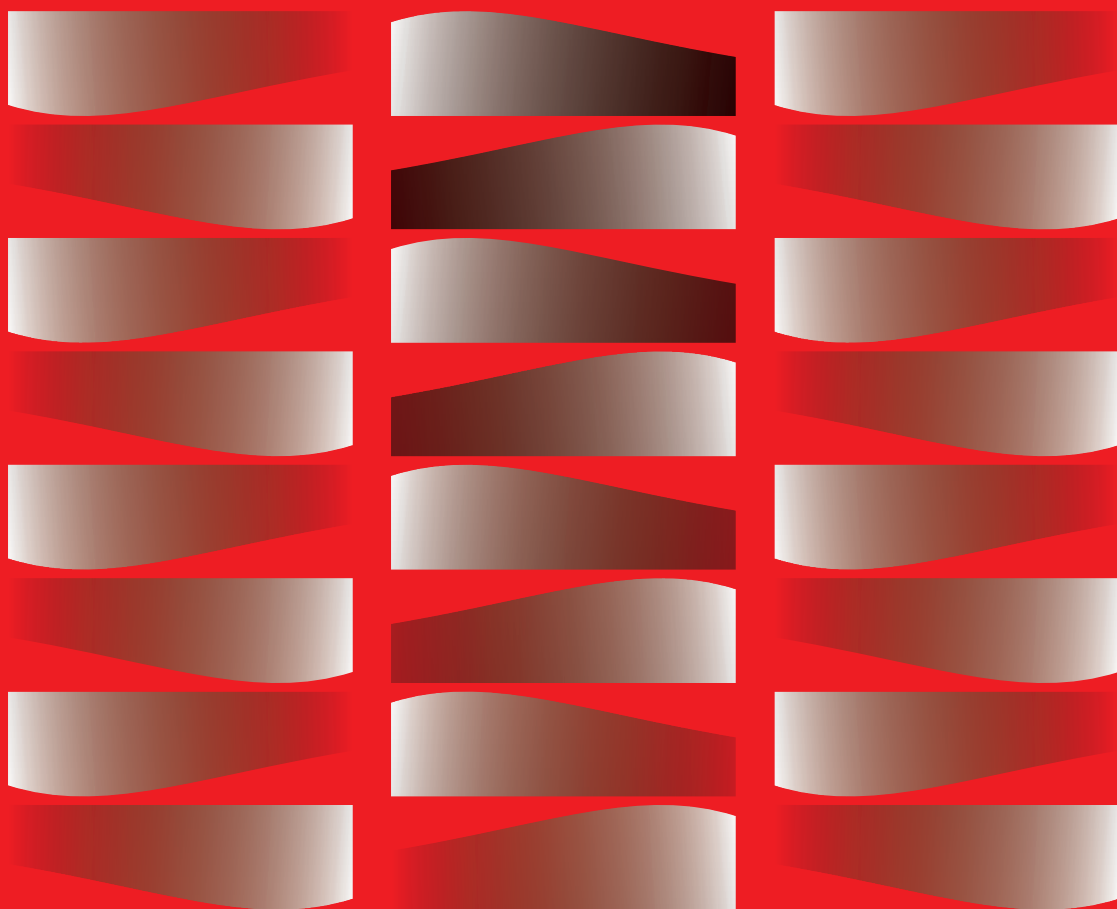


STUDIA SCIENTIFICA
FACULTATIS PAEDAGOGICAE
UNIVERSITAS CATHOLICA RUŽOMBEROK



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**STUDIA SCIENTIFICA
FACULTATIS PAEDAGOGICAE
UNIVERSITAS CATHOLICA RUŽOMBEROK**



Ružomberok 2024

**STUDIA SCIENTIFICA FACULTATIS PAEDAGOGICAE
UNIVERSITAS CATHOLICA RUŽOMBEROK**

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Predhovor

Vedecké štúdie v predloženom časopise *STUDIA SCIENTIFICA FACULTATIS PAEDAGOGICAE* (č. 2/2024) predkladáme v anglicko-poľskej jazykovej mutácii, nakoľko spolupráca, ktorá vznikla v rámci univerzitných pracovísk zo Slovenska, Česka a Poľska úspešne pokračuje. V rámci scientometrických ukazovateľov v tomto vedeckom časopise predstavujeme 15 príspevkov, ktorými prispelo viac ako dve desiatky autorov pôsobiacich na 8 pracoviskách orientovaných na špeciálnu a liečebnú pedagogiku, psychológiu, výtvarné umenie a na masmediálnu a marketingovú spoluprácu.

