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CONTENTS

UNIVERSITIES AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS – MANAGING PEOPLE AND PROCESSES

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Abstract: *"The present article explores the way organizations learn by looking at universities as a specific type of organization. Are universities learning organizations? This article presents a brief overview of the field of organisational learning with some models and paradigms used in research.*

The article also puts forward the proposal that organisational learning is a complex phenomenon which is nevertheless critical for the survival of the respective organisation in today's knowledge society offering some explorations of the ways in which Romanian universities try to become competitive on the regional educational market."

Keywords: *learning organisation, organisational learning, higher education, management.*

1. Introduction

Organizations have been mailny looked at and studied through the lens of metaphors (Gareth, 1986) and this has led to an evident tendency to humanize organizations. In reality the truth is that organizations are anything but human, they do not have a mind of their own except, obviously, the mind and senses or feelings of some of their members.

Higher education has itself been going through various changes and continues to look for new organizational frameworks to adapt itself to the massive changes that society and, according to the 2016 World Economic

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Forum in Davos[1], humanity goes through at this very moment. Each higher education system and, consequently, each university has its own ways and strategies to adapt to societal pressures and demands. If we add to this the public discourse that more and more uses the term "knowledge society", knowledge intensification and innovation to describe the desired type of a developed society, then we have a better picture of why universities might be interested to describe themselves as learning organizations.

This article looks at the way organizations learn by looking at universities as a specific type of organization. The question we ask is: are universities learning organizations? This article presents a brief overview of the field of organisational learning with some models and paradigms used in research.

2. What is a learning organization?

The concepts of "learning organization" or of "organizational learning" have been around for some while and their meaning in the field of knowledge management is that of a community of people that may learn both as a group and also from one another. In order to have such a situation it is necessary that individual experiences (Nevis et al., 1995) should be transformed in work practice and shared in a three stage process:

1. the **acquisition of knowledge** – individuals create and develop skills, insights and relationships. People learn through making sense of their concrete, private experiences. They observe what happens to them or around them and reflect on these happenings. This process may be spontaneous and intuitive: "This is not going to work here! People are too traditional to buy alternative training programmes!" or it may involve a longer period of reflection: "I hate this type of educational advertising! But it proved quite successful in similar international campaigns! We might as well try it ourselves!" The final result is a type of theory or generalization of what is happening that can be later on tested – we give up selling alternative training programmes or change the advertising for it – which will lead to a new experience. Then the learning process starts again while people fine-tune their knowledge in the respective area. This type of learning is called experiential learning the whole cycle being described and explained by Kolb (1984).

[1] 2016 World Economic Forum, *The Future of Jobs Report* considers that we are at the brink of the Fourth Industrial Revolution which will lay the basis for a revolution more comprehensive and all-encompassing than anything mankind has ever seen so far.

2. the **sharing of knowledge** – it is not enough that some members of a community have learned a certain thing for the organization to have learned it as well. What is needed is that their learning process should be shared with the rest of the community and used on a large scale. This is what we call today a "community of practice". The classical definition of communities of practice was given by Wenger (1988). Wenger described them as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do better as they interact regularly". Communities of practice may be known under various other names: learning networks, discussion groups or tech clubs. What they share, however, are a domain, a community and a practice[2].

3. the **use of knowledge** – integrating the newly discovered knowledge in such a way that it can be easily and generally used as well as transfered to new situations. Very often the result of such a process is a new organisational competence.

The way group learning transforms into organisational learning is a process not yet entirely understood by researchers. A model of how this process might take place is offered by Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (1995). They consider that this is a four stage process which repeats itself:

- People share their tacit knowledge through **socialization**. They observe one another at work and/or brainstorm possible problems. Socialization may take place among the members of the same group or through the interaction of employees and customers, with employees watching how customers use products or services.
- People find a way to articulate this tacit knowledge by using words that sometimes are very suggestive as a way to help others understand it. This part of the process which helps spread tacit knowledge and make it more available is called **externalization**.
- To create something new there is a **combination** of explicit knowledge coming from different sources. To create a new product/programme/process one can use data analysis to combine a new production technology from one source with data from a market research from other sources. New ideas can be made more accessible to own employees, suppliers and to customers by using formal training.

[2] There is a larger discussion of these aspects in Nicolae, M., Nicolae E., (2015), http://www.amfiteatrueconomic.ro/ArticolEN.aspx?CodArticol=2427

• People take new ideas back to their own work place and try to implement them. This process of learning by doing is called **internalization**. When the process is complete new explicit knowledge has been created and it is being supplemented with more tacit knowledge.

The knowledge of the organisation is enriched while these four stages repeat themselves in "the spiral of knowledge creation". At the same time, while successive stages of socialization and combination bring more people together and in contact with knowledge, it becomes more accessible.

Experience accumulated in organisations represents an important source of knowledge and learning. Research done on product manufacturing shows that with the increase of production volume the costs of the work force involved tend to decrease. The more of a product organizations manufacture, the better and more efficient they become at doing the respective product. This is the basis for what is called "experience curve" and led some researchers to conclude that if a company becomes market leader and can preserve this position it will have a cost advantage difficult to beat by its competitors.

However, there are three reasons for which this is not the case:

• organizations learn from both various external sources (suppliers, competition, professional or trade associations, conference participation) and their own experience.

• various organizations have various paces of learning. A company that is more open to external influences may learn quicker than one which has a larger production capacity, but is more introvert.

• there are more types of learning. Experience is more useful in exploitation or in the process of single-loop learning by which organizations concentrate on refining the competences they already have. This type of learning is no longer enough for survival on the international markets of today. Companies also need exploration or double-loop learning through which they "learn how to learn" to go beyond their current level of knowledge through innovation or radical organizational change, in other words a change of paradigm.

3. Single or double loop learning?

All organizations act on the basis of a **paradigm**, in other words a set of assumptions or hypotheses about the world, **how** the organization

should operate and **what** it should create. For example, a university may consider that the world around it is made up of a large number of young people who all want to study and develop from an educational point of view. That university is convinced that it is good at offering good learning programmes, a great studying environment, good extra-curricular activities, a valid and valuable degree/diploma that will ensure a good job for its alumni.

The large majority of organizations use the single-loop learning (loop 1 in Fig.1) to solve a problem or to improve on a routine activity. For example, if a university discovers that the number of possible students has decreased by natural, demographic causes, or that they developed another preference for an education destination, then that university may try and change its tuition fee or even offer admission or entrance facilities in order to attract more candidates.

All these types of explorations and experiments are part of the general paradigm of an organization which believes that if it has a good reputation, its study programmes used to be in demand then students will continue to come. It is extremely difficult to question the basic assumptions of an organization and even more difficult to challenge them in order to change them and to induce a double-loop organizational learning (as shown in loop 2 Fig. 1). Universities are learning this truth the hard way and there are smaller universities which have disappeared or almost.

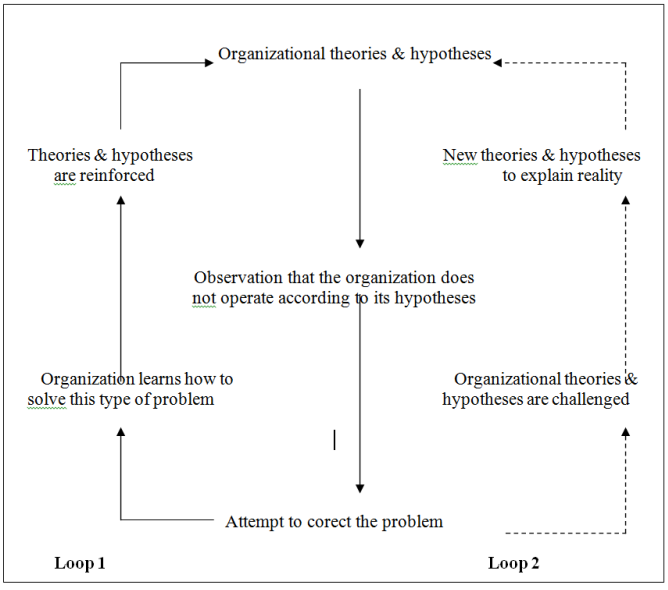

Figure 1. Single and double loop learning

As Garvin has shown a „learning organization" is an „an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights."[3] Garvin underlines the two essential components of this definition: generating new ideas and, based on those new ideas, changes in the organization, in the way in which it is implementing its activity. These conditions seem to eliminate universities from the category of learning organizations, mainly due to the great degree of inertia the majority of universities have in developing systematic processes to improve their basic teaching processes. Universities in many countries have come under increasing external pressure in the form of performance indicators, teaching assessments, and academic audits designed to make them accountable for various categories of stakeholders and to maintain or improve their quality of teaching and learning.

As Brătianu[4] says, "the semantic halo effect of the learning processes within a university makes people think that universities are learning organisations. This is not the case with many of them due to some organisational learning barriers." Brătianu underlines the paradox which shows that a university is an organisation based on learning processes, but it is not necessarily a learning organisation unless it is able to develop a strong integrator to ensure the transition from individual learning to team and organisational learning, from adaptive to generative learning. Brătianu considers, rightly we think, that most universities are far from being learning organisations, due to some of the mental and functional barriers they have developed during their history.

4. Some conclusions

Organizational learning is a complex, relatively difficult to study phenomenon which is, nevertheless, extremely important for the adaptation and even survival of organizations under the conditions of internationalization and development of the knowledge society.

Universities need to make a clear effort to adapt and transform themselves into learning organisations. The international competition is extremely tough and universities need to make efforts to learn organizationally in a double loop.

[3] Harvard Business Review, 1993, p. 80.

[4] in Eardley, A., Uden, L., (2010), p. 5.

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Seitz, V., Nicolae, M., *The Role of Academic Values in Higher Education Convergence in Romania: A New Approach*, in *Handbook of Research Trends in European Higher Education Convergence*, IGI Global, 2014, http://www.igi-global.com/book/handbook-research-trends-european-higher/97340

BEHAVIOURAL COGNITIVE PATTERNS WITHIN THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: "*New technologies offer a series of opportunities for the educational environment, but also plenty of challenge. To get maximum benefits, and also to face the challenges, the educational software designers must understand a series of learning patterns and decisional behaviors used by students in the knowledge acquiring and accumulation process.*"

Keywords: *eLearning, virtual environment, online, platform.*

Some students learn easier by going through the documentation themselves, others by discussing and asking questions. In the 80's, studying the Aristotelian paradigm of learning by doing, David Kolb[1] has released and developed a learning pattern (Figure 1), named learning cycle, consisting of four mandatory stages: concrete experience – C.E. (real experience), reflective observation – R.O. (learning from experience, and also by observing and analyzing), abstract conceptualization – A.C. (learning by identifying and internalizing patterns and phenomena) and active experimentation – A.E. (experiments' verifying and implementation). Starting from the four stages, Kolb also defined four learning types/ styles: divergent (C.E. & R.O.), assimilation (C.E. & A.C.), convergent (C.E. & A.C.) and applicative (C.E. & A.E.).

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[1] Kolb, D.A., *Experiential Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984

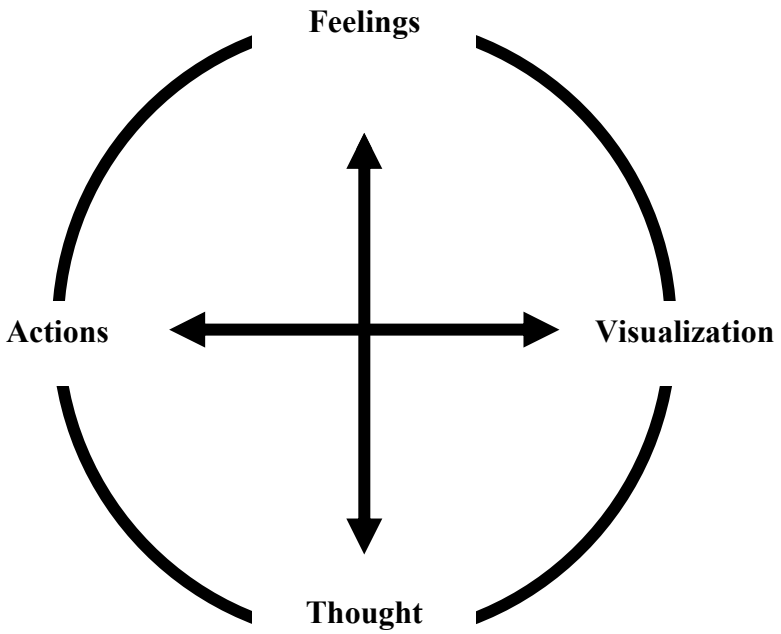

Figure 1. Learning cycle defined by David Kolb

Continuing Kolb's studies, Honey and Mumford[2] showed that, although at some point a person may try different learning styles, generally, each individual will identify only one learning style which is considered the most appropriate for oneself and will mainly use (Figure 2).

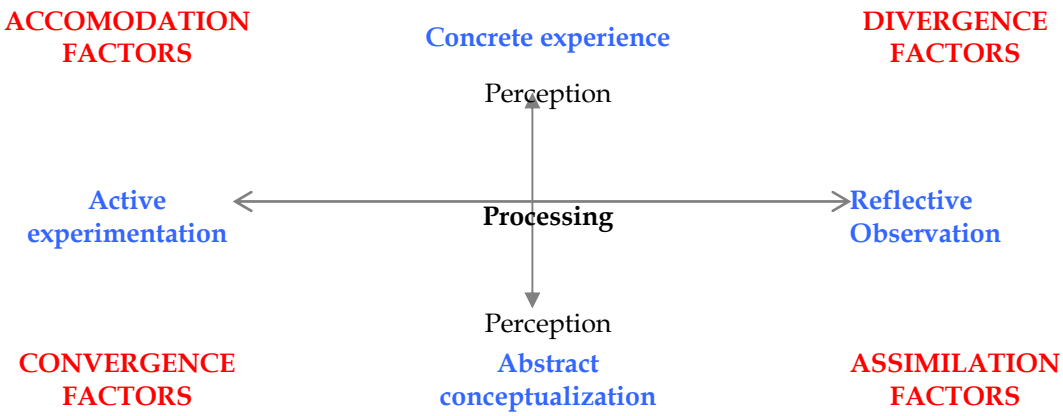

Figure 2. Learning cycle defined by David Kolb, updated by Honey and Mumford.

[2] Honey, Peter, Mumford, Alan, *The Learning Styles Helper's Guide*, Peter Honey Publications, 2000 [2006]

The four styles defined by Honey and Mumford are:

- activists (those who go into action) – they actively involve themselves into the new experience, are open-minded, are enthusiast and flexible;
- analysts (those who review) – they keep a distance in order to observe, they analyze the experiences, they collect and analyze data referring to experiences and events;
- theoreticians (those that conclude) – are disciplined, they are looking to find the rational order of things, they adapt and integrate observations into coherent theories, they're drawn to systemic thinking, patterns, principles and theories;
- pragmatics (planners) – are looking for new ideas and plan for future experiments, eager to put into practice their ideas, theories and techniques.

The use of different patterns in teaching practice also drew the attention of TIC based educational environments' software creators, who show an increasing interest for the mathematical patterns with applicability in building an interaction virtual environment, that will support and facilitate the improvement of the educational process.

However, a research report published in Great Britain in 2004 criticizes the majority of instruments used for identifying the individual learning styles[3]. Coffield and his team showed that none of the circulated theories was validated by independent researches, which might lead to the conclusion that, all patterns adapting teaching to learning styles are questioned.

As a result and opposed to what Coffield et al. stated, a study in 2005[4], based on the educational theories launched by professors Rita and Ken Dunn[5], proves the validity of a teaching – learning pattern successfully employed in many of the American learning institutions ever since the 80's, clearly showing that the instruction adapted to the student's learning preferences significantly improves the academic results, as well as the student's attitude towards the learning process.

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[3] Coffield, F., Moseley, D., Hall, E., Ecclestone, K*Learning Styles and Pedagogy in post-16 learning. A Systematic and Critical Review*. London: Learning and Skills Research Centre., 2004.

[4] Lovelace, M.K., *Meta-Analysis of Experimental Research Based on the Dunn and Dunn Model*. Journal Of Educational Research, no.98/2005.

[5] Dunn, R., Dunn, K., & Price, G.E. *Learning Style Inventory.* Lawrence, KS, USA: Price Systems, 1984.

To analyze the interactions and decisional behavior within the virtual learning environment, in order to build an efficient platform that will support and facilitate an educational process based on the information and communication technology and as fitted as possible to the students' needs and specific learning styles, it has begun with the pattern proposed by Dunn & Dunn in 1976, with all the subsequent improvements and updates, up to the most recent studies – in 2005.

The PlatOn online platform of the Faculty of Communications and Public Relations within SNSPA has the main objective supporting the educational programs and the classes held in Distance Open Learning and Online mode.

The architecture of this system is structured on three levels:

- users
- software & hardware
- virtual learning environment.

The interaction between users and the virtual learning environment is realized through software and hardware, the software representing the programs structure and software tools incorporated within PlatON platform. So, PlatON offers to both types of main users – students and professors/ tutors – two types of services:

- ensuring the interaction within the environment: interaction between a student and his fellow students, interaction between students and professors/ tutors, students and cognitive content (access to the cognitive content – classes and additional resources, access to forum and e-mail, etc.);
- instruments for ensuring evaluation and feed-back: monitoring and measuring the student's cognitive evolution, offering feed-back (self-evaluation tests, online testing, online uploading materials, e-class-book, etc.)

An essential characteristic of the e-Learning paradigm is the possibility to offer the student freedom from the time and space limitations during the learning process. In this regard, the decisional behavior corresponding to the learning process becomes a key element in drafting the virtual education environment's design.

The behavioral patterns proposed by the American researchers Dunn & Dunn, proved that the students' performances and learning styles heavily depend on a series of internal and external factors, grouped into five big categories[6]:

- physical (the environment whereby the learning process takes place – the lighting, the office, the instruments used, etc.)
- emotional (motivation, the sense of responsibility, work steadfastness, etc.)
- sociological (learning by oneself or within a group, with the colleagues or with the help of the tutor / teacher, etc.)
- physiological (visual acuity and hearing, preference for visual or auditory stimuli or for a combination of them, etc.)
- cognitive (analytical style or synthetic, reflexive or impulsive, etc.)

All these things influence each student's learning style and must be reflected into the educational platform's design, so all students will be offered a wide range of options to develop the learning process, so they will be helped to identify their strengths, to streamline the new knowledge internalizing process and thus to improve the cognitive results.

All throughout learning, the students make decisions referring to the actions to be taken, activities they will attend. They attribute to these activities/ actions certain properties based on their perceived usefulness and, after evaluating this usefulness, they decide if they will choose action/ activity X or, on the contrary, another one, Y, with a greater usefulness for the purposes, objectives and needs they may have at the time.

For mathematical expression of this process, the results of the research conducted by Professor Dr. Ioana Moisil were called upon, who proposes and exposes a decisional behavior[7] – utilized within DANTE project[8] – a project which had as main objective the development of a virtual system for the educational environment, centered on the student, and which in some

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[6] *Ibidem*

[7] Moisil, Ioana, *A Model of the Student Behaviour in a Virtual Educational Environment*, în I. Dziţac, F.G. Filip, M.J. Manolescu (eds), Proceedings of ICCCC 2008, in IJCCC, Vol.III (2008), suppl.issue, pp.108-115.

[8] Moisil, Ioana, Pah, I., Barbat, B., Popa, E.M., *Socio-Cultural Modelling of the Student as the Main Actor of a Virtual Learning Environment*, Proc. of the 8th WSEAS Int. Conf. on Mathematical Methods and Computational Techniques in Electrical Engineering, Bucharest, October 16-17, 2006.

key points is similar to what the proprietary system Plat On actually does. So, the Faculty of Communication and Public Relations' platform, similar to the Dante project, is centered on the student, encouraging a mode of learning specific to each student, in the rhythm and space most suited.

So, starting from defining the multitude of possible actions/ activities offered to the student within the virtual environment, the multitude of properties attributed to them by the student and the multitude of beliefs that the student developed in relation to the educational process he is part of, Moisil demonstrates that actually, the more an activity will acquire a greater degree of usefulness compared to the student's needs, then the probability that the said activity will be chosen and fulfilled is greater and it gains a more advanced position on the student's priorities' list, as being more important, a conclusion mathematically expressed as follows[9]:

$$\alpha k = \sum i \, \beta ki \, \varepsilon ki$$

whereby:

$a\kappa$ is the attitude towards an action/ activity iκ, k = 1, …, n;

βki is the belief that fulfilling the action/ activity ik will lead to the anticipated result i, i=1, …, m;

εki is the i result's usefulness/ desirability evaluation, i = 1,…, m.

