education no 1/2011, and the early education is the basis for the development of these competences, starting from the structuring model of the levels of development of the eight key areas of competence, in relation to the levels of pre-university education.

In this context, the aims of early education are aimed at a number of issues, which are becoming the premises of the key competences formed, developed and diversified, along the path of further schooling: free, integral and harmonious development of the child's personality, according to his own rhythm and by its needs, supporting its autonomous and creative training; developing the ability to interact with other children, adults and the environment in order to acquire new knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors; encouraging explorations, exercises, tests and experiments, as autonomous learning experiences; discovering, for each child, their own identity, autonomy and developing a positive self-image; supporting the child in acquiring the knowledge, skills, skills and attitudes needed to enter school and throughout life. („Curriculum pentru Educația Timpurie, nr. 4.694/2.08.2019, pp. 13-14)

## Methods

### *Sample*

In the present study, we propose an analysis of the arguments regarding the introduction of the concept of early education both in the legislative documents and in the curricular documents in the Romanian education system; of the fundamental values, which are the basis of the elaboration of the curriculum from the perspective of its adaptation, to the characteristics

of today's child; of the characteristics of the main curricular documents. In this sense, a questionnaire was applied to the teachers from the preschool education, qualified teachers who have gone through certain forms of improvement in the profession, especially obtaining the didactic degrees.

The sample of subjects consisted of 57 persons, all teachers. These persons were invited to complete the questionnaire of this research. The minimum age was 23 years, the maximum was 57 years, with an average of  $M = 34.53$  years and  $SD = 8,400$  years. All participants were female.

The average age in education was  $M = 15.53$  years and  $SD = 9.936$  years, with a minimum of one year and a maximum of 40 years old. Of these persons, 8 obtained the final degree, 9 obtained the second degree and 29 persons obtained the first degree. The database was collected in 2018 within the University "1 Decembrie 1918" in collaboration with conf. Igna Cornel.

### *Instruments*

The tool used is a survey questionnaire, structured in items grouped into five categories of information or opinions, as follows:

- descriptive data (age, seniority, grade)
- data on the level of knowledge and application by the teachers of the curricular concepts with which the current curriculum for early education operates; 3 questions.
- data on the opinion of the teaching staff on the importance of introducing into the education plan for the early education of the early period from birth to six years; 2 questions.
- data on teacher attitudes about accepting or rejecting certain curricular concepts proposed for use in the new curriculum; 4 questions.
- data on the degree of recognition and importance of the arguments behind the restructuring of the curriculum for early education. A 5-point question, each distinct. Except for descriptive data and data on the level of knowledge and application of curricular concepts by teachers (where the correct answers were counted), the answer to all other questions allowed the choice of a variation on a 5-point scale (0-4). These answers were summed up in each group of questions.

In this article were used results from several questions of the survey questionnaire:

I5. To what extent do you consider that it is important to introduce in the curriculum for early education the preschool period (0-3 years)?

I10. Do you appreciate the importance of the following arguments underlying the restructuring of the curriculum for early education:

- a) systemic approach to early education - pre-preschool and pre-school education
- b) has as reference the key competences that determine the formation profile of the later student
- c) creates the necessary premises for the formation of competences from very young age
- d) the curriculum promotes an adaptation to the characteristics of today's child
- e) the curriculum engages children from birth to 6 years, through learning experiences, in as many experiential field

Because some questions were related their results were summed (I10b\_plus\_c, I10e\_plus\_I5).

### *Statistical analysis*

It sought to obtain more data by using mean and frequency analysis

### **Findings**

The obtained results are grouped in order to clarify the dimensions of the present study.

Table 1. Descriptive results for the analyzed items

	I10a	I10e_plus_I5	I10d	I10b_plus_c
N Valid	57	57	57	57
Mean	2,91	5,52	2,91	6,00
Std. Deviation	1,106	2,659	1,258	2,163
Minimum	0	0	0	0
Maximum	4	8	4	8

The systemic approach of early education from the perspective of the curriculum for early education is appreciated by the teachers as being quite important and important, by 75.5% of them.

We appreciate the preoccupation of the teachers from the preschool education to have an integrative vision on a high quality institutionalized education even from the first months of the child's life until the entrance to the school. Training of specialists to carry out educational actions, referring to the particularities of child development and needs is another priority of the Ministry of National Education.

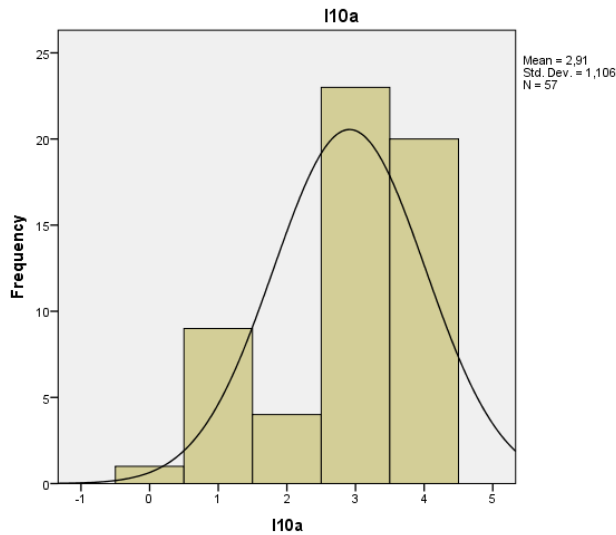


Fig. 1 Histogram with normal curve for variable I10a

The introduction in the official curricular documents, respectively the educational plan and the school syllabus, of the pre-preschool period (from 0 to 3 years) is considered by 71.9% teachers as quite important and very important due to the fact that are presented unitary the types of activities and the, appropriate learning experiences from as many experimental fields.



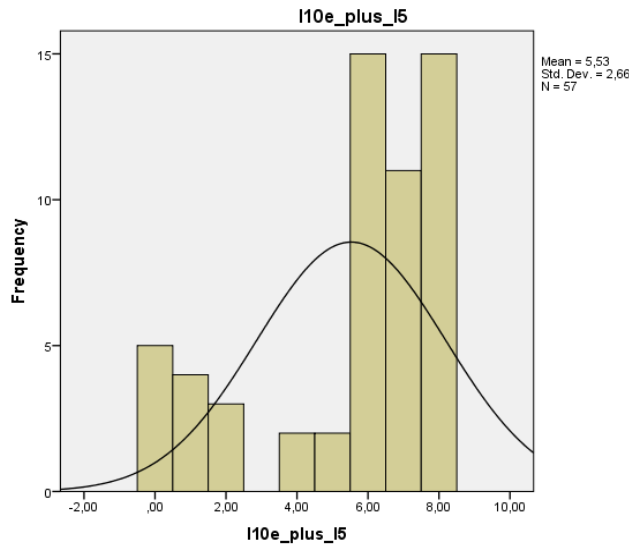


Fig. 1 Histogram with normal curve for variable I10e\_plus\_I5

Adapting the entire educational process to the characteristics of today's child, to the age and individual particularities is an important principle in designing the curriculum for early education. *The individuality of each child should be recognized and, therefore, each child should be treated according to his needs. Each child must have equal opportunities to play, learn and develop, depending on his or her potential* - it is considered quite important or very important by 68.4% of the questioned teachers.

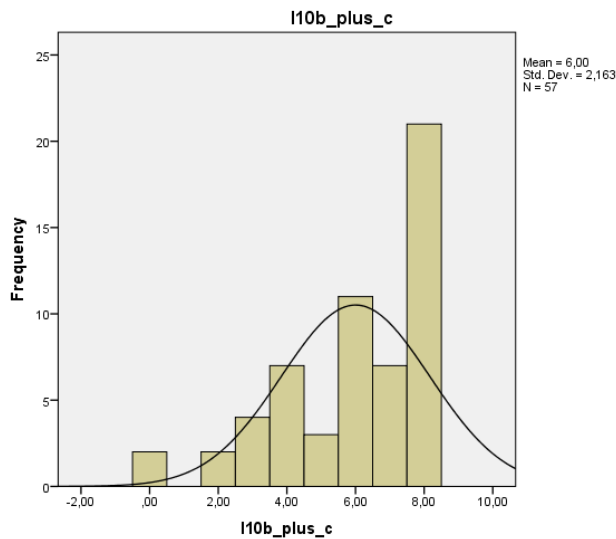


Fig. 1 Histogram with normal curve for variable I10b\_plus\_c

The aims of early education are aimed at a number of issues, which are based on the premises of the key competences formed, developed and diversified, on the course of further schooling. *The axis of the Program for early education is: development domains - dimensions of development - behaviors, as prerequisites of subsequent competences* is considered to be quite important or very important by 70.2% of teachers

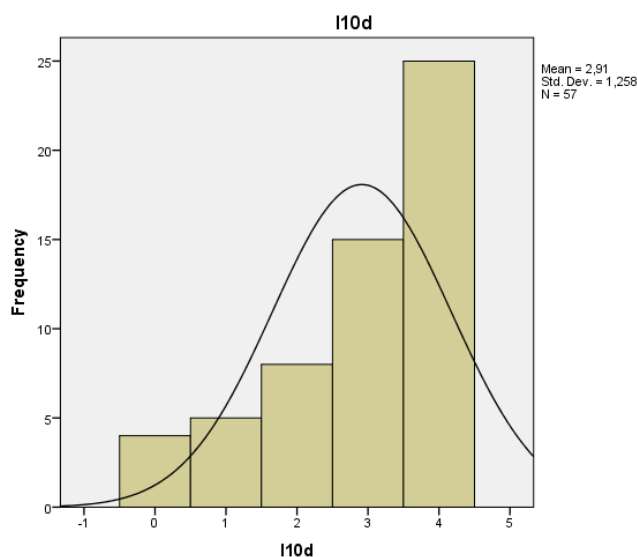


Fig. 1 Histogram with normal curve for variable I10d

## Conclusion

The curriculum for early education (2019) adds value to the education system in Romania, as it starts from the implementation of the concept of early education by analyzing the values of its objectives and characteristics, stipulated in international reference documents, adapted and then synthesized in the legislative documents, and in the curricular documents of the national education system. We appreciate the attitude of the teachers to implement early education at pre-preschool and preschool level, in kindergartens and other educational institutions, which promotes the adaptation of educational theories and practices to the characteristics of today's child and bases the premises necessary for the formation of the key competences of the future pupil.

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## THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND COHERENT STRATEGIES IN EARLY EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *The early development of the child occurs as a cumulative effect of the child's care, nutrition, stimulation and education and social protection, which implies a series of interventions specific to each of these areas that should work in a coherent and integrated way. The present study aims to analyze the theoretical contributions from the perspective of development and learning that support the introduction of the concept of early education both in the legislative documents and in the curricular documents in the education system and to identify coherent curricular strategies in the early education in Romania. Thus, the theoretical accumulations and experience of the early education programs of the last decades at international level, at present, draw much more clearly the territories of a quality early education. Some theories, although they have been stated several decades ago, benefit from new interpretations or reconfirmations due to research undertaken in the field of child development psychology, neuropsychology, and longitudinal studies on the effects of early education programs*

**Keywords:** *early development; learning activities; curriculum;*

### Introduction

#### *Theoretical arguments for early education*

Early childhood is the most important period in a child's life, as it is marked by crucial moments for his later success, at school and in life. The intervention of the adult on the child during this period is fundamental. Research in the last 30-40 years has shown significant correlations between environment and intellectual development, between early learning and learning that takes place in other stages of life. Thus, children raised in a stimulating environment have an accelerated intellectual development compared to those raised in a restrictive environment. From birth and until they grow up, children have an emotional development and a special receptivity to the different categories of stimuli, an aspect that can be influenced by the information the child receives from the environment, as well as by the quality of their processing. Thus, it is necessary for the practitioners to organize training interventions to capitalize on this receptivity. Thus, in the current social context, the early education, in the period between birth and 6/7 years, is a scientifically proven and scientifically substantiated necessity that implies rapid development.

If the development process is neglected later, compensating for these losses is difficult and costly. Investing in children at the earliest ages leads, in the long term, to their social development and to the sustained realization of children's rights.

If early learning and psycho-behavioral deficiencies of children are detected and remedied at the level of early education, before integrating the child into primary education, the recognized benefits refer to: higher school performance, lowering of school failure and dropout rates.

The quality of the education, care and protection of the child from birth to 6/7 depends on us, everyone who interacts with the children, day by day: parents or educators, school counselor or nurse - all acting coherently and having permanent attention. the child and his particularities (*Educatia timpurie si specificul dezvoltarii copilului prescolar*, 2009, p.5)

### **Early development and learning**

The theoretical accumulations and experience of the early education programs of the last decades at international level draw, at present, much more clearly the territories of a quality early education. Some theories, although they were announced several decades ago, benefit from new interpretations or reconfirmations due to research undertaken in the field of child development psychology, neuropsychology, longitudinal studies on the effects of early education programs. (*Educatia timpurie si specificul dezvoltarii copilului prescolar*, 2009, p.5)

The focus on early education is natural, knowing that the development of children is fast in this age stage, and the exploitation of the potential that the child has for him creates the premises of his later performances. Research in the field of early childhood education has shown strong correlations between kindergarten attendance and children's behavior as students. More specifically, we notice: significant progress of the intellectual level of children, regardless of the environment from which they come; the positive effects on the future social integration and the reduction of deviant behaviors as well as of the school failure; discovering for each child their own identity, autonomy and developing a positive self-image; the development of social skills through the interactions generated by the learning environment; task-centered behaviors; socio-emotional development; motivation and positive attitudes towards learning. (Pre-School Education in the European Union. Current Thinking and provision, 1995, în „Curriculum pentru educatia timpurie“, M.E.C.T., 2008)

The early development of the child occurs as a cumulative effect of child care, nutrition, stimulation and education and social protection, which implies a series of interventions specific to each of these areas (health, child protection, education) which it should work in a coherent and integrated way. In Romania, so far we cannot speak of a policy regarding the early development of the child, but of sector policies that are focused on different aspects of the child's development. If in the development of public policies in the field of child development, we consider the child the most important landmark and investment in this age period as the most efficient, then all public policies through their implementation tools should refer to the orientation, coordination and convergence of all activities carried out by adults around the child, based on a common vision, regardless of the status that the adult occupies in his life: parent / guardian, teacher, social worker, maternal assistant, medical assistant, doctor etc.

### **Curriculum for early education**

From the perspective of the Romanian educational policies, in the document *Benchmarks for the design and updating of the national Curriculum* (ISE, 2016), the following are mentioned: the curriculum for the early education of the child from birth to 6 years old is based on a set of aims formulated in the policy document education. *The fundamental benchmarks in early learning and development* (RFIDT, aprobat prin O.M.nr.3851/2010).

Contributing to the elaboration of a whole set of standards, RFIDT have multiple uses: improving the educational process from the early education services; improving the curriculum for the education of the child from birth to 7 years; improving the training of teachers; developing and improving parental education programs; evaluating and improving the educational programs offered by the education, care and protection services; monitoring at the educational system level of the impact of the educational programs for children from birth to 7 years; improving the level of public awareness of the importance and value of the early childhood period; the creation of a continuum of learning that links the development of early care to the success of later life and life, by aligning these benchmarks with the requirements for the next stages of child development (RFIDT, 2010, p.5).

This document is a set of statements that reflect expectations about what children should know and be able to do. These expectations are defined to support the normal and full growth

and development of children from birth to entry into school. According to the mentioned document, the aims of early education envisage a holistic approach, targeting the five areas of child development: physical development, health and personal hygiene; socio-emotional development; cognitive development and knowledge of the world; development of language, communication and the premises of reading and writing; skills and attitudes in learning.

In this context, the new curriculum for early education brings an improved vision of education for this age segment, embedded in the content of the program, in the methodology of applying the curriculum for early education, in methodical letters and recommendations, in guides and methodical guides endorsed by ministry, constituting a complex endeavor, which values previous contributions, experience and successful practices in the field of early education in Romania. („Curriculum pentru Educația Timpurie, nr. 4.694/2.08.2019, p. 3)

Principles of the application of the Curriculum for early education: the principle of individualization (the organization of activities takes into account the child's own pace of development, the necessities, ensuring the children's freedom to choose activities and tasks according to their needs), the principle of play-based learning (play is the activity of the child through which it develops naturally, therefore it must be based on the conception of the didactic activities of all types), the principle of diversity of learning contexts and situations (offering an educational environment of different learning contexts and situations, which requires the involvement to the child under as many aspects: cognitive, emotional, social, motor), the principle of alternating forms of organization of activity: front, in small groups, in pairs and individually and of learning strategies, the principle of partnership with family and community (it is necessary as between education partners and family to establish partnership relationships that ensure continuity and coherence in the educational process; the family represents an active partner, not just a recipient of the information provided by educators regarding the progress made by the child; at the same time it is important to understand the value of education, for the community and the participation of the community, in the early periods). („Curriculum pentru Educația Timpurie, nr. 4.694/2.08.2019, p. 5)

### **Research questions**

Do teachers understand the directions of legislative changes related to early education ?  
Do teachers support the directions of legislative changes related to early education ?

### **Purpose of the study**

In the present study, *the research objective is to analyze the theoretical contributions from the perspective of development and learning that support the introduction of the concept of early education both in the legislative documents and in the curricular documents in the education system and to identify coherent curricular strategies in the early education in Romania.*

### **Methods**

#### *Sample*

In this sense, a questionnaire was applied to the teachers from the preschool education. The sample of subjects consisted of 57 persons, all teachers. These persons were invited to complete the questionnaire of this research. The minimum age was 23 years, the maximum was 57 years, with an average of  $M = 34.53$  years and  $SD = 8,400$  years. All participants were female.

The average age in education was  $M = 15.53$  years and  $SD = 9.936$  years, with a minimum of one year and a maximum of 40 years old. Of these persons, 8 obtained the final degree, 9 obtained the second degree and 29 persons obtained the first degree. The database

was collected in 2018 within the University "1 Decembrie 1918" in collaboration with conf. Muntean-Trif Letiția.

*Instruments*

The tool used is a survey questionnaire, structured in items grouped into five categories of information or opinions, as follows:

- descriptive data (age, seniority, grade)
- data on the level of knowledge and application by the teachers of the curricular concepts with which the current curriculum for early education operates; 3 questions.
- data on the opinion of the teaching staff on the importance of introducing into the education plan for the early education of the early period from birth to six years; 2 questions.
- data on teacher attitudes about accepting or rejecting certain curricular concepts proposed for use in the new curriculum; 4 questions.
- data on the degree of recognition and importance of the arguments behind the restructuring of the curriculum for early education. A 5-point question, each distinct.