Obsahová náplň daného čísla časopisu je špecifická v rámci pedagogických vied s ambíciou poskytnúť nové výskumné zistenia v proklamovaných témach.

V prvom bloku príspevkov autori prezentujú výskumné zistenia z hľadiska výtvarnosti a jeho využitia v kontexte diagnostiky a intervencie (Jana Marie Havigerová, Marie Herynková, Paula Maliňáková, Daniela Valachová, Miroslava Repiská, Dominika Weissová) a literárneho umenia (Zuzana Chanasová).

Následný druhý blok príspevkov popisuje možnosti a význam osamostatňovania sa osôb s postihnutím (Lenka Hovorková et al.) a dôležitosť pohybu v rámci vyučovania telesnej výchovy (Štefan Adamčák et al.). Taktiež na pohyb sú orientované príspevky s dôrazom na žiakov s mentálnym postihnutím (Viktor Hladush, Bohuslav Stupák) a na človeka s Parkinsonovým ochorením (Zuzana Fábry Lucká).

V treťom bloku príspevkov autori spracovali rozvíjanie životných kompetencií v základnej škole (Mária Hrobková) a na využívanie didaktických prostriedkov na vyučovaní (Michal Mrázek, Daniel Kučerka, Čestmír Serafín, Hana Bučková). Súčasťou tohto bloku sú aj príspevky orientované na výskum popisujúci integráciu v školách (Mieczysław Dudek, Martina Magová, Monika Homolová, Barbora Bačíková, Blanka Babická).

Posledný blok príspevkov prezentuje kultúrnu komunikáciu v našich podmienkach cez kultúrne ustanovizne (Adam Križan) a na kultúru

v spojitosti s marketingovými predpoklady v kultúrnej diplomacii (Natália Dadíková).

Vedecké štúdie predstavujú aktuálne témy v súvislosti s rozširovaním si odborných a profesijných kompetencií, ktoré rezonujú v súčasnom svete a zároveň sú inšpiračnými pre rozvoj výskumnej činnosti v jednotlivých študijných odboroch.

doc. PaedDr. Barbora Kováčová, PhD.

Preface

The scientific studies in the presented journal “STUDIA SCIENTIFICA FACULTATIS PAEDAGOGICAE” (No. 2/2024) are presented in the English-Polish language mutation, as the cooperation that arose within university workplaces from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland continues successfully. Within the scope of scientometric indicators in this scientific journal, we present 15 articles contributed by more than two dozen of authors working at 8 workplaces focused on special and therapeutic pedagogy, psychology, visual arts, and mass media and marketing cooperation.

The content of the given issue of the magazine is specific within the pedagogical sciences with the ambition to provide new research findings in the proclaimed topics.

In the first block of contributions the authors present research findings from the point of view of creativity and its use in the context of diagnostics and intervention (Jana Marie Havigerová, Marie Herynková, Paula Maliňáková, Daniela Valachová, Miroslava Repiská, Dominika Weissová) and literary art (Zuzana Chanasová).

The subsequent second block of contributions describes the possibilities and significance of the independence of persons with disabilities (Lenka Hovorková et al.) and the importance of movement within the teaching of physical education (Štefan Adamčák et al.). Contributions are also oriented towards movement with an emphasis on pupils with mental disabilities (Viktor Hladush, Bohuslav Stupák) and on people with Parkinson's disease (Zuzana Fábry Lucká).

In the third block of contributions the authors elaborated on the development of life skills in primary school (Mária Hrobková) and on the use of didactic tools in teaching (Michal Mrázek, Daniel Kučerka, Čestmír Serafín, Hana Bučková). This block also includes research-oriented contributions describing integration in schools (Mieczysław Dudek, Martina Magová, Monika Homolová, Barbora Bačíková, Blanka Babická).

The last block of contributions presents cultural communication in our conditions through cultural institutions (Adam Križan) and culture in connection with marketing assumptions in cultural diplomacy (Natália Dadíková).

Scientific studies represent current topics in connection with the expansion of professional and professional competences, which resonate in the contemporary world and are also inspirational for the development of research activities in individual fields of study.

doc. PaedDr. Barbora Kováčová, PhD.