For most eLearning (PlatOn) platforms, the multitude of possible actions/ activities offered to the student within the virtual environment includes attending online classes or virtual classes, participating in forum topics, interacting with the professor via e-mail, participating to joint projects with other colleagues, etc., the multitude of properties attributed to these actions/ activities by the student may include, for instance, "improving the final grade by up to 30%", "socializing / interaction with favorite colleagues", "enhanced visibility within the student group" or, on the contrary, "failing the exam", "impossibility to show up for the exam", etc.

Considering that the decisional process will end with the student's choice to get involved with activities rated as most important on his priorities' list, it is imperative for the virtual educational environments' designers to identify those mechanisms that trigger and maintain the student's focus on the learning process, fitting on his natural processing style, and ensuring a most efficient use of the cognitive material and time

[9] Moisil, Ioana, cited works.

allotted to studying, in order to facilitate going through, absorbing and retaining the information in the long term.

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HOW DOES THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING AFFECT FAMILY COMMUNICATION OF TEENAGERS?

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Abstract: *The social network sites have had important impacts on the people who use them in their daily life frequently. This situation is also true for teenagers. The number of teenagers using social network sites has been increasing continuously in the last decade and its use has become an important part of teenagers' daily life. This frequent utilization has started to affect their social life and communication skills. In this paper, I examine whether the use of social network sites by teenagers affects the face to face communication of teenagers with their family members. If it does affect the communication with them, I want to investigate whether it is considered as a problem by teenagers. I have made a survey about the use of social networks and communication periods of teenagers with family members. I have conducted the survey on 445 teenagers from two different cities, Bucharest and Constanta in Romania.*

Keywords: *social network sites, social networking, teenager, family communication, Romania.*

Introduction

As a result of the rapid developments in computer science, communication technologies and networking, the number of people who use social network sites has increased sharply in recent years. Social network sites are playing an important part in human beings' existence and more than a billion of people are connected to them in their daily life. The use of these social network sites by many people has meaningful social impact and has completely affected daily life of people all over the world. The users have excessive interaction chances during social networking, therefore people can share almost everything in their social life, such as information, ideas, pictures, events, news, with their friends or even with strangers (or virtual friends) on social network sites.

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Moreover, information, including private information on personal issues, is being shared by the users with other people. During this social networking, new ongoing relationships are established.

Social network sites do not only allow individuals to meet strangers and other users from all over the world, but they also enable them to articulate and make their social networks visible by many people. This can result in connections between individuals, connections that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently based on "latent ties"[1]. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or seeking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites"[2]. As a consequence of this rapid popularity, researches related to social network sites have gained importance in the last several decades and they are basically related to many fields of social sciences[3].

This new way of communication influences also the daily life of teenagers. It affects the interaction methods of teenagers and their socialization with their environment. As an outcome of these changes in communication ways, today's young generation can be defined as "the most electronically social generation" of human beings. This situation has formed a very big gap between parents and their children in terms of privacy and priorities of social life[4].

Literature review

Social Network Sites

1. Definition

Social Network Sites can be described as web-based operations that allow people to design a public or semi-public profile within a closed system, make a list of other users in this system, and share information

[1] C. Haythornthwaite, *Social Networks and Internet Connectivity Effects*", *Information,* Communication, & Society, 8 (2), 2005, pp. 125-147.

[2] D. Boyd & N. Ellison, Social Network Sites: *Definition, History, and Scholarship*, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1), 2007, pp. 210-225.

[3] L. C. Freeman, *The Development of Social Network Analysis: A Study in the Sociology of Science*, Vancouver: Empirical Press, 2004.

[4] S.A. Salgur, *The Effect of Social Networking on Teenagers' School Success*, Euromentor Journal Studies About Education, Volume IV, No.3, 2013, pp. 35-46.

with these people using the same social network system[5]. These sites let users manage, build and represent their social networks online. They may contain not only the individuals themselves, but may also include public activities, companies, political parties, even officials. Users of social network sites have the possibility to add other users in the same network as a 'friend' or a 'contact'. *Social networking* is a kind of computer-mediated communication in which users share news or information, basically called '*profiles*', with their 'virtual' friends on social network sites. These virtual friends may be known or unknown online users.

The information or the news that is shared by the users on their own profiles can be personal files, pictures, fun stuff and other documents sent by e-mailing or instant messaging via the internet. In this sharing process, permissions are extremely important issues during social networking. It means that users have the possibility to control who can see or access their profiles, information, connections and other stuff. The level of permission may change depending on which social network site is being used. Moreover, there are some general settings for permission that include:

- keeping the user's information private depending on to whom the user gives permission to access,
- restricting the visibility of the user's information,
- making the user's information public. It means that any user from all over the world can see the information given by the owner of the account[6].

2. A Brief History

'SixDegrees.com' is known as the first recognizable social network site that was launched in 1997. At that time, its users could design profiles and make a list of their friends[7]. 'Classmates.com' allowed users to connect with their ex-friends from high-school or college and also surf for new users who were also connected. In this network, people had no possibility to design their own profiles or to make lists of their friends in the first years. Even though SixDegrees developed itself and solved this problem,

[5] D. Boyd & N. Ellison, *Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship*, cited works.

[6] Childnet International Research Report, *Young People and Social Networking Services*, Childnet International, 2008.

[7] A. Marion&O. Omotayo, *Development of a Social Networking Site with a Networked Library and Conference Chat*, Journal of Emerging Trends in Computing and Information Sciences, Volume 2, No.8, 2011, pp.396-401.

it was not advisable to continue the service because of its lack of popularity, therefore it stopped its activity in 2000. Many social networks sites were launched until 2003, such as AsianAvenue, LiveJournal, BlackPlanet, MiGente, Cyworld (Korean), LunarStorm (Swedish). At the same time some business networks were started to serve such as Ryze.com, Tribe.net, LinkedIn. Some of them were profitable online dating sites, such as Match.com and Friendster.

In 2003, MySpace was launched in Santa Monica, California to compete with the other social network sites and to attract their users. MySpace added features based on users' demands by allowing them to personalize their own pages, which made it very popular in a short time[8]. Social network sites have become much more popular all over the world after the launching of Facebook in September 2005[9].

Teenagers and Social Networking Services

Engaging in different types of social media is a habitual activity and research demonstrates it is beneficial to children and adolescents by improving their communication, social connection, and even technical skills[10]. As a result of rapid technological improvements, people live nowadays in a world of technology and can get technological competences immediately in their daily life. These changes affect also teenagers'life. Especially the internet has changed their daily life and its use has becomepart of the daily activities of teenagers in their social and school lives. Social network sites are spreading quickly and are acquiring a worldwide dimension and they have quickly become a universal method of communication and socialization for teenagers. This rapid widening of social network sites has intensively affected the communication methods of the teenagers who use and engage with internet and with each other in the last decade. These sites have developed new and multifarious ways to interactthrough the internet and young people can connect these sites to their personal computers, tablets or cellular phones. This mobile

[8] D. Boyd, "Friendster lost steam. Is MySpace just a fad?"*Apophenia Blog*. Retrieved July 3, 2014 from <.http://www.danah.org/papers/FriendsterMySpaceEssay.html>

[9] D. Boyd & N. Ellison "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship", *cited works.*

[10] Ito Horst H, M. Bittani, *Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth Project*, 2010, Chicago, IL: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Reports on Digital Media and Learning, Retrieved July 7, 2014, <http://digitalyouth.ischool.berkeley.edu/files/report/digitalyouth-TwoPageSummary.pdf>

interaction and connection with social network sites has become an indispensable part of teenagers' life style[11]. Indeed, this new way of communication creates for the teenager extraordinary opportunities to become more literate and productive because they have the possibility to share their opinions and ideas not only with their closest friends, but also with the rest of the world. This interaction with people all over the world can make them more open-minded and tolerant.

In fact, teenagers improve their social networking technologies continuouslyby using and sharing the information with other users, even though their parents and teachers remind them not to share personal information in their accounts. As a result of this improving, teenagers learn quickly about online publicity and privacy, and they develop the ways of protecting their personal information. Moreover, teenagers have started to realize the importance of online privacy and they are mindful of who should or should not be able to see what they share in their social network sites. However, these strategies are not enough to protect their online privacy and need to be improved by effective privacy education[12].

However, there are still many other problems that teenagers face during social networking in their social life and they can have some problems related to the social networking in their family life and school life. I want to mention some important problems related to the social networking of teenagers. They can involve some social network activities that may cause some unfortunate results for them, fortheir families or for their schools as a consequence of posting some information, news or comments in their social network accounts. Another issue associated with social network sites is that many teenagers may give false information about their age in order to get free access to websites. This problem can be observed across all socioeconomic groups and geographic locations. Receiving inappropriate advertising online is another issue for the teenagers during social networking, especially when they lie about their age in order to access certain sites. These advertisings can be too violent or sexually explicit for their real ages[13].

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[11] M. Zwart, D. Lindsay, M. Henderson & M. Philips, *Teenagers, Legal Risks and Social Networking Sites,* Grants Pub. Education, Australia, 2011.

[12] V. Steeves, *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III. Online Privacy, Online Publicity*, 2014, Ottawa. Retrieved July 15, 2014,
<http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/publication-report/full/YCWWIII_Online_Privacy_Online_Publicity_FullReport.pdf>

[13] M. Madden, A. Lenhart, S. Cortesi, U. Gasser, M. Duggan, A. Smith, &M. Beaton, *Teens, Social Media, and Privacy*, 2013, Pew Research Center, Retrieved July 16, 2014, < http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2013/05/PIP_TeensSocialMediaandPrivacy_PDF.pdf>

Social Networking and Communication

Social network sites have extraordinarily affected our communication ways and concepts. People were only communicating through the mail or a land-line telephone and in person until several decades ago. However, many people all over the world communicate with each other by using new methods of communication. These new ways of communication are the text messages and voice messages sent by cellular phones, instant messengers, emails, talking through headphones, cell phones, online video phones, and the social networking tools by connecting to the internet. Today, many people prefer to discuss something by emailing, but not in a meeting, or by sending text messages rather than by talking on the phone. These easy ways of communication have consequently made people more interactive and communicative than ever.

In this section, I would like to discuss more about the communication through social network sites. These sites have affected people's ability to interact and communicate. This effect can be easily observed throughout all the levels of society in many countries. Social networking has changed the way of interacting with the society across all venues and ages. It means that people have started to communicate through these sites instead of face to face interaction. As a result, people have become more social. However, communication and interaction through social network sites do not form strong relations between individuals, because they do not feel connected strongly compared to face to face communication. According to Paul Booth, there are three issues as regards the role of social media in the communication ways of people. First, users of social network sites tend to trust the people on the other part of the communication during communicating through social media. It means that messages sent should be more open. Second, connections formed as a result of social networking are not strong compared to face to face communication. Third, people tend to communicate with the others who have and who share the same ideas as theirs[14].

Methodology

Participants

The survey was conducted on teenagers from 7 different middle and high schools in Bucharest and Constantain the spring term of the 2014-

[14] M. Keller, *Social Media and Interpersonal Communication*, Social Work Today, 2013, Vol.13, Issue 3, p.10.

2015 Academic Year. A total of 445 responses were received. They were given by 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12thgrade students. The representation of each grade group was as follows:

- 8th Grade Participants: 85
- 9th Grade Participants: 109
- 10th Grade Participants: 155
- 11th Grade Participants: 51
- 12th Grade Participants: 45
- Total Number of Participants: 445

The averageage of the teenagers who participated in the survey was 15.6. The percentage by sex of the participants was as follows:

- Female participants: 49.2% (219 respondents), and
- Male participants:50.8% (226 respondents)

Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to understand the time spent for social networking by teenagers and to see whether it affects the school success of teenagers.There were 15 questions designed to explore the purpose mentioned above in the survey. The respondents gave the answers of the survey online during their ICT classes.

Some of the survey questions were as follows:

- How frequentlydo you connect yourself to social networks?
- How much time do you spend on social networks in a day?
- Do you think that you spend too much time on social networks?
- How much time do you spend with your family members face to face?
- Do you think that you spend enough time with your family members?
- Do you think that social networking affects the amount of your face to face family communication?
- Do you think that you could spend more time for communication with your family members if you did not spend time with social networking?
- Do you think that social networking affects your ability of face to face communication skills negatively?

Result and discussion

The result of the survey demonstrates that the great majority of the respondents (98.6) have accounts at least one of the very popular social networking sites and they make use of them in their social life.It means that only 7 students do not have a social networking account among the 445 respondents (Figure 1.a). It proves that social networking has entered the daily life of teenagers. The age of 16 has the highest percentage (33.3%) for social networking comparing to the other ages. Figure 1.b shows that the 8th and 12th grades students have the lowest percentages (16.4 % and 15.3%). The reason for these low percentages could be that these pupils studyfor the exams in order to complete their education (In the Romanian Educational System, students finish secondary school in the 8th grade and they should take the exams to enter a prestigious high-school. The 12th grade is the last year of high-school education and the students must take the exam called 'Baccalaureate' to graduate high-school and be able to continue their higher education). This result can be noticed when we look at the percentages of Usage of Social Network by *Ages* (Figure 1.c).

Another important result of the survey is that more than half of the teenagers (61.4%) connect to social network sites at least several times a day (Figure 2.e). Moreover, 54.9% of the total participants spend 2 hours or more time for social networking in a single day (Figure 2.f). According to Figure 2.g, 37.9 % of those teenagers who are social networking two or more hours do not think that they spend too much time on social network sites. I think, as teachers, parents or scholars do, this is a critical result. These participants are wasting 2 or more hours daily and they consider that it is normal for them to do so.

The third part of the tables and figuresin this survey gives the results about face to face communication of the respondents with their families.Figure 3.h shows that 17.8% of the teenagersspend less than 1 hour with their family members. It means that 79 respondents share less than 1 hour of their time with their parents or siblings. Only 71 teenagers (16.0%) out of the 445 participants spend more than 2 hours of their time with their families according to the same figure. According to figure 3.i, 261 participants (58.7%) think that they do not spend enough time with their family members and 99 participants (22.2%) believe that they share enough time with them. Moreover, 193 participants (43.4%) think that social networking during the day affects negativelythe amount of their face to face communication with family members (Figure 2.j); and 162 respondents (36.4%) believe they could spend more time for

communicating with their family members if they did not spend so much time with social networking (Figure 2.k). The last question in the questionnaire was whether social networking affects negatively their ability of face to face communication skills. 42.5% of the teenagers (189 respondents) believe that it affects in an adverse way (Figure 2.l).

Conclusions

Social networking has definitely become one of the important parts of social life of both teenagers and adults. Many people have accounts on the social network sites and they cannot imagine a daily life without those sites.Social network sites give teenagers the possibility of connecting with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests. As a result of this easy way of communication, online communities have become very common and attractive especially for young people all over the world. Young people have thus the possibility to express themselves by using social network sites virtually. Moreover, the increasing use of mobile devices such as smart-phones, tablets and palmtops is another reason for the wide use of social network sites in teenagers' daily life. During social networking, teenagers get and share informationeasily,such as photos or videos, which is a very dynamic and interactive way of communication. Furthermore, teenagers can also involve actively in the social networking process by using many tools that are useful for them, such as tagging the pages that they want or bookmarking them for different purposes.

In fact, this survey also demonstrates that the use of social network sites by the respondent teenagers is very popular and common in teenagers' daily life. Social networking may develop the socialization process of young people with new people or groups. Therefore spending time with social networking does not seem to be a serious problem for them. However, social networking may interfere with other activities or responsibilities of the social life of the teenagers if they spend too much time with social networking. Unfortunately, there is no scientific method or way to prove that spending too much time with social networking can be a crucial addiction that can be considered as a disease or even as a disorder. As afore-mentioned, teenagers spend two or more hours on social network sites and they do not think that it is too much time allotted to this activity.

In terms of communication, social networking has its own advantages. It means that teenagers can communicate with their family members and friends easily. However, this type of communication affects negatively the ability of face to face communication or real life conversations of

teenagers. Moreover, young people whose life is based on social networking do not recognize that their connection with real life is getting weaker and weaker.

Figures and tables

1. General statiscs about social networking

a. Do you have an account for any social networking sites?

Answer	Yes	No
Percentage (%)	98.4	1.6

b. Usage of Social Network by *Grades*

Grade	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Percentage (%)	16.4	19.1	29.9	19.3	15.3

c. Usage of Social Network by *Age*

Age	14	15	16	17	18	19
Percentage (%)	10.2	17.5	33.3	21.6	9.8	7.6

d. Usage of Social Network by *Gender*

Gender	Male	Female
Percentage (%)	51.2	48.8

2. Statisctics about the daily use of social network

e. How frequently do you connect yourself to social networks?

Frequency	Rarely	Several times in a week	Every couple of days	Once a day	Several times a day	Many times per day
Percentage (%)	2.6	7.3	11.2	17.5	23.3	38.1

f. How much time do you spend on social networks in a day?

Period/Day	Less than 1 hour	About 1 hour	About 2 hours	More than 2 hours
Percentage (%)	23.3	21.8	35.2	19.7

g. Do you think that you spend too much time on social networks?

Period	About 1 hour or less			About 2 Hours			More than 2 hours		
Answer	Yes	No	No idea	Yes	No	No idea	Yes	No	No idea
Percentage (%)	25.1	29.8	45.1	48.2	25.3	26.5	65.9	12.6	21.5

3. Statistics about communication and social networking

h. How much time do you spend with your family members face to face in a day?

Period/Day	Less than 1 hour	About 1 hour	About 2 hours	More than 2 hours
Percentage (%)	17.8	26.8	39.4	16.0

i. Do you think that you spend enough time with your family members?

Answer	Yes	No	No idea
Percentage (%)	22.2	58.7	19.2

j. Do you think that social networking affects negatively the amount of your face to face family communication?

Answer	Yes	No	No idea
Percentage (%)	43.4	37.8	18.8

k. Do you think that you could spend more time for communication with your family members if you did not spend time with social networking?

Answer	Yes	No	No idea
Percentage (%)	36.4	41.3	22.3

l. Do you think that social networking affects your ability of face to face communication skills negatively?

Answer	Yes	No	No idea
Percentage (%)	42.5	45.4	12.1

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THE INFLUENCE OF MASS-MEDIA ON THE BASIC PERSONALITY

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Abstract: *The problem of mediatic memory and its impact on the basic personality can be approached from different perspectives. Any of these, however, will appeal to the outcomes obtained by means of multidisciplinary research. The social and cultural context of the human society is increasingly complex and amplified by multimedia. Equipped with a high degree of credibility, this type of communication is also a socializing factor, imposing new directions on the overall dynamics of the social body. Thus, the oral communication of mediatic information becomes a socio-cultural and cognitive way of communication, a coefficient of credibility, a socializing function, an element of building up social dynamic cluster – an indicative factor underlying attitudes, mentality, systems of value; in a word, a reference existential framework. We can suggest that the new ways of communication, in addition to the standardization involved, also requires a rapid adjustment which is not deprived of risk factors.*

Keywords: *multimedia, mediatic memory, mediatic model, basic personality, mediatic effect, mass-media.*

Introduction

We are currently engaged in a process of rapid change in communication through the introduction of increasingly sophisticated and effective media, information networks. Not only is the media offer diverse, but also extremely complex. The transmission strategies can alter the

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message entirely, and in extreme cases can get the same message to include different or even contrasting interpretations. Maletzke used to consider "mediatic effect"[1] all the changes that occur at social or individual level (micro-effects) under the influence of the media, more specifically of the message type. Umberto Eco (1982) used to characterize this phenomenon as follows: "instead of modifying the messages and the emission sources, we can alter the communication process by acting on the circumstances of the message reception"[2]. Mass-media (especially television) is part of the existence of all people; it illustrates a world in which "all things are there, here and now", in a time proximity we cannot become aware of, but which we live: sound, color, movement, light, etc. "Television can influence the viewers' perception of the real world and of the real behavior"[3] (Bandura 1977; Hawkins si Pingree, 1982).

The mediatic memory – multimedia product and effect

New generations of technology compete with each other and decide not only on the latest information and their access, but also upon and the new guidelines / directions of global cognitivity. The messages are being conveyed, explicitly or implicitly, in order to gain the whole range of participation (reaction) both from the collective and individual receiver.

The entire living environment becomes a "computerized" one, so that the individual / person cannot avoid the media coverage. Thus, from a simple option to connect to information networks, the individual will switch to addiction. This process triggers implicitly a structuring of the personal memory functions, a new dynamic of these functions which give rise to a process of *replacing* the "personality" in the surrounding reality and, implicitly, in his relation with mass-media. Thus, a new type of recording the reality is being created (perception, organization, storage, playback, significance etc) which is called *mediatic memory*. "The mediatic memory has a universal, standardizing and highly aggressive character. We do not refer

[1] J.J. van Cuilenburg, *Communication Science*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest , 2004

[2] Umberto Eco, – *Treaty of General Semiotics*, The Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982

[3] Bandura A., *Social Learning Theory*. New York, General Learning Press, 1977; Hawkins and Pingree, *Divergent Psychological Processes in Constructing Social Reality from Mass Media Content* in N.Signorielli & M.Morgan (Eds.) Cultivation Analysis: New Directions in Media Effect research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990

to a deliberately maintained aggression, but to its speed and capacity to spread without limits of time and space."[4] (Laurențiu E.F. -1997).