Except for descriptive data and data on the level of knowledge and application of curricular concepts by teachers (where the correct answers were counted), the answer to all other questions allowed the choice of a variation on a 5-point scale (0-4). These answers were summed up in each group of questions.

In this article were used results from several questions of the survey questionnaire:

I4. To what extent do you think it is important to relate the whole curriculum to the fundamental benchmarks in the learning and development of the child from birth to seven?

I8. To what extent do you consider it important to relate the elements of competence to the development areas?

I9. To what extent do you consider the examples of behaviors and examples of learning activities important in the activity of the teacher?

*Statistical analysis*

It sought to obtain more data by using mean, frequency and correlation analysis.

**Findings**

Most relevant findings of this study are presented below:

Table 1. Descriptive values for collected items

	I4	I8	I9
Valid	57	57	57
Mean	3,05	3,00	3,19
Std. Deviation	1,481	1,118	,972
Minimum	0	1	0
Maximum	4	4	4

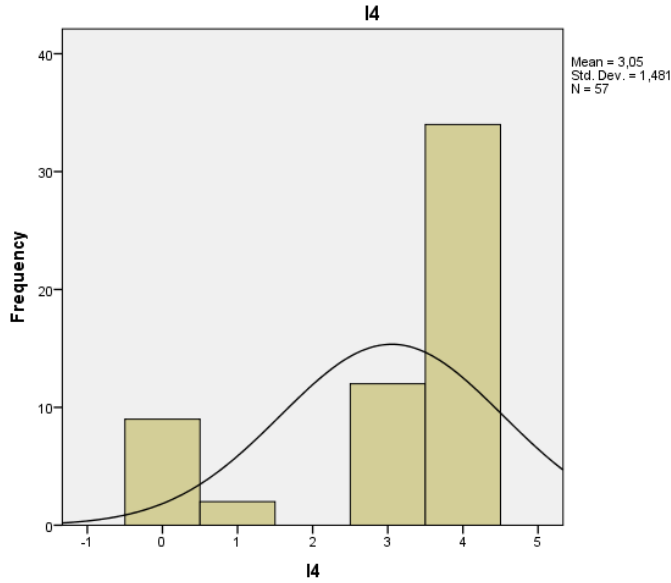


Fig. 1 Histogram with normal curve for variable I4

From the perspective of *the importance of reporting the curriculum to the fundamental benchmarks in learning and the development of the child from birth to seven years*, we appreciate the openness of the teachers (80.70%) to the reference documents that show the areas of child development and details support indicators and practices for all stages and sub-stages of development. Such documents are at the base of the entire conception of designing and carrying out educational activities with children.

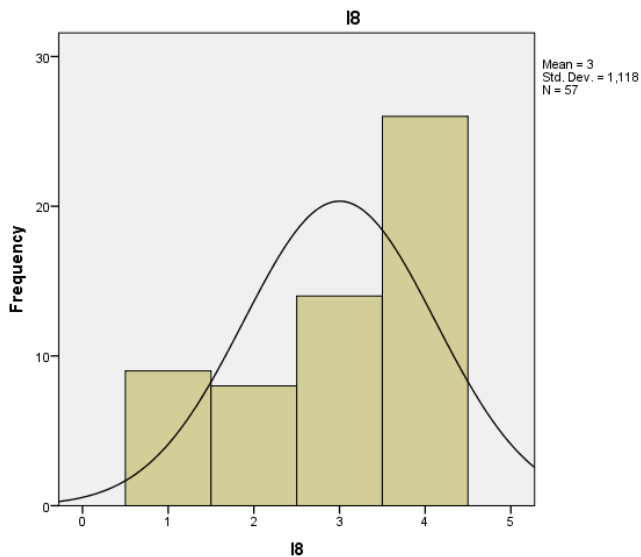


Fig. 2 Histogram with normal curve for variable I8

In presenting the curriculum for early education, we appreciate the importance of describing the elements of competence in the form of examples of behaviors related to the development areas because they are scientifically validated through research in the field of psychology and pedagogy and are endorsed by the ministry of education as supporting documents. The teachers investigated consider very important and very important (70.20%) this correlation of the development areas and the behaviors of pre-elementary level.

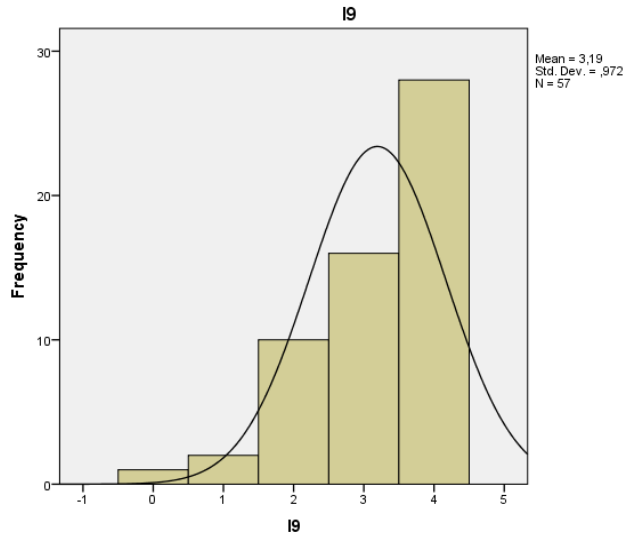


Fig. 3 Histogram with normal curve for variable I9

In the curriculum for early education, 2019, the following requirements are specified from the perspective of the practicing teacher: *he will carry out the necessary pedagogical derivations and, starting from the development areas concerned (...) he will select the development dimensions, for each development area specific to the level of age and related behaviors, which will follow; will transfer into the didactic practice and will "operationalize" the selected behaviors, by designing appropriate learning activities.*

In this regard, we appreciate that the interviewed teachers are aware of the importance of designing high quality learning activities (77.20%) and related to the current requirements of the curriculum and science.

Table 2. Correlations between study variables

	age	exp	ca	I	I	I
	erience	erience	lification	4	8	9
			(d			
			egree)			
age	Pearson		,79	,5	-	-
	Correlation	1	,6**	,63**	,405*	,064
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,00	,01	,017	,720
erience	N	34	31	31	34	33
	Pearson	,7	1	,6	-	-
	Correlation	,96**		,34**	,347*	,187
Sig. (2-tailed)	,00	,0	,00	,011	,180	,090
N	31	53	51	53	53	55
fication	Pearson	,5	,63	1	-	-
	Correlation	,63**	,4**		,223	,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,01	,0	,00	,108	,000
Sig. (2-tailed)						,833



	N	31	51	53	3	5	5	5
	Pearson	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
	Correlation	,405*	,347*	,223		,690**	,650**	
I4	Sig. (2-tailed)	,17	,01	,08	,1	,000	,000	
	N	34	53	53	7	5	5	5
	Pearson	-	-	-	,0		1	
	Correlation	,064	,187	,00	,690**		,740**	
I8	Sig. (2-tailed)	,20	,70	,18	,000	,000	,000	
	N	34	53	53	7	5	5	5
	Pearson	-	-	-	-			1
	Correlation	,035	,235	,030	,650**	,740**		
I9	Sig. (2-tailed)	,42	,80	,09	,33	,000	,000	
	N	34	53	53	7	5	5	5

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

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

The correlation table indicates statistically significant direct correlations between variables I4, I8 and I9. At the same time, statistically significant inverse correlations were obtained between the "age" and "experience" variables on the one hand and the I4 variable on the other.

### Conclusions

The obtained results indicate: the opening of the teaching staff (80.70%) to the reference documents presenting the areas of child development, the appreciation (70.20%) of the correlation of the development areas with the pre-elementary level behaviors and the appreciation of the importance of designing the learning activities (77.20%).

At the same time, however, it can be seen that despite some incomplete data offered by some of the respondents, the results obtained in the case of the correlation analysis indicate negative, statistically significant correlations between variable I4 and variables "age" and "experience", which may indicate a certain resistance to the content of this item by older teachers in the educational system. However, the lack of a statistically significant correlation (although the direction of the correlation remains the same) can be found between the "degree" and I4 variables, which can lead us to assume that better professional training improves the openness of the teachers to the reference documents presenting the child development areas. The same type of associations (although statistically insignificant) can be found in the case of the results of the correlations of the variables "age", "experience" and "degree" with the variables I8 and I9, which can be an additional argument for the interpretation in this sense of these associations of the variables.

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\*\*\* Strategie privind educația timpurie (varianta de lucru 2005)

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## MENTAL HEALTH CARE NETWORKS IN OLDER ADULTS: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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**Abstract:** *The present narrative review addresses the difficulties and challenges occurring in the field of mental health in elderly adults by describing and synthesizing the available data. More precise knowledge on the prevalence of mental health difficulties in this population is still necessary. This directly leads us to the problem of age-related stereotypes and inaccurate knowledge regarding diagnosis in old age. Poly-pharmacy and side effects of psychotropic medications are also challenges encountered in the field of mental health in older adults. This paper highlights the necessity to improve knowledge and skills by research and by training professionals and develop multidisciplinary networks focusing on older adults' mental health care.*

**Keywords:** mental health; older adults; mental health networks;

### **Mental health care networks in older adults: a narrative review**

This paper presents a stocktaking of the current knowledge as well as gaps regarding mental health care for older adults. This narrative review is motivated by the necessity to develop efficient mental health care networks to handle the combined global population's aging that began in the last decades and the increasing prevalence of mental health difficulties in young population cohorts (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2015). Mental disorders are conditions that occasionally or chronically involve changes in thinking, feeling, mood, and/or behavior that will affect daily-life functioning (e.g., depression, bipolar disorders, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, eating disorders). Findings from the WHO World Mental Health surveys reveal that a large number of people will suffer at some point in their life from mental health issues with, for example, a lifetime prevalence of 29.1% for Belgium, 37.9% for France, and rising to 47.4% for the USA (Kessler et al., 2009). The concern regarding mental health in old

age is a priority given mental health difficulties are related to premature mortality, an increased dependence, and higher risks of co-morbidities (e.g., Gureje & Oladeji, 2017).

The particularity of mental health in older adults is to combine mental health problematic to age-related changes affecting cognitive, social, physical, and economic domains (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2018). Consequently, in mental healthcare as well as in geriatric care, care networks have been developed in recent years in response to the necessity of a multidisciplinary and coordinated support system. Regarding networks in mental health, Provan and Milward (1995) state: "Through coordination, an integrated system supposedly minimizes duplication of services by multiple provider agencies while increasing the probability that all essential services are provided somewhere in the system and that clients will have access to these needed services" (p. 3). Hence, mental health networks are supposed to increase the care cost-effectiveness by increasing the quality of care and avoiding unnecessary economic costs. However, a joint action materialized by mental health care networks specialized in older adults has never been widely tested.

By highlighting current insights, knowledge gaps as well as future challenges regarding mental health in elderly people, this narrative review aims to assist the development of efficient mental health care networks

## Methods

After the authors agreed on the search terms, searches were conducted in PubMed and ScienceDirect of the combination *mental health network* and *older adults* (or *elderly adults* or *elderly people* or *elders*), and the combination *mental health* (or *mental disorder* or *mental illness*) in the title and/or abstract and in English in publications from January 1997 to October 2017. The references in the retrieved publications were reviewed and relevant contributions were included. Another source of additional references has been discussion with experts of the mental health network for elderly adults. Publications in French were included in this case due to their relevance by describing an innovative French mental health care network completely dedicated to older adults. In order to keep the narrative review concise, only the most relevant papers have been included in the present paper, and the references that were deemed by authors as lacking relevance for the focus of the review have been eliminated.

## Results

The narrative review highlighted several aspects and limitations that we will develop below: (1) prevalence and typology of mental health difficulties, (2) diagnosis and treatment and (3) older adults' mental health network challenges.

### Prevalence of mental health difficulties

A necessary step to deal with mental health in elderly adults and to offer efficient answers is to have a clear overview of mental health difficulties encountered by this part of the population. However, we observe a relative lack of data on prevalence and the available ones mainly focused on North American and European countries.

Paradoxically, if Alzheimer's disease and other related types of dementia do not fall in the category of mental health disorders, people living with dementia represent an important part of older adults having mental health disorders due to the high prevalence of behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) combined to the high prevalence of dementia. Between 5.9 to 9.4% of the European aged of 65 years and more have dementia (Berr, Wancata & Ritchie, 2005). An estimated 47.5 million people are currently living with dementia (WHO, 2015) and Worldwide predictions posit this number to reach 81.1 million in 2040 (Ballard et al., 2011). In addition to cognitive changes, dementia is often associated with behavioral and psychological changes that affect the daily life functioning and well-being of patients

(Cummings & McPherson, 2001). BPSD may include several aspects that belong to mental health disorders, such as agitation, aberrant motor behavior, anxiety, euphoria, irritability, depression, apathy, disinhibition, delusions, hallucinations, and sleep or appetite changes. Their prevalence is very high, with 50 to 80% of all individuals with AD or a related dementia concerned (Ballard, Day, Sharp, Wing, & Sorensen, 2008). Apathy is the most frequent BPSD followed by irritability, agitation, depression, and anxiety (Bergh & Selbaek, 2012). BPSD are a main cause of premature entrance into long-term care facilities and a predictive factor of more severe cognitive decline (Cerejeira, Lagarto, & Mukaetova-Ladinska, 2012).

Mental health problems related or not to dementia, will increase the use of home care and nursing homes entrance. A Canadian study on older adults (aged 55 years and older) receiving home care showed that only 6% to 9% of those who were not diagnosed with a mental health problem received home care, compared to 16% and 19% of those diagnosed with a mental health problem, and 30% to 34% of those with a dementia diagnosis (Martens et al., 2007). Logically, dementia is the most prevalent related mental health difficulty among older adults living in long-term care homes, with a median prevalence of 58% across studies and the presence of BPSD in 78% of residents with dementia (Seitz, Purandare & Conn, 2010). Following this in the list of disorders are depressive symptoms and major depressive disorders (with a prevalence of 29% and 10%, respectively). Frequently associated with depressive symptoms, the prevalence of anxiety and substance abuse disorders has been less studied. In 2004, the National Nursing Home Survey reported a prevalence of 11% for anxiety disorders and 1.5% for substance abuse disorders in U.S. long-term care (reported in Seitz et al., 2010). These data are not so different from those regarding home care. A study of 28,475 elderly Americans receiving home care revealed that 39.3% had at least one mental health problem, with depression and anxiety being the most frequent ones with a prevalence of 28% and 18.9%, respectively (Wang, Kearney, Jia, & Shang, 2016). According to European data available from the SHARE survey of non-institutionalized adults aged 50 years and above, in the 10 investigated countries the prevalence of depression ranges from 18.1% in Denmark to 36.8% in Spain. More globally, higher prevalence was recorded in the Latin countries (France, Italy, and Spain) than in the Germanic (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands) and Hellenic (Greece) countries (Castro-Costa et al., 2007).

### **Diagnosis and treatment**

Adequate knowledge on the prevalence of mental health difficulties in the elderly population has an impact on the adequacy of diagnosis, treatments and services offered to them. Currently, mental health in older adults is facing the specific aspects of inaccurate or missing diagnosis due to age-related stereotypes and poly-medication.

### **Diagnosis inaccuracy and age-related stereotypes**

Efficient treatments require accurate diagnosis. However, mental health problems in older adults appear to be underdiagnosed or at the contrary treated in absence of a diagnosis. For example, compared to younger adults, people aged 65 and older are three times less likely to report receiving any form of mental health treatment but in the same time a large proportion of older adults receive psychotropic medications without a clear diagnosis (Karlin & Fuller, 2007). Similarly, a U.S. American study revealed that only 37.9 % of patients identified as depressed received depression intervention during their 2-month home care episode. Even more surprising, among older adults receiving depression support intervention, 32% of them had no mention of depression in their diagnosis, symptoms, or prescription of mental health services at admission (Wang et al., 2016). These different results can be explained by the fact that, as highlighted by Montagnier, Hanon, and Glénisson (2012), current mental health classifications and diagnostic tools do not fit with the specific symptomatology of older adults

and might lead to incorrect diagnosis. Another explanation is the high prevalence of negative stereotypes on older adults' mental health. Potential adherence of older adults to negative age-related stereotypes may lead them to believe their difficulties, such as depression, are "just old age" and hence reduce the probability of seeking medical consultation to treat it. In addition, negative age-related stereotypes (e.g., older adults are frail and often depressed) are also reported by healthcare professionals and may lead to inaccurate diagnosis and medical prescriptions (Chrisler, Barney, & Palatino, 2016).

The harmful nature of such inadequate or unnecessary medications is exacerbated by the fact that older adults are highly sensitive to polypharmacy and the side effects of prescribed medications.

### **Potential side effects of psychotropic medications**

The number of medications increase with aging, and U.S. American data of community-dwelling older adults report that more than 90% use at least one medication per week and more than 40% use five or more different medications per week (Gurwitz, 2004, cited in NHTSA, 2006). The multiplication of medication increases the risk of side effects and harmful interactions between medications, and this by 50% for older adults taking five medications to 100% for those taking seven and more medications (Delafuente, 2003). The elderly population is particularly susceptible to develop side effects linked to medications due to age-related physiological changes (e.g., decrease of liver volume and hepatic blood flow, reduction of body mass and basal metabolic rate, reduced proportion of body water, etc.) that may reduce medication metabolism (e.g., Arnold, 2008; NHTSA, 2006). Principal negative side effects of medications commonly described in older adults are drowsiness, weakness, confusion, difficulty coordinating movements, and falls. Consequently, polypharmacy may reduce the older adult's quality of life, safety, and independent living, as well as increase the risk of misdiagnosis or misinterpretation of symptoms, mistreatment, need for hospitalization/admittance into a nursing home, thus causing unnecessary health care costs (Arnold, 2008).