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Kresli, na co myslíš: Komparativní analýza kreseb předškolních dětí a prvňáků

Draw what's on your mind: Comparative analysis of preschool and primary school children's drawings

Jana Marie Havigerová, Marie Herynková

Abstract

Children's drawings provide valuable insights into their mind, their development. The study aimed to compare children's drawings revealing age and sex differences. A total of 204 children aged 5-8 years participated, drawing pictures based on a content-neutral instruction (Draw what's in your mind.). Theme and frequency analysis were conducted. Results showed that preschoolers drew significantly fewer objects (modus = 1) compared to first graders (modus = 11). Preschoolers most often drew vehicles, persons, and symbols, while first graders' drawings vary much within themes and objects. Girls in both age groups depicted more nature-related objects, while boys focused on human-made products. These findings suggest a developmental shift, with preschoolers often drawing what they see or can draw and first graders expressing complex inner contents and experiences. Comparing drawings of preschool children and first graders can enhance our understanding of developmental processes during this period.

Keywords: Drawings. Preschoolers. Firstgraders. Content analysis. Grade differences. Sex differences.

Introduction

Drawing is one of the most natural activities for preschoolers and younger school age kids. Children love drawings (Hsu, 2015) and begin their drawing process as early as they can physically hold a drawing utensil (Farokhi & Hashemi, 2011). Many child development experts have studied the importance of drawing for young kids. Drawing is a game or game-like activity for children (Kouvou, 2016). It has the character of a non-verbal holistic statement, that allows the projection of the child's experience.

The process of this activity promotes many psychological benefits for children, including visual thinking, observation and the analysis of the theme, problem solving, imagination, expression, creativity, as well as more general habits of

thinking such as perseverance, experimentation and reflection (Jolley, Barlow, Rotenberg, & Cox, 2016). Children enjoy drawing because it stimulates the universal desire to express oneself (Farokhi & Hashemi, 2011).

Drawing is a complex process. It involves many interacting components, including the perceptual system, fine and gross motor skills, perceptual feedback, interaction with the drawings of a culture, social interaction and motivation, emotional impact (Cohn, 2012). Both observed groups fall into the developmental period when they are psychophysically able to draw a picture. Both of them fall into the developmental period of preschematic age with illustrative thinking (Piaget & Inhelder, 2019), so the contents of the drawing correspond to the current contents of the child's mind (a child up to about 9 years of age typically draw immediately the first thing that comes to mind). They are in the period of descriptive symbolism, when they draw objects based on past experience: the main features of what they have seen, what they have experienced, what they have already drawn, not on the basis of what they see at the moment - for example, objects located in the room (Anning & Ring, 2004). Both age groups have already developed a mechanism of conceptualization, and executive functions with visual perception or memory recognition planning so they are able to plan comprehensively what they want to draw and draw from memory (Cohn, 2012). In this study is used the technique of free-memory picture (Strauss, 2007), spontaneous drawing (Kolouchová, 2016), that is not defined thematically so that children are not limited by fixed instructions (Kucharská, 2002, p. 58). The characteristics of developmental period imply the choice as an optimal way for research.

In this study, we explore the drawings of preschool children and first-graders. Despite just one school year separating these two groups, we anticipate variations in the number and themes in their drawings, and this expectation is based on several significant factors. Firstly, a pronounced developmental shift occurs during this period, as highlighted in studies by Brod, Bunge, and Shing (2017). This shift is accompanied by substantial changes in neuromotor development (Largo et al., 2001), motor skills (Eriksen, Olsen, & Sigmundsson, 2023), working memory (Hu, Liang, Zhou, Feng, & Zhang, 2023), particularly in visuospatial working memory (Eriksen et al., 2023), visual-motor integration (Pfeiffer et al., 2015), cognitive tempo (Dvorsky, Becker, Tamm, & Willoughby, 2021), and event-related potentials, which serve as neurophysiological markers of perceptual and cognitive processes (Jetha, Segalowitz, & Gatzke-Kopp, 2021). These developmental transformations during these years are also reflected in corresponding brain regions (Jetha et al., 2021; Karipidis, Pleisch, Pietro, Fraga-González, & Brem, 2021). The resulting level of neuropsychomotor skills may find a particular expression in the ability to draw, affecting aspects such as spatial grasp, line quality, the number of objects, and level of detail, among others.

Moreover, various variables like feeding habits, nutritional status, methods of psychosocial stimulation, quality of education (Sharma, Budhathoki, Maharjan,

& Singh, 2023), and the presence of older siblings (Wu et al., 2022) have the potential to influence the developmental process.

Differences are influenced by psychological and social circumstances. Preschoolers are in a phase of discovery and exploration, processing their surroundings in the form of simple objects or symbolic concepts (Baxter, 2005; Gardner, 2011). In contrast, first-graders are already engaged in acquiring more structured knowledge and complex skills within the school environment (Eriksen et al., 2023). These different contexts can not only influence the subjects or themes of their drawings but also the complexity of their artwork, including the number of elements and details.