The variety of mediatic models, which are circulating and being proposed in an increasingly wider space, close-knit the mediatic memory in its optional socio-cognitive dynamics, which an individual or group can join and promote it in their turn, *globalizing* it. There is, thus, a uniformity of information, an apriori levelling of the receiving environment. Globalization is standardized, it involves both the production and proliferation of more and more sophisticated technological tools. The market of this huge and growing offer is not only one of consumption, but also a human space of *adjustment* to the new communication changes. In this context – **the basic personality** - defined as "a personality configuration that is shared by the majority of the society memebers as a result of the common experiences"[5] (Linton-1970) undergoes a number of significant transformations.

The impact of mediatic communication on the formation of personality

From early childhood, the child is exposed to media coverage at home and this does not happen accidentally, but continuously. The media coverage is natural for him, he does not assume it, nor does he see it as an additional factor with playful valences or of other type. We no longer speak about the child being exposed, more or less intensely, to multimedia. What we speak about is an integration of the child's personality into the multimedia environment. He is part of it. The electronic games that children begin to handle ever since they are two or three years old, also have the effect of "customizing" this integration and pinning it. The child becomes addicted to the multimedia, no matter under what form: electronic games, cartoons etc. He cannot "read" and conceptualize the contents and the messages which are transmitted, he captures, stores and keeps them in a passive backup as to their content, but which is active as to his possibility of intervention, control but not creativity. Everything is pre-ordered, only the beneficiary (in this case, the child) is unaware of these things.

[4] Laurentiu, E.F, *Notes of Cultural Memory*, Vitruviu Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997.

[5] Linton, R., *The Cultural Fundamental of Personality*, The Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1970.

The addiction we are talking about here is not onefold The child will be addicted to the physical presence of the media he is used to, which formed his pattern of seeing the world, but he it also addicted to the need for action, intervention. He has got used to controlling or even dominating what he is presented with and what is reality for him. Thus, the acting, event triggering "memory", that of possible and desirable control of the object prevails, to the detriment of a parallel development of dimension or a signification register. The personality will be oriented towards a direct affirmation of "seizing power". The paradox is that the object of this control power is one that can neither be controlled nor dominated, involving all the sides of the child's personality who is in formation. For the subsequent years, as the child will be integrated into the broader social group, these traits of his personality will be exposed to an exercise of inherent "restraint".

In order to be able to get integrated into the group, the child, like everyone else, will look for those ways which seem more familiar to him. There are ways that are offered and promoted by the educational environment itself. The exposure to the media stands to replace, somehow, the educational process. In many respects, the educational process, everywhere, gathers the characteristics of globalization, includes the same requirements that will arise later on in the process of the individual's socialization, also cumulating, more powerfully, the consequences of such education. Thus, the younger generations who are in charge with children and adolescents' formation come themselves from the same fully standardized, depersonalized and undifferentiated context. These generations cannot act towards their followers in a way that is different from the one in which they were and are still being shaped. Stereotyping replaces a formative socialization in which the individual personality is truly free and balanced, benefitting all its potential for creativity and expression, integration. The models are provided and developed by all types of media with a rapidity that defies any imagination or any reference to any "control room" socially desirable and useful. Getting used or programmed to be active and to have the possibility of direct intervention, the child and the adolescent will seek the same ways of manifesting themselves in the socialization programs they are exposed to in preschool, elementary school and even further on. They will seek to assert themselves through the means they "know" and through which they

find themselves in the middle of a group with the same characteristics, as potential accepted or refused members.

The basic personality being ”inherited”, other factors will come into play to determine how the individual will get integrated and evolve further in society. One thing is certain: the most vulnerable type of personality will suffer more in a mediatic environment whose criteria are not selected for "comprehensive" or fully formative education.

The effects of the mediatic message in our country

As far as these issues are concerned, even in our country, we are dealing with a real explosion towards which those ”in charge” have no solution or provide palliative solutions. In parallel, but with an increasing weight, the media coverage, like the direct socio-cultural, personal, inter-human, group one etc. continues its "objective" development and produces the outcomes we can see "live". The violence pushed to murder, early sexual life, prostitution and homosexuality are more likely to spread among the young generations along with the whole procession of inevitable delinquency - theft, running away from home, involvement in pimping networks, drug trafficking, school dropout, a poor level of education, etc. All these are to be found in our country at a scale we can consider alarming.

Another element that illustrates the vulnerability of the human environment for the younger generations is the increasingly high percentage of suicides. During physical maturation, the generations of youngsters build their identity by joining groups. A collective identity, but which for the youngsters also promises a field of personal affirmation provided they accept and put into practice all the behavioral features, no matter how devious they are. It is a mark of personal status within the group, as a categorical manifestation that it is necessary and justified at the same time. The social image obtained will come to strengthen the self-image in the shaping process of the basic personality. During all this dialogue or inter-active communication, which is the individual’s level of awareness? It is a fact that remains to be appreciated – but through what scale?

In the urban areas, more open to the media coverage process, the problems of the young generations are more acute and more numerous. Youth social clotting in small groups that share their land is achieved upon criteria that are too little favorable to their development as partners, as individual personalities. We are dealing with a local representative collective psychology or with an illustration of a further situation which is

quite unlikely to change after the youngsters will leave the group and integrate themselves into adult categories.

The problems related to the family environment are not separate from the teenage ways of socialization/ communication, on the contrary, they have the tendency and capacity to maintain, reproduce and amplify them. Alcoholism, domestic violence, murder, abuse of all kinds (including against children) are tributaries to the socialization process and, implicitly, to the media coverage.

Conclusions

From the perspective that interests us here, we can draw some data that relate to the basic personality formation, on generations, under the circumstances of globalization, depending on increasingly sophisticated and specialized media coverage.

The higher the media coverage, the more the individual personality tends to overlap with basic personality, to become a "global and standardized" process, in which mass-media is one of the responsible factors. In this type of communication to which all and each one of us must adapt, it comes without saying that the individuals will not assert their personality to the full, nor will they be required to do so. Communication is predetermined, in terms of a goal that wants to be achieved, most often a practical and material one and as quick as possible in terms of its achievement.

As a result, the collective memory is reduced, in fact, to a collective emotional experience: a psychology of the crowds always likely to exceed a degree of relative stability and able to pass to extreme manifestations. The individual's belongingness to this behaviour is for him a way of being, but one that exonerates him of any liability and any possible consequences. It is a new type of anonymous identity, the proto model of the faceless hero.

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MULTIMEDIA AND SMALL SCHOOLCHILDREN AS TARGET PUBLIC

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Abstract: *After 1990, the television, the computer/tablet, internet, multifunction mobile phone broke into homes in Romania; there are many dwellings, especially in urban areas, where modern means of information and training are found in every room. In this context deep studies of multi-media and school age children as target audience have emerged. The conclusions are clear and linked to the undesirable effects of multi-media presence in the lives of* ***children of school age****.*

Keywords: *multi-media, small schoolchild, electronic drug, electronic babysitter.*

Argument

In a globalized world, unprecedentedly dynamic and hungry for knowledge, multi-media has become indispensable to all. For children these modern means of communication can be a friend or even a close person that they alone can choose. Asked of whom her family is formed, a girl of seven years said: "My family is mother, father, grandmother and TV, computer/tablet, mobile phone." From the perspective of younger children, TV and tablet are someone close, familiar and good. For older children, multi-media is the friend, good friend that helps and teaches them not to get bored and adolescents considers the Internet a source of knowledge, a guide to help them get in life which they do not know well but which is fascinating. "What happens to children raised by TV and computer? Are they forever re-doomed to a malfunction of the brain, due to its structural alterations? The answer depends on the time they spent in front of the screen, especially during preschool (2-6 years) and also the degree or intensity of their involvement in other activities outside of time devoted to watching." [1]

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Realities

We can say without question that the target which multi-media today requires is to become a partner of all the families, the community, the school and of the society. At least 10 television stations are direct addressing: Children. Of course, there are also often rhetorical interrogations. Parents are often heard saying "of course, multi-media is an acquired good", then it follows a list of concerns because of the TV, computer/tablet, Internet, Smart-phones. Also specialists (doctors, teachers, sociologists), virtually all socio-professional categories, are hostile, condemning something that everyone uses permanently.

Why this attitude? The answer seems simple to reach all parents, schools, society, and can be formulated as the "electronic drug" and why not "the necessary electronic evil left to the world in the end of the twentieth century."

The presence of multi-media, especially TV, tablet/computer, multifunctional mobile phone in child's life is seen differently by parents. Several trends have been structured: the first believes that multi-media is the cause of the ill in child's life, therefore the child must not be allowed to access the "electronic drug"; second, that there are no consequences and as such the access is unlimited and too often encouraged by parents; Both are reductionist and I believe that nothing is wrong if you know the necessities, the child's needs and the development stage but also the harmful effects of modern means of information if used by children without limits.

Children learn from the age of 3/4 to use the TV and tablet, often watching many programs with parents, adults or alone; all too many families have in their children's room TV and the tablet takes the place of the feeding bottle. This phenomenon usually occurs in families where the tablet is considered an important factor in the cognitive development of children, their education, sometimes even "able to give their children more than they themselves can provide." There were met many cases in which TV has become the "new type of modern and materially unpretentious nanny. Parents solve their problems without child care and believes that tablet games and TV programs are "precious, interesting and helps to build a healthy mentality, opening horizons". Contrary to these positive consideration to the tablet and television, psychologists and educators have

[1] V. Gheorge, *The effects on the Human Mind*, Prodromos Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p.42-43.

found that the method of "non-stop" TV watching and games playing on the tablet are the "enemies number one" of children as in terms of health, frequent concentration on the tablet/TV screen has a detrimental effect on the nervous system of the child, the child becomes irritable, bold. They also forget that the child's body is quite limited and that the body does not have the same capacity as an adult in this context when the time of the child is spent only for watching TV and tablet buttoning, the consequences of this way of life are unfavorable for the normal development of children, estrangement/alienation appearing at an early age.

But for a good judgment we must also know the other multi-media trend: parents who are totally and vehemently opposed to TV, tablet, internet, multifunctional mobile phone, since they consider an obstacle to the normal growth of children; with computer and tablet, the TV disconnects children from solving tasks/themes incumbent on them, changes them and even disrupts daily schedule of play and learning, and consequently encourages passivity, convenience, reduced interest in learning, reduces time to be spent outdoors. This is the view of parents who say that you need to supplement children's education, to capture their attention and time that the TV, the computer could kidnap from them.

Beyond these two reductionist tendencies, unfavorable for the accurate development of children's personality we can find another category of parents who use multi-media from the perspective of operant conditioning/behaviorism. The concept of modeling behavior is achieved through positive and negative reinforcements. Simona-Elena Bernat[2] believes that "positive reinforcement is obtained through permission to access something pleasant and negative reinforcement is obtained by allowing you to avoid unpleasant stimuli." As such any behavior considered desirable/any good child behavior leads to his access to the tablet, TV, internet, multifunctional mobile phone, **multi-media thus appearing as a reward and not a positive reinforcement**. For aggressive, inappropriate behavior, for poor results at school, the child is punished by forbidding him the right to watch television or computer, to play with multipurpose tablet or mobile phone; multi-media **"appears as a punishment, not a negative reinforcement because it does nothing else than to suppress bad behavior"[3]**. This way of parents as a way of

[2] Bernat Simona-Elena, *Effective Learning Technique*, Presa Universitară Clujană Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2003.

[3] Bernat Simona-Elena, *Effective Learning Technique*, Presa Universitară Clujană Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2003.

deprivation or offer of the right to use multi-media is not correct pedagogically, failing to teach children what is right and what is not good.

In rural areas, there are parents who exempt their children from household chores to which they have to participate in order to have more time for playing or teaching, for what they want to do in a non-formal and informal context. It is not the teaching solution to be encouraged, because it is very important to induce to the child a reasonable, selective relationship, an evaluation of everything he encounters in everyday challenge.

Multi-media is not the only obstacle in the lives of children, but it is imperative that parents and even some school install a password for certain television programs, to limit access to everything that is presented; children use television and computer/tablet to escape the real world and enter a fantasy world and there is a risk of loss of childhood/innocence. The effect is predictable: the television, the computer help children to discover adult life (children get to know the sex life and her secrets, dangers on conceiving a child, causes of conjugal conflicts, incompetence and dishonesty of certain political leaders) A common, unsupervised school age child, or encouraged to use multi-media, is usually spending almost 30-40 hours a week watching television, using the tablet, PC, Smart-phones, as such and in place of the human supervisor there appears an "electronic babysitter" with many perverse effects. Things get more complicated with the increase of the age of the child. Researches on multi-media noted that the "on the age of 12, a normal child spent generally 12,000 hours watching TV programs or using the computer/tablet; an adolescent finishing high school has seen, helped by the TV, computer, more than 15,000 television murders." Harry J. Skornia, media researcher, prepared a study on the effect on children of the prolonged exposure to TV, computer. He retained attention mostly with the possibility that the message broadcasted by TV, computer/tablet stimulates the aggression of the youngest viewers. If the television, the computer produce learning by example, then children, like adults, are influenced by these major examples. Problems that occur in these programs for children and even teenagers are quite high. Of course, we think about the manner of realization, the staff working for the realization of programs in specialized departments. For a correct perception of children's programs, the most important is to know the reception method used by children. The child of school age has neither the necessary ability nor the interest to differentiate the past from the present and the future. He perceives everything as being contemporary, without limit; something without beginning and end.

Methodology of watching children's programs is to reach by parents, and the television has only limited opportunity to understand and use. It's quite complicated for creative programs to compose a message that meet certain requirements related to moral and education, as many parents allow much longer to their children (sometimes for pre-buddies ages) to watch programs for adults, sometimes even totally unsuitable programs. In general, children begin to look at those broadcasts their parents do. This period of imitation does not last very long; children begin to develop their tastes and to set preferences. At this time the child becomes accustomed viewer. Thus, it is found in the family a preference for programs and the need for each family member to hold one's own television. For example, between the age of 3 to 16 child spends many more hours watching TV and computer than in school. In most cases, not only television and computer are the sole mass media in contact with the child, but they take leadership. The effects of television/computer/tablet are heavily dependent on the child's mental and intellectual capacity and the process of forming its personality.

Unquestionably, the influence of parents' social status plays an important role; families with better material circumstances have more possibilities of development of children and vice versa, in poor families in material terms, the TV can be one of the few sources of education. TV screen seems to be sending the child from the prosaic everyday world to a wonderful world in which he identifies only with invincible heroes. Telenovelas have a function of mental therapy from this point of view. The private life of those appearing in the TV series is a great attraction for children.

In general, children are attracted to programs for adults. Programs for children - shows with puppets, films about animals and nature and scientific programs that aim to help children to develop their personality, are not really appreciated, are not attractive. Television, along with computer, attract children primarily because they are accessible and usually do not require intellectual effort to be pursued. It is also perhaps the easiest way for children to spend their free time. Another reason is that they give children the opportunity to discover the "secrets" of reality, being placed in adult life. It is undeniable that TV/computer/tablet can shape the child and the system of norms and moral values. Even fun programs change the child's vision of the world.

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PARENTAL PERCEPTION OF THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES - PSYCHOSOCIAL CORRELATES

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Abstract: *The study aims to explore the psychosocial correlates (age, residential area and relationships between parents) of parental perceptions of children's behaviours and communication difficulties. Participants in the study were 120 female, aged 24 - 46 years (M = 34.34, SD = 4.55), mothers of 120 preschool children (64 boys and 51 girls) from 6 Kindergartens in Bucharest and Târgu Jiu, Romania. In order to collect data about family relations, parental perceptions about their child's behaviour and communication difficulties, three self-rating questionnaires were used. An additional questionnaire collected data about children and parents gender, age, and place of residence. The results highlighted interesting differences in mothers' perceptions of their children (children's behaviours and communication difficulties)according to their perceived relationship with the husband, and place of residence, and according to child' s gender too. The results can be used in parental training's programs that help parents to achieve positive transformations in their perceptions of their children via transforming their inter-parental relationship and accommodating their positive perceptions to the child's age and gender.*

Keywords: *parental perceptions of child's behaviour and communication difficulties, positive parental perceptions, inter-parental relationships.*

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Introduction

The current changes which are produced in the Romanian society, including the Romanian educational system, have important effects at all its levels, also concerning the primary level of education (primary school), reality which requires a re-evaluation of many of the aspects involved in approaching children both in the school setting and in the family setting (Iftime, and Vărăşteanu, 2013; Catalano, 2014)[1].

Many research works aiming to explore the role of parents in the child's development are focusing on the parental perceptions about their children as predictor of children's social outcomes (Powell et al. 2010)[2], as "cause behind behaviours" that highly influence the children's development (Baldwin, 2011, p.16)[3], especially "their likelihood of providing those resources" (McLeod, 2008, p. 53)[4] needed for an optimal development.

The understanding of parents' perceptions and beliefs about their children is an important issue (Baldwin, 2011, p.16) because the way the adults communicate "their evaluation to the child about how « good » or « bad » are their behaviours and the extent to which they are expected (…) might lead sensitive adults to coherent response in a day-to-day interaction or in more structured fashion, like in prevention programmes or schooling, for competence consolidation"[5]. (Bigras, Gosselin, Capuano, Normandeau, & Parent, 2008, p.3) Gupta, &Singhal (2004) in a research, tried to "highlight the process of developing positive perceptions in the

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[1] Iftime, A., &V*ărăş*teanu, C. M. (2013). Language Learning in Preparatory Classes in the Romanian Educational System. ***Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 93,*** 326-331.; **Catalano, H. (2014). The Implications of the Elements of Outdoor Education in the Preparatory Class Curriculum.** ***International Journal of Education and Research 2 (6). 545 – 550.***

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[5] Bigras, M., Gosselin, C., Capuano, F., Normandeau, S., & Parent, S., (2008). A Comparison of Parent and Teacher Ratings of Child Behaviours: the Pygmalion Effect Revisited, available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/files/280/9537850.pdf

parents about their children ”because positive perceptions are different outcomes to stress and other negative experiences'' (p.28)[6].

Researchers (as cited by Bigraset al., 2008, p.4) found out that “compared to non-depressed mother's, depressed mothers tend to describe their child as more disturbing”[7] and that “parenting stress, as the result of the negative assessment of their child, is associated repeatedly to child's social competencies or difficulties”[8] (Bigras, 2008).

Literature also states that “the perceived family dynamics may be involved in creating negative parental perceptions”[9] (Esbjørn, Caspersen, Sømhovd, Breinholst, &Reinholdt-Dunne, 2014, p.116). In the family dynamics, a major role is played by the interparental relationships (Feetham, 2011). As it is mentioned in the literature, family relations “can be characterized by conflicts, or can be very harmonious”[10] (Eichelsheimet al., 2009, p.37) and both situations “will be mirrored” in aspects of parenting (Yu, &Gamble, 2008, p.757), in children's developmental outcomes and in their short-term coping and long-term adjustment (Parke, &Buriel, 2008) (see: Negovan, Sterian, & Martin, 2015).

Barthassat (2014) notice that “previous research focused (…) on positive and negative effects that constructive and destructive parental conflict behaviors have on a child's condition and behavior” found that ”Depending on the style of parental conflict behaviour, children's emotional reactions and behavior vary from positive to negative, and are moderated or mediated by different variables” (p.11)[11].

The present study, based on the theoretical perspectives from the literature on the family as component of socio-cultural context of

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[6] Gupta, A., &Singhal, N., (2004). Positive perceptions in parents of children with disabilities. Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal, 15(1), 22-35.

[7] Bigras, M., Gosselin, C., Capuano, F., Normandeau, S., & Parent, S., (2008). A Comparison of Parent and Teacher Ratings of Child Behaviours: the Pygmalion Effect Revisited, available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/files/280/9537850.pdf

[8] Idem

[9] Esbjørn, B. H., Caspersen, I. D., Sømhovd, M. J., Breinholst, S., &Reinholdt-Dunne, M.L. (2014). Exploring the Contribution of Parental Perceptions to Childhood Anxiety. Scandinavian Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychology, 2(3), 115-123.

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preschoolers' development (Sun, &Fernandes, 2014,p.270), investigated the differences in perceptions of the parents of preparatory class children according to the relationships between the parents (mother reports) and socio demographic variables such as parents' age and place of residence.

It was predicted that: 1) mothers reporting positive relationships with the fathers will report a more positive perceptions of their children when compared to the mothers reporting conflicting and controlling inter-parental relationships; 2) mother's and father's age, place of residence and inter-parental relationships will interact in differentiating the parental perception of the children.

Participants

Participants in this study were 120 female, aged 24 to 46 years (M = 33.59, SD = 4.93), 99 living in urban and 21 in rural area, mothers of 120 children, 71 boys and 49 girls, aged 6 - 7 years (M = 6.48, SD = 0.52) enrolled in the preparatory class from 6 elementary schools in Bucharest and TârguJiu, Romania.