Polypharmacy is also a problem in mental healthcare for adult of all ages, as demonstrated in several European studies on psychotropic medications (Hallahan, Murray & McDonald, 2009; Prudent et al., 2008). Beside the necessity of appropriate indication, dose and duration of treatment are also important aspects to consider regarding potential harmful side effects. Investigations in nursing homes revealed that relevant medication choice, but also dose and duration of the prescription are associated with lower mortality (Wei et al., 2014). To help practitioners in the task of preparing prescriptions, lists of potentially inappropriate medication use in older adults (i.e., where the risk of adverse events outweighs the clinical benefit) have been published in the U.S. (e.g., American Geriatrics Society Beers Criteria Update Expert Panel, 2015) and Europe (e.g., Renom-Guiteras, Meyer & Thürmann 2015).

### **Older adults' mental health network challenges**

The variety of symptoms, needs, and resources of people experiencing mental health difficulties add to the growing recognition that interdisciplinary teams and networks are a necessity to attend to the complex needs of patients. This interdisciplinary approach involves professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, general practitioners, nurses, auxiliary nurses, social workers, and occupational therapists who are regularly found in mental health networks (Veras et al., 2014). The aim of their combination in care networks is to increase continuity of care and to reduce the fragmentation of care resulting in an unnecessary and expensive multiplication of appointments and tests that overload health care systems (Veras et al., 2014).

### **Older adults care networks**

As mental health networks dedicated specifically to older adults are still rare, first insights have to also be found from the information available on older adults' health care networks. Veras et al. (2014) reviewed 12 articles referring to five coordinated and integrated health care models for older adults (i.e., SIPA, PACE, PRISMA, Guided Care, and Grace) that mainly focus on frail older adults encountering high functional dependency. Their beneficial outputs included the reduction of hospitalization and institutional costs as well increased user and career satisfaction due to the implementation of care networks (Veras et al., 2014).

A substantial part of the older adult population receiving professional assistance via home care or long-term care facilities is affected by mental health difficulties. However, involved professional careers appear to have insufficient specific knowledge on mental health in older adults. Among them, home care workers are a main component of mental health care networks, maintaining daily or almost daily contact with the older adults in their place of residence. Despite this main role, care workers report that they are not enough or not at all prepared to provide care to older adults with mental health conditions. Focus group interviews revealed that aggressive, disruptive, and psychotic behaviors are perceived as the behaviors that make daily care provision to clients more challenging (Gleason & Coyle, 2016).

A way to respond to this lack of specific knowledge has been to develop additional care networks focusing on psychiatric care. For example, to structure a new and specific care offer in France, as well as to enhance training, education, and to develop clinical and epidemiological research, the first resource regional center of old age psychiatry was established in 2014 in Ile-de-France (Hanon, 2015; Pancrazi et al, 2015). This resource center has allowed the creation of a network of professionals and a clinical center for excellence and expertise. As the subspecialty of old age psychiatry was recognized in 2017, programs of initial training and postgraduate education have been developed. The implementation of such an innovative center focusing on geriatric psychiatry will soon be followed by similar institutions in other regions of France (Hanon, Seigneurie, & Limosin, 2018) and highlights the need for this kind of offer.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this narrative review was to summarize important facts related to mental health in older adults to understand why the development of mental health networks adapted to their specific needs is a necessity to enhance care efficiency.

A first observation was the relative lack of data regarding prevalence of mental health difficulties in older adults. We highlighted the non-representativeness of these numbers resulting from studies originating mainly from North America and Northern or Western Europe. This missing, specific information, added to age-related stereotypes, might explain the high proportion of undiagnosed mental health problems in older adults as well as inappropriately prescribed treatments. The development of mental health and psychosocial networks with expertise regarding the situations of older adults will contribute to the alleviation of these difficulties and increase the continuity of care. Pointing out the importance of providing adequate health care for older adults, Veras et al. (2014) states that 'patients' care needs to be managed from entry into the system until end of life, with services integrated at all levels' (p. 362).

More and more countries are shifting from hospital and long-term care facilities to home and community-based health care (Gleason & Coyle, 2016) but the balance of community-based and hospital-based services appears currently effective in only a few high-income countries (Saxena, Thornicroft, Knapp & Whiteford, 2007). In addition to the reduction of health care costs, community-based services are expected benefit to a better social integration of patients with, as positive outcome, a preserved sense of well-being. However, this progressive shift requires adaptation and adjustments such as 'the networking of professionals

outside and inside the hospital, in outpatient services and the monitoring of users alongside other professionals from the social and related sectors' (Fond-Harmant, Gavrilă-Ardelean, et al., 2016, p. 264). As highlighted previously, older adults with mental health difficulties need a holistic approach involving several partners who require an efficient coordination to guarantee continuity of care. The development of health care networks aims to satisfy this need of coordination by offering community health services to the local population by long-term agreements across local organizations (Lorant, Nazroo, Nicaise, The Title 107 Study Group, 2017).

To comply with this aim of an integrated and life-long approach to mental health care in older adults, the training of care providers is a priority. For instance, data arising from home care workers suggest that more training or information would help them to develop efficient strategies to deal with challenging behaviors but also to manage their own personal and emotional responses (see Gleason & Coyle, 2016). In addition, a lack of external support was highlighted regarding this lack of information in general but also regarding acute crisis situations requiring the intervention from their employer or the police. As underlined by the authors, acute crises are time- and resource-consuming for the care workers as well as for other members of the care network, and increasing training and skills on how to react to such situations are necessary for the success of care in the community. A main aspect of an effective mental health care network is to develop an efficient top-down but also bottom-up communication regarding the patient's situation and needs. More precisely, home care workers have to be informed and trained by their employer about the person's diagnosis in order to understand and anticipate potential behaviors or difficulties (e.g., refusal to get out of bed). Increased bottom-up communication is also necessary to relay important information on symptomatology changes or potential undiagnosed patients, allowing home care workers to be fully involved in the development of an individualized care plan (Gleason & Coyle, 2016).

All of these suggestions imply the availability of an adequate and specific training to foster a better level of knowledge and skills for all professionals involved in a mental health network. Offering more information and a more active role in patient's care is a way to empower professionals, especially home care workers who are working in a low-paying and challenging job, and are subject to high levels of burnout. Providing information and training could be effective measures to increase their job satisfaction, sense of accomplishment and, consequently, reduce their risk of turnover. The empowerment of mental health care users and their relatives is also a challenge that networks can undertake. Previous investigations revealed that interventions aiming to increase families' knowledge about mental health improve their capacity to cope with their relative's mental health difficulties (e.g., Kulhara, Chakrabarti, Avasthi, Sharma & Sharma, 2009; Pickett-Schenk, Lippincott, Bennett, & Steigman, 2008). The promotion of exchanges and partnerships between people affected by mental health difficulties, mental health professionals, and researchers is a necessity to improve the communication about mental issues to society and reduce mental health-related stigma (Sunkel, 2012). It is also a powerful way to increase the empowerment of mental health users as strongly recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2010). More investigations are necessary to study how to make mental health networks even more efficient to reach this aim. Another main point to develop concerns the relevance of extending mental health networks to more countries.

In conclusion, more efforts are still required to increase worldwide knowledge of mental health in older adults and on determining how to inform and support all professionals to work together to offer continuity and quality of care to users of all ages.



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## CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO BENEFIT FROM HEALTH SERVICES AND HEALTH EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** *Health is a basic human right for all children. Children have the right to grow up healthy and to receive education regarding a healthy behavior. According to the World Health Organization's concept of health, a healthy and educated life is a qualitative life. Children's right to health consists of three different aspects: cultural, social and economic rights. The right to benefit from health services is regulated by a few international conventions, such as: 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', 'International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights', 'Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' (O.N.U, 1991). Access to optimum health services is necessary for good health. Health is a fundamental right for all categories of children, including children with special needs (W.H.O., 2001). This paper analyses the importance of children's right to health and the practical possibilities to improve the accessibility and addressability of children to medical health services. Conclusion: Children's health can be seen as a bio-psycho-social whole.*

**Key words:** *health services; education; medical; children's rights.*

### Introduction

Over the last five years, significant progress has been made in the process of improving the health and well-being of children and young people. However, some children and young people still fail to receive the highest standards of healthcare attainable – a right of all children as set out in Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (O.N.U, 1991). There are a couple of key points that must be taken into account when providing health care ([www.unicef.ro](http://www.unicef.ro)):

- Health professionals should always act in the best interest of the child or young person they are supporting or engaging with.
- Children and young people are not a homogeneous group and the health service must be flexible in responding to their diverse needs, backgrounds, capabilities and interests.

Participation and involvement must take place on two levels: individual involvement, with people making their own health care choices and being confident in their interaction with health professionals; and group involvement, either as a service user or member of the public (Gavrila-Ardelean, Gavrila-Ardelean, 2016).

The main characteristics of the right to health, after O.N.U (1991) are:

- Health is the state of physical, mental and social well-being and does not only mean an absence of illness or disease (W.H.O, 2012).
- The right to health is closely linked to other fundamental human rights, most notably access to potable water and adequate hygiene.
- The right to health includes access to health services.

## **Research Methodology**

Research methodology consists in a specialty literature review, considering human rights and children's rights for health and health education, viewed from different stages of human development: from antenatal to postnatal stages and from primary education to preschool and school stages (Cazacu, Bădescu, 1981; King, 2005).

## **Research results**

All children have the right to timely access to appropriate health services. This requires the establishment of a system that ensures access to essential medicine.

To fulfill the right to health, each country must put in place health services available in any circumstances, accessible to everyone, of good quality and satisfactory (meaning they conform to medical ethics and respect our biological and cultural differences).

However, this does not mean that every country guarantees good health to everyone. We can also see the distinction between the right to health and the right to good health.

### ***The right to health also involves prevention and awareness campaigns***

Prevention plays an essential role in maintaining public health, particularly children's health. Health education and vaccinations prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Vaccinations are efficient because they are fairly inexpensive and they protect children against the risk of death and handicaps caused by infectious diseases (tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus, leprosy, polio, whooping cough, and measles). In the long term, these vaccinations can even lead to the end of these diseases in a given country.

Vaccinating children, as well as conducting awareness campaigns, can lead to a significant reduction in health risks. Additionally, spreading basic information about hygiene, nutritional needs, as well as the circulation of simple illustrations reminding people of the fundamental rules are very efficient actions that can help people improve their healthy behavior.

In addition, it is important to inform the population about the harmful effects that child marriage or female genital mutilation have on children's health.

### ***Children's right to health***

For children, the right to health is vital because they are vulnerable beings, who face more risk to illness and health complications. Children that have been protected from diseases can grow into healthy adults, thus contributing to the development of a dynamic and productive society. It is one of children's rights to enjoy the optimal state of health.

Children require additional attention in order to enjoy the best possible health (Gavrila, 2016). This allows them to develop properly during their childhood and teenage years.

At every step of their physical and mental development, children have specific needs and different health risks. Moreover, a newborn is more vulnerable and more exposed to certain diseases than a young child or teenager (i.e. infectious disease, malnutrition).

On the other hand, teenagers, due to their habits and behaviors, are exposed to other kinds of risks (sexual health, mental health, alcohol and drug use, etc.).

Generally, a child who benefits from appropriate health care will enjoy a better state of health during the stages of childhood and will become a healthy adult.

### ***Pre- and postnatal health care***

The right to children's health also includes pre- and postnatal care for mothers.

A newborn will have a much lower chance of survival if the mother dies due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth.

The results of the specialty literature review about children’s rights is they have the right to benefit from health services and health education. The synthesis of the children’s right to health is illustrated in figure below (fig. 1).

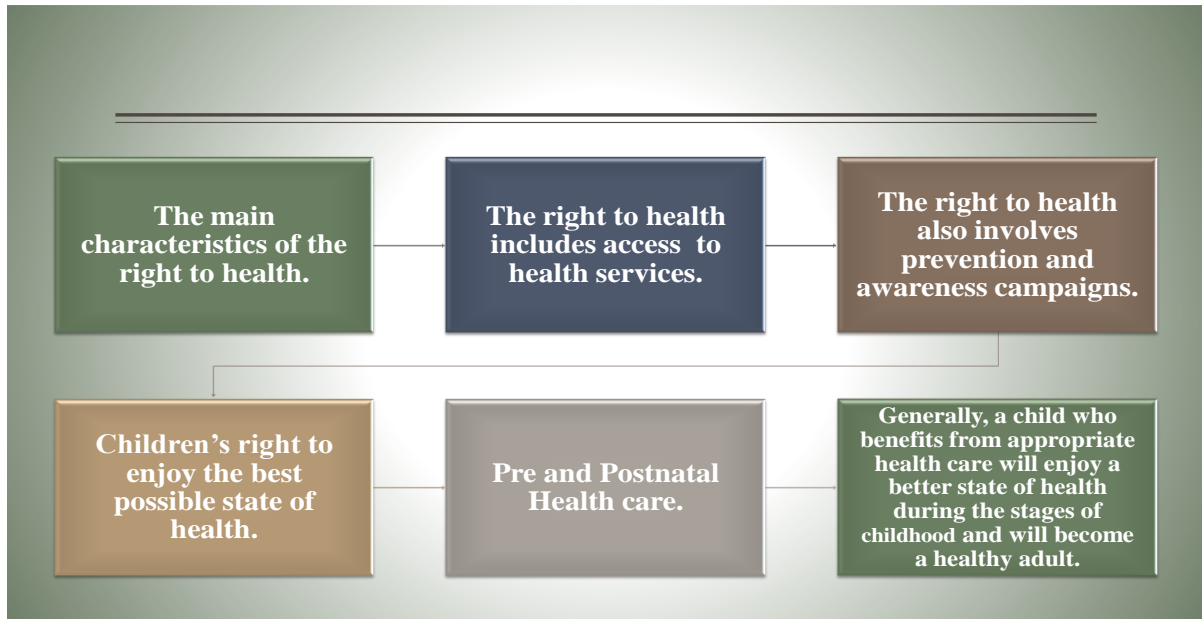


Figure 1. Synthesis of children’s right to health

***The importance of health education***

The Organization of the United Nations stipulates the importance of health education for the children’s right for health (www.unicef.ro; Kelemen, Gavrilă-Ardelean, et al., 2016; Gavrilă-Ardelean, Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2017). The significance of this issue is summarized in the figure below (fig. 2).

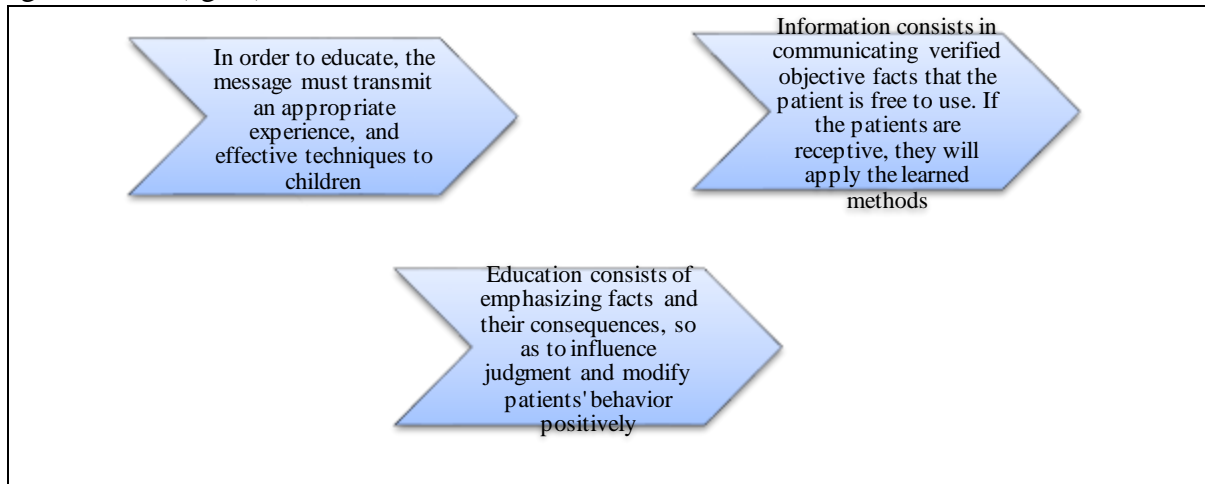


Figure 2. Importance of health education

**Conclusions**

Children’s right to health is a complex right that includes: access to health services, the right to be informed, the right to be educated for a good health behavior, access to prevention services and awareness campaigns, children’s right to enjoy the best possible state of health, the right not to be used in experimental drugs studies and the right not to be involved in medical

abuse. For children, the right to health is vital because they are vulnerable beings, more prone to illness and health complications. When children are protected from disease, they can grow into healthy adults, and, in this way, contribute to the development of a dynamic and productive society.

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## PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR SPECIALISTS DEALING WITH PARENTS OF CHILDREN ON THE SPECTRUM

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**Abstract:** *Parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are known to present high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. The impact of the diagnosis is clearly presented in the literature and refers to consequences affecting the couple and the family. The understanding of the psychological impact faced by the family leads to the highlighting of a new approach addressing an integrative treatment plan. In these contexts, the importance of specialist like family and couple therapist in order to help members stay connected and together is clear. Hence, for all the specialists dealing with families of children on the spectrum, it is very difficult to know how to efficiently help these families. All the specialists dealing with families of ASD children could benefit from having some ideas about the ways they could help. Furthermore, the current paper aimed to explore the exact impact of diagnosis and to offer some suggestions that could serve as guidelines in practice.*

**Keywords:** *Autism Spectrum Disorder; couple therapy; family therapy; parents; specialist; guidelines; practice;*

### Introduction

The latest statistics suggest that the prevalence of Neurodevelopmental Disorders, especially of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been constantly growing in recent years (Solomon and Chung, 2012; Christensen et al., 2018). Even if the understanding of ASD has changed in time, or any kind of disability, especially ASD represents a challenge for families and couples (Solomon and Chung, 2012). Consequently, in recent years the impact of ASD upon families and their quality of life has sparked substantial research attention.

After years of research we clearly know that in comparison to parents of typically developed children, parents of children on the spectrum present an entire list of consequences linked to the diagnosis. Among these we remind: low parental self-efficacy; anxiety related to the child's communication, motor and social skills; stress related to the cognitive difficulties of the child, mood swings of the child, lack of autonomy, hyperactivity, learning difficulties; fatigue; family conflicts; low family functioning; low marriage satisfaction; low quality of life and as mentioned before, high rate of divorce (Karst and Van Hecke, 2012; Smith et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2008; Brobst, Clopton and Hendrick, 2009; Fond-Harmant and Gavrila-Ardelean, 2016; Gau et al., 2011; Hartley et al., 2011; Higgins, Bailey and Pearce, 2005). Despite knowing and acknowledging that such a family reality has its impact, specialists still face difficulties in supporting these families. First, it was not until recently the magnitude of the impact was recognized. Secondly, the years in which all the focus was upon the treatment of the child made specialist fall behind with the way the family could be helped. Thirdly, in some cases parents do not consider needing help, do not have enough money or time left in order to ask for help and enroll in therapy or any kind of support program reality which also made specialists fall behind with practice. Considering these facts, the paper aims to explore practical ways that could offer support for specialist in their work with families of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. We aim to provide suggestions that could inspire and support



specialists in their work. We begin by highlighting the impact of the diagnosis at an individual level, family level, and couple level and continue by exploring possible practical guidelines. The paper concludes by reinforcing the impact of the diagnosis and the main aspects to remember into practice.