In the observed age range, children like to draw what they already know and can do, enrich and expand what they have learned into an original drawing or drawing with innovative elements for the child (for example, he can draw a dog, but he draws an elephant, that looks like a four-legged dog with that has an extra trunk). The first theme of the drawings in this age is usually 'a man', spreads out with 'a tree' and 'a house' (Strauss, 2007, p. 37). Natural topics appear to be the most common (Hass-Cohen, Chandler-Ziegler, Veeman, & Funk, 2016). Klobuchar (2016) identified 5 thematic categories in the drawings of preschoolers: figural, natural, technical, construction and fantasy objects. Frost (1958) identified 14 of meaningful objects in drawings at observed age: scenes, houses, boats, plant life, land vehicles, air vehicles, human figures, animal figures, still life, designs, the sun, moon and stars, weapons, letters. Will the same categories appear in the children's drawings in our research, or will we detect new categories? Will be differences between preschoolers and first-graders?

The number of objects drawn differ with age. In preschool age there are typical single-object drawings (Frost, 1958). The number of drawn objects increases with age, culminating around the age of ten (Oguz, 2010). We assume that this will also be reflected in our study and that older children will have more complex drawings with more objects.

Gender differences were observed in previous studies. Girls start drawing earlier. According to Henderson and Pehoski (2005) girls have about a half-year to a year "head start" in drawing. Better drawing performances are given until about twelve years of age (Picard, 2015). They differ in thematic preference. Robert (2012) found that girls rather draw human topics (person), while boys non-human objects (house, tree, car). Alter-Muri and Vazzano (2014) confirmed that boys incorporate into a picture vehicle (most of all vehicle of transportation), weapons, and sports more than girls. Wolpert (2014) states that girls prefer flowers, butterflies and woman persons, boys more mechanical subjects (cars, trains) or soldiers and fighting. Intersex differences were observed in status line drawing or sizes of objects drawn (Barendse et al., 2018), or in using colours (Deaver, 2009). We ask the question, what will be the difference between boys and girls in free drawing in our research?

Study aim

Study aims to describe and analyse the contents of free drawings of children in preschool and first grade; to compare the findings with respect to class and gender; and to compare our results with the current state of knowledge.

Methods

Participants: Data collection took place in the end of the school year (kindergarten June to August, elementary school June). Data were collected by student administrators that were trained on how exactly to proceed. The parents' consents to the involvement of their children in the research were obtained. The administrators implemented data collection as a natural part of teaching in the classroom, the children were used to them and willingly followed their instructions. A total of N=204 children were included in the research, the age range of 5.9-8.1 year, boys slightly predominate among preschoolers, the first-grade group is balanced (see Table 1).

Table 1 : Research sample: descriptives (N=204)

| Sex | Preschool | First grade | Total |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Boys | 34 (55.7 %) | 72 (50.4 %) | 106 |
| Girls | 27 (44.3 %) | 71 (49.6 %) | 98 |
| Total | 61 (100%) | 143 (100%) | 204 |

Data acquisition method

After a short activity of calming and emptying the mind (micro-meditation with visualization on the theme of "erasing our inner board") lying on the game carpet, the children were seated to their desks, where blank white A4 papers and crayons were prepared. The children were given content-neutral (so-called invisible) instructions: "Draw whatever comes to mind," and they started drawing. Administrators walked among the children and provided conditions for calm concentrated work. They also made sure that the children did not copy from each other. Whoever felt that the picture was ready, brought their drawing to the administrator, who asked them "What is the name of the picture?" and recorded the answer on the back of the drawing. The sex and age of the child was written on the back side. When the last child in the group finished their drawing, a debriefing followed, the children talked to the administrator about whether and what they like to draw. This was followed by other activities planned in the class' educational plan.

Data processing

Data processing procedure — each image was scanned, the child's ID, age, gender and image name encoded. The obtained data were subjected to thematic analysis of visual data. They were processed through content theme analysis (Glaw, Inder, Kable, & Hazelton, 2017) and frequency analysis procedures.

Intersex and grade differences were tested by non-parametric tests for two independent samples comparing: Mann-Whitney U test (for ordinal variables), Cochran and Mantel-Haenszel test of conditional independence, which is suitable for 2x2 analyses of dichotomous variables.

Results

The actual thematic analysis was carried out in two steps. First, the images were scanned and in Atlas: TI version 8.0, each object in the image was encoded "in vivo" (a specific name of the element in the image was assigned). Secondly, they were grouped into 17 thematic categories (Havigerová et al., 2021), they were grouped into 5 higher order categories (Table 2).