Instruments

The variable "Family relations" ("inter-parental relationships") was assessed with a 15-item scale adapted from the Dominance-Accommodation Scale (DA; Hoskins, 1986). The whole scale is a 37 items self-report instrument to measure dominance-accommodation in couples and families (Mitrofan, 1994; Sava, and Negrei, 2006). Factorial analysis of the 15 selected items yielded three components corresponding to the presumed dimensions of inter-parental relationships: conflicting inter-parental relationships, controlling inter-parental relationships, positive inter-parental relationships (E.g.: I know my partner takes me seriously when I am concerned about conditions in today's world; I insist on having my say about how much free time we spend with friends). In Hoskins' definition (1986) higher scores on dominance express the fact that the partner could be perceived as the controlling one (Fischer, and Corcoran, 2000; Sava, and Negrei, 2006).

The variables "Parental Perceptions about their child's behaviour" and "Parental perception of their child's communication difficulties" were assessed with a 9-item scale (E.g.: „my child is inhibited in relationships with the family members") created by the second author of this paper based on the Parent Perception Inventory (PPI; Hazzard, Christensen,

&Margolin, 1983).[12] Parental perceptions of the child's behaviour were assessed as: very disobedient (1), disobedient (2) and compliant (3). Parental perceptions of the child's communication difficulties were assessed as: severe (3), medium (2) and minor (1).

An additional questionnaire collected data about children and parents gender, age, and place of residence.

Data Analysis Procedures

The descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for all variables. Bivariate Correlations procedure, One-way analysis of variance and Univariate analysis of variance were conducted in order to test the research hypotheses

Results

As is shown below (Figure 1), most mothers reported their relationships with their husbands as being controlling inter-parental relationships (70/58.3%), a significant percentage reported positive inter-parental relationships (43/35.8%), and a smaller percentage reported conflicting inter-parental relationships (7/5.8%).

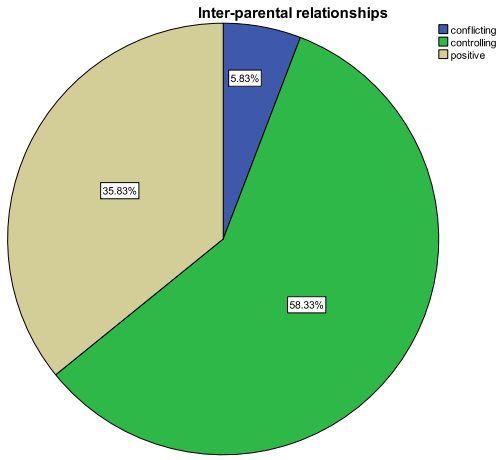

Figure 1. Distribution of mothers according to their perception of the inter-parental relationships

[12] Hazzard, A., Christensen, A., &Margolin, G., *Children's Perceptions of Parental Behaviors.* Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 1983, *11*(1), 49-59.

The mean scores of measured variables, as is shown in table 1, indicate that the mother perceive their child's behaviour as disobedient to compliant, and their child's communication difficulties as minor to medium.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the measured variable

Scale	Mean	SD	Cronbach's
Inter-parental relationships	2.30	.57	.81
Parental Perceptions about the child's behaviour	2.33	.62	.73
Perception of parents about the child's communication difficulties	1.63	.67	.70

Through the Bivariate Correlations procedure we found small but statistically significant Pearson correlation coefficients between inter-parental relationships, parental perceptions of the child's behaviour, child's communication difficulties, and parents' age (table 2). The older the father is, the more likely the mother was to report inter-parental relationships evolving from conflicting to positive. The older the mother is, the more likely the mother was to report a positive perception of their child's behaviour and less child's communication difficulties.

Table 2. Correlations Matrix of the Variables

Scale	Inter parental relationships	Parental perceptions about the child's behaviour	Parental Perceptions about the child's communication difficulties	Mother's age	Father's age
Inter-parental relationships	1				
Parental Perceptions about the child's		1			
Parental Perceptions about the child's communication difficulties		-.81**	1		
Mother's age		.17*	-.204**	1	
Father' s age	.19**			.67**	1

** Correlation is significant at. .001 levels (2-tailed), * Correlation is significant at. .05 levels (2-tailed). N= 120

Differences in perceptions of their children according to the mothers' perceived inter-parental relationships

The One Way ANOVA indicated that mothers reporting positive inter-parental relationships (N= 43) reported a statistically significant (F2 = 3.65 and 18.63, p = .03 and p< .001) positive perceptions about the child's behaviour (M = 2.43, SD= .53) and about the child's communication difficulties (M = 1.67, SD= .65) compared to the mothers reporting controlling and conflicting inter-parental relationships.

Main and interaction effects of mother's and father's age, place of residence and inter-parental relationships on the perception of children's behaviour and communication difficulties

In order to test the presumption about differences in perceptions of the children (both, child's behaviour and child's communication difficulties)according to the interaction between the mother's and father's age, place of residence and inter-parental relationships, a series of MANOVA and ANOVA's were performed.

Inter-parental relationships differentiated both perception of child's behaviour [F(2, 119) = 3.20, p = .020, Partial eta squared= .09] and child's communication difficulties [F(2, 119) = 18.15, p < .001, Partial eta squared = .41].

Interaction between mother's age and inter-parental relationships differentiated both perception of child's behaviour [F (2, 119) = 3.52 p = .02, Partial eta squared = .11] and perception of child's communication difficulties [F(2, 119) = 2.62, p = .05, Partial eta squared = .08].

Interaction between children gender, place of residence, mother's age and inter-parental relationships differentiated children's perception as far as their behaviour is concerned [F(2, 119) = 5.32, p = .02, Partial eta squared = .07].

Inter-parental relationships in interaction with child's gender and father's age affected the scores of the perceptions of children as far as their behaviour is concerned [F(2, 119) = 6.03, p = .02, Partial eta squared = .07].

Inter-parental relationships in interaction with child's gender, mother's age and the place of residence affected the scores of the perceptions of children as far as their communication difficulties is concerned [F (2, 119) = 5.14, p = .02, Partial eta squared = .06]

The highest mean score of perception of child's behaviour (child perceived as compliant) (M= 2.75, SD = .46) was found for the girls from

the urban area, with mother and father aged 30 - 39 years, with positive inter-parental relationships.

The lowest mean score of perception of child's behaviour (child perceived as very disobedient to disobedient) (M= 1.50, SD = .70) was found for the boys from the urban area, with mother and father aged 20 - 29 years, and with conflicting inter-parental relationships.

The highest mean score of perception of child's communication difficulties(child perceived as having severe communication difficulties) (M= 2.50, SD = .70) was found for the girls from the urban area, with mother and father aged 20 - 29 years, with conflicting inter-parental relationships.

The lowest mean score of perception of child's communication difficulties(child perceived as having medium to minor communication difficulties) (M= 1.33, SD = .58) was found for the boys from the urban area, with mother and father aged 30 - 39 years, with positive inter-parental relationships.

Discussions and conclusions

The present study investigated the differences in mother's perception of preparatory class children's behavior and communication difficulties according to the inter-parental relationships and parents' age.

Findings from this investigation provided support for the hypothesis that children whose mothers report positive inter-parental relationships will be perceived more compliant and having less communication difficulties than children whose mothers report conflicting and controlling inter-parental relationships.These results are similar to the ones presented in the specialty literature (Alessandri, Caprara, Eisenberg, &Steca, 2009). As far as the second hypothesis is concerned, the results partly support it.

Inter-parental relationships differentiate perception of child's behaviour and of communication difficulties as a pattern of variables. When interacting with other variables, inter-parental relationships differentiate either the perception of child's behaviour or the perception of the child's communication difficulties.

Girls from the urban area, with mother and father aged 30 - 39 years, with positive inter-parental relationships are perceived as compliant but boys from urban area, with younger mother and father (aged 20 - 29 years) reporting conflicting inter-parental relationships are perceived as very disobedient to disobedient.

Boys from the urban area, with mother and father aged 30 - 39 years, with positive inter-parental relationships are perceived as having medium

to minor communication difficulties but girls from the urban area, with mother and father aged 20 - 29 years, with conflicting inter-parental relationships are perceived as having severe communication difficulties.

These results seem to be congruent with the ones reported in other studies (Brandon, Sidebotham, Ellis, Bailey, &Belderson, 2011; Powell et al., 2010; Eichelsheimet al., 2009; Fletcher, Bridges, and Hunter, 2007).

The findings of the present study should be interpreted in the context of several limitations. First, only mothers' reports were used to assess the family relationships. In order to gain a fuller understanding of the investigated association, more research is needed on this association with parenting styles. However, some mothers may not have been able to define their child communication difficulties and to corectly interpret the behavioural problems. As Dunlop, Hughes, Fee, & Marwick (2008) state: "Children's behaviours are subject to interpretation. The extent to which behaviours are perceived as problematic or not is often dependent on context. Differences of view about the same behaviour can occur within families, in school and in the wider community. Day-to-day variations can occur, and will be influenced by a whole range of factors" (p.8)[13].

Future research may expand the scope of the study by examining some potential moderators of parental perception of their child's behaviours: family stress or parenting self-efficacy.

Despite these limitations, we believe that the research's results ads to the literature by indicating the direct association between inter-parental relationships and parents' perception of their children.

The results can be used in parental training's programs that help parents to achieve positive transformations in their perceptions of their child via transforming their inter-parental relationship and accommodating their positive perceptions to the child's age and gender.

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THE EFFICIENCY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT IN THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF PUPILS WITH CES

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Abstract: *For every child with special educational needs it is necessary an individual approach of the training and realization of the motor educational program.*

The experiment had been realized on the basis of proper investigation methods (observation method, questionnaire method, experimental one) and processing, analysis and gathered data interpretation during the research (mathematical method, logical method, graphic method, statistic one). During the adapted physical education classes, the abilities (skills) development and education can be realized during its entire period using in this purpose free exercises or with objects, individual, in pairs or in group; also exercises can be made under the form of relay race or in more varied forms and in conditions always changed and with different difficulty levels.

The presentation of a content adapted to the age characteristics had reduced progressively the discrepancies between the subjects and had determined the knowledge of the skills that all the subjects use in the natural, domestic, vocational, communitarian, recreational context.

Our research confirms the inter-dependency of the motor abilities education with the manifestation level of the individual motor qualities, that contributes to facilitating the social integration of the pupils with CES.

Keywords: *strategies, instruction, motor ability, pupils, integration, special educational requests, adapted physical education.*

Introduction

Physical education and sport is constituted as a necessity for all the society's individuals and in special for those with special needs; from here appears also the term of *adapted physical education and sport* following the

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recovery and social integration by promoting the adaptation programs for a child with different types of deficiencies. The adapted physical education content is connected to the motor behavior or to the ensemble of varied corporal techniques that influence in a complex way the subjects. Physical education from special schools puts the child in the position of a social being, apt to contribute to his own training and development, being at the same time an addition of the working program of the Kinetic therapist through which it is aimed the recovery of the deficiency functions and winning the functional independency. Adapted physical education for children with special education needs supposes the general objectives accomplishment: the realization of a as good as possible physical development; the use of certain adequate means that contribute to the obtaining of the will to practice physical activity; understanding the deficiency and winning self confidence necessary to the adaptation and social integration. General objectives can be realized by developing educational activities that hold certain characteristics: adapted physical education must include these children with special needs in the mass educational system; the main principle of the adapted physical education is the equal right to education for all children, making abstraction of the social, cultural, religion, ethnic environment, spoken language or the economic conditions where they come from. Social integration of the persons with special educational needs represent the common purpose of all educational systems and have at their basis the three principles: nominalization principle, consisting of the application of the curative and re-adaptation models; the acceptance of the other, principle that describes the physical and socio-cultural obstacles totality that hinder the individual's participation with special educational needs at the social life and the interaction principle that represent a combination of the actions of the two early mentioned principles. Having as main objective, social integration, adapted physical education respects the educational approaches that put in their center in-dividual problems, but also a preventive approach that suppose the identification of risk factors (sedentariness, social isolation, unhealthy nutrition habits) and making programs to fight them. The effects of physical exercises practice by the persons with mental deficiencies can be grouped on three levels: on the social interaction level, by the benefits brought by the peers interaction; on the self image level, by increasing the confidence in one's strengths; on the physical condition level, by improving the biological factors.

The classification and characteristics of the mental deficiency

Specialists from the domain consider that "in a certain way, the mentally deficient child is in an equal manner a motor deficiency" but such as the mental systematization is different from an organizational and functional point of the normal child, the same is the motor and psycho-motor organization plan that is different due to the following aspects[1]: immaturity or morph-functional structures lesions responsible for the general and special motor activity; sub-cortical lesions that do not allow a integration coordination of synthesis of the motor behavior; pronounced autonomy of the somatic structures in comparison with the psychic ones; the lack of a hierarchy organization ascending – descending in the information transmission and processing; weak intellectual dominance. Domain specialists present the following classification and characteristics of the mental deficiency and can be met frequently in the special schools from the Argeş district. Slightly mental deficiency characterizes the individuals that have difficulties in the analysis and synthesis processes, present problems of orientation in space, form, size, weight perception and the nature of the material from which there are made different objects and takes place in a higher period of time in comparison with the color perception, partial immobility in thinking, understanding difficulties of the new knowledge, delay in language development, voluntary memory is weakened, present difficulties in imitating movements, the affective sphere is poorly developed, psycho-motor disorders emphasized through the low level of the movements made with speed and precision, spatial orientation and weak temporal one, realizing with difficulty voluntary relaxation and passing from a motor activity to another. Children with moderate mental deficiency present the characteristics: they develop communication skills and personal autonomy during childhood; scholastic performances remain at the level of a 2nd grade pupil; in the family space they present a high level of autonomy being able, at an adult age, to make under supervision qualified or unqualified activities. In the severe mental deficiency we notice that motor activity is insufficient developed. Volunteer motor activity is marked by trembles, imprecise movements that lack fineness. We can see other general motor disorders – of walking, equilibrium. Psycho-motor disorders will reflect in diffi-culties that these subjects have in assimilating the spoken, written language also the auto-

[1] Bota, A, Teodorescu, S. and Stănescu, M., *Adapted Physical Activities*, Printech, Bucharest, 2007, p. 144.

serving abilities[2]. Our experimental researches had contained pupils with slight mental deficiency, moderate mental deficiency and sever one. The Special School no.2 Piteşti has a pre-scholars group, 6 classes of primary education and 5 classes of gymnasium education.

Adapted physical education and sport – formative motor activities

The action area in the pupils field with special educational needs is situated between studying the normality state and the pathological one, going over a complex direction that includes prevention, finding out, diagnosis, therapy, recovery, education, scholar and professional orientation, social integration and ulterior evolution monitoring of the person in need. Adapted physical education and sport has imposed in the latest years a distinct philosophy, an institutional frame, and clearly stated competencies ensemble, trans-disciplinary original strategies that have as finality the creation of a values system with a signification for the individual and for the society, capable to put in a new light the person with deficiency. Properly motivated and without being made to feel inferior, the pupil with mental deficiency can learn the motor skills necessary in the physical and sport activities, these representing an important mean of obtaining the personal success, of improving the self image[3]. Motor learning raises problems that are due to the understanding level and that is why motor learning programs must contain: the ability to be made gradually, in successive steps, with precise tasks; selected means to be used must be in concordance with the needs and capacities of the person with deficiency; practicing the same physical exercises for a bigger period of time, patience being the key of assimilating certain motor skills; verbal communication helps to learning the concepts and problems solving; motivation level increase; selected activities must rouse the subject's interest; to take into account the deficiency level. The participation at competitions contributes at the self image improvement, at the consolidation of relationship modalities with the others, at the capacity of team cooperation development, the acquisition of certain motor abilities, at the knowledge and their acceptance by the others. The psycho-socio-individual formation of the persons with special educational needs are materialized through: the psycho-motor function development; effort capacity improvement; team work improvement; the improvement of the

[2] Ghergut, A., *Social Psycho-pedagogical Synthesis*, Polirom, Iaşi, 2005, p. 131

[3] Dragnea, A. şi Mate-Teodorescu, S., *Sports Theory*, Fest, Bucharest, 2002, p. 89.

affective motivational structures; the respiratory capacity increase; the development of cognitive structures in learning the game rules. The sport competition impact in the socio-professional competition of the persons with special educational needs: on the individual plan: morph-functional recovery; physical–emotionally equilibrium; active rest; on a social level: social integration; professional integration; on an economic level: scholar achievement; professional one. By knowing the complexity of the pupils with special educational needs, the physical education teacher can bring working methodological corrections so that the subjects' interaction with mental deficiencies is effective and efficient[4].

Research premises

In realizing the present research we started from the following premises: optimum physical condition is obtained and maintained through the regular realization of certain physical efforts adequate and according to the individual's possibilities; optimum physical condition, realized by practicing the systematic physical exercise, has benefic effects by increasing the self confidence; improves the relationship with the other children, contributing to the socializing and pupils integration with the special education needs, it is realized through physical activities projected for the entire existence, having as result the formation of body hygiene skills and personal autonomy, of working space organization and respecting the imposed rules; strength improvement, endurance and muscular flexibility go to the increase of the abilities and equilibrium level, requested by the quotidian tasks, removing accidents appearance; by interacting and children co-operation, with and without disabilities, a reciprocal and non-conditioned acceptance is obtained; during the adapted physical education class, the physical education teacher must prove a good professional training, understanding, patience, calm, but especially love towards children; communication abilities of the physical education teacher in the relation with parents but especially with pupils increase the interest for practicing the physical exercise.

Research purpose and objectives

The purpose of out research has been: to prove that the adapted physical education through the functions that they exert and the effects

[4] Gherguţ, A., *Psychopedagogy of the persons with special needs. Integrated education strategies*, Polirom, Iaşi, 2001, p. 198.

that they produce must get a higher percentage in establishing the instructional strategies that foresee the improvement of the physical condition and the integration and socialization capacity of children with special educational needs; contributions in what concerns the clarification of certain major problems that condition the selection and the use of means specific to the adapted physical education. The research objectives can be resumed to: realizing an applicative study in connection with abilities' education (skills) during the instructive – educative process on the basis of means specific to the football game; analysis and synthesis of the most significant aspects of the instructive-educational process in what concerns the used action systems; discovering and establishing limitative and favorable factors in realizing the instruction programs; to take into account in the didactic planning of the reform in the education; the organization of the adapted physical education on the basis of certain adequate, modern, instructive instruction models.

Research hypotheses

1. Knowing the manifestation level of the pupils' abilities (skills) can direction the methods and used means during the adapted physical education.

2. Using during the physical education class means specific to the football game and adapted to the individual psycho-motor particularities contributes to their assimilation and practice both in sport competitions and in the free time.

3. The efficiency and productivity to the instructive-educational process are conditioned by the communication abilities and the manager qualities of the physical education teacher.

Research design

The research has been developed during the physical education classes (2 classes/week) of the Special School no.2 Piteşti in the period September 2008 – June 2009, at the level of the gymnasium cycle, 5th grade – 8th grades. There have been investigated a number of 30 pupils (10 pupils 5th grade, 5 pupils 6th grade, 10 pupils 7th grade and 5 pupils 8th grade) respecting for every pupil the medical diagnosis with which he is framed and the semester calendar plan planned at the beginning of the scholar year 2007-2008.

Used research methods

The observation method consists of the intentional following and the exact, systematic recording of the different behavior manifestations of the individual or group also of the situational context of the behavior. The conversation method is a discussion engaged between the researcher and the subject that allows the more direct survey of the subject's inferior life[5]. The statistic – mathematic method catches the quantitative relations between the recorded phenomena. The statistic processing was based on calculating the following indicators: the ponderate arithmetic mean ($\bar{x}$), median (M), superior limit (Max), inferior limit (Min), amplitude (W), standard deviation (S), variability coefficient (Cv). The graphic method consists in the graphic allocation of data statistical process under the form of curves of probabilities, histograms, schemes, graphics and tables. The measurements method and recordings consists of applying the three tasks Special Olympics specially created for the pupils with special needs for the abilities development necessary to the participation to the football competition[6].

Working programs for the physical education condition

In selecting these activities and exercises for these subjects we took into account the age, deficiency severity, their option, material equipment of the school unity, but firstly *to point out the abilities, not the disabilities*. The functional capacity and the mental age will condition the presentation way of the actions, activities that should be learnt. The presentation of a content adapted to the age characteristics have reduces progressively the discrepancies between the subjects and have determined the assimilation of skills that all the subjects use in a natural, domestic, vocational, communitarian, recreational context. The effects of practicing physical exercises by the persons with mental deficiency can be grouped on three levels: on the social interaction plan, by the brought benefits by the interaction with the peers; on the self image plan, by the increase of the own strengths confidence; on the physical condition plan, by the improvement of the biologic factors[7]. The individual possibility to cope with the physical and functional requests from the quotidian and sport

[5] Siedentop, D., *Introduction to Physical Education, Fitness and Sport*, McGraw-Hill, sixth edition, 2007, pp. 123-126

[6] Foundation "Special Olympics", România, *Football game rules*, Bucharest, 2005, p. 155.