Knowing and understanding the impact of ASD and the role of specialist

The depiction mentioned above reveals the complex impact of the diagnosis which ways of treatment that is still debatable (Karst and Van Hecke, 2012). We could see that the diagnosis has its impact at an individual level (depression, anxiety, fatigue), at a family level (family conflicts, low family functioning) and couple level (low marriage satisfaction, lack of trust, lack of emotional support). At the individual level, the risk of developing anxious or depressive symptoms is increased together with a higher level of stress (Lecavalier, Leone and Wiltz, 2006; Karst and Van Hecke, 2012). In one recent study we can see the comparison of 151 families of children with ASD with 113 families with typically developed children concerning the levels of psychopathology (Gau et al. 2012). The results were similar to others and suggested a high rate of depressive, anxious and obsessive symptoms, especially among mothers. Some other findings suggest that 33% of mothers of children with ASD and 17% of fathers were scoring high levels of depression and 6% of both groups were scoring high levels of anxiety (Davis and Carter, 2008). Additionally, couples face the challenge of staying together and even saving their marriage as statistics show that the rate of divorce is higher in families of ASD children (Karst and Van Hecke, 2012; Hartley et al., 2010; Freedman et al., 2012). Yet, when it comes to the impact upon the couple, we still lack understanding. In their paper Hartley and colleagues (2017) argument that we still miss information about the impact of impact of child-related challenges associated with ASD on other family dynamics and marital relationships while only knowing that this couple presents low marital satisfaction. Most studies analyzing the family and couple impact are limited to markers of marital stability (i.e., divorce/separation) or self-reported global marital satisfaction or marital adjustment (Hartley et al 2017). This gap in the literature is essential in the context of a systemic principle saying any stressor in one family subsystem influences the functioning of other subsystems (Cox et al. 2001) which would mean that what affects the child, affects the couple and vice versa.

### **Individual difficulties**

The principal consequences of ASD are depression and anxiety. As a specialist in the field one could pay attention to the parents in order to recognize depression and anxiety and firstly listen parents, offer to understand and suggest seeking help. In order to recognize depression any specialist should pay attention to the behavior of the parents and their nonverbal language starting with the outfit and posture. In case signs are identified and seen repeatedly at any parent it is in any specialist duty to suggest the seeking of help, which could be a very hard mission. Despite the hardness it is essential to accomplish this hard mission as we know depression comes with considerable suicidal risk. In case of depression help should be found at a psychotherapist and/or at a psychiatrist.

In case of anxiety, any specialist should again pay attention to any sign and take into consideration that in many cases the main worry of these parents is referred to the child. Parents of children on the spectrum, as mentioned very often worry about the child's communication, motor, and social skills; the cognitive difficulties of the child, mood swings of the child, lack of autonomy, hyperactivity, learning difficulties. In these cases specialist could be opened to discuss with families about their worries and offer them the chance to participate in support groups where to find validation and empathy.

### **Family and couple difficulties**

Although the complexity of the impact requires a complex psychological intervention, until recently all the focus was towards the therapy of the child (Karst and Van Hecke, 2012). Given the impact upon the couple and family one could think that the most appropriate specialist to help in these cases could be a family and couple therapist. Hence, until recently the impact was not clear in the literature and these cases belonged to the field of education specialists that helped with the therapy of the child. Consequently, even if the family and couple therapist could have had a unique and powerful contribution to this population, they felt and may still feel not authorized to work with these cases (Solomon and Chung, 2012). It is not until recently that the literature speaks about their contribution. Among all of these, some other factors may be involved. For example, the fact that in our country institutions – teachers and developmental specialist do not encourage families to undergo therapy may contribute to the poor involvement of systemic specialists in these cases. So to speak, family therapist seems to be not confident enough and not sustained by other specialists.

According to systemic specialists, the concerns faced by the family throughout the child's development include identifying that the child has a problem, gain a diagnosis, coping with emotional reactions to the diagnosis, taking treatment decisions, developing a support system (Neely et al 2012). While families struggling with the impact of the chronic situation, systemic therapists may contribute to family wellbeing (Gavrila, 2008).

One potential contribution of a systemic therapist that could be considered by any specialist that deal with these families refers to supporting the family in exploring potential interventions for their child. In many situations, one parent could believe and consider that one intervention is more suitable, and another could consider something else. In such a situation, families could benefit from exploring the pros and cons of treatment options. Also, in other situations families may face one member that gives up his/her life in order to serve the child. A specialist could consider observing these situations and encouraging the family into action, into keeping up with their lives as usual as much as possible. They could also benefit from being encouraged to keep being involved in the community life which could help them keep a good level of satisfaction and wellbeing. In other cases, families may face a system that is more or less supportive of their situation. Consequently, specialist may help the family to speak up for their rights and needs and by offering to understand and promoting acceptance. Any specialist could also pay attention to the approach of the parents towards the siblings that most often are also affected. The most often situation is that the sibling receives less attention from the parents than the affected child. A specialist could observe the situations and encourage parents to spend time with their siblings (Gavrila-Ardelean, 2014).

Specific interventions regarding emotions, grief, and meaning are essential and should be addressed by a family and marital therapist (Solomon and Chung, 2012; Neely et. al. 2012). Other specialists could help in this regard for example just by knowing, accepting and promoting the help of systemic therapists. Education opportunities for families could increase the chance to understand how to manage these situations (Goian, 2013). It has been demonstrated that social support can improve the capacity to face overwhelming events, becoming a protective factor for these situations (Tudorel & Vintila, 2018; Goian 2004). However, specialists should use specialized language with caution, as this can create a barrier between the professional and the client, sharing or receiving meaningless messages (Goian, 2010).

As far as the difficulties faced by the couple, we remind that until recently we do not fully understand the way in which the diagnosis affects the family dynamics. What could be intuitive is that each member of the couple faces the reality in a different way and reacts in a distinct way. Couples that do not have a strong and secure attachment style could be seen at risk in falling apart as they do not find support in one another at difficult times. As mentioned before what affects one subsystem, affects the other subsystem, in other words, parents, couple

partners, and children are all affected. Furthermore, specialist could pay attention to the couple dynamic, at any sign that could show that the relationship is at risk. It is well to know that the face conflicts regarding child-rearing, time spent together, and sexual satisfaction (Knapp, 2004; Weber, 2011), child issues, habits/personality; work; target child; other parenting; intimacy/commitment; relatives; leisure/friends; communication; money; chores and other (Hartley et al. 2016; Hartley et al. 2017). In case of any distress observed specialist should be prepared with a recommendation of couple therapist. In these regards, it is well to know that one form of couple therapy named Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) starts to show good results in the case of parents of children on the spectrum. Emotionally Focused Therapy was developed in 1985 by Johnson and Greenberg. Its goal is to diminish the couple levels of stress by developing a secure attachment style between the partners (Lebow et al., 2012) and in order to achieve this, the therapy views emotions as a means of change (Johnson, 2004). In their study regarding the effectiveness of EFT and ASD parents Lee, Furrow and Bradley (2017) revealed the relevant potential of EFT in the case of couples raising chronically ill children and that the parents of ASD children confront great relational distress. They included seven couples in the study and received 12 weeks of EFT treatment each lasting 75 minutes. Their findings highlighting the benefits of EFT in decreasing marital distress. Consequently, in the case of couple difficulties specialists could be prepared with names and phone numbers of specialist in the field of couple therapy. All of these could serve and result in saving one family, into helping members stay together.

## Conclusions

The current paper aimed into offering practical guidelines that specialists could consider when dealing with families raising a child on the spectrum. The impact of such a diagnosis is complex and affects at an individual level (depression, anxiety, fatigue), at a family level (family conflicts, low family functioning) and couple level (low marriage satisfaction, lack of trust, lack of emotional support). Hence, it was not until recently that we understood the complexity of the situation and the need of a multifaced treatment plan. Given the circumstances, specialists and institutions could firstly be up to date with the information regarding the named impact and secondly be prepared with ways of helping families. Some of these ways that could inspire specialist and institutions refer to:

- Be prepared to recognize depression by paying attention to the behavior of the parents and their nonverbal language starting with the outfit and posture. Suggest parents seek help with a psychotherapist or psychiatrist.
- Pay attention to any sign of anxiety and take into consideration that in many cases the main worry of these parents is referred to the child. Discuss with families about their worries and offer them the chance to participate in support groups where to find validation and empathy.
- Supporting the family in exploring potential interventions for their child by exploring the pros and cons of treatment options.
- Encouraging the family into action, into keeping up with their lives as usual as much as possible. encouraged to keep being involved in the community life which could help them keep a good level of satisfaction and wellbeing.
- Help the family to speak up for their rights and needs and by offering to understand and promoting acceptance.
- Pay attention to the approach of the parents towards the siblings that most often are also affected and encourage parents to spend time with the siblings.
- Pay attention to the couple dynamic, at any sign that could show that the relationship is at risk and be prepared with a recommendation of a couple therapist.
- Knowing, accepting and promoting the help of a systemic therapist.

Using culturally adapted instruments to obtain robust and validated results (Tudorel et al., 2018; Vintila et al., 2018).

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BODY APPRECIATION, BODY SELF-ESTEEM AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS EATING IN CHILDREN

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<https://www.uav.ro/admin/actions/users/set-password?code>

**Abstract:** *Body appreciation among children has received special attention in the health literature, so that the prevention of body image impairment confirms the importance of the relationship between personal identity and family. The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between child's body appreciation, attitudes towards eating and body self-esteem. In this respect, children from different schools have completed instruments that measure the level of body self-esteem, eating attitude and the level of body appreciation. For statistical purposes,  $r$  Pearson correlation and hierarchic regression were used. The results showed that eating attitudes correlates positively with body appreciation of the Romanian children ( $n = 418$ ) and that a higher level of body appreciation correlates with a higher level of body self-esteem, also the present study pointed out that a low levels of body self-esteem predict negative eating attitude when we control the gender and BMI.*

**Keywords:** body image; eating attitude; body self-esteem; body appreciation; body appearance;

## 1. Introduction

The development of body perception and body satisfaction among adolescents and children during puberty has received special attention in recent years (Bearman, Presnell, Martinez and Stice, 2006; Thompson, Corwin and Sargent, 1997).

Many studies have investigated body satisfaction or dissatisfaction among adolescent girls and boys and their involvement in body modification strategies through different methods (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003; Pope, Olivardia, Gruber, & Borowiechi, 1999).

Going through the literature body image it is revealed to be considered as a multidimensional construct that is defined as an attitude towards the body of an individual. It is also defined as a mental representation of the information that was closely related to the physical aspect, this information being the result of the perception of one's own body (Schilder, 1950 apud. Grogan, 2008). This concept is considered as accepting and maintaining favorable opinions regarding the body, respecting it and in this sense also rejecting the ideals promoted by the media as the only form of beauty (Tylka and Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

Body esteem refers to one's own perceptions of one's body appearance and is conceptualized as a global construct (Mendelson et al., 2001), which can be measured by self-report questionnaires, open interviews or different reactions to words related to body appearance.

In the 1980s, some researchers identified body perception as divided domains (Franzoi & Shields, 1984). Their studies have shown that there are different areas of body esteem, such as physical attractiveness, body strength, physical condition, concern for weight fluctuations, and these issues are relevant to both boys and girls (Franzoi & Shields, 1984).

Mendelson et al. (1995) emphasized this concept and came up with a new original theory of body esteem. They argued that feelings related to body weight can be differentiated from feelings about the general appearance of the person and suggested that their own opinions could be differentiated from the opinions attributed to others.

In this context, against the backdrop of rising obesity rates in children and adolescents, researchers and clinicians are interested in measuring children's attitudes and behaviors regarding weight, body shape and eating habits. This type of information is especially important, as it can warn about the time and, possibly, how to intervene in children behaviors that have unhealthy eating habits.

While adolescence is a crucial moment in a person's life, when dissatisfaction with one's body and maladaptive eating habits are common (Cooke, 2004), many researchers have highlighted that concerns about body image and maladaptive forms of eating nutrition is developed much earlier than during this period (Robin et al., 1998).

For such a statement, there is evidence that even younger children may show signs of dissatisfaction with their own body and show a certain negative attitude towards unhealthy foods (Robinson et al., 2001; Lawrence 1995).

Consistently, researchers have shown that both boys and girls with a higher BMI want to be thinner (Candy & Fee, 1998) found that 78% of girls who were overweight wanted to be thinner, while only 30% of normal girls wanted to be slimmer. Similarly, 60% of boys who were overweight wanted to be thinner, while only 13% of normal weight boys want to be thinner. On the other hand, all boys who were underweight wanted to be larger and 44% of girls who were underweight wanted to be heavier. The differences in these findings reflect not only BMI influences on body image, but also socio-cultural influences to be thin, even when they are already under normal weight.

At the same time, the thin ideal as a body aspect is also associated with disordered eating in children of early age, both simultaneously and longitudinally (Moriarty & Harrison, 2008). Undoubtedly, playing with dolls in thin forms (for example, Barbie) is also associated with body stimulation, especially in young girls (Anschutz & Engels, 2010).

To highlight the contexts that contribute to children's attitude towards food, a meta-analysis by Schultz et al. in 2016 was evaluated. It is important to review the literature that states that the phenomenon of food consumption must be defined as a complex process whereby a substance that has been considered edible is consumed in order not only to ensure the nutrients to satisfy the physiological requirements in maintaining and sustaining life, but also to satisfy psychological and emotional desires (Rozin, 1990; Wellman & Johnson, 1982; Gavrilă-Ardelean & Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2010).

The purpose of this review was to integrate the literature on children's knowledge of food consumption. The evidence indicates that children of all ages know and understand much about food. In particular, evidence shows that even before entering school, preschoolers know about food, despite the fact that many adults question their level of understanding. The evidence in this review also suggests that what children and adolescents believe and that they do know about food items, and not their knowledge of nutritional facts, may be more influential in directing their eating behaviors.

Body image is recognized as a complex of factors that affect the cognitive, behavioral and emotional functioning of individuals. (Pruzinsky & Cash, 2002). Despite this broad conception of body image, most body image research has focused on understanding and investigating the negative aspects of body image (Tylka, 2011). Recently, however, there has been an increase in examining the positive and adaptive components of body image.

Positive body image is largely described as love, respect and acceptance of the physical appearance and function of the body (Wood-Barcalow, Tylka and Augustus-Horvath, 2010; Tylka and Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Specialized studies have revealed common characteristics of individuals with positive body image outcomes, including body acceptance, affective visualization of the body, in-depth filtering of appearance information, and support for a broad conception of beauty (Bailey, Gammage, van Ingen, and Ditor, 2015; Frisé and

Holmqvist, 2010; Holmqvist and Frisé, 2012, McHugh, Coppola, and Sabiston, 2014; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010).

Corporal assessments have been shown to be related to psycho-social adaptive indicators of well-being including self-esteem, optimism (Avalos et al., 2005) and self-compassion (Albertson, Neff and Dill-Shackleford, 2015, Wasyliw, MacKinnon and MacLellan, 2012). In experimental studies, body appreciation has shown that it effectively protects against distortion of body image induced by the media (Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2015). At the same time, most of the researchers examined body appreciation using adult women as subjects. Given that a significant proportion of adolescent girls report marked dissatisfaction with their body (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999), it is important that positive body image development be investigated prior to maturity.

Also, satisfaction regarding children's family life is a predictor for their body appreciation level. The better family life satisfaction, the higher body appreciation level is. Results reveals that there is a positive correlation between family life satisfaction and body appreciation level which shows that there is a need to provide a healthy environment for children to develop properly from both mental and psychological aspects (Maguran, 2019).

The body appreciation has been described so far from the point of view of the size and possibly the amount of fat existing on the body so we should not overlook that in fact the body assessment means a combination of factors as presented in a recent study by Grower et al., earlier this year. Also, body appreciation is consider to be a positive dimension of body image (Swami et al., 2017). Through this study, the contributions regarding the pubertal synchronization of the feelings of the young women regarding their body were examined, integrating an important development within the self-objectification. The results indicate that girls who presented with early pubertal development reported even more monitoring of their body experiencing a stronger foundation of their own intrinsic value, reported lack of body appreciation but did not report increased shame in terms of appearance physically and did not report a sexualization pleasure. The study is also based on previous research, which found zero results regarding the early effects of puberty on objectivity (Slater & Tiggemann, 2012; Rousseau, Trekels, & Eggermont, 2018).

## **2. Methods**

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between attitude towards food, body appreciation among children and body self-esteem in children.

For this purpose, the following hypotheses were formulated:

*H1. Self-esteem correlates with body appreciation.*

*H2 Self-esteem predicts eating attitudes if we control gender and BMI.*

### **2.1 Participants**

For this study we involved 418 students (n = 418) of which 54.3% were boys, who attended 3 schools in Timisoara and the suburbs: W. Shakespeare, General Giroc, General Chisoda. Participants were between the ages of 9 and 14 (M = 10.46; SD = 1.16). Students were enrolled in different classes with years of study from the third grade to the sixth grade. The participating students had Romanian citizenship and came from different socio-economic backgrounds.

### **2.2. Instruments**

To highlight the results, we used three tools that were given to the children to fill out in order to measure the level of body appreciation among children, as well as to measure the



level of body self-esteem and their eating attitudes. Height and weight were also found in the requested demographic data in order to calculate BMI.

### **Body Appreciation Scale-2 for Children**

(BAS-2C; Halliwella, Jarmana, Tylka, Slater, 2017). This instrument is an Adult Body Appreciation Scale that was adapted in the form of BAS-2C by Tylka and Wood-Barcalow in 2015, which has been translated and validated on the Romanian population by Swami, Tudorel, Goian, Barron and Vintilă in 2017. This scale at its turn was adapted for its use in children, BAS-2C having a one-dimensional factor structure and evidence of good internal consistency, test-retest fidelity and construct validity, related to criteria and incremental validity. In addition, the results suggest adaptive properties of body appreciation for emotional and body well-being among children. The tool contains 10 items with responses on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = never; 5 = always.

This instrument has a good internal consistency and in the case of the present study Alfa Cronbach was .87.

**Children Eating Attitude Test** (Linda Smolak and Michael P. Levine in 1993 developed an Eating Attitude Test which has a child friendly form developed by Maloney, McCuire and Daniels in 1988)

This test was proposed because it has been found that as the interest in eating disorders is increasing, there is also an increased need for psychometric measurements regarding attitudes and behaviors towards eating in children. The answers were given using the Likert scale, where 1 = never, and 6 = very often. ChEAT has a questionable internal consistency; Cronbach's Alpha was .69 for our study.

**Body Esteem Scale** (Mendelson et al., 2001);

Body self-esteem scale has 23 items, and subjects indicated responses on a 5-grade Likert scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (always). There are nine negative items that are inverted items. Body Esteem Scales for adolescents and adults was divided into three subscales: Appearance, Weight and Attribution. The first factor, Aspect (general feelings about the appearance), consisted of 10 items, the second factor, Weight (weight satisfaction), consisted of 8 items, and the Attribution consisted of 5 items. The BES in our case has an acceptable internal consistency, Alfa Cronbach being .76.

**Demographic data.** The study participants also provided demographic data with reference to the age, their height, weight, environment of origin, family status of parents.

Height and weight are used to calculate body mass index ( $\text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ ). In the case of children, BMI is represented by age.

## **1.2. Procedure**

The aforementioned tools were given to the children to be completed by the pencil-paper method. Before beginning the completion, they were trained on the process and were informed about the tools and specialized words found in these tools and were also informed about the time required to complete the questionnaires. While completing these scales, they were monitored and provided with answers to questions and explanations in relation to some words or expressions that they did not understand or did not know. The effective completion of the instruments took place in their classrooms.

## **3. Results**

The raw data we collected was subsequently analyzed and interpreted using SPSS for Windows, v. 20.0. This study is a correlational non-experimental one. To investigate the

correlations between the variables we used the Pearson correlation coefficient, and we also used hierarchical regression to investigate the role of self-esteem on eating attitude if we control gender and BMI.

*H1. Self-esteem correlates with body appreciation*

The results show that body self-esteem correlates positively with body appreciation, which means that a higher level of body self-esteem correlates with higher body appreciation level,  $r = .349$ ,  $p < .01$ ; effect size  $r^2 = .12$ , which represents an average effect (Table 1).

Tabel 1. *Correlations between variables*

Variables	1	2
BE	.349**	-
BA	-	.349**

$p < .01$ ; BE – Body self-esteem; BA –Body appreciation

*H2. Body self-esteem predicts eating attitude if we control sex and BMI*

The results of the hierarchical regression showed that if we control gender and body mass index, a lower level of self-esteem predicts a negative attitude towards eating (Table 2). Thus, after including in the initial model containing gender and BMI ( $R^2$  change = .066,  $F_{\text{change}}(2, 414) = 14.711$ ,  $p < .001$ ), of the self-esteem factor a better explanation was observed ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .078$ ,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 413) = 5.075$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Tabel 2. *Results of regression analysis for self-esteem as a predictor of eating attitude for children*

Predictor	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Step 1		
Gender	5.023	.000
BMI	2.771	.000
Step 2		
Gender	5.355	.000
BMI	2.493	.003
BE	2.253	.025

BMI= Body mass index, BE- body self-esteem

**4. Discussion**

The present study was conducted to highlight that healthy self-esteem can predict the attitude towards eating in children if gender and BMI are kept under control. Self-esteem refers to feelings about body and external appearance (Mendelson, 1995) and is inversely proportional to body mass index (BMI, kg / m<sup>2</sup>) (Steeter 2012). Understanding the determinants of body esteem in adolescents is important because of the marked development of their habits of health during this stage of life (Nelson, 2008) and of the negative consequences of body self-esteem.

Reel et al. (2015) argue that adolescence is a vital stage for individuals who develop a positive or negative image of the body. The influences that can contribute to this development include the friends and the mass media. Adolescents with a lack of social support or poor familial relationships, tend to isolate themselves, therefore they will search for online support in the virtual environment (Tudorel & Vintila, 2018; Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2014). Reel et al. (2015) also, say that the development of a negative body perception is related to the development of the eating disorders or the dysfunctional effort. Further study of the consequences of body dissatisfaction underlined that dissatisfaction was a clear predictor of increased depression and low self-esteem during adolescence (Bucchianeri et al. 2013,).

Research on the relationship between self-esteem and body self-esteem is mainly focused on adolescents (van den Berg et al., 2010) and it has already been proven that the overall self-image is correlated with feelings towards one's own body resulting in functional or dysfunctional behaviors : such as withdrawal from social interactions, eating disorders and depression (Orenstein, 2013).

The present study shows that body self-esteem is correlated with body appreciation, thus a higher level of body self-esteem correlates with higher body self-esteem in children. Higher self-esteem increases the level of body appreciation, which shows that it is imperative to provide a healthy environment for children so that they can develop properly both physically and mentally. A major change in understanding the body image was the development of communication on positive body image issues. In this respect, the research has been largely focused on the negative body image, but lately there has been a major interest in understanding positive concepts of body image and the body appreciation which is a facet of the body image.

Also included in this study was the interest regarding the eating attitudes in children because it was found that there is a predisposition among children to have disorganized eating preferences. Schultz showed in a study that was conducted in 2016 that these maladaptive eating behaviors are associated with disorganized eating most often identified as one of the many factors that contributed to the development of obesity in children. This eating behavior is, to some extent, supported by the individual's opinion of himself in the sense that whatever he believes is true. The knowledge of children and adolescents about food consumption is very important and critical because as these eating behaviors are set at the age of 4 to 6 years, they are obese at this age and predict obesity in adult life (Brisbois, Farmer and McCargar , 2012).

## **5. Limitation**

As with other researches, our study has limits that we must recognize. First of all, we could point out that the schools from which the sample of participants was formed, although the children came from different social and economic backgrounds, mainly from the surrounding areas of the city. In relation to the age range we can say that it was limited, the children between the ages of 9 and 14 years and this limits our ability to generalize the findings in the case of children and adolescents. Also we could not generalize the results to children who come from other areas and attend well-rated schools. Another highlighted limit could be considered the use of instruments that are not validated on the Romanian population. For future studies, the recommendation is to include in the research a more diversified range regarding

age and geographical location and at the same time to use tools that have been validated on children and adolescents in the country (Tudorel et al., 2018; Vintila et al., 2018).

## 6. Conclusion

In our study, we investigated the relationship between self-esteem and body appreciation in children between the ages of 9 and 14 because we identified, by consulting the literature, a major importance regarding the long-term negative effects of these two aspects that could influence adult life, being a clear predictor of increased depression and self-esteem (Bucchianeri et al. 2013). Following the results, it was pointed out that a high level of body self-esteem correlates with a high level of body appreciation. In this context, we also tried to emphasize that the body self-esteem is a predictor of the attitude towards eating in children if we control the gender and BMI. Education opportunities for families could increase the chance to understand how to manage it (Goian, 2004). It has been demonstrated that social support can improve the capacity to face overwhelming events, becoming a protective factor for these situations (Tudorel & Vintila, 2018; Runcan et al, 2012; Fond-Harmant & Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2016). However, specialists should use specialized language with caution, as this can create a barrier between the professional and the client, sharing or receiving meaningless messages (Goian, 2010).

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## PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD RECREATIONAL AND ACADEMIC READING

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**Abstract:** *This article aims to investigate primary school children's attitude toward reading using The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990). A number of 106 Romanian students from 4th grade participated in this study. The results showed a rather positive attitude towards reading, both in recreational and academic reading. The data did not indicate differences in attitude toward reading between boys and girls. 12.26% of the students showed high negative attitudes on both subscales. Only a few students with atypical profiles (very high scores in one type of reading, and very low scores in the other) were identified.*

**Key words:** *recreational reading; academic reading; attitudes; primary school*

### 1. Introduction

In primary education reading is a fundamental acquisition for acquiring the competence of Communication in Romanian Language and a basic activity for learning and studying (Bocoş, 2016). Competencies are defined as structured assemblies of knowledge, skills and attitudes developed through learning, which allow solving specific or general problems in different contexts. A competence is not fully formed if the students do not show a positive attitude towards reading, both at school and in their free time. From a psychological point of view, the attitude is a construct representing "an ensemble of personal reactions to a particular object, which the subject himself perceives as part of his personality" (Silammy, 2000, p. 27). The attitudes have an affective component, and can be located at a positive or a negative pole. If students have a favorable attitude towards reading, then the time spent on reading activities is higher. However, studies in reading have focused mainly on fluency and understanding (knowledge and skills), and less on attitude. That is why the present study focuses on this non-cognitive component of reading.

A number of factors are associated with reading attitudes in primary classes, such as fluency and comprehension of written texts, age, gender, socio-economic status, personal interests or teaching methods. Worrell, Roth & Gabelko (2006) found, for example, that in 3rd Grade, girls have a more positive attitude towards reading compared to boys. Another goal of this research is to confirm that gender influences the attitude toward reading.

Although the literature has constantly emphasized the role of recreational reading on the general knowledge development, many students show a negative attitude towards reading, with the risk of remaining with significant gaps in the vocabulary. Moreover, studies have shown that attitudes affect reading performance (Martinez, Aricak, & Jewell, 2008) which emphasized the importance to evaluate the affective dimension of reading activities. Once these values and beliefs have been identified, targeted interventions can be structured to improve the attitude towards reading. Even if it seems more difficult to be activated, the affective side of reading is a key point in training high performing readers.

### 2. Research Questions

Through this study we aim to answer the following research questions:



- What is the attitude toward reading of 4th Grade children? Is there a difference between the level of recreational and academic reading attitude?
- Is there a difference in reading attitude between boys and girls?
- Are there students with high negative or positive attitudes on both subscales of reading attitudes or with large differences between recreational and academic reading?

### 3. Research Methods

#### 3.1. Participants

106 4rd grade students from the municipality of Arad, Romania participated in this study. Of these, 62 are male and 44 are female. The subjects come from two primary schools with normal education and study the Romanian language and literature according to the national curriculum.

#### 3.2. Instruments

The attitude toward reading was measured using a public-domain instrument, The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) whose authors are McKenna & Kear (1990). The tool contains 20 questions that measure two aspects of reading: recreational reading (10 items) and academic reading (10 items). Recreational reading includes items related to extracurricular reading activities and the pleasure of reading in leisure time. Academic reading refers to the attitude towards reading in the school environment. Each question is followed by four scenarios, in which of a cartoon character is: very happy, a little happy, a little upset, and very upset. Students can answer each question by circling the emotional expression that best suits them. In the present study, the cartoon character was replaced with emoticons that express the emotions described above. An example of a question and answer item is the following:

*How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?*



The answers were rated on a Likert scale, with scores between 1 and 4, the higher score indicating a more positive attitude. Each student can have three scores. The overall individual score can vary between 20 and 80 and represents the general attitude towards reading. The scores on the two subscales, the recreational and academic reading can be situated between 10 and 40.

The authors reported good psychometric qualities of the general attitude and of the two subscales, the coefficients of internal consistency ranging from .74 to .89 (McKenna & Kear, 1990). In the present study the alpha coefficients were as follows: .91 for the recreational attitude, .84 for the academic attitude and .92 for the general attitude toward reading.

The administration of the questionnaire was done in group. The experimenter gave the instructions, providing additional explanations if requested. The average time to administer the instrument was 15 minutes.

### 4. Findings

**Research question 1.** What is the attitude toward reading of 4th grade children? Is there a difference between recreational and academic attitude?

In order to determine the level of attitude towards reading, we calculated the average and standard deviation for the general scale and for the two subscales (attitude towards recreational reading and attitude towards academic reading). (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Average values of reading attitude

Variable	N	M	SD	LEVEL
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<b>General attitude</b>	106	55.84	12.61	Medium-between a little happy and a little upset
<b>Recreational reading</b>	106	27.39	7.77	Medium-between a little happy and a little upset
<b>Academic reading</b>	106	28.12	6.52	Medium-between a little happy and a little upset

The results indicate a middle-level general attitude, with a tendency towards the positive pole. The answers given by the children tend to approach *a little happy*, both in terms of the general attitude and the attitude on the two subscales. We noticed a higher average attitude towards academic reading ( $M = 28.12$ ), compared to recreational reading ( $M = 27.39$ ), but this difference was not statistically significant. Below we present the average values of each item of the scale.

**Table 2.** Average values for attitude toward Recreational reading

		M	SD
1.	How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?	2.69	.96
2.	How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?	2.56	1.05
3.	How do you feel about reading for fun at home?	3.03	.99
4.	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?	2.88	1.05
5.	How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?	2.75	1.13
6.	How do you feel about starting a new book?	3.19	.89
7.	How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?	2.47	1.20
8.	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?	2.00	.96
9.	How do you feel about going to a bookstore?	2.82	1.05
10.	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?	2.95	1.04

The items with the highest average from Recreational reading subscale (Table 2), are item no. 6 ( $M = 3.19$ ) and item no. 3 ( $M = 3.03$ ) indicating a positive emotional state (a little happy) associated with starting a new book and reading at home, for pleasure. Items associated with a negative emotional state are item no. 8 ( $M = 2.00$ ) and item no. 7 ( $M = 2.47$ ), subjects declaring themselves a little upset when they must read instead of playing or when it comes to reading in the summer vacation.

**Table 3.** Average values for attitude toward Academic reading

		M	SD
11.	How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?	2.84	1.03
12.	How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?	2.84	1.03
13.	How do you feel about reading in school?	2.85	1.06
14.	How do you feel about reading your school books?	2.64	.97
15.	How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?	3.00	.86
16.	How do you feel when you read out loud in class?	2.88	.99
17.	How do you feel about using a dictionary?	2.51	.98
18.	How do you feel about taking a reading test?	2.66	1.11
19.	How do you feel about learning from a book?	2.78	.98
20.	How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?	3.05	.94

Regarding the Academic reading (Table 3), the items with the highest average are item no. 20 ( $M = 3.05$ ) and item no. 15 ( $M = 3.00$ ), indicating a positive emotional state (a little happy) associated with reading stories from Romanian language and literature. Item no. 17 has the lowest score, ( $M = 2.51$ ), subjects declaring themselves between *a little happy and a little upset* when they have to use a dictionary.

**Research question 2:** Is there a difference in reading attitude between boys and girls?

To answer this research question we calculated the T test for two independent samples (male/ female) for both the general scale and the two subscales scores. The results did not indicate a significant difference in any of the situations, which means that in the present sample the attitude towards reading does not differ significantly between the girls and boys of the fourth class.

**Research question 3:** Are there students with high negative or positive attitudes on both subscales of reading attitudes or with large differences between recreational and academic reading?

To answer this question, we set three levels of attitude towards reading: low level ( $M - SD$ ), medium level ( $M \pm SD$ ) and high level ( $M + SD$ ) for each subscale.

**Table 4.** Levels of attitude toward recreational and academic reading

	Low level	Medium level	High level
<b>Recreational reading</b>	N=22 (20.75%)	N=59 (55.66%)	N=25 (23.58%)
<b>Academic reading</b>	N=23 (21.69%)	N=65 (61.32%)	N=18 (16.98%)

The results showed that more than half of the subjects have a medium level attitude towards both recreational and academic reading (Table 4). 20.75% of the subjects are at a low level regarding recreational reading, while 23.58% have a high attitude. For academic reading, the results are different, a higher percentage of children showing a low attitude (21.69%), compared to 16.98% who show a high attitude.

In order to identify if there are children with distinct recreational and academic attitudinal profiles, we calculated the number of children with low/high levels on both subscales (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Number of children with low and high levels of attitude towards recreational and academic reading

	Low Academic reading attitude (-)	High Academic reading attitude (+)
<b>Low Recreational reading attitude (-)</b>	13 (12.26%)	2 (1.88%)
<b>High Recreational reading attitude (+)</b>	1 (0.94%)	10 (9.43%)

The results indicate that of the 20.75% of students with low Recreational reading, 12.26% also have a low attitude towards the Academic reading, while only 1.88% have a high attitude towards it. At the opposite side, of the 23.58% of children with high Recreational reading, only 0.94% have a low attitude towards the Academic reading, while 9.43% have a high Academic reading attitude.

## 5. Discussions and conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of attitude towards reading in fourth-grade students and to identify the proportion of children who presents big differences between the levels of attitude toward recreational and academic reading. The results indicated an average, slightly positive attitude towards reading. These results are consistent with other studies that have identified a similar pattern.

Recreational reading has a slightly lower value, compared to the academic one, with children associating the reading during the summer vacation with a negative emotional state. On the other hand, reading a new book in leisure time is associated with positive emotions, which denotes that not recreational reading itself is rejected, but rather its mandatory aspect. The children showed themselves little upset when asked to replace the game with reading, which also indicates a non-assimilation of reading with a game. It is important that recreational activities are diversified, so that students do not associate reading at leisure with giving up other enjoyable activities.

Regarding the attitude towards the academic reading, it seems that an important aspect is represented by the stories from the Romanian language and literature towards which the subjects showed positive emotions, while the use of a dictionary was perceived to be a less pleasant activity. It seems that at this age, children prefer attractive, captivating texts, with accessible and easy-to-understand language, whose reading should not be interrupted by the use of the dictionary. However, most texts contain unfamiliar words, whose misunderstanding would lead to errors in extracting the meaning of the read message. A solution in this regard could be the use of online dictionaries, which are more attractive to children.

Another important result of the study is the one related to the levels of attitude towards reading. About 20% of the subjects have a low reading attitude. Of these, 12.26% have a low attitude towards both the academic and the recreational reading. It is important to identify these cases and to conduct a more thorough assessment of the factors associated with these unfavorable attitudes, and to create remedial programs based on the results obtained. In the high school cycle, most learning is based on written texts, and a negative attitude associated with reading would contribute to less effective learning.

It is interesting that only three children from the entire sample have low attitudes for one type of reading and high attitudes for the other. These cases need to be thoroughly analyzed, through alternative methods of investigation, to reveal the reasons behind these perceptions and beliefs, such as lack of school motivation, self-confidence or family problems.