[7] Epuran, M., *Methodology of Body Activities Research*, Fest, Bucharest, 2005, p. 139

activities, dependent of his anatomic, physiologic and psychological condition, takes a certain signification in the case of the persons with special needs, at which the risk due to the movement lack is increased; the majority of deficiencies have predispositions to develop hypo kinetics affections that can be added to the clinic frame of the deficiency that hey already have. For the physical condition improvement we will center our attention on its components development and that is: the cardio-vascular resistance; articular mobility; local muscular resistance; local muscular strength; corporal composition (by its maintaining in the normal limit). The programs for the physical condition development are strictly individualized and recommend the establishment of: priority objective for every subject; physical condition components over which the practice influence will be exercised; corporal segments that will be trained; used tests for the manifestation level of the physical condition. In the table 1 we will present the general methodic lines for the elaboration of a exercises program in what concerns the physical condition improvement for the mental deficiencies, adapted de-pending on the subjects and particularities of their instruction[8]. The main means that can be used for the development of physical condition components are: For the local muscular strength development – in the conditions in which the muscular innervations is intact and there are no pathologies, the work for strength can be made mainly without restrictions; we will try to work in a balance manner both for the agonist muscles and for the antagonist ones, with accent on the development of the extensors, abductor and supinatory muscles. Examples of exercises: for facial prostrate or from the palms or knees, bending and arm stretching; from spread standing position; flexions of the forearm on the arm with slight loads, clenching a ball of small dimensions and different consistencies; torso lifting from dorsal standing position or lifting up the feet from hanging at a fix ladder; the crab walking, arm tractions on the gym bench, seal walk; hitting the medicinal ball with the median or lateral side of the foot; ball-like-jumps, jumps from a foot to another, lateral jumps over the gym bench, jumps on the bench and from the bench, chord jumps.

[8] Radu, Gh., School Pedagogy of Mentally Disabled Children, Pro Humanitate, Bucharest, 2000, pp. 211-214.

Table 1. *The general methodic lines for the elaboration of a physical exercises program*

COMPONENT	INTENSITY	DURATION	FREQUENCY
Corporal composition	Moderate	20 – 30 minutes/class	3 – 5 days/week
Local muscular strength	4 -10 repetitions with high charge	Maximum 10 seconds 3 series/class	3 – 5 days/week
Local resistance strength	20 repetitions with slightly charge	30 seconds or more 2 – 3 series/class	3 – 5 days/week
Speed	Maximal Sub-maximal	1 – 30 seconds 30 – 180 seconds 1 – 3 series/class	3 – 5 days/week
Strength	10 – 20 repetitions with moderate or high charge	Maxim 30 seconds 2 – 3 series/class	3 – 5 days/week
Articular mobility	5 – 10 repetitions	6 – 12 seconds/repetition 3 series/class	3 – 5 days/week
Cardio-vascular resistance	75% from the maximum cardiac frequency	20 – 40 minutes	3 – 5 days/week

For the development of the cardio-vascular development and body structure, the objectives can be accomplished if there is used a continuous aerobe program, of running, swimming, riding the bike, in general activities that engage in movement the entire body, fact that favors the superior calories consumption and lead to the adjustment and the cardio-respiratory function improvement. The activities through which this

objective can be realized are: mountains hiking, riding the stationary or non-stationary bike, jogging, walk on stepper or rolling carpet, aerobic gymnastics with low impact, races with obstacles, fond and alpine sky, aerobic dance etc. examples of exercises: slight run of duration; run on varied field in uniform tempo; rounds from different games or sport games; applicative

– utilitarian direction. For the articular mobility (the main objective aims at the functional improvement of the movements); physical exercises are being made from different positions (sitting, standing, on the knees, lie down) and will prepare the subject for sustained efforts that will engage both the inferior train and the superior. Examples of exercises: head rotations, exercises for the face musculature, arms rotations, lateral bending, torso spinning; the elephant walk, walk with lifted pace, rising the left/right knee at the chest and maintaining, walk on heels; ventral lying down, rising the head and torso; from standing with the feet close to each other, knee pressing; from costal lying down, balance of the inferior limbs; from lying down, dorsal and plantar flexion.

The evaluation tasks of the instructive-educational process of the research

Task 1. Dribbling - the graphic presentation (annexes – figure 1). Task description: The pupil starts in dribbling from the start line towards the finish, remaining in the interior of the marked lane. The finish line must be marked both with poles and chalk. When the pupil with the ball has stopped in the interior of the finishing zone the chronometer will be stopped. If the pupil drops the ball from the finishing zone he will have to bring it back in the finishing zone. Requested materials: 4 or 5 balls, the traced mark on the ground, 4 poles to mark the finishing zone, 1 chronometer. Assessment: the recorded time during the dribbling is transformed in points according to the transformation scale of time in points; if the balls passes the border line of the lane or the pupil touches the ball with the hand a penalty of 5 points is being applied (note: if the ball passes the lane, the teacher will place immediately another ball in the center of the opposite lane where the ball has passed). The transformation scale of time in points: 5-10 seconds = 60 points; 11 – 15 seconds = 55 points; 16-20 seconds = 50 points; 21-25 seconds = 45 points; 26-30 seconds = 40 points; 31-35 seconds = 40 points; 36-40 seconds = 30 points; 41-45 seconds = 25 points; 46-50 seconds = 20 points; 51-55 seconds = 15 points; 55 or more seconds = 10 points.

Task 2. Kick at the goal - the graphic presentation (annexes – figure 2).

Task description: the pupil starts from the start line, running; picks a ball that he lays at the kick line, after which he shoots at the goal. The pupil is allowed to touch the ball only one time. Then he runs towards the ball placer, picks up another ball and shoots another ball. The chronometer will be stopped when the pupil shoots the last ball or at the maximum of 2 minutes since the start. Requested materials: 4 or 5 balls, the traced mark on the ground, 1 goal football game 4 x 2 m, 1 chronometer. Assessment: for every achievement (goal) 10 points are given.

Task 3. Running and kick at the goal - the graphic presentation (annexes - figure 3). Task description: the pupil starts from the start line. He runs towards any of the balls so that positioned and he kicks it towards the goal correspondent to the place of the ball position. The pupil is allowed only one touch of the ball. The chronometer stops when the pupil kicks the last ball. Required materials: 4 or 5 balls, the mark on the ground, a goal (marks of cubes or cones) of 2 x 2 m positioned at 2 m in front of every ball, 1 chronometer. Assessment: the time since when the pupil start is recorded until he kicks the last ball and it transforms in points according to the transformation scale of time into points. A bonus of 5 points is offered for every ball kicked through the 2 poles that form the goal. The transformation scale of time into points:11 – 15 seconds = 50 points; 16-20 seconds = 45 points; 21-25 seconds = 40 points; 26-30 seconds = 35 points; 31-35 seconds = 30 points; 36-40 seconds = 25 points; 41-45 seconds = 20 points; 46-50 seconds = 15 points; 51-55 seconds = 10 points; 55 or more seconds = 5 points. The big advantage of these methods consists in the fact that they allow the gathering of certain numerous, various and precious information in a relatively short time.

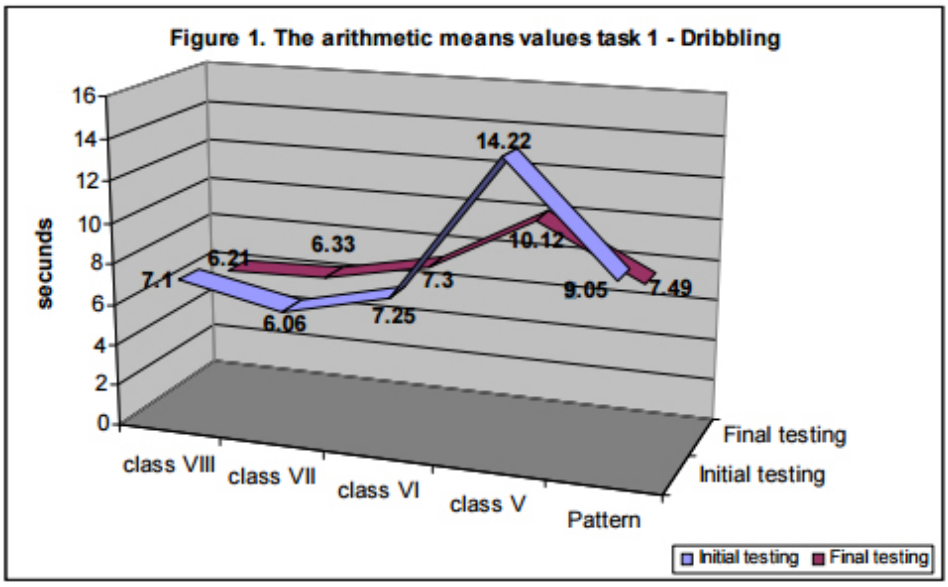
Research results and their interpretation

Applying the research project concerning the motor ability education specific to the football game was preceded by the evaluation of the level of motor abilities manifestation through an initial testing on the basis of the 3 tasks established, after which the following primary data have been recorded table 2 – annexes, at the level of each individual undertaken to measurements. The initial testing allowed us to draw the following conclusions: 1. Task 1 – Dribbling (figure 1). a. The 8th grade: the pupils of this class have made an arithmetic mean of 7"10. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is higher than the one of the research pattern (9"05). b. the 7th grade: the pupils of this class have recorded an arithmetic mean of 6"06. From table 4 – annexes we can notice

that the arithmetic mean of the class is higher than the one of the research pattern (9"05). c. 6th grade: the pupils of this class have registered an arithmetic mean of 7"25. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is higher than the researched pattern (9"05). d. 5th grade: the pupils of this class have registered an arithmetic mean of 14"22. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is lower than the researched pattern (8"65). 2. Task 2 – Kick at the goal (figure 2). a. 8th grade: the pupils of this class have recorded an arithmetic mean of 16.20 goals. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is higher than the one of the researched pattern (16.25 goals). b. 7th grade: the pupils of this class have recorded an arithmetic mean of 18.90 goals. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is higher than the one of the researched pattern (16.25 goals). c. 6th grade: the pupils of this class have registered an arithmetic mean of 18.60 goals. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is higher than the one of the researched pattern (16.25 goals). d. 5th grade: the pupils of this class have registered an arithmetic mean of 11.30 goals. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is lower than the one of the researched pattern (16.25 goals). 3. Task 3.

– Running and kick at the goal (figure 3). a. 8th grade: the pupils of this class have registered an arithmetic mean of 12"04. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is lower than the one of the researched pattern (11"28). b. 7th grade: the pupils of this class have registered an arithmetic mean of 9"02. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is higher than the one of the researched pattern (11"28). c. 6th grade: the pupils of this class have registered an arithmetic mean of 10"06. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is higher than the one of the researched pattern (11"28). d. 5th grade: the pupils of this class have registered an arithmetic mean of 14''. From the table 4 – annexes we can notice that the arithmetic mean of the class is lower than the one of the researched pattern (11"28). The variability coefficient calculated presents us, at the level of three evaluation tasks, a group with weak homogeneity (between 20 – 35%); the standard deviation and amplitude shows us that the recorded results by the re-searched pattern have a high level of spreading. After applying the research project and

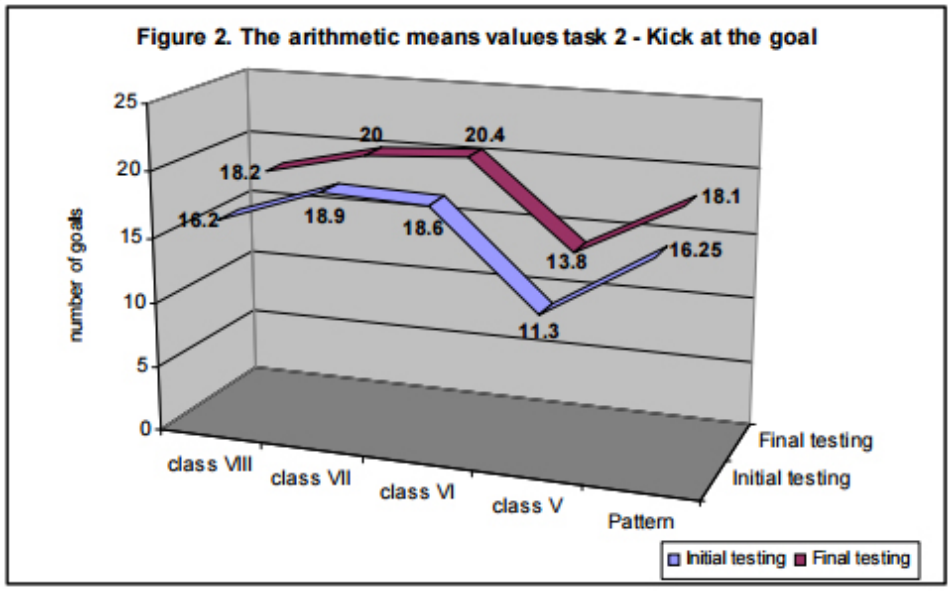
making the final tests the primary data have been recorded presented in the table 3 – annexes.



Final measurements allowed us to make the following findings: Task 1 – Dribbling (figure 1). a. Calculated arithmetic mean (6"21) for the representatives of the 8th class shows us that this is higher than the arithmetic mean of the researched pattern (7"49, table 4 - annexes) but also comparative with the initial testing (7"10). b. The calculated arithmetic mean (6"33) for the class representatives of the 7th grade shows us that this is higher than the arithmetic mean of the researched pattern (7"49, table 4 – annexes) but weaker in comparison with the initial testing (6"06). c. The calculated arithmetic mean (7"30) for the class representatives of the 6th grade shows us that this is higher than the arithmetic mean of the researched pattern (7"49, table 4 - annexes) but in comparison with the initial testing (7"25). d. The calculated arithmetic mean (10"12) for the class representatives of the 5th grade shows us that this is weaker than the arithmetic mean of the researched pattern (7"49, table 4 - annexes) but higher in comparison with the initial testing (14"22).

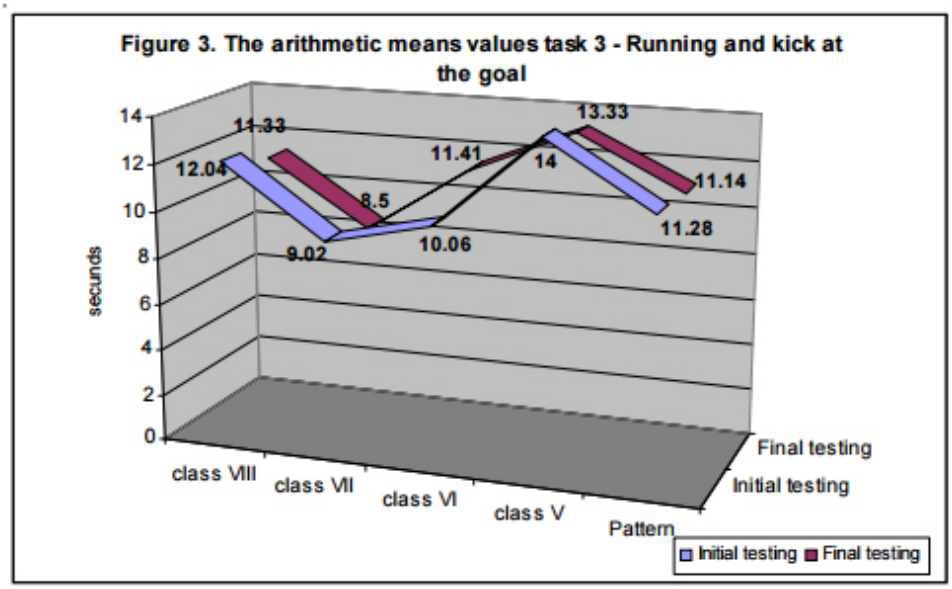
2. Task 2 – Kick at the goal (figure 2). a. The calculated arithmetic mean (table 4 - annexes) for the pupils from the 8th has been of 18.20 goals higher than the one of the researched pattern (18.10 goals) and than the one of the initial testing (16.20 goals). b. The calculated arithmetic mean

(table 4 - annexes) for the pupils in the 7th grade has been of 20 goals higher than the researched pattern (18.10 goals) and than the initial testing (18.90 goals). c. The calculated arithmetic mean (table 4 - annexes) for the pupils from the 6th grade has been of 20.40 goals higher than the one of the researched pattern (18.10 goals) and than the one of the initial testing (18.60 goals). d. The calculated arithmetic mean (table 4 - annexes) for the pupils from the 5th grade has been of 13.80 goals lower than the one of the researched pattern (18.10 goals) and than the one of the initial testing (11.30 goals).



4. Task 3 – Running and kick at the goal (figure 3). a. The calculated arithmetic mean (table 4 - annexes) for the pupils from the 8th grade has been of 11"33 weaker than the arithmetic mean of the researched pattern (11"14) but higher than the initial testing 12"04. b. The calculated arithmetic mean (table 4 - annexes) for the pupils from the 7th grade has been of 8"50 higher than the arithmetic mean of the research pattern (11"14) but also than the arithmetic mean of the initial testing 12"04. c. The calculated arithmetic mean (table 4 - annexes) for the pupils from the 6th grade has been of 11"41 weaker than the arithmetic mean of the researched pattern (11"14) but higher than the initial testing 12"04. d. The calculated arithmetic mean (table 4 - annexes) for the pupils from the 5th grade has been of 13"33 weaker than the arithmetic mean of the researched pattern

(11"14) but higher than the initial testing 14". The calculated variability coefficient presents us, at the level of the three evaluation tasks, a group with weak homogeneity (between 20 – 35%); the standard deviation and the amplitude shows us that the recorded results by the researched pattern have a high level of spreading.



General conclusions

From the research made by us the following conclusions and recommendations have been drawn concerning the management of the motor abilities education specific to the football game at pupils form the 5th – 8th grades with special educational needs during the physical education class.

Theoretical conclusions of the research

The complexity of the physical education domain, the high number of connected connections, impose continuously the selection and choosing the most adequate and efficient methods and means used during the adapted physical education class for the increase of the manifestation level of the individual motor abilities specific to the football game.

The coherent approach of the educational process make easier the achievement of the educational objectives by completing and modifying, for how many times it is needed, the analytical program specific to the physical education domain.

The necessity of making a physical activity at least an hour/day, in special, by the pupils with special educational needs; the general benefit of the physical activity is represented by the improvement of the health state, relaxation and the possibility to realize certain activities from the afternoon schedule, with an acceptable productivity, for a longer period of time.

Methodical conclusions of the research

The physical education activity planning is realized both at the teacher, methodic board and through he specific plans of every teaching staff, on a medium and long term, constituted form the annual plan (annual pattern of the educational unities), the calendar semester plan and the project of the educational unities.

The means and methods specific to the adapted physical education can assure an adequate muscular and articular processing but also the formation and development of certain psycho-motor capacities necessary to pupils in their socio-professional integration.

Through the physical educational lesson it is assured the training continuity, establishing an optimum report between the individual physical condition and achieving motor skills specific to the different sport branches adapted but also to a gradual effort's graduation.

Practical conclusions of the research

The usage during the physical education at pupils with special educational needs, of a relatively low number of means specific to the football game but simple and practiced more time, contributes to the increase of the manifestation level of the motor capacities, so that it is shown also by the evolution of the calculated arithmetic means, from the first to the second testing, confirming the research hypotheses.

The education level of the motor abilities specific to the football game is confirmed by the increase of the interest for the participation in sport competitions, in self affirmation, in the competition desire with other pupils.

Our research confirms the interdependence of the education of the motor abilities of the manifestation level of the individual motor qualities.

Physical exercise specific to the football game, as mean of the adapted physical education, realized under different forms, assures the socializing and integration of pupils with special educational needs.

The psycho pedagogical training of the physical education teacher, the organization spirit, initiative, collaboration relations with parents, training and leading the pupils in order to obtain performances and successes confirms the research hypothesis.