Investigating the affective component of reading is an important step in designing reading improvement programs. Attitudes are formed over time as a result of experiences. In their study, Kazelskis et al. (2005) highlighted the fluctuating side of reading attitudes, especially for 4th and 5th grade students. For the younger students, immediate, positive or negative reading experiences produce rapid fluctuations in personal reactions. Teachers, family and multidisciplinary teams should take advantage of this attitudinal flexibility in order to facilitate the emergence of new, positive experiences that will lead to positive reading perceptions.

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## ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT ALGORITHM

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**Abstract.** *The article, based on the analysis and generalization of the experience of using pedagogical technologies in the educational process, presents the adaptive technology development algorithm, which allows managing and structuring the process of training students in a higher educational establishment in constantly changing internal and external environment. It is argued that the process of technologization in higher education is purposeful, structured and algorithmic, takes place on the basis of joint interaction between the subjects of education, has its elements, specific features, criteria and structure. Eventually, adaptability becomes the dominant characteristic of the teacher's activity, means the transition to a qualitatively new level of knowledge-intensity and optimality, as well as shapes the style of modern scientific and practical thinking. At the same time it makes it possible to increase the mastering of training material by students and to switch the teacher's attention to the individual development and creative thinking of students. Adaptability in education and adaptive approach is given special priority in the article. It is emphasized that the basis of the adaptive approach are provisions of the concept of directed self-organization, which contributes to the achievement in a changing environment of a predetermined intended goal. It is defined that adaptability involves aligning the goals and results of the educational process with market demand and personal goals of the individual with the requirements of society. The concept of "adaptive technologies" has been considered, as well as the approaches on which adaptive technologies are based have been presented: systemic, synergetic, active, humanistic, personality-oriented, differentiated, and adaptive. The result of the research is the structure of adaptive technology proposed by the author, which has been developed on the basis of known pedagogical technologies and includes conceptual, content, procedural-adaptive and resulting components. The adaptive technology development algorithm has been defined, which allows maximizing the mechanism of directing the joint activity of students and the teacher towards the achievement of a feasible target, increasing the extent of freedom between the subjects of the educational process, mobilizing them for the desired result.*

**Keywords:** technology; pedagogical technology; adaptability; adaptive technology; adaptive technology algorithm.

**Problem statement.** The technological approach has become an integral part of the organization of the educational process in a higher education establishment. The use of modern technologies helps the teacher to involve all components of the pedagogical process, to structure the material, to algorithmize the consistency of educational activities, to manage complex pedagogical systems and processes, and to ensure the achievement of the set educational goal. However, this approach is not well structured for the higher education process.

**Analysis of recent studies.** Since the 60's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the technologization of the educational process has been given considerable attention, but it still remains relevant. The analysis of modern scientific works and publications shows that there is no less interest in this issue. Thus, adherents of pedagogical technologies are O. Antonova [1], O. Zagika [6], D. Lup'yak [9], M. Rostoka [10], O. Ryabova [11], V. Strel'nikov [13], G. Shatkovska [14] and others. However, insufficient attention has been given to the development of adaptive technologies in higher education.

**The purpose of the article** is to find out the adaptive technology development algorithm based on the experience of pedagogical science in the technologization of educational process.

**Statement of basic material.** In modern literature, the term "technology" has been studied very carefully. Currently, there are several positions in the interpretation of the concept of "technology". Thus, according to the explanatory dictionary of information and pedagogical technologies, the concept of "technology" is viewed as a set of techniques used in any practice, skill, art [7].

In the pedagogical field G. Selevko [12] outlines four approaches to defining the essence of this concept, namely technology: as a means, development and application of organizational and methodological tools; as a communication process, a model of joint activity for designing, organizing and conducting the educational process; as a large field of knowledge that relies on data from the social, management and natural sciences and is engaged in designing optimal training systems; as a multidimensional, comprehensible integrative process. We agree with the scientist that technology is the system of functioning of all components of the pedagogical process. It is based on science, programmed in time and space and leads to certain results.

In considering the essence of the concept of "technology", we turned to the scientific study of G. Shatkovska [14]. The scientist reveals a variety of definitions of the concept of "technology" and notes that it can be defined as: skill, a set of processing methods, change of state; set of knowledge about methods of carrying out any processes; purposeful, pedagogical view and influence on the educational process; a meaningful technique for achieving the teaching goals and a description of the process; a project of a particular pedagogical system that is implemented in practice.

In our view, the concept of technology has been more fully defined by scientist B. Likhachev [8], who states that pedagogical technology is a set of psychological and pedagogical goals that determine a special set and arrangement of forms, methods, practices, techniques of teaching, educational means. According to him, this includes organizational and methodological tools of the pedagogical process.

According to the UNESCO's definition [2], pedagogical technology is a systematic method of creating, applying and defining the whole process of teaching and learning, taking into account technical and human resources and their interaction, the objective of which is optimization of the education forms.

By analysing and generalizing the above definitions, we view pedagogical technology as a purposeful, structured and algorithm-driven process of joint interaction of subjects of education using specially designed didactic tools.

V. Bespalko outlined the *elements* of pedagogical technology: clear, consistent, pedagogical, didactic development of goals of training, education; structuring, ordering, summarizing of content, information to be learnt; comprehensive application of didactic, technical, including computer, training and control tools; enhancing of diagnostic functions of training and education; guaranteed sufficiently high level of quality of training [3].

Scientists V. Bespalko, D. Levites, G. Selevko and others [12] also identify *specific features* of pedagogical technologies, which include the development of diagnostically set goals of education and training (goals that describe the result and the achievement of which can be verified); orientation of all procedures to the guaranteed achievement of the set goals; prompt feedback, assessment of current and final results; repeatability of pedagogical procedures.

Scientists assert that any pedagogical technology must meet the basic *criteria* of adaptability:

1. *Conceptuality* – each pedagogical technology must be supported by a certain scientific concept, which includes philosophical, psychological, didactic and socio-pedagogical justification for the achievement of educational goals.
2. *Systematic nature* – pedagogical technology must have all features of the system: the logic of the process, the interconnection of all its parts, integrity.
3. *Manageability* – an option of diagnostic goal-setting, planning, designing the educative process, step-by-step diagnostics, varying of means and methods to correct the results.
4. *Efficiency* – modern pedagogical technologies exist in a competitive environment and must be effective in results and cost-effective, ensuring the achievement of a certain education standard.
5. *Repeatability* – an option of applying (repeating, reproducing) pedagogical technology in other types of educational institutions, by other subjects.

In our view, G. Selevko revealed the structure of pedagogical technology in more precise terms. He identified:

- a) conceptual basis describing the predominate idea, hypothesis, principles, laws of technology, scientific concept of learning;
- b) content component of training: the goals of training are general and specific, corresponding to the main purpose of education and social mandate; content of educational information;
- c) procedural component: technological process; organization of the educational process; methods and forms of learning activity of students; methods and forms of teacher's work; teacher's activity to manage the learning process; diagnostics of educational process [12].

Activities to develop pedagogical technology will be shown schematically as follows (Fig.1):

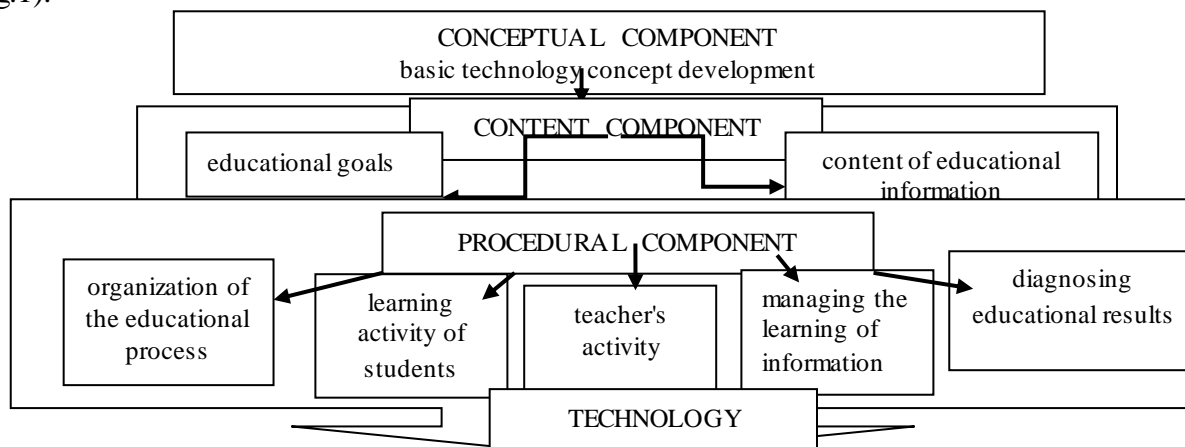


Fig. 1. Scheme of pedagogical technology development

The same technology can be implemented by different performers in different ways: strictly by the book, more or less faithfully or creatively. This performance inevitably involves a personal component of the master, a certain specificity that characterizes patterns of learning information, composition and sequence of students' actions. Certainly, the results will be different, but close to some average value characteristic specific to this technology. Therefore, technology can be considered as an algorithm for obtaining the intended result.

Eventually adaptability becomes the dominant characteristic of the teacher's activity, means the transition to a qualitatively new level of efficiency, optimality, knowledge intensity, and forms the style of modern scientific and practical thinking.

There are many pedagogical technologies in pedagogical science: pedagogical support, differentiation and individualization, computer, health-saving, interactive, technology of gifted education, collaboration and more. The use of pedagogical technologies allows, on the one hand, improving the learning of teaching material by students, and on the other hand, shifting the teacher's attention to the individual development and creative thinking of students.

Insufficient teacher's awareness about the real level of knowledge of the student, constant change of external and internal environment, circumstances, instability of situations in education caused the advent of adaptive technologies.

Adaptive means adapted. An adaptive approach involves considering the system from the perspective of its preservation and development under unstable conditions, which determines the ongoing changes to achieve the initial goal and preserve the system itself. As a result, there are certain system transformations in its structure and operation. The change of personal behaviour occurs in response to changing processes, constant adaptation to the requirements of the environment.

The term "adaptation" originates in biological science, where it denotes the process of adaptation and functions of organisms and their organs to certain environmental conditions. But now the concept of "adaptation" went beyond biology and began to be used in other sciences: technical, natural, humanities. Adaptation in pedagogy should be viewed as a process of adjusting the potential of the individual and an integral part of its formation, which results in an increase in the degree of universality of the system. The innate or acquired aptitude for adaptation is called adaptability.

Adaptability in education is to align the goals and results of the educational process with market demand and the personal goals of the individual with the demands of society.

In identifying the concept of "adaptive technologies", it should be noted that these are technologies the implementation of which activates adaptive processes to achieve the original goal in changing environment, circumstances, situations [4].

It should be emphasized that adaptive technologies are based on the following approaches:

1. Systematic – which focuses on studying certain objects as complex systems. In this case, the structural analysis goes from whole to part.

2. Synergistic – the basis for considering complex systems that are self-organizing and self-developing.

3. Practical – which shifts students into the position of subjects of cognition, cooperation and communication based on the use of pedagogical methods of "teacher and student equality", as well as carries out reflective (analysis of joint activity) training of students.

4. Humanistic – promotes the development and improvement of a whole person on the basis of self-organization of the training process.

5. Person-centered, which allows creating the most adapted educational environment for the student, in view of the peculiarity of his or her individual development.

6. Differentiated – provides an opportunity to adapt learning environment to the characteristics of different levels of student development.



7. Adaptive – provides priority to the development of actors and is carried out through self-organization processes.

As shown by practice, adaptive technologies are a powerful tool in student training. The use of them enables a high school teacher to interact with them taking into account their real potential. Adaptive technologies allow responding more quickly to changes, while maintaining the optimum balance between student capabilities and the external educational environment, to take into account feedbacks, to make joint decisions aimed at self-development and self-organization, and to automatically provide individual support for each student.

We share the opinion of scientist O. Zagika that adaptive technology is “a systematic pedagogical process that achieves a scientifically grounded educational goal, implements didactic set (principles, pedagogical conditions, educational environment), involves subjects and complex pedagogical technologies (forms, methods, means) of organization of students' educational activities, ensures the achievement of the intended result through flexible response to changes in the requirements of socio-cultural and industrial environment through optimal selection and allocation of resources and has more efficient, reliable and guaranteed result than it comes with traditional teaching technologies” [6].

As noted above, pedagogical technologies include a certain algorithm, a sequence of pre-designed stages that take place in an innovative pedagogical environment. Therefore, further consideration will focus on the adaptive technology development algorithm.

In view of the previous description of pedagogical technologies, we identify the following components of adaptive technology: *conceptual* (definition of educational feasible goals and objectives); *content* (didactic set: methodological approaches, principles and pedagogical conditions; didactic tasks); *procedural-adaptive* (procedural: subjects of the training process, analysis of experience, diagnostics of the state, setting of diagnostic goals, creation of appropriate educational environment: selection of forms, methods, means, diagnostic tools of the initial level of students' knowledge and further educational results; adaptive: variability, adaptivity to factors of change, influence); *resulting* (reflection, result analysis, correction).

Schematically, the adaptive technology development algorithm can be represented as follows:

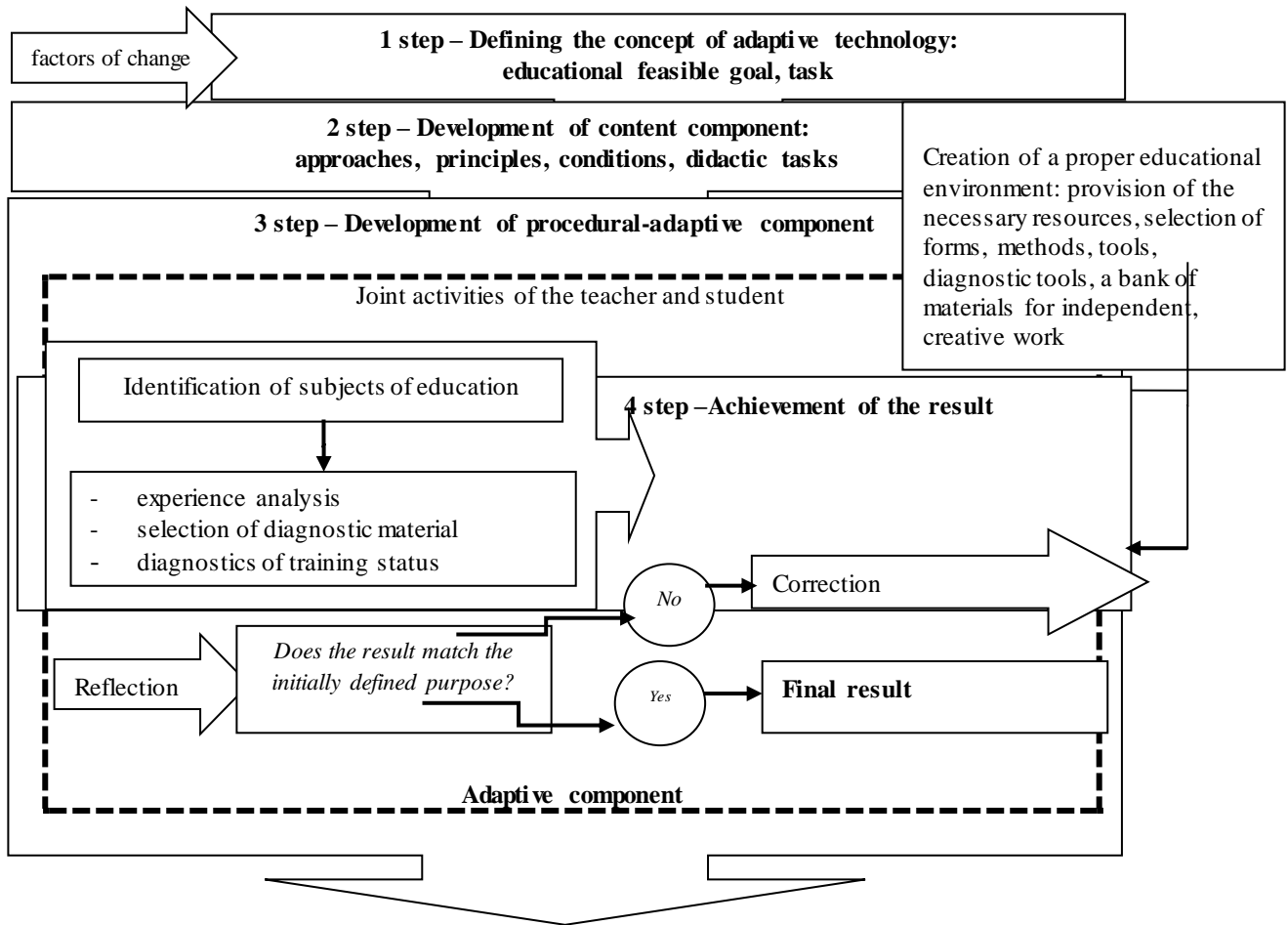


Fig. 2. Scheme of the adaptive technology development algorithm

The adaptive technology development algorithm that we have proposed is based on an adaptive approach, the main provisions of which are the concept of directed self-organization, developed by G. Yelnikova. According to the scientist, directed organization refers to the self-direction of the object of own actions towards the achievement of a conscious goal [5]. Through self-organization processes, a common goal can be achieved, taking into account the requirements of the environment and the balance of interests of all participants in the educational process.

The first component of our algorithm is the definition of conceptual provisions of adaptive technology under development. Conceptualism is identified from the standpoint of alternative and adaptability. Targets and tasks to be achieved and solved through technology are characterized. In designing the goal, it is necessary to take into account the factors of change which influence the determination of its feasibility. These factors can be innovations at the government and administrative levels, requirements and needs of participants in the educational process, their priorities for development, real circumstances that can accelerate or, on the contrary, impede development.

The second, content component, reveals the content of the educational process participants' activity, its didactic set: methodological approaches, principles and pedagogical conditions, didactic tasks, that is, fills the adaptive educational environment with the adequate necessary resources.