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Annexes

Figure 1 - task 1. Dribbling - the graphic presentation

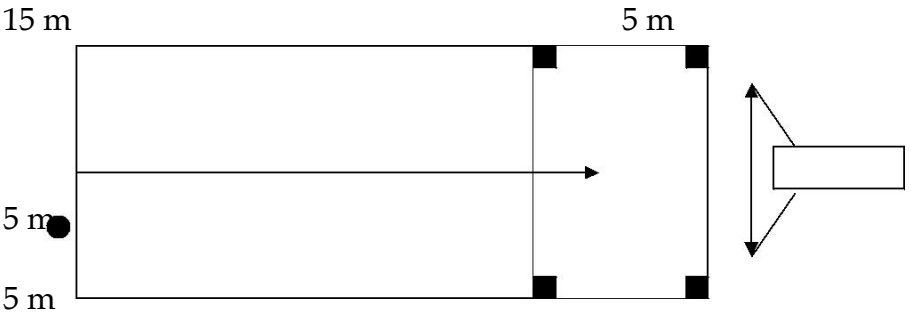

Figure 2 - task 2. Kick at the goal - the graphic presentation

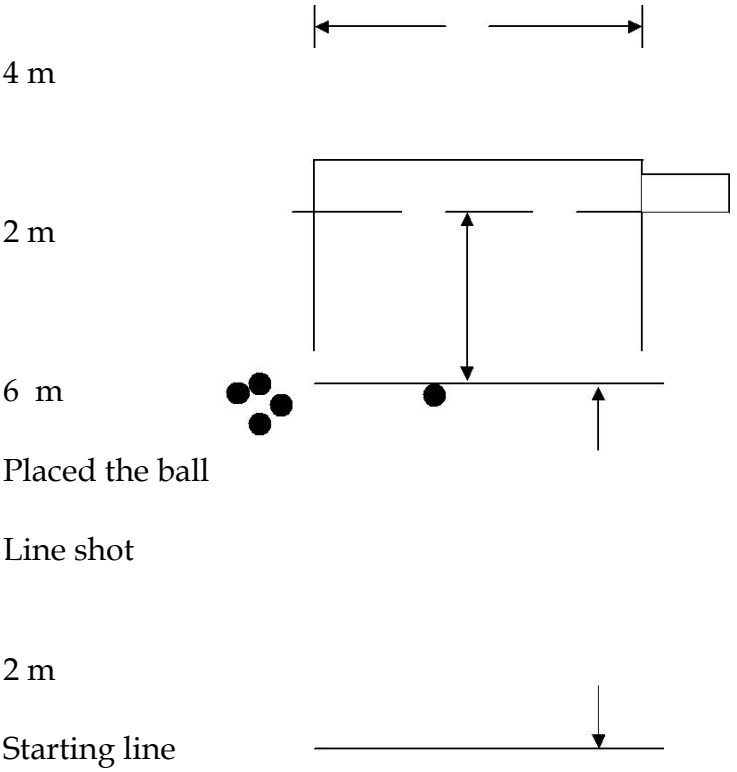

Figure 3 - task 3. Running and kick at the goal - the graphic presentation

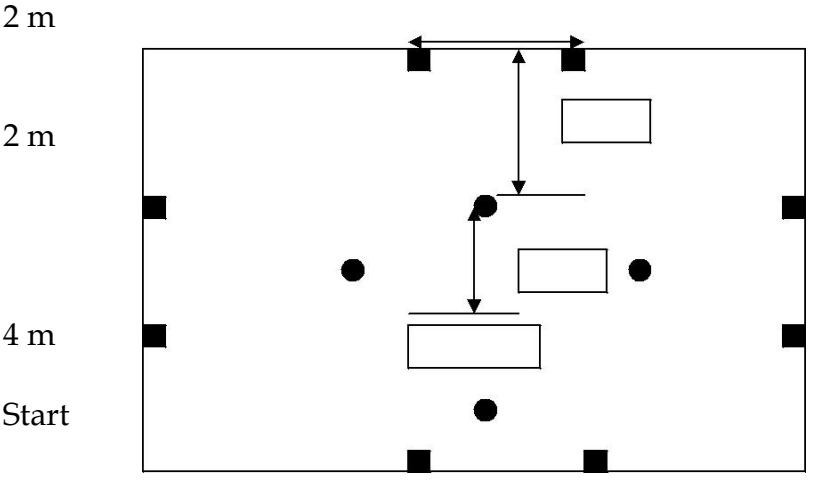

Table 4. The arithmetic means values

	X		S		Cv%		M		W		Min		Max	
	Initialtesting	Finaltesting	Initialtesting	Finaltesting	Initialtesting	Finaltesting	Initialtesting	Finaltesting	Initialtesting	Finaltesting	Initialtesting	Finaltesting	Initialtesting	Finaltesting
Task 1	9.05	7.49	2.49	2.33	34.39	31.40	10.13	10.29	12.03	12.52	4.12	4.03	16.15	16.55
Task 2	16.25	18.10	4.74	4.67	29.91	26.43	14.5	14	17	18	6	5	23	23
Task 3	11.28	11.14	3.25	2.66	28.96	24.69	15.20	14.72	15.81	15.26	7.25	7.09	23.16	22.35

Table 2. The primary data recorded for the 3 tests - Initial testing

No.	Name and surname	Class, date of birth	Diagnosis	Task 1		Task 2		Task 3		Totalpoints	Rank
				Perf.	Points	Perf.	Points	Perf.	Points		
1.	B. L.	a VIII-a, 24.08.1993	Moderate deficiency	4″12	60	21 goals	210	7″30	50	320	III
2.	G. A.	a VIII-a, 05.12.1992	Moderate deficiency	4″53	60	20 goals	200	10″9	50	310	IV
3.	S. B.	a VIII-a, 15.09.1992	Moderate deficiency	9″30	60	13 goals	130	13″37	50	240	XI

4.	R. R.	a VIII-a, 25.08.1992	Severe mental disability	7″32	60	12 goals	120	16″29	45	225	XIII
5.	S. S.	a VIII-a, 15.05.1993	Moderate deficiency	8″24	60	15 goals	150	10″38	50	260	IX
6.	P. M.	a VII-a, 19.10.1990	Moderate deficiency	4″43	60	21 goals	210	9″14	50	320	III
7.	P. C.	a VII-a, 04.06.1992	Moderate deficiency	4″16	60	17 goals	170	8″27	50	280	VII
8.	S. I.	a VII-a, 20.11.1994	Moderate deficiency	5″28	60	19 goals	190	10″12	50	300	V
9.	A. C.	a VII-a, 22.10.1993	Moderate deficiency	4″28	60	22 goals	220	9″22	50	330	II
10.	S. M.	a VII-a, 22.03.1992	Moderate deficiency	4″15	60	23 goals	230	7″25	50	340	I
11.	D. D.	a VII-a, 06.09.1994	Mental deficiency associated	4″19	60	20 goals	200	7″28	50	310	IV
12.	Z. M.	a VII-a, 25.11.1989	Severe mental disability	8″04	60	12 goals	120	11″38	50	230	XII
13.	P. A.	a VII-a, 13.07.1993	Moderate deficiency	6″45	60	19 goals	190	8″02	50	300	V
14.	M. C.	a VII-a, 01.05.1994	Moderate deficiency	7″45	60	16 goals	160	9″12	50	270	VIII
15.	M. D.	a VII-a, 11.08.1993	Moderate deficiency	8″23	60	20 goals	200	8″41	50	310	IV
16.	!. I.	a VI-a, 18.12.1994	Mental deficiency, school failure	5″19	60	17 goals	170	9″43	50	280	VII
17.	V. M.	VI,	Moderate	9″09	60	18	180	11″0	50	290	VI

		12.11.1994	deficiency			goals		9			
18.	V. R.	a VI-a, 09.06.1995	Moderate deficiency	6″13	60	19 goals	190	10″24	50	300	V
19.	!. A.	a VI-a, 05.07.1994	Moderate deficiency	5″43	60	20 goals	200	9″22	50	310	IV
20.	O. L.	a VI-a, 11.03.1995	Moderate deficiency	8″45	60	19 goals	190	10″34	50	300	V
21.	A. M.	a V-a, 12.04.1996	Moderate deficiency	5″00	60	14 goals	140	8″29	50	250	X
22.	P. I.	a V-a, 17.06.1995	Moderate deficiency	5″10	60	11 goals	110	9″19	50	220	XIV
23.	C. P.	a V-a, 21.04.1995	Moderate deficiency	5″54	60	11 goals	110	9″24	50	220	XIV
24.	O. C.	a V-a, 16.01.1996	Mental deficiency, school failure	5″03	60	18 goals	180	8″08	50	290	VI
25.	O. N.	a V-a, 13.06.1997	Mental deficiency associated	11″20	55	8 goals	80	12″15	50	185	XVI
26.	F. C.	a V-a, 17.05.1997	Mental deficiency associated	5″05	60	19 goals	190	11″19	50	300	V
27.	R. D.	a V-a, 11.08.1994	Moderate deficiency	9″18	60	7 goals	70	18″45	45	175	XVII
28.	E. D.	a V-a, 15.1.1995	Moderate deficiency	16″	50	10 goals	100	23″16	40	190	XV
29.	R. T.	a V-a, 17.11.1994	Moderate deficiency	16″15	50	6 goals	60	20″	45	155	XVIII
30.	S. V.	a V-a, 22.09.1994	Moderate deficiency	14″54	55	9 goals	90	20″34	45	190	XV

Table 3. The primary data recorded for the 3 tests - Final testing

No.	Name and surname	Class, date of birth	Diagnosis	Task 1		Task 2		Task 3		Total points	Rank
				Perf.	Points	Perf.	Points	Perf.	Points		
1.	B. L.	a VIII-a, 24.08.1993	Moderate deficiency	4″03	60	22 goals	220	7″20	50	330	II
2.	G. A.	a VIII-a, 05.12.1992	Moderate deficiency	4″33	60	21 goals	210	9″49	50	320	III
3.	S. B.	a VIII-a, 15.09.1992	Moderate deficiency	8″03	60	15 goals	150	13″44	50	260	X
4.	R. R.	a VIII-a, 25.08.1992	Severe mental disability	7″12	60	16 goals	160	15″44	45	265	IX
5.	S. S.	a VIII-a, 15.05.1993	Moderate deficiency	7″54	60	17 goals	170	9″38	50	280	VII
6.	P. M.	a VII-a, 19.10.1990	Moderate deficiency	4″33	60	20 goals	200	8″34	50	310	IV
7.	P. C.	a VII-a, 04.06.1992	Moderate deficiency	4″46	60	19 goals	190	8″50	50	300	V
8.	S. I.	a VII-a, 20.11.1994	Moderate deficiency	5″55	60	21 goals	210	10″12	50	320	III
9.	A. C.	a VII-a, 22.10.1993	Moderate deficiency	4″56	60	23 goals	230	8″48	50	340	I
10.	S. M.	a VII-a, 22.03.1992	Moderate deficiency	5″25	60	23 goals	230	7″48	50	340	I
11.	D. D.	a VII-a, 06.09.1994	Mental deficiency associated	5″39	60	22 goals	220	7″09	50	330	II
12.	Z. M.	a VII-a, 25.11.1989	Severe mental disability	8″24	60	10 goals	100	11″55	50	210	XII

13.	P. A.	a VII-a, 13.07.1993	Moderate deficiency	6″35	60	21 goals	210	7″47	50	320	III
14.	M. C.	a VII-a, 01.05.1994	Moderate deficiency	7″41	60	20 goals	200	8″43	50	310	IV
15.	M. D.	a VII-a, 11.08.1993	Moderate deficiency	8″44	60	21 goals	210	7″58	50	320	III
16.	!. I.	a VI-a, 18.12.1994	Mental deficiency, school failure	6″09	60	20 goals	200	9″22	50	310	IV
17.	V. M.	VI, 12.11.1994	Moderate deficiency	8″41	60	19 goals	190	10″39	50	300	V
18.	V. R.	a VI-a, 09.06.1995	Moderate deficiency	6″53	60	20 goals	200	9″44	50	310	IV
19.	!. A.	a VI-a, 05.07.1994	Moderate deficiency	5″23	60	22 goals	220	9″09	50	330	II
20.	O. L.	a VI-a, 11.03.1995	Moderate deficiency	8″25	60	21 goals	210	9″54	50	320	III
21.	A. M.	a V-a, 12.04.1996	Moderate deficiency	5″33	60	17 goals	170	8″56	50	280	VII
22.	P. I.	a V-a, 17.06.1995	Moderate deficiency	5″30	60	19 goals	190	9″08	50	300	V
23.	C. P.	a V-a, 21.04.1995	Moderate deficiency	6″24	60	16 goals	160	8″44	50	270	VIII
24.	O. C.	a V-a, 16.01.1996	Mental deficiency, school failure	5″49	60	20 goals	200	7″37	50	310	IV
25.	O. N.	a V-a, 13.06.1997	Mental deficiency associated	11″54	55	9 goals	90	12″45	50	195	XIV
26.	F. C.	a V-a,	Mental deficiency	5″45	60	18	180	10″08	50	290	VI

		17.05.1997	associated			goals					
27.	R. D.	a V-a, 11.08.1994	Moderate deficiency	8″58	60	10 goals	100	18″55	45	205	XIII
28.	E. D.	a V-a, 15.1.1995	Moderate deficiency	16″23	50	12 goals	120	19″26	45	215	XI
29.	R. T.	a V-a, 17.11.1994	Moderate deficiency	16″55	50	5 goals	60	22″35	40	150	XV
30.	S. V.	a V-a, 22.09.1994	Moderate deficiency	16″54	50	12 goals	120	18″04	45	215	XI

CHILDREN WITH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENT IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: *The present study aims to explore the differences between children/preschool students with speaking disorders, and typically developed children, who exhibit no speaking disorders as far as their school teacher's perceptions, the psychological age of language development, and the sociometric index and are concerned. The participants in the study were 120 children, 71 boys and 49 girls, aged 6 to 7 years (M = 6.48, SD = 0.52), 60 of which with speaking disorders, and 60 with no speaking disorders, selected from 11 educational institutions in Gorj county. 32 teachers who work directly with the investigated children have also taken part in the research. Findings from this investigation have provided support for the hypothesis that children with no speaking disorders have obtained significantly higher scores in comparison with those with speaking disorders, with reference to their school teacher's perceptions, the psychological age of language development and the sociometric index in their peer group.*

Keywords: *speaking disorders, psychological age of language, children's sociometric status, teachers' perceptions.*

Introduction

Language development, the capacity for social interaction, and, at full length, for social integration, is reciprocally conditioned (Carpendale, and Lewis, 2004, p.82) and these mutual relationships exhibit specific features when speaking disorders are involved (Lazarevic, and Kopas-Vukašinović, 2007).

Speaking disorders generate a series of negative effects in the child's process of social integration: problems regarding social adaptation, difficulties in learning, reading and writing, directing one's attention and staying focused, difficulties in communicating with peers and even with grown-ups, behavioural issues (hyperactivity, aggression, violent

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behaviour, anxiety, distress, suspicion), limited activity, a reduced capacity for self-determination, difficulties in partaking in activities which are typical for his or her age group (playing), less openness towards communication and a lower motivation to communicate, as well as a higher risk of sending reduced, late, and inconsistent signals for proper social interaction.

The development of linguistic and communication competences − 1) the correct pronunciation of sounds, words, and sentences; 2) vocabulary use; 3) expression skills; 4) receptive communication skills; 5) expressive communication skills (Manolescu, 2013)[1] – represents the corner stone for the child's ability to develop his or her social competences (Lindsay, & Dockrell, 2000)[2].

A greatly appreciated model regarding the social integration of children with speaking disorders was the one promoted by Guralnick (1999)[3]; this model comprises contributions from a majority of specialists in the field who tackle the notion of social integration from three points of view corresponding to three constructs: 1) peer interaction, 2) the quality of interpersonal relationships, and 3) the nature of the adjustments which occur during the social exchange.

Because of the speaking disorder, the child is predisposed to sending messages with reduced clarity which may sometimes be difficult to understand; therefore, the significant people around him or her may be less responsive to the child's attempts to communicate and peers may feel unable to efficiently and adequately connect with the child (Bernstein, Hans, & Percansky, 1991). This enhances the difficulty encountered by children with speaking disorders in establishing social relationships and expressing their emotions (Manolescu, 2013, p.45)[4].

Children with speaking disorders find it difficult o initiate and maintain verbal interaction with their peers, and an increase in the

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[1] Manolescu M. (Ed)., *Methodological guide for assessing pupils in the preparatory class. Bucharest*: The National Assessment Evaluation Center (CNEE), 2013, p. 8, www.edu.ro http://lic.ncit.pub.ro/Ghid_de_completare_si_valorificare_a_Raportului_de_evaluare_clasa_pregatitoare.pdf [accesed 15.04.2015.

[2] Lindsay G., Dockrell J.E., Strand S., *Longitudinal patterns of behaviour problems in children with specific speech and language difficulties: Child and contextual factors*. In: British Journal of Educational Psychology, 2007, 77 (4), pp. 584 - 585.

[3] Guralnick M.J., *The nature and meaning of social integration for young children with mild developmental delays in inclusive settings*. In: Journal of Early Intervention, 1999, 22 (1), pp. 70-71.

[4] Manolescu, Ibid.

awareness of their inability to communicate efficiently, to which repeated experiences of failure are added when it comes to engaging in conversation, may discourage them or may prevent their peers from wanting to interact with them in the future. Initiating and responding to an act of communication are sensitive elements which occur at the interface of verbal and social abilities. In order to successfully initiate a relationship, a child has to know intuitively when is the right moment to approach another child, to negotiate mutual attention, and to find the suitable moment to start talking about something. The capacity to initiate a conversation serves as an indicator of social assertiveness; if this capacity is significantly more reduced as compared with the ability to offer a response, it would indicate social passivity (Lazarevic și Kopas-Vukašinović, 2007)[5].

Although such aspects have not been extensively investigated, it has been shown that children with speaking disorders are less willing to interact with their peers and to respond to social offers (Guralnick, 1992); this phenomenon is linked with the children's incomplete knowledge regarding their peers' capacity to understand them, and with all the information they receive through observation and feedback from their peers who are more advanced in their communication skills (Guralnick, Connor, Hammond, Gottman și Kinnish, 1996)[6].

Children with language and communication impairment are more prone to experience unsuccessful interactions, lack of clarity/precision in communication and to feel themselves as unaccepted by their colleagues. They are disadvantaged in their relations with peers ever since pre-school period: they engage less in interactions, in active conversations, are less sensitive to initiating relations with their colleagues, have poor communication skills, can give inappropriate situational verbal responses, involve less in mutual decisions and in acts influencing those around (Guralnick, Connor, Hammond, Gottman and Kinnish, 1996).

The kindergarten environment gives the child new ways to acquire social knowledge and experiences (Golu, 2010). In the pre-school period, educators play an essential role in the emotional, social and cognitive

[5] Lazarevic E., Kopas-Vukašinović E., *Cooperation between school and parents of SLI children. International*. In: Journal about Parents in Education, 2007, 1 (0), p. 152.

[6] Guralnick, M. J., Connor, R. T., Hammond, M., Gottman, J.M., & Kinnish, K., *Immediate effects of mainstreamed settings on the social interactions and social integration of preschool children*. AJMR-American Journal on Mental Retardation, *100*(4), 1996, pp.359-360.

formation of the child (Donahue, Falk, Provet, 2000). In the formal framework of the kindergarten, educators are also the first people intervining in reducing the stress that the child feels in its family or in the social environment.

Communication problems in the school environment of a speech impaired child do not necessarily lead to misfit, but insufficient relations can lead to a general functioning below the optimum for the child's development in other domains of life. The lack of patience, encouragement, reward or praise, shown by teachers to these children, influences not only the speech-impaired child, but also his colleagues' attitudes towards him/her. Colleagues can isolate and ignore him/her or can show intolerance. These attitudes can cause conflicts between the child and the teachers or other members of the school staff, who, in certain conditions, may lead to aggression. In school, the rejection experience may be felt the more painful the more it happens in the family too (André C, 2009, p. 235).

Studies indicate that students with speech impairment are less accepted socially than other children, as they benefit from less favourable attitudes both from the adults and their peers, less liked and more rarely invited to take part in social activities, more often excluded and even victims of their colleagues' explicit verbal, physical, relational harrassment, or of their ignoration (Lindsay, Dockrell and Strand, 2007). They are often subject to ridiculisation by their colleagues and to the teachers' lack of understanding and patience, which increases the emotional tension level and affects the safety development level and the acquisition of positive experiences, leading to withdrawal, social avoidance, lack of cooperation, hiperactivity, anxiety, diminishing of prosocial skills, agressive reactions or losing interest for school (T.Vrasmaș, 2011; E. Vrasmaș, 1999; Rusu, 2005, p.160 Gherguț, 2013, p.200), diminishing the motivation for communication or even learned helplessness (Prizant and Meyer, 1993)[7].

The present study, in accordance with the trends signalled by the specialised literature, intends to identify the differences between children /pre-school children with dislalie speech impairment (monomorphic and polymorphic dislalie) and children with a typical development, with no

[7] Prizant B.M., Meyer, E.C., Socio-emotional aspects of language and social-communication disorders in young children and their families. In: American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 1993, 2 (3), p. 62.

speech problems with regard to the perception of children by their teacher and colleagues (more precisely the sociometric statute of the child in his/her group/school class)

It was predicted that: 1) children with speech impairment will have a language psychological age and an inferior sociometric statute compared to the children without language impairment; 2) compared to the language impaired children, speech impaired children will be perceived by their educator/teacher as having more pregnant communication problems.

Participants

Participants in this study were 120 children, 71 boys and 49 girls, aged 6 - 7 years (M = 6.48, SD = 0.52), 60 children/pupils with monomorph and polimorph dislalie and 60 children with typical development, with no speech problems from 11 educational institutions– 6 kindergartens and 5 secondary schools, assigned to the logopedic interschool centre (CLI) in the town of Târgu Jiu and villages in the Gorj county. In the survey, 32 teachers were involved, who actually work with the children under study.

The measured variables in this study were: 1. Psychological age of language; 2. Perception of children by their teacher (with the categories: a) strong relational problems, marked with 1, b) average relational problems marked with 2, c) slight relational problems, marked with 3); 3. Sociometric statute (colleagues' appreciation, with categories: a) unpopular, b) neglected, popular).

Instruments

1. For the children's language evaluation, the Alice Descoeudres for language psychological age test was used. The instrument is adapted by E. Vrăşmaş and C. Stanică (1997) and is applicable to children 3 to 7 years old. The instrument includes 7 probes: I shows contraries with objects and images; probe II - lacunae completion; probe III – repetition of numbers; probe IV - subjects; proba V- contraries without objects and images; probe VI - colours; probe VII – knowing the meaning of verbs. The psychological age of language is obtained according to the cummulated score for each of the 7 probes according to the scale (see: Vrăşmaş and Oprea, 2003).

2. The Sociometric Questionnaire was used to establish the child's position in his/her school group. The questionnaire comprised three questions regarding the colleagues with whom he/she would like to perform various activities specific of the school environment: didactic, play, meal activities. Only questions regarding choices have been

formulated, not regarding rejections, in order not to raise suspicions, especially with children fearing that they might be marginalised in the group.

3. The perception of children by the teacher scale, drafted by the author, comprises 5 items concerning the behaviours of the child who expresses inhibition with regard to his/her relations with the colleagues and the teacher, colleagues' avoidance, retreat and social contact avoidance (egg: the student is "Inhibited in relation to his colleagues"). Evaluation is conducted on a Lickert scale in 5 steps (from 1 to 5). In order to facilitate reporting, the scores obtained were hierarchised through the percentilation procedure (*n-tiles* in the spss programme) in three categories: a) the first percentile - under 33 – marked with 1, representing the perception of students as having serious relational problems; b) the second percentile between 33 and 66 – marked with 2, representing the the perception of students as having average relational problems); c) the third percentile is 66 – marked with 3, representing the the perception of students as having slight relational problems.

Data Analysis Procedures

The descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for all variables. Student T-test and Bivariate Correlations procedures were conducted in order to test the research hypotheses.

Results

The results show that if the percentage of children with a statute of being isolated is approximately equal for the students with speech impairment and for the students without speech impairment (33 and 30 children respectively), there are more children with speech impairment compared to those who are not speech impaired (20 children compared to 3 children) who have the statute of unpopular. Instead, there are more children without speech impairment, compared to the speech impaired children, who have the statute of being popular (27 children compared to 7 children respectively) (Figure 1).

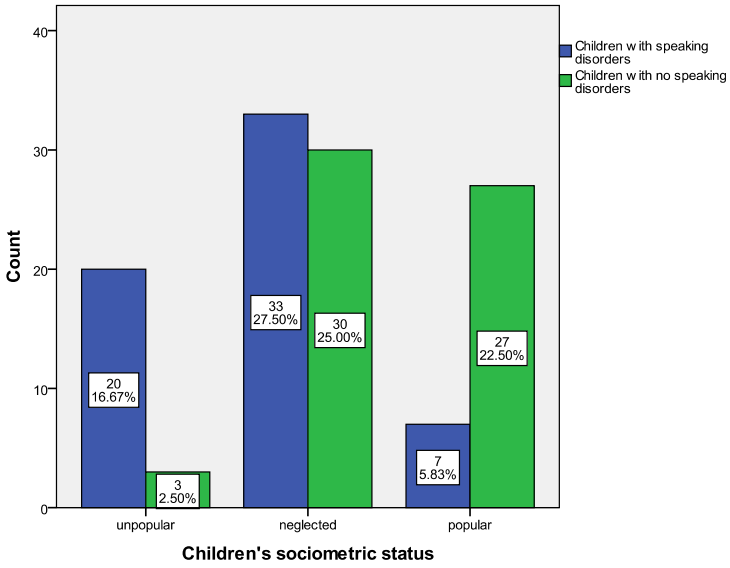

Figure 1. Distribution of students according to their sociometric index (colleagues' appreciation)

Regarding the teacher's perception of the child there are not statistically significant differences between speech impaired children and children without speech impairment (Figure 2).

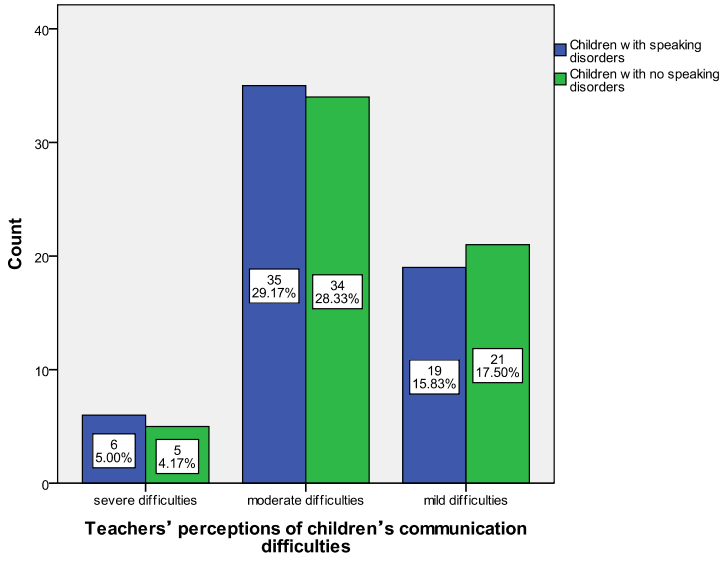

Figure 2. Distribution of students according to the educator's/teacher's perception

The mean scores of measured variables, as shown in table 1, indicate that the speech impaired children's average psychological age of language is below their chronological age of 6 and 7 years old, the sociometric index between the statute of being isolated and marginalized and are perceived by the educator/teacher aas having average relational problems.

The statistic analysis through the t-Student test of the significance of the difference between the compared mean scores releaved that, compared to the children without speech impairment, the speech impaired children report statistically significant lower scores regarding the psychological age of language and a similarly low sociometric index (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and T-Test for the measured variable

Scale	Children with speaking disorders		Children with no speaking disorders		T-test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Children's psychological age of language development	5.67	.62	6.30	.49	t=-6.12, df=118,
Children's sociometric status	1.78	.64	2.40	.58	t=5.49, df=118, p<.001
Teachers' perceptions of children's communication difficulties	2.22	.61	2.27	.60	ns

Through the Bivariate Correlations procedure we found small but statistically significant Pearson correlation coefficients between the psychological age of language and the sociometric index/the Situation in the group of colleagues. The younger the child's psychological age, the lower is the sociometric index. The educator's/teacher's perception of the child is not correlated with the psychological age of language, nor with the sociometric index.

Discussions and conclusions

Findings from this investigation provided support for the hypothesis that there are statistically significant differences between speech impaired children and children who are not speech impaired with regard to the psychological age of language and the sociometric index. Children without speech impairment have statistically significantly higher scores,

compared to those with speech impairment, regarding the psychological age of language and the sociometric index/situation the the peer group.

The second hipothesis was not confirmed: no significant differences were recorded with regard to the teacher's (educator's) perception of the child.

Based on the data reported above we can conclude that the speech impaired children's social integration is bellow that of the children without speech impairment, as it is mentioned in the specialised literature (Carpendale and Lewis, 2004; Marton, Abramoff and Rosenzweig, 2005; Lazarevic and Kopas-Vukašinović, 2007; Abrudan, 2003; Buică, 2004).

The data supporting the idea that speech impairment affects interactions with the colleagues are the more important, as there are not many studies in the specialised literature in this respect, compared to the studies analysing this situation of an existing mental handicap (Hadley and Rice, 1991). The speech impaired children's interaction with the others can be explained by thier limited activism, reduced verbal expressing capacity, low intelligibility, poor speaking fluency, specific of this category of disorders (Prutting and Kittchner, 1987).

In accord with the existing data in the specialised literature, the findings reported above certify the fact that, in the peer group, speech impaired children are marginalised or isolated. This is explained by the scarce connectivity of their discourse, which affects their popularity (Rice, Sell and Hadley, 1991). Having a lower impulse to initiate interactions, to give verbal answers in order to build a conversation and maintain verbal interactions, the speech impaired children are more likely to be avoided by their colleagues. To this, we can add the increasing degree of awareness regarding the incapacity to communicate efficiently, repeated experiences of failure in a conversation, isolation and marginalization (Lazarevic and Kopas-Vukašinović, 2007).

In conclusion, both the differences identified by the present empirical reaserch and the confirmation of the opinions existing in the specialised literature endorse the thesis that language/spesch is a key element of the children's development and implicitly of their social integration (Manolescu, 2013; Vrăsmaș and Stănică, 1997: Avramescu, 2008; Abrudan, 2003; Bowen, 2009).

The findings of the present study should be interpreted in the context of several limitations. One of the limits derives from the use of self-report scales, and the second one from the representativity of the groups studied. In order to gain a fuller understanding of the investigated differences it is

necessary to approach the studied variables in relation with other variables, especially with those of personality and with factors related to the family education environment.

Despite these limitations, we believe that the research's results allows us to advance the idea that, by correcting speech impairment, the children's social interaction capacity can be improved and therefore their social integration, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the assumption that the optimisation of the social interaction capacity, of the social skills, of social competence in general can be an associated, complementary objective for correcting speech disorders, an optimisation which, independently from speech disorder treatment, leads to a better social integration of these children.

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THE PHYSICAL TRAINING PROFESSOR AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROMOTION IN THE PERMANENT EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

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Abstract: *This paper is based on the assumption that a primary goal of physical education is to promote lifetime physical activity.*

Now more than ever before, we have the evidence to unequivocally state that regular physical activity reduces the risk of chronic illness and enhances wellness

The conclusion drawn from this study based on the idea that encourage, it is assumed that promoting lifelong physical activity is a primary goal of physical education programs.

Keywords*: children, physical activity, young people, permanent education, motor skills, health.*

Introduction

In recent years evidence has accumulated to document the importance of physical activity to lifelong health and fitness.Common misconceptions are described and alternatives for change are proposed: (a) recognizing the unique physical activity needs of youth; (b) promoting opportunities for girls; (c) changing our focus from fit-ness to physical activity; (d) promoting self-esteem and feelings of competence among youth; (e) narrowing the scope of our objectives; and (f) emphasizing self-management skills in high school to help youth adopt active living as adults. The suggestions are based on scientific evidence and the author's own experience.

Over the past 10 years a wealth of information has accumulated that doc-uments the value of physical activity. (American Heart Assocation, 1992; Corbin, Lindsey, & Welk, 2000; Corbin & Pangrazi, 1996a; U.S. Dept. Health & Human Services, 1996, 2000). My career has spanned ten years during which much of the evidence supporting physical activity has been

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accumulated. It is for this reason that I refer to the following observations as "what I know now that I didn't know then." The comments are intended to provide information for professional physical educators to help them promote lifelong physical activity among their students.

What I Know Now That I Didn't Know Then

At any point in time we collect the best scientific evidence available and make professional judgments based on this evidence. As time passes, we find that some of the assumptions we have made in the past are not as accurate as we once thought. In this paper I have outlined several misconceptions that were prevalent in years past. I also propose alternatives that I believe more accurately reflect the facts as we currently know them to be. I do not mean to suggest these are the only facts of importance, or that the future will not require modification of what I believe. We must constantly study the facts and revise our positions as new evidence is presented.

Misconception 1: Children are Fragile

As recently as the 1960s, child growth and development textbooks warned that children should not do vigorous physical activity because of the mistaken notion that the hearts and blood vessels of children grow at different rates. It was thought that as children grow older, the heart grows faster than the blood vessels. This was thought to result in high blood pressure in children because the larger heart would be pumping large amounts of blood into relatively small blood ves-sels. It was believed that the high blood pressure resulting from activity would put children at risk (Hurlock, 1967). More than 30 years before, Boas (1931) had conducted research to show that children were capable of vigorous exercise. Soon afterward, Karpovich (1937) traced the misconception that the "child's heart is fragile" to the work of a German physician named Beneke (cited in Karpovich, 1937). Karpovich showed that Beneke had made mathematical errors. Though the size of the blood vessels appeared to lag behind the size of the heart in children, the actual blood carrying capacity of the vessels increased proportionately with the increase in heart size.

Unfortunately, textbook authors continued to cite Beneke, rather than Boas or Karpovich. Each text author cited the previous text author rather than checking the original research. Had they been more thorough, the misconception concerning children in activity would never have been perpetuated. The reader is referred to Corbin (1980a) for more detail.

Primarily because of the prevailing information taught in child growth and development classes, the misconception that children were physically fragile was perpetuated. It should be noted that the first motor development books were not writen until the 1960s (Espenschade & Eckert, 1967), and motor development courses taught in physical education departments were not developed until the 1970s. Those of us who taught physical education in the public schools in the early 1960s were often confronted with parents, and even physicians, who felt that vigorous activity was inappropriate for children, especially in their preadolescent years.

The idea of the fragile nature of the child was also perpetuated by early fit-ness tests. For example, the first cardiovascular fitness test for the AAHPER Youth Fitness test battery was a 600-yard run/walk (AAHPER, 1958). Though some of the test developers were said to have wanted a longer test, others felt that children should not be exposed to a vigorous test. The inclusion of the word "walk" in the test name was a concession to the notion that children are fragile. Indeed, in the early 1970s when my colleagues and I attempted to get approval to study children's heart rates in physical activity, we got considerable resistance from a medical doctor on the newly formed human subjects committee. Our proposal was the first to be reviewed by this committee and ground rules were still being established (Corbin, 1972). The proposal was initially approved only if we agreed to stop children in activity when their heart rates reached 170 beats per minute! Again, the prevailing attitude was that children were not only incapable of vigorous physical activity, but that such activity could cause serious physical harm.

With our persistence, the study was finally approved when we pointed out that we were simply monitoring the heart rates of students in activities they normally perform. Still, those of us teaching in schools in the 1960s often had to overcome the attitudes of parents and physicians who felt that children were not capable of vigorous physical activity.

Alternative: Children are Resilient

The findings of Karpovich in 1937 clearly showed the error of Beneke's cal-culations, yet it was only when motor development books and motor development courses emerged in the 1970s that the misconception began to be dispelled. Our own research showed that

children's heart rates are typically quite high during activity and that no ill effects come to those who run distances in excess of 600 yards (Corbin, 1972). By 1980, health related tests for children included longer runs such as the mile. Clearly children are capable of vigorous activity.

We now know that children are capable of vigorous aerobic physical activ-ity and that they are more active than any other segment of society (Rowland, 1990). Elementary school children are more active than teens, and teens are more active than adults, though the activity levels of teens decreases with each year in school (USDHHS, 2000). Our early research (Corbin & Pletcher, 1968) suggests that children who are given the opportunity will be quite active. We found that structured games result in increased activity for relatively sedentary children, but structured activities also decrease the activity levels of the most active children. On the other hand, typically sedentary children are quite inactive in less structured and free-play activities while highly active children are especially active in these situations. Based on our findings, it is safe to say that the more you structure activity, the less the variability in activity among children. Children are active in different ways than adults (see next section), but they are not fragile. Indeed, children are quite resilient.

Misconception 2: Children Are Miniature Adults

At the same time that the so-called experts cautioned that children were fragile, society encouraged children to adopt the sporting activities of adults. The free play of children that characterized small town America in the 1930s and 1940s gave way to a college and professional sports movement in the 1950s that ultimately led to widespread organized sports for children (Seefeldt & Ewing, 1997). As the scientific movement blossomed in the 1970s, adult models of appropriate physi-cal activity were developed. The most prominent model, often referred to as the Exercise Prescription Model (Corbin & Pangrazi, 1994, 1996b), emerged in the 1970s and became the centerpiece of the American College of Sports Medicine's exercise prescription guidelines (ACSM, 1998, 2000). Central to this model is the notion that physical activity must be performed continuously and that it must be vigorous (high heart rate).

Unfortunately, too many people in our profession decided that the Exercise Prescription Model, which was developed for adults, was a good one for children. In fact, many "experts" have suggested that "too many

children are inactive" based on heart rate studies showing that most children do not demonstrate long periods of activity at high heart rates (see Pangrazi, Corbin, & Welk 1996). Adult sport and exercise models have consistently been applied to children as if they were miniature adults.[1]

Alternative: Children Are Children

In more recent years professionals have adapted sports to better meet the needs of children. In addition, position statements have been published to show that different activity models should be used for children than for adults (COPEC, 1998; Corbin & Pangrazi, 1994, 1996b), and that activities should be developmentally appropriate to be most beneficial to children (COPEC, 1998). The guidelines have shown that the Exercise Prescription Model is inappropriate for children and that continuous vigorous activity (high heart rate) is not a good indicator of children's physical activity. The Children's Lifetime Physical Activity Model (C-LPAM), based on the Adult Lifetime Physical Activity Model (A-LPAM) (see Corbin & Pangrazi, 1994), is more appropriate for children. The guidelines developed by the Council on Physical Education for Children (COPEC) of the National As-sociation for Physical Education and Sports (NASPE) outlined several concepts that differentiate children from adults. One key point is that children are concrete rather than abstract thinkers and will not do activity simply because "it is good for them." Instead, they are active because they enjoy it. When they become fatigued, they rest. But they recover quickly and become active again.

Children are also less efficient in movement. They are just beginning to learn skills and need time to practice them. For these reasons, it is not surprising that children are typically intermittent rather than continuous exercisers. Most children enjoy vigorous activity, but they rarely do it without regular rest periods. Such intermittent exercise is appropriate for children and is important to their normal growth and development. The C-LPAM, on which the COPEC guidelines are based, indicates that children should get at least 30–60 minutes of physical activity, and up to several hours a day if they are to meet their developmental needs. The COPEC guidelines (1998) are similar to the international activity

[1] Sbenghe, T., *Kinesiology-Science of Motion,* Medical Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, pp. 105-112

guidelines for children published by the British Health Education Authority (1998). Guidelines specifically for adolescents are also available (Sallis, Patrick, & Long, 1994). It is important that we *do not* apply adult models to children, and that we recognize that children are *not* inactive just because they do activity in different ways than adults.

One additional point is worth mentioning. We have learned that children are quite capable of vigorous activity, but in a way that is different from adults. But does the fact that children are capable of performing an activity without harm mean they will benefit from it? I suggest not! If physical activity promotion is our goal, it is essential that we consider each child's developmental level. Requiring children to be active in ways that "do not hurt them" physically, but which also do not elicit enjoyment and intrinsic motivation, are counterproductive[2]. Just because children are capable of vig-orous physical activity does not mean that all forms of vigorous physical activity are appropriate for them.

Misconception 3: Girls Are Not Interested in Physical Activity

Though most professional physical educators are now aware that girls are very interested in physical activity, this was not always the case. Prior to the adop-tion of Title IX in 1972, and for many years after, those who advocated equal op-portunities for girls in all forms of physical activity were confronted by those who suggested that girls were not interested in physical activity. They argued that if girls were offered opportunities similar to boys, they would simply choose not to take advantage of the opportunities. More than a few physical educators argued against equal opportunity for girls, suggesting that girls are fragile and lack competence in physical activity. During the debates associated with the implementation of Title IX guidelines, I personally heard testimony that girls enjoyed "playdays" but not competitive leagues, and that girls "are not physically capable of withstanding the rigor of organized sports"[3]

[2] Corbin, C.B., & Lindsey, R., *Fitness for Life (4th edition),* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1997, p. 192.

[3] Dragnea, A., Bota Aura, *Theory of Motor Activity*, Didactical and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, pp. 158-160.

Alternative: Girls Take Advantage of Legitimate Opportunities in Physical Activity

During the time that I taught elementary physical education, I did not see a lack of interest in physical activity among girls. When opportunities for physical activity were made increasingly available in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I saw girls eager to participate—though not always in the activities chosen for them. More than a few girls did seem reluctant to try out for sports teams, some suggesting that they did not have the necessary skills.[4]

It was during this time (late 1970s and the 1980s) that my colleagues and I undertook a series of studies relating to the self-confidence of girls in physi-cal activity. Research in business showed that women were often limited in their opportunities to succeed primarily because of their lack of self-confidence. Our research showed that the factors affecting the self-confidence of women in busi-ness also affected the self-confidence of girls in physical activity (Corbin, 1984). Specifically, we found that girls lacked confidence in physical activity when the task was perceived as masculine in nature, when feedback about performance was ambiguous or lacking, and when the task involved an evaluative component.