The third component of our algorithm is the procedural-adaptive one. It has the function of adaptability and involves the process of joint activity of participants in the educational process (teacher, student). It describes the features of application of forms, methods, and means, adequate to the tasks. It should be noted that here the variable models of the educational process subjects' activity are created: first, the "input" training status of students, their expertise with the help of selected diagnostic means (for example, qualimetric models) is studied. Then, depending on the results of diagnostics, the further course of work is coordinated by the students themselves, and adequate forms, methods of work are jointly determined. Students make their own choices. The teacher selects the "initial" diagnostic tools of the educational results. Such steps help to shift the work into a mode of cooperation, to individualize the process of student training, to develop an individual adaptive scenario and to activate directed self-organization and independent activity of students.

The fourth component is a resulting profile which includes reflection - analysis of the joint activity, analysis of the results obtained, their "initial" measurement, subsequent correction and, if necessary, a step back to the procedural-adaptive level with subsequent joint updating of actions.

**Conclusions.** Thus, the adaptive technology development algorithm described herein allows maximizing the mechanism of directing the joint activity of students and the teacher to achieve a feasible goal, increasing the extent of freedom between the subjects of educational process, mobilizing them for the desired result. The technological chain of pedagogical actions, operations and communications is arranged strictly in accordance with the targets, have the form of a specific expected result. An organic part of adaptive pedagogical technology is diagnostic procedures containing criteria, indicators and tools for measuring performance. The use of adaptive tools further emphasizes the role of the teacher. Now it is not a mechanical assessment of knowledge, but the development of various practical and creative tasks, the creation of projects and assistance to students in the organization of independent work.

**Prospects for further research.** Prospective areas for further research are development of the author's adaptive technology for Master's training.

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## CONSCIOUS LISTENING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCAL CULTURE

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**Abstract:** *In the context of a society where we are invaded with all kinds of advertisements and the century of rapidity in which everything is on the run, attention is very easily disturbed and everything must happen as quickly and efficiently. The study for the formation of the vocal culture besides the fact that it requires a lot of time is also very demanding. Conscious listening comes to the aid of the student, in order to conserve their energy and to make the most of every moment. When he is in a place and time when he cannot study, with the help of headphones or any audio device he can listen. By learning to listen to a musical creation, students learn how to decipher it, just like deciphering a reading. The purpose is to read, read with the musical hearing and to understand the musical pieces, so that they can interpret them correctly musically but also semantically. The present paper is a preamble to the research that aims to bring to our attention a new methodology that will guide teachers to a new methodology through which the voice can be cultivated through conscious listening.*

**Keywords:** *conscious listening; voice culture; methodology;*

### 1. Conceptual delimitations in conscious listening.

Conscious listening is the activity of listening to a musical creation as a research, musical investigation, which requires and develops a discipline of hearing and mind. Conscious hearing refers to the penetrating hearing of a creation, its pursuit as attentive, focused and analytical as possible. In order to speak of the conscious hearing of a musical work, it is necessary that the hearing, because it is the sense and at the same time, the "instrument" used, to actively, uninterrupted and participatory follow the whole process of its development.

Voice culture is defined as the set of skills of the voice. Cost-diaphragmatic breathing, clear and correct emission, sending sounds in resonators, diction, volume of sound, expressiveness, all these skills, lead to a trained, studied, cultured voice. The discipline that deals with vocal culture formation is called singing. At the general theory level of the curriculum, which defines and analyzes the fundamental pedagogical concepts related to the curriculum as a paradigm and as a model of curricular design, valorised at the level of music high schools and the faculty of music, the song specialization, the concept is defined: methodology. Methodology is a manual for a teacher specialized in facilitating, challenging, supporting learning, in our case, learning in the field of singing.

The methodology contains, principles, methods, techniques, processes, instruments, recommendations, numerous exercises, sometimes also studies, in ascending order in terms of difficulty (= in methodical progression) or with emphasis on isolated aspects such as fluency, rhythm, dynamics, articulation. and the like. Such a methodology is designed, as a useful course for the teacher, to guide, provoke, support the development of the student, in a consistent manner, respecting the particularities of the age category and the individual ones.

### 2. Purpose of the study

Anyone who wishes they could make music. For the talented, inclined towards music, it is less work or, with the same effort, could have much better results than one who does not

have musical skills. There are both hearing cultivation exercises and voice cultivation exercises. Even one of the voice cultivation exercises is based on hearing - listening.

The aim and purpose of this research is to develop a methodology for forming the vocal culture by using it as a support for conscious listening.

### **3. Methodological framework**

The research objectives are:

- O1. - realization of an individual profile of the subjects, regarding listening and vocal culture:
- vocal factors: correct breathing, support, phrasing, correct emission, ambitus, diction, expressiveness.
  - Hearing factors
  - attitudinal factors: message transmission, artistic emotions, motivation, joy to sing, initiative;
- O2. - establishing a diagnosis regarding the individual needs for the formation of the vocal culture;
- O3. - personalized intervention, at the level of conscious listening;
- O4. - monitoring the changes produced, at the level of vocal culture, for each subject;
- O5. - interpretation of results;
- O6. - implementation of the methodology.

The first objective, will be achieved in the pre-experimental stage, using as an instrument the profile of the individual profile of the student.

With the help of the student's individual profile sheet, the teacher will describe the vocal characteristics: correct breathing, support, phrasing, correct emission, ambitus, diction, expressiveness, auditory and attitudinal characteristics: message transmission, artistic emotions, motivation, joy to sing, initiative, specific to each student, which represents the characterization of each student, the potential, the dispositions that each has, as a basis for the development of the vocal culture. Starting from this profile, the students, together with the teacher, can set development goals, focused on those areas that do not favor or impede progress.

The second objective, to establish a diagnosis regarding the individual needs for the formation of the vocal culture will be made using the Systematic observation grid, in the initial evaluation stage. The grid will be designed based on the specific competences provided in the program for the vocal initiation discipline, the 9th grade, the Music specialization, the Theoretical section. It will be used by both teacher and student. The third objective, the personalized intervention, at the level of conscious listening, will be achieved by the teacher, throughout the entire school year through individualized activities, according to the needs, particularities, objectives and evolution of each subject. The fourth objective, the monitoring of the changes produced, at the level of the vocal culture, will be achieved during the whole school year, through successive assessments, at least four times in a semester or whenever the teacher observes a change in the student's behavior. The grid will use the information obtained through observation / evaluation and self-observation / self-observation.

Objective five, the interpretation of the results will be achieved by corroborating the information obtained from the Systematic observation grid with the results obtained by administering the initial and final questionnaires.

The sixth, it will be realized by capitalizing on the results, the materials, the working tools obtained and realized during the whole research and will consist in the methodology, which values the conscious listening in support of the development of the vocal culture.

### **Research hypothesis**

The research hypothesis, considered as an assertion with prognostic value, predicts that frequently exposed to conscious listening situations, subjects, students of music high schools, will gain more efficiency in the formation of vocal culture.

From this general plan the approach of the training experiment aims to verify the following secondary hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: following the results found in the pre-experiment stage, it is expected that by using conscious listening, the vocal culture will be made more efficient for students;

Hypothesis 2: the use of active listening as a support for the formation of the vocal culture, can make the activity more efficient and easy to obtain the learning results;

Hypothesis 3: by making the formation of the vocal culture more efficient, it will be easier to obtain the learning results, these becoming motivating factors and educational progress.

Variables are derived from working hypotheses.

The independent variable is found in conscious listening.

The dependent variable 1 is the impact of conscious listening on the development of vocal culture.

The dependent variable 2 consists in increasing the motivation for the study.

The dependent variable 3 consists in increasing the motivation for learning.

Conscious listening will promote the development of vocal culture, which will increase the motivation for the study, as a result of the satisfaction generated by the success, the progress. Success, the progress in the study, will increase the motivation for school learning.

In these conditions, the intermediate variable, which mediates the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, psychological and social variable, will be considered, being found in the personality structure of the teacher and students in the experimental group.<sup>6</sup>

**The experimental group** is made up of 5 students, from the Art High School class, from Sibiu, the Music specialization, the Canto section and 12 students from the Faculty of Letters and Arts, the Theater section, who have discipline - vocal initiation.

As methods we intend to use: observation and self-observation, investigation, experiment, case study.

The tools used in research for conducting investigations will be: Systematic observation/self-observation grid, Student's individual profile sheet, questionnaire.

The initial questionnaire can be used to analyze the degree of difficulty, perceived by the students, with reference to the activities carried out during the Voice Initiation hours.

The final questionnaire can be used to analyze the impact of conscious listening on vocal culture.

All these instruments can then be used by teachers, with the approach of the new methodology.

#### **4. Research design**

The research will be carried out during the 2019-2020 school year, with the following design:

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<sup>6</sup> Drăgan, I., Nicola, I., 1995, *Psycho-pedagogical research*, Tipomur Publishing House, Târgu Mureș

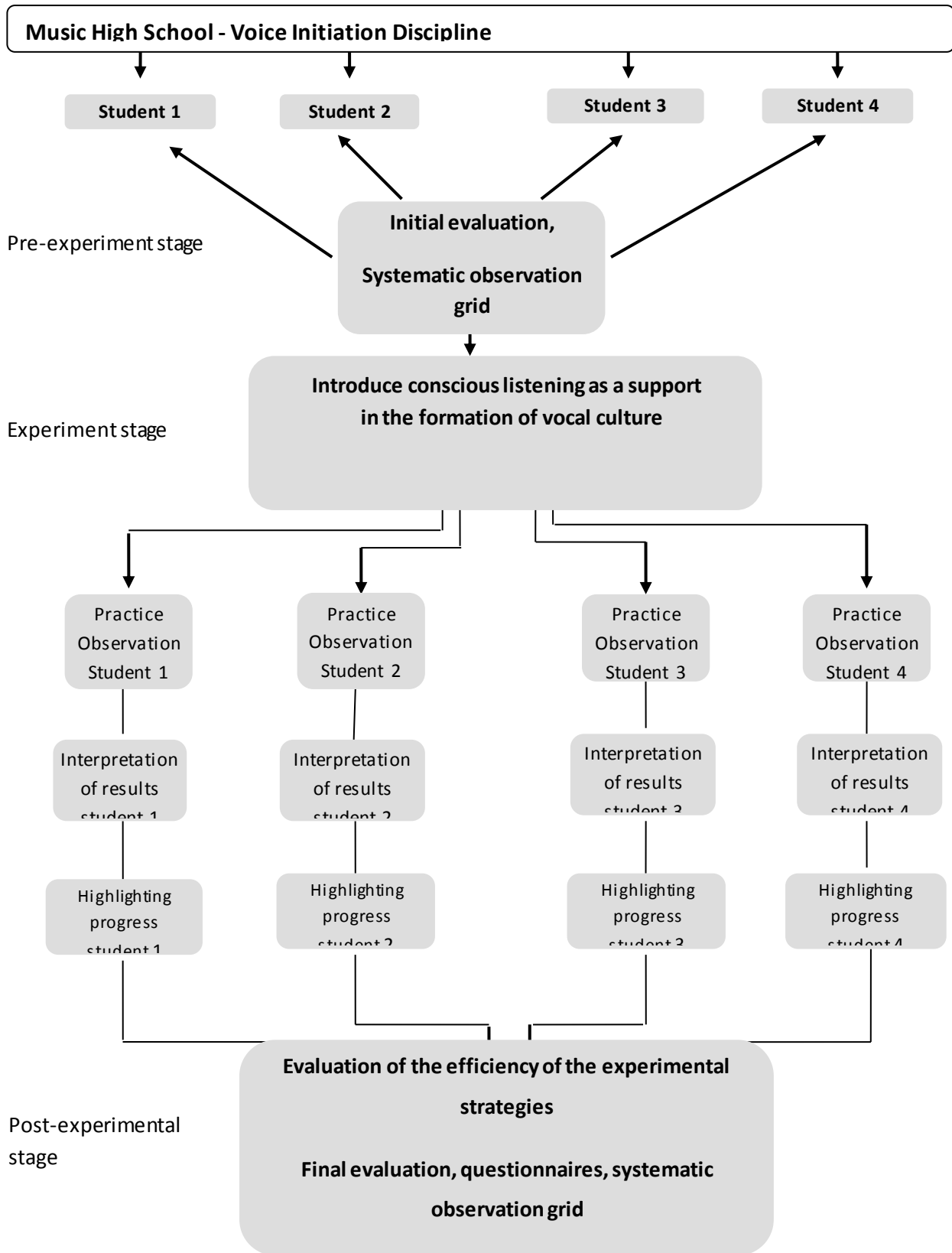


Fig. 1 Research scheme



## 5. Results

The scientific novelty that we expect to bring the research consists in making connections between the phonatory and the auditory apparatus, which leads to the efficiency of vocal culture formation.

The applicative value of the research consists in developing a methodology that can become a component of the methodology used by the teacher, to guide, provoke, support the development of the student's vocal culture, in a consistent manner, respecting the particularities of the age category and the individual ones. The obtained results, the instruments, the didactic strategies can be used and capitalized by the teachers of the music high schools, who teach vocal initiation and singing, for the formation of the vocal culture of the students, using as a premise the conscious hearing.

By using this methodology, the effort to which the voice is subjected will be diminished, the progress felt and implicitly the motivation increases and the joy of singing increases, among the students.

The correct breathing, the clear and correct emission, the sending of sounds in resonators, the diction, the volume of the sound, the expressiveness, all these skills, lead to a trained, studied, cultured voice. The valorisation of the hearing as a support for the formation of the vocal culture provides an alternative for the teaching of the vocal initiation discipline.

## 6. Conclusions

Anyone who wishes they could make music. For the talented, inclined towards music, it is less work or, with the same effort, could have much better results than one who does not have musical skills. There are both hearing cultivation exercises and voice cultivation exercises. Even one of the voice cultivation exercises is based on hearing - listening.

For the formation of the vocal culture, the students need a considerable effort, expressed in time allocated to the study and effort of the vocal apparatus subjected to consistent and prolonged repetitions, which leads to physical and mental fatigue. The situation notified, in the case of our work, the problem, requires the identification of some ways of forming the vocal culture other than strictly the exercise of the song.

By teaching students to listen to a musical creation, to hear, to penetrate it, to internalize it, they will be in a musical state, that is, to feel it to internalize it, to acquire it, that creation to one can hear it inside, without it even hearing outside, then be able to express it, transmit it. But first we have to print so we can express.

By learning to listen to music, you learn to understand music, to understand musical discourse. How any body is created and evolved so the music has a speech and note by note is created, cell by cell, reason by reason. Every musical creation has a discourse, introduction, development, climax (climax) a resolution of it, a reduction of the cumulative tension and the ending. Teaching students to listen to a musical creation teaches them to decipher it, just like deciphering a reading. The purpose is to read reading with musical hearing. She learns to understand her speech so that she can express it in turn, so that she can express her drama.

If we teach students to listen, not just listen, the phoning device will be in the correct singing position.

The result of the research, we want it to be, will be the methodology of conscious listening, with which the singing teacher can carry out his activity in the classroom and the student to facilitate his study but to add value to his interpretation. This methodology is not addressed exclusively to singing teachers. It can also be used by amateur people who have minimal musical knowledge and want to improve their singing.

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## DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE INTERACTION BEHAVIORS IN THE EDUCATIONAL GROUP

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**Abstract:** *Problematic situations in the educational space are common and require special attention, because ignoring them leads to increased aggression among children. The purpose of this research is to identify the degree of relationship and cooperation within the group of preschoolers, by investigating the efficiency of the intervention program "We Cooperate And Share!". Emphasis is placed on preschoolers' behavior in problem situations, on discovering new styles and strategies for addressing them, on observing the changes that occur as a result of their involvement in the educational program.*

**Keywords:** *interactions; development; socio-emotional; didactic game; therapeutic stories;*

### 1. Research objectives, hypotheses and samples

Preschoolers are currently facing more and more problematic situations that hinder their socio-emotional development. The kindergarten offers the environment in which the children evolve, they can know themselves, they can manifest freely, but most of the times the kindergarten is also the place where the conflicts constantly erupt between the little ones, they are triggered by different causes and they can have a destructive effect on the preschooler's personality.

The key person is the educator of the group of preschoolers who must always be prepared to act in preventing and combating any kind of conflict that has arisen, and in order to successfully manage a conflict group, the educator must know the preschoolers very well, to discover the relationships from the educational group and act creatively to restore the balance of the group.

**The purpose** of this research is to identify the degree of relationship and cooperation within the group of preschoolers, by investigating the efficiency of the intervention program "WE COOPERATE AND DISTRIBUTE!". Emphasis is placed on preschoolers' behavior in problem situations, on discovering new styles and strategies for addressing them, on observing the changes that occur as a result of their involvement in the educational program.

For this research we have set the following objectives:

**O1:** Identification of the types of relationships existing in the educational framework between preschoolers;

**O2:** Pre-school behavior analysis before the application of the program and after its implementation;

**O3:** Determining the efficiency of the proposed intervention program for addressing and managing problem situations in the preschool environment.

The hypothesis of the present research was to identify creative strategies and styles to address the problematic situations that preschoolers face. We have established the following hypothesis: *"If a preschool training program is designed and implemented in solving the problem situations, then it will be found that their occurrence is reduced and the preschoolers have an efficient management of the resources involved."*

The study included an enrollment of 40 preschoolers from a kindergarten with an extended program in Arad County. Preschoolers in both groups are between 3 and 4 years old.

The middle group A consists of 11 boys and 9 girls (the experimental group), and the middle group B is composed of 13 boys and 7 girls (the control group).

The games proposed in the content sample were carried out within the learning activities of the Human and Society domain, the proposed theme: "Who am I / are we?", being realized through the thematic project: "Preschooler's heart". The activities carried out in the middle group had as a strategy of accomplishment of the didactic gaming, this being, *the most natural form of learning and, at the same time, of expressing one's psychic content..*<sup>7</sup> In carrying out the research we have also pursued the objectives present in the curriculum, for the Human Domain and Society:

- to know and respect the norms necessary for integration in the social life, as well as rules of personal security;
- to adapt their own behavior to the requirements of the group in which they live (family, kindergarten, play group);
- to appreciate in certain situations certain behaviors and attitudes in relation to predetermined and known norms;
- to live in relationships with others around positive affective states, to show friendship, tolerance, harmony, concomitant with learning self-control.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Research methodology

Therefore, in order to achieve the proposed objectives, we used the following research methods in the paper: observation method; the psycho-pedagogical experiment; survey method. In order to put into practice these methods we used the following research tools: observation sheet; the survey.