At that point in time, several of the characteristics that undermined self-confi-dence among girls were present. Sports were perceived as masculine by many, and participation in sports resulted in evaluation—often harsh evaluation—by others. Studies of college students in the 1970s and 1980s showed that most sports were perceived as masculine rather than feminine (Corbin, 1984). Competitive sports, especially those involving physical contact and requiring strength, speed, and power, were likely to be perceived as masculine rather than feminine in nature. Individual activities, especially those that involved separation in space (such as separation by a net) and those that involved an aesthetic component (such as skating or gymnastics), were more likely to be perceived as feminine.

In the end, our research (Corbin, 1984; Corbin, Landers, Feltz, & Senior, 1983; Petruzzello & Corbin, 1988; Stewart & Corbin, 1989) showed that girls could develop the confidence needed to take advantage of opportunities in physical activities, including activities previously thought to be masculine in nature such as sports. To gain this self-confidence, both

[4] Drăgan, I., *Sports Medicine*, Bucharest, Medical Publishing House, 2002, pp. 152-155

girls and society had to be convinced that it was acceptable to participate in activities stereotypically classified as masculine. Furthermore, it was important that girls get positive feedback (support) in all forms of activities from parents, teachers, coaches, and peers.

Increased opportunities with good teachers and coaches have helped change the system so that fewer girls lack confidence today than in previous decades. Still, too many adolescent girls are inactive and this is no doubt partly due to the lack of confidence in their ability to perform activities. Of course one of the best ways to build confidence is to become skilled. Building skills requires practice. Practicing enough requires confidence that the practice will pay off. The confidence/skill cycle is a complex one. Learning skill builds confidence, but confidence is needed to build skill. It is important to reinforce both skill learning and self-confidence.

It is also important to recognize that girls are not always interested in the same activities as boys. Different activities must be offered for different popu-lations if girls are to take full advantage of physical activity opportunities. The more opportunities girls have, the more experience they will gain. Our studies show that experience with good teachers/coaches is the best way to gain confidence in physical activity and to develop a self-reward system that allows girls to say "I can do that" (Corbin, 1984).

In 1976 the famous author James Michener published *Sports in America*. In this book he noted that girls should not be allowed to compete against boys from the ages of 12 to 22 because if a boy loses to a girl in sport, it is "a failure in manli-ness" for the boy (p. 163). This led me to test this hypothesis. Results indicated that most boys felt they were better than girls in a competitive activity, and virtually all boys felt they should beat the girls in competition. Boys were highly anxious when they lost to a girl if they had no information about her ability. Boys simply felt they should win, so a loss was anxiety-producing. Interestingly, when boys were informed beforehand that certain girls were very good in the particular activity, they did not feel threatened when they lost (Corbin, 1980b). Thus, competition between boys and girls was not the problem. The problem was the false notion that only boys could be good at physical activities, especially sports.

Misconception 4: Physical Fitness is a Paramount Goal for Children

If someone had asked me what my most important job was when I was teaching elementary school physical education, I probably would have said, "to get children fit." Indeed, in my early writings and research I focused on physical fitness. I had been well taught by my professors that "American children are unfit, and it is our job to change this fact." I now know that fitness is important. I also know that as a teacher I had less to do with the fitness of the children than I thought I did. Several studies conducted over the past 40 years have taught me that:

- Heredity plays a major role in the fitness of children (Bouchard, 1993).
- Age and maturation are as important to predicting fitness as is activity (Corbin & Pangrazi, 1990).
- The relationship between fitness and physical activity is not strong among youth. In fact the relationship is quite low (Morrow & Freedson, 1994; Pate, Dowda, & Ross, 1990; Payne & Morrow, 1993).
- Because of the low relationship between physical activity and physical fitness among youth, you cannot judge the activity level of a child from his or her fitness level.
- Most American children are not less fit than in previous decades (Corbin & Pangrazi, 1992).
- American children are fatter than in past decades (Flegal, Dietz, Srinivasan, & Berenson, 1988; USDHHS, 2000)

I no longer believe that physical education classes can get children fit. First, I believe that children spend too little time in physical education to provide the activ-ity it takes to dramatically increase fitness. Second, I believe that factors beyond the control of physical educators, rather than physical activity done in class (see list above), limit the ability of physical education to "make kids fit."

The fact that many school districts use tests of youth fitness as measures of program success suggests that many still believe physical fitness is physical education's most important goal and that physical education can fulfill that goal. Those who use fitness scores to evaluate teacher competence, or as a primary indi-cator of student achievement in physical education, obviously subscribe to the idea that fitness is our paramount goal. I believe this is a serious mistake.

Alternative: Physical Activity Promotion Should be Our Major Concern

There is no doubt in my mind that each of the five characteristics of a phys-ically educated person, outlined by NASPE (1992) in the Outcomes Project, is important. Surely a physically educated person must be fit, be skilled, know the benefits of physical activity, and value physical activity. Nevertheless, being active seems to me to be the ultimate goal. Focusing too much on "getting kids fit" can have as many negative consequences as positive ones in my view. Some of these negative consequences include:

- Loss of interest in physical education and physical activity among children exposed to the "get them fit" philosophy.
- Teaching to the test when fitness tests are administered as a measure of program success or teacher competence.
- Student and teacher cheating on fitness tests.
- Undermining the confidence of students who find that, even with effort, they cannot achieve the fitness goals necessary to get good grades or to meet teacher expectations[5].

So what does this mean to the professional? To me it means we have to help children and their parents understand that children need to be active but their fitness may not be a good indicator of regular participation in activity. Some children will be fit in spite of their inactivity. This will lead parents to conclude everything is alright when it is not. Parents understand that a child must brush his or her teeth even if he or she has no cavities. Waiting until cavities appear would be a mistake. Children with good heredity may have no cavities even if they don't brush their teeth. But parents teach children to brush anyway. We must help parents see that seemingly fit children who are inactive must learn the habit of activity when they are young, even if there is no evidence of low fitness.

Just as some children who are quite fit are not necessarily active, some children who are quite active may not score well on fitness tests, especially when compared to others. If fitness is used as the ultimate indicator of success in physical education, many children who are quite active may "turn off" to activity because they feel it does not pay off.

[5] Grosu, Emilia, *Motor Skills Learning and Performance in Sports*, GMI Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, pp. 99-102.

Misconception 5: Competence Equals Self-Esteem

Many professionals feel that making children competent is our goal, just as I did when I first started teaching. While I endorse the notion that we should build as much physical competence in each child as possible, there are factors other than actual physical competence that contribute to future activity patterns[6].

Alternative: Perceptions of Competence Are as Important as Competence

During the 1980s and 1990s my colleagues and I embarked on a series of studies designed to better understand feelings of competence in physical activity. I now believe, based on my own work and the work of former graduate students Ken Fox (Fox, 1997; Fox & Corbin, 1989), Jim Whitehead (Whitehead, 1995; Whitehead & Corbin, 1991), and Greg Welk (Welk, Corbin, & Lewis, 1995; Welk, Corbin, Dowell, & Harris, 1997), that a person's self-perceptions, or beliefs about his or her competence, are as important as actual competence. The research cited above leads me to the following conclusions:

- Some physically competent people lack positive perceptions of competence (physical self-esteem).
- Some people who are not particularly physically competent can have strong physical self-perceptions.
- All people can have positive physical self-esteem.
- Positive physical self-esteem relates positively to lifelong physical activity and possessing an active identity.

Accordingly, it is my belief that physical education programs should make special efforts to help all children develop positive self-perceptions (self-esteem) in physical activity situations. I suggest avoiding "Do Not actions" and focusing on "Do actions." This will help young people feel better about themselves. The following actions are adapted from Whitehead and Corbin (1997).

- Do Not condone peer comments and actions that deprive children of positive self-perceptions. Do encourage youth to be supportive of peers in activity— even those who are less skilled than others.
- Do Not use language or take actions that undermine self-perceptions of children. Do find words and take actions that make all youth feel they are included and respected.

[6] Plas, F., Hangon, E., *Active Kinetic Therapy*, Iaşi, Polirom Publishing House, 2001, p. 189.

• Do Not condone or participate in actions that undermine the self-perceptions of children who are especially at risk (e.g., those perceived as gay, youth low in physical stature or ability, youth who are underdeveloped or accelerated in development, youth who are high or low in body fatness). Do make it clear that physical activity is for all people.

• Do Not use physical activity as punishment. Do find ways to make activity fun and enjoyable—not a chore.

There are many things that physical educators can do to promote perceptions of competence in addition to those listed above. One deserves special mention here. Teenagers are especially concerned about their appearance, and body attractive-ness is one of the major components of physical self-esteem. Many youth dislike physical education at the secondary level because of the trappings associated with classes. For example, locker rooms are often intimidating, too little time is provided for showering, drying and styling hair, and applying make-up. If positive physi-cal self-perceptions are important, we must make changes to make it possible for students to keep their feelings of attractiveness. In other words, we need to make changes in the locker room experience. Competence should be a goal, but helping all children to develop positive self-perceptions of competence is even more im-portant. Keeping self-perceptions high, including feelings of body attractiveness, should be a prime concern of all physical educators and coaches[7]

Misconception 6: All Skills Are Motor Skills

Motor skills are important, and being skilled is one of the five characteristics of being a physically educated person (NASPE, 1992). There is evidence that those who are competent in motor skills are more likely to be active later in life (Malina, 1996). However, many physical educators feel that the only skills we have to teach are motor skills. I suggest there are skills other than motor skills—specifically self-management skills—that should be emphasized by physical educators. If we are to help all youth to become physically active adults, we must do a better job of teaching these self-management skills.

[7] Johnson, L.M., Randall, M.J., Reddihough, D.S., Oke, L.E., Byrt, T.A., & Bach T.M., *Development of a clinical assessment of the quality of movement for unilateral upper limb function*. Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology, vol.36, 1994, 965–973.

Alternative: Self-Management Skills Are Critical to Lifestyle Change

Over the past decade my graduate students and I have worked with a local high school district on a program called Project Active Teen. The project was designed to promote lifetime physical activity as a major curriculum goal. After studying the literature (Sallis, 1994; Sallis, Simons-Morton, Stone, et al., 1992) it became apparent that self-management skills *must* be taught if we were to meet our goal. We based the Project Active Teen curriculum on the Stairway to Lifetime Fitness

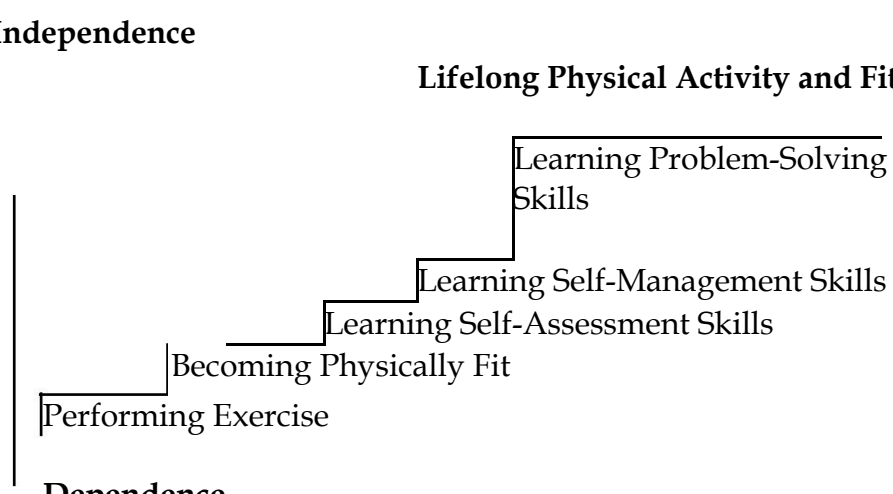

Figure 1 — The stairway to lifetime physical activity and fitness (adapted from Corbin & Lindsey, 1997).

(see Figure 1) which emphasizes the need to teach for independence rather than dependence (Corbin & Lindsey, 1997). The Stairway is meant to show that "getting youth active" and "getting youth fit" are low order objectives. If we "do fitness and physical activity to youth" and if we make all the decisions about what to do and when to do it, youth become dependent on us. We may help them temporarily, but we will have done little to help them develop lifetime habits.[8]

If we are to move students to independence, we must teach for higher order learning. We must teach our students how to self-assess (test themselves rather than our testing them). We must teach them self-management skills such as goal setting, program planning, self-

[8] Bourke-Taylor, H., *Melbourne assessment of unilateral upper limb function: construct validity and correlation with the pediatric evaluation of disability inventory. Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, vol.45, 92–96, 2003.

monitoring, and overcoming barriers, to name but a few. These skills, coupled with problem solving skills such as learning how to evaluate a fitness product or a magazine article, will lead to independence and the ability to make lifetime decisions about active living.

For Project Active Teen we identified numerous self-management skills and focused our teaching efforts on these. We also focused on teaching information that would help students become good fitness and physical activity problem solv-ers. Results support the notion that such skills can help reduce sedentary behavior among teens (Dale & Corbin, 2000; Dale, Corbin, & Cuddihy, 1998). I believe all teens should be exposed to a program that builds self-management and problem solving skills at some time in their high school physical education program. Learning these skills is as important, or maybe more important, than building motor skills. Not all students develop a high level of motor skills; but with proper instruction, all students can learn the self-management skills to become independent problem solvers who participate in lifetime physical activity that ultimately leads to lifetime physical fitness[9].

Misconception 7: We Can Be All Things to All People

I was excited about my first teaching job at an elementary school in Albu-querque, New Mexico. I was convinced that I would teach all "my" children a wide variety of motor skills, would get them fit, and would make them all good sports. Like any good physical educator, I was committed to accomplishing all of the objectives extolled by the likes of Jesse F. Williams, Delbert Oberteuffer, Ruth Abernathy, and the many others about whom I had studied in school. Confronted with the real world, I found that I had two 20-minute periods per week to do this with primary-grade children and 3 days a week of 30 minutes to do this with intermediate-grade children. I learned that you can't be all things to all people, especially when time is limited.[10]

While I continue to endorse all the major objectives of physical education, I am convinced that we must narrow our focus if we are to be

[9] Cordun, M., *Kinetic therapeutic means in abdominal -gynecologic disorders,* Bucharest, Caritas Publishing House, 1995, p. 89.

[10] Câmpeanu Melania, *Rhythmic Sports Gymnastics*, Risoprint Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, pp. 123-125.

effective in truly physically educating our students. At all times we should keep *all* of our objectives in mind; however, our goals are too grandiose. We must narrow our focus and do a few things well, rather than many things not so well. For example, we try to teach every child to perform all of the many sport skills common in the United States. We know we cannot teach every child to play every instrument in the band. Why do we think we can teach every child to play every sport? At some point we must begin to adopt a strategy that allows us to use our limited time in a more focused way. Within the skill objective, we must decide which skills are most important to be taught and learned. The same is true for the other principal objectives of physical education.

Alternative: We Can Educate People to Become Active Now and Later in Life

Teaching motor skills is important and we should teach as many as time will allow. However, if students do not become skilled by their high school years, we must find ways to help them be active even if they do not possess high level motor skills. To help those who need it most, we must adopt new and innovative programs that teach for higher order learning (see Figure 1) and focus on lifetime physical activities that can be performed without exceptional motor skill. At some point in the secondary curriculum, *all* students should experience a "lifetime physical activity promotion" class that teaches the self-management skills necessary to be active for a lifetime. Upon completion of such a class, all remaining physical education classes should be "required" electives that allow students to choose the activities they would like to perform. Our work with intrinsic motivation indicates that choice is central to autonomy, and autonomy is central to lifetime physical activity adherence (Whitehead, 1993, 1994; Whitehead & Corbin, 1991).

Following are some suggestions for secondary school curricula:

• High school objectives should focus on lifetime physical activity promotion with an emphasis on higher order objectives such as learning self-management skills and acquiring problem solving skills.

• At least one semester, and preferably a year, of the high school program should be devoted to a class specifically designed to meet higher order objectives (see Point 1).

• To assure that *all* students learn higher order objectives, exemptions from physical education for band, athletics, and other non-physical-education class should be abandoned. Students who have learned higher order objectives in alternative ways should be given the chance to "test

out" of this component of physical education. Such a plan will offer alternatives for those who want to avoid physical education requirements.

• The lead teacher in each high school, and at least half of the physical education faculty, should be free of coaching responsibilities.

• A school "fitness club" approach should be considered. This approach should promote active living in ways similar to those currently practiced by active adults.

• School facilities should be built primarily on the needs of the physical education program, *not* the needs of gifted athletes. This includes building fitness rooms, fitness testing rooms, weight rooms, and classrooms with computers that are available to all students, not just the gifted athletes.

• It is important to target adolescents, especially physical activity promotion programs for girls. It is well documented that activity drops during the teen years and that teenage girls drift toward inactivity (CDC, 1998). National research priorities have targeted this population (Sallis et al., 1994) and CDC guidelines have been published to lead efforts to promote activity in this age group (CDC, 1997). At the request of the President of the United States, the CDC (2000) has developed plans for promoting health through physical activity.

Concluding Comments

The comments in this paper are based partly on scientific evidence gained from others and partly on the results of the research I have conducted over the years with my colleagues and graduate students. Of course my own professional experiences, beginning with my days as a public school teacher in 1960, have in-fluenced the thoughts expressed in this paper. Many of the objectives I extolled for physical education in my early days are objectives I still view as very important. I have come to believe, however, that our most important objective is to promote lifetime physical activity behaviors among all of our students. We should continue to teach for learning in a wide variety of areas, but as I noted at the outset, a focus on physical activity promotion should be paramount.

As Experts We Must Set a Higher Standard

There are many things I know now that I didn't when I started. I now know that much of the talk about the lack of fitness of our youth is hyperbole, designed to create a need for physical education in the eyes of the public. I know that the press likes bad news and is quick to pick up on

our hyperbole. I also have learned that our continued emphasis on physical fitness has led the public to distrust us. Many with whom I have spoken ask why physical education has failed in its efforts to "get our kids fit." We must educate the public to understand that factors other than activity account for the fitness of our youth. We must help the public understand that adopting a physically active lifestyle is the key to future fitness and health. Further, we must help the public understand that physical education alone is not the answer. We can teach children to be active, but parents must help in this effort by giving their children the opportunity to be active daily.

At the high school level, many changes need to be made. A recent national survey indicates that the activities most often undertaken in physical education by high school students are football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and baseball/softball (Simons-Morton, Eitel, & Small, 1999). This is true in spite of the fact that none of these is listed among the 10 most popular activities among adults. That's not all. Among the top activities in physical education are dodge ball and bombardment. In light of this evidence, the suggestion that modern physical education programs emphasize lifetime activities seems out of touch. The public trust has been eroded by poor programs in many high schools, often resulting from lack of professional interest among teachers who are also coaches. It is my belief that many coach/ teachers focus on coaching at the expense of quality physical education teaching. I believe the dramatic decrease (29%) in required physical education in recent years (Morrow & Jackson, 1999) is a direct result of student and parent dissatisfaction with inadequate and ineffective programs that continue to focus on team sports rather than lifetime activities.

If we are to regain the public trust, we must set a higher standard for ourselves, especially at the high school level. We must be aware of the facts and educate the public about these facts. It is no longer acceptable to spout the hyperbole that has led to our current situation. As experts, we must avoid the misconceptions that have plagued us in the past and consider some alternatives for the future. As experts, we must continue to identify misconceptions that need to be replaced with suitable alternatives. We are the experts and we must set the standard—a higher standard.

Educate, Not Dictate

I have learned over four decades as an educator that young people are inher-ently active and inherently enjoy activity. Young children typically

have positive self-perceptions because they are concrete thinkers who get positive reinforcement from adults. As children grow older, it seems that those with good heredity and early maturation get reinforced and are often chosen for team activities because of their physical precocity. Those who are less gifted are often not reinforced and may become disenchanted with the physical education experience. Our own research suggests that most high school students have positive feelings about physical activity but more negative feelings about physical education. We must change this.

The evidence suggests that while children are not fragile, they are not miniature adults either. We need to adapt programs especially suited for chil-dren—based on the needs of children. We must consider the needs and interests of learners, whether they are boys or girls. In the process we must pay special attention to the development of positive physical self-perceptions that will lead to a physically active identity, and ultimately an active life. "Doing physical activity to children and youth" is not the answer. Rather, we need to help youth learn to be independent problem-solvers so they can choose to be active on their own. Our job is to educate, not dictate.

One Person Can Make a Difference

For too many years I have seen enthusiastic young student teachers thrust into the teaching situation only to be told by older teachers not to make waves. Some of these teachers become socialized to not make waves and thus to not make a difference. On the other hand, there are many teachers who keep up to date, who are enthusiastic about what they do, and who believe they can make a difference. If my ideas help one teacher help one child, I have made a difference. Each of us can make a difference in helping all youth to become physically active for a lifetime. To accomplish this, we must keep abreast of the facts and continue our commitment to educate all youth.

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