The observation method provides qualitative data and implies the knowledge of the preschoolers by following the behaviors within the groups, without the direct intervention of the observer. The behavioral manifestations of children in their natural environment, their reactions to problem situations and the way they handle them are recorded. It involves drawing up an observation plan and immediately noting the observed data, the main instrument being the observation sheet. It thus identifies the roles of preschoolers within the group, their deeds of conduct, the observer having the advantage of being in direct contact with the preschoolers., *Based on the analysis of these facts and manifestations we can deduce the temperament traits, habits and habits of behavior, how they were educated in the family.*<sup>9</sup>

The data obtained from the application of this method must be analyzed and objectively interpreted by the observer to proceed to the next step, namely to establish the conclusions and prepare, if necessary, an intervention plan.

The survey method is a quantitative and interactive method, it involves a natural and direct exchange of information between the researcher and the subjects, in order to collect data on the behaviors, desires, needs of children in certain situations. The essential instrument of this method is the questionnaire that we used in the post-experimental stage to ascertain the success or failure of applying the program of invention to the experimental class and to identify the changes that have occurred as a result of this program. The questionnaire was applied to both groups in order to highlight the improvement of interpersonal relationships within the experimental group due to the games and activities proposed. The questions of the questionnaire were formulated in a language accessible to the little ones, I respected the level of development

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<sup>7</sup>Manea Alexandra, Mirela Tăbîrcă, (2017), „Suport didactic pentru aplicarea curriculumului pentru învățământul preșcolar”, Editura Delta Cart Educațional, București, p. 9

<sup>8</sup>Ministerul Educației, Cercetării și Tineretului, (2008), *Curriculum pentru educația timpurie a copiilor de la 3 la 6/7 ani*, p. 40-41

<sup>9</sup>Roșca Alexandru, (1966), „Psihologia copilului preșcolar”, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, p. 312

of the children as well as their age. In order to answer the questionnaires, the preschoolers verbally formulated the answers, thus helping me to gather the information I needed.

The main method of this research is the psycho-pedagogical experiment of constative-formative type. Analyzing it in comparison with the observation method in which the observer does not intervene with anything in the unfolding of the phenomena in the group, we find that the psycho-pedagogical experiment involves the intentional modification of the conditions of occurrence of the phenomena and the study of the reaction of those involved. The primary purpose of the experiment is to confirm or deny the research hypothesis.

The psycho-pedagogical experiment is performed in most cases by the technique of parallel samples, meaning that such an experiment is performed with two samples of subjects: the experimental and the control sample. The change occurs when the independent variable and the new working method are introduced in the experimental sample.

### 3. Analysis and interpretation of research data

The first stage was of a constitutive nature and involved the observation of the preschoolers' behavior in the middle groups A and B, by using observation sheets in which the behaviors observed during a semester were gradually noted (Tabel no.1. Observation sheet).

Following the analysis of the observation sheets, we have played back with the help of the graphs, the observed behaviors and the frequency with which they appeared in the educational space. We investigated eight types of behaviors to determine the degree of conflict present in the two groups. We have followed:

- the way preschoolers interact, as manifested in certain problematic situations;
- if they have frequent episodes of anger or irritability;
- if the language they adopt in conflicts is the right one;
- if others contribute to the amplification of the conflict state;
- if they are encouraged by others to cause conflicts;
- if you call on the educator to solve the co-intellectual problems.

We have noticed the presence of problematic behaviors in both groups, children sometimes show conflict, but without the intervention of the teacher such manifestations are more frequent. The data obtained emphasized the importance of the group manager in managing problem situations. Most preschoolers often resort to conflict resolution (the experimental class - 55%, the control class - 50%), considering that this is the person most able to solve them.

The experimental stage involved the introduction of the independent variable in the activities carried out with the experimental group. Interactive activities of cooperation, networking and expressing emotions have been introduced gradually to help preschoolers learn how to manage a conflict situation. Often conflicts between preschoolers arise because of inefficient communication and the purpose of these games is to prepare children to solve a conflict effectively. We introduced therapeutic games and stories that have had a tremendous impact in changing preschool behaviors.

The objectives pursued:

- Developing positive interaction behaviors within the collective;
- Developing self-awareness and positive attitudes towards one's own person and those around you.

Activities proposed:

a. *Interactive game of assertive communication – I would like to...*

**Objective:** Assertiveness of assertive communication when children want to play with the same toy.

**Description:** The activity is focused on the role play, creating some situations that occur frequently within the preschool group, and they are taught how to assertively communicate in

order to reach a goal. Children learn positive addressing formulas that they can use, for example: „I would like it if you would want to share the toys.”

*b. Role game – what would you do if...?*

**Objective:**Identifying the right solutions to resolve group conflicts.

**Description:**Children are divided into several subgroups, and educators present situations that may become problematic, to discuss with preschoolers what is the most appropriate way to approach the situation, for example: „Matthew and Kevin quarrel over a car, they both want to play with it and neither of them wants to give up in favor of the other, so they take the plunge. What would you do if you were in their situation? ”.The children are thus trained in the search for suitable solutions, motivating the chosen solution.

*c. Lets find the guilty one!*

**Objective:**Recognition of positive and negative behaviors in the group room; finding solutions to resolve a conflict.

**Description:** Children are invited to see some pictures that illustrate children who are arguing over a toy; one of the children cries with the toy in his hand, and the one who holds the toy pushes the other. Children will have to describe the conflict and find solutions to avoid such situations.

*My twin*

**Objective:** To create a poster expressing different emotions.

**Description:** The title of the poster will be "My twin" and will include several faces expressing different emotions: sadness, happiness, anger, anger, joy. When a conflict appears in the group room, children must identify the face that expresses the emotion they are experiencing, and then the other participants in the conflict will identify the face with the emotion they feel at that time, so those involved discover that they resemble and are directed to look for another face with has and would like to sow and motivate the choice made.

*The chest with positive and negative characters*

**Objective:** Distinguish the feelings that the characters in the stories show.

**Description:** Stories are chosen that illustrate different states and behaviors experienced by the characters, for example: "The dumb puppy". The task of the children is to discover the feelings that the puppy experiences, to describe the behavior of the child and to seek solutions for the correct behavior towards the animals.

*Role Playing - Kids around me*

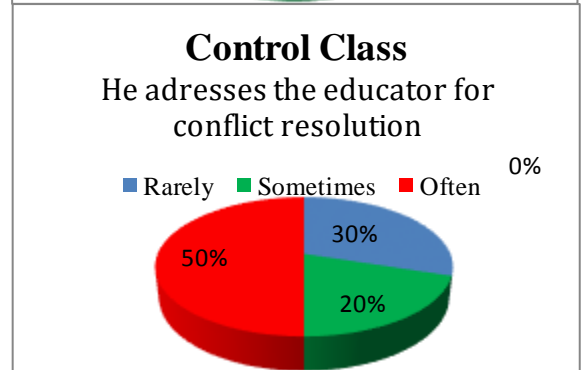
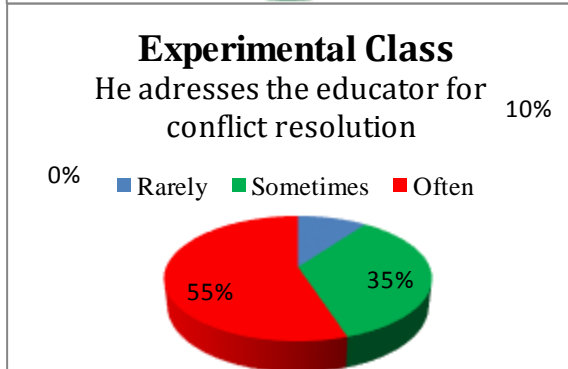
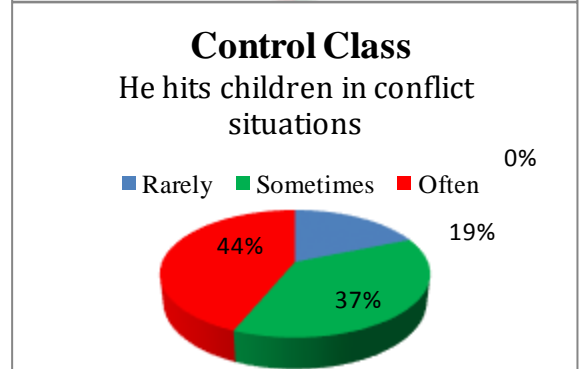
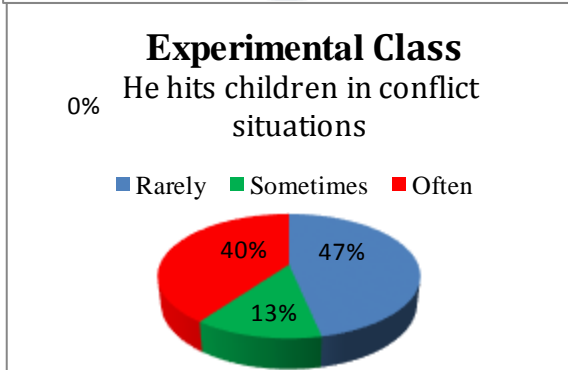
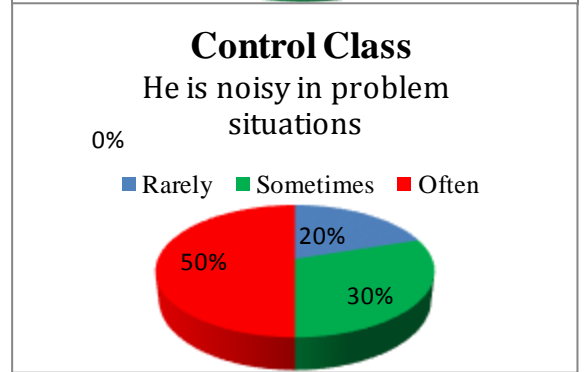
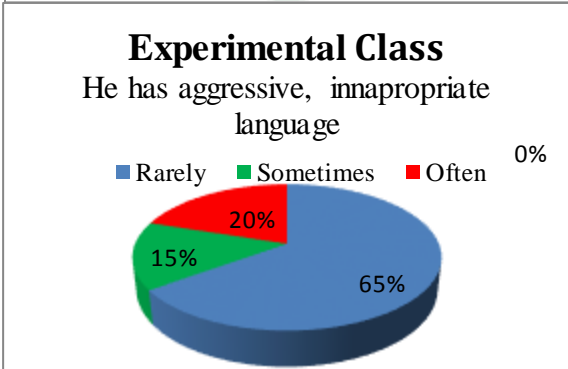
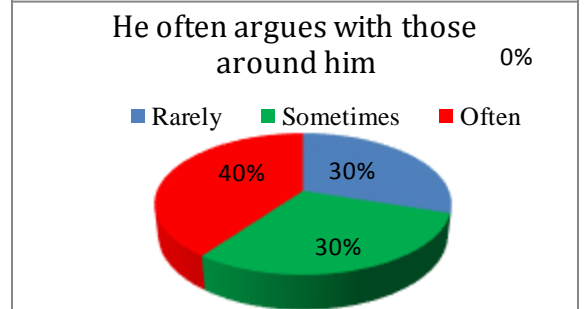
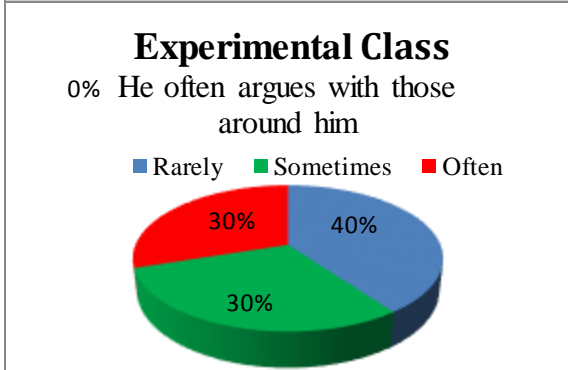
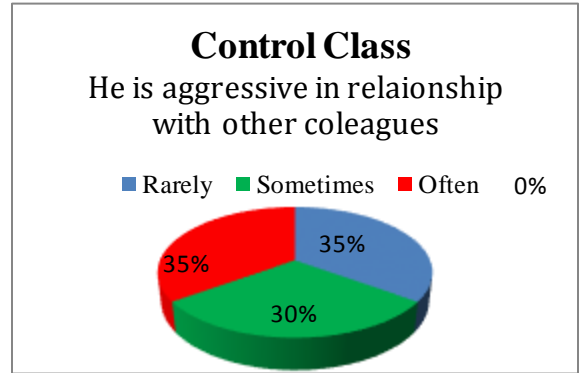
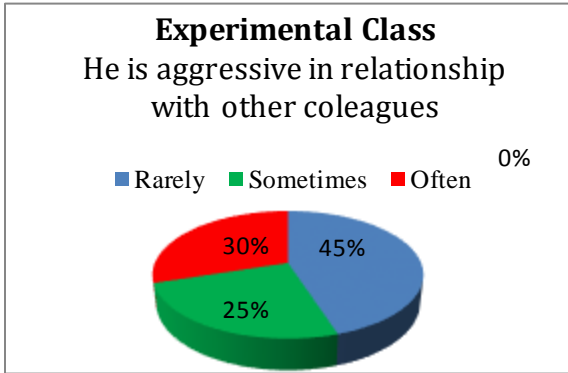
**Objective:** Familiarize children with the communication styles they should adopt in case of conflicts;

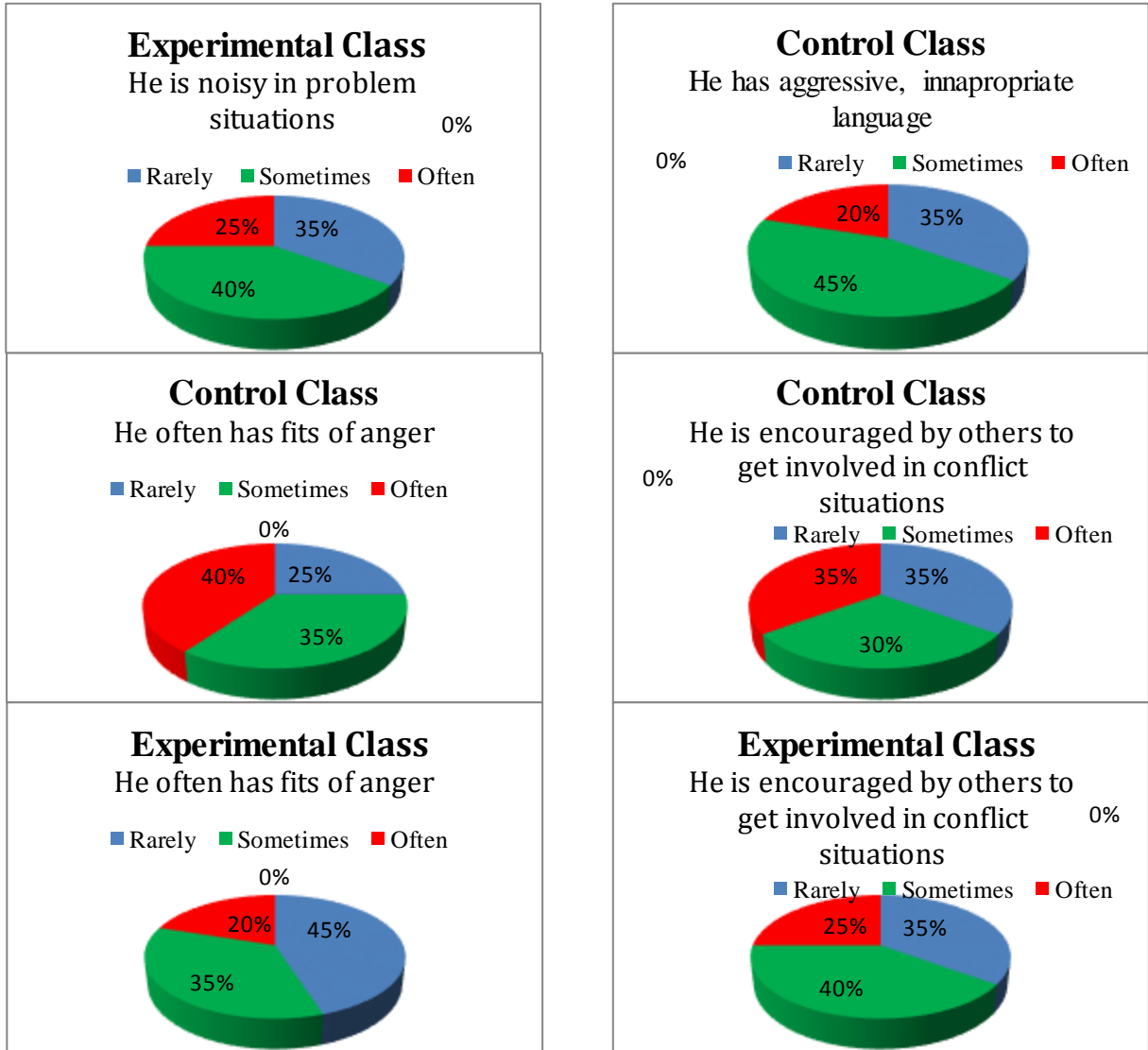
**Description:** Children must imitate the positive or negative behavior of those they have observed in the group activities. We discuss what is right or wrong to do when choosing to respond to a conflict situation.

*Therapeutic stories*

**Objective:** Demonstrating a positive attitude, sharing the feeling of friendship, taking on tasks within the group, enhancing cooperation.

**Description:** Presentation of stories with therapeutic character in order to teach children how to respond to certain problem situations within the group, how to overcome their negative states and how to enjoy the preschool period: solitary play in the group, not accepting friends, sharing toys , hitting preschoolers, longing for parents, feeling abandoned, feeling inferior, not following the rules of the group, eating disordered and so on.





#### 4. Conclusions

Conflicts are inevitable in the community, but through effective management they can be prevented and mitigated. In the post-experimental stage I applied an oral questionnaire based on which I verified the effectiveness of the program carried out in the experimental group. The questionnaire provided us with clear data on the conflict situation in the preschool groups. Therefore, it is clearly highlighted the improvement of the behavior of the preschoolers in the experimental group, they are more friendly, they accept to share the toys, they know how to solve a conflict without resorting to the teacher. Problematic situations in the educational space are common and require special attention, because ignoring them increases aggression among young children. Prevention remains the key to successfully managing a group of preschoolers, and the activity of preventing and combating behavioral deviations requires a lot of patience, a pedagogical tact, but also a lot of consequence from the educator.

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