Table 2: Categories of assessment

| | | |
|-----------|--|--|
| Animals | a category grouping topics from the animal kingdom (i.e. including homo sapiens) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mammal — includes all terrestrial four-legged animals, such as dog, horse, rabbit, b) Bird — winged creature, e.g. bird, peacock, owl, c) Insect — e.g. butterfly, ladybug, bee, wasp, d) Aquatic animal — animals in the water, e.g. fish, aquatic mammals, turtles and other aquatic animals (seahorse, starfish, crab, etc.). |
| Person | the human figure of a child or adult | |
| Plants | a category covering topics from the plant kingdom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tree — e.g. generally deciduous tree, apple tree, conifer, b) Flower and grass — common meadow flower with petals, roses, sunflowers, water lilies, tufts of grass. |
| Inorganic | category associating topics from inanimate nature and space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ground-line — horizon representing the boundary of the land, often green (as a meadow, natural basis) or blue (sea level, water base, sky), b) Sun c) Cloud d) Rainbow e) Natural object — other natural objects not elsewhere classified, e.g. stone, hill, lake, volcano. |
| Products | (house, vehicle, tool, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) House — any building or dwelling, e.g. a house with a roof, a cottage, a |

| | | |
|--------|---|---|
| | symbol) – a category containing themes that represent the products of human activity, the human spirit: | <p>block of flats, a castle, a square dwelling for Minecraft characters, a kennel for a dog,</p> <p>b) Vehicle — any vehicle independent of propulsion, e.g. car, limousine, caravan, bus, tractor, tank, scooter, airplane,</p> <p>c) Tool or product — products of human activity commonly known by people, e.g. sword, axe, balloon on a string, key, antenna, cake.</p> |
| Symbol | includes shapes, signs and inscriptions, e.g. heart, victory cup, signature, | |
| Other | categories containing uncategorized topics | <p>a) Imaginary character — fairy-tale, game (especially from Minecraft and movie characters,</p> <p>b) Other — everything else, not elsewhere classified.</p> |

The assumptions for calculations of parametric tests were verified: Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test for sum-of-objects and sum-of-categories showed that they do not have a normal distribution ($\text{sig} < 0.001$), which is why it is advisable to work with non-parametric methods. Frequency analysis of the number of objects in the picture was performed. A total of 2304 objects were detected in the 204 analysed images. Table 2 shows the results separately for groups of boys and girls in each grade.

Table 3: Themes of objects in the picture: frequency analysis (N=204)

| Grade | Sex | N | Sum | Median | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
|---------------|-------|----|------|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| Preschoolers | Boys | 34 | 66 | 1 | 1,94 | 1,79 | 1 | 8 |
| | Girls | 27 | 93 | 1 | 3,44 | 4,85 | 1 | 23 |
| First graders | Boys | 72 | 1040 | 9 | 14,44 | 13,22 | 1 | 49 |
| | Girls | 71 | 1105 | 13 | 15,56 | 10,90 | 1 | 49 |

The results: preschoolers draw significantly less objects (on average 2-4 objects), first-grade children draw more (on average 15-16 objects). Moses extreme reactions test to compare ranges across groups shows that extreme values are more likely to occur in the population of preschool girls

(preschoolers: $\chi^2=0.029$, $p<0.001$, 1 outlier; firstgraders: $\chi^2=1.181$, $p=0.982$, 3 outliers). In both groups girls draw on average 1 to 2 objects more than boys. Mann-Whitney U test shows the average difference of 1 to 2 images is not statistically significant (preschoolers: $U=511$, $p=0.385$; firstgraders: $U=2940$, $p=0.120$).

The number of themes used is shown in Table 3. Preschoolers draw fewer objects, most often a single one, while firstgraders draw ten times more objects, so a match within each group is more likely. Preschoolers most often draw vehicles (almost a third of children), people (a quarter of children) and symbols like heart (a fifth of children), while in firstgraders drawings ground (almost two-thirds of children), sun (half of children) and tool (half of children) are most often found. In both groups, rainbow, imaginary character and aquatic animals' theme are the least represented (preschoolers did not have aquatic animals at all).

Table 4: The number of objects in the picture: sex differences (N=204)

| Preschoolers (N=61) | | | First graders (N=143) | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|----|-----------------------|-----------------|----|
| Rank | Theme | % | Rank | Theme | % |
| 1. | Vehicle | 29 | 1. | Ground-line | 65 |
| 2. | Person | 24 | 2. | Sun | 50 |
| 3. | Symbol or text | 21 | 3. | Tool or product | 49 |
| 4. | House | 19 | 4. | Natural object | 45 |
| 5. | Sun | 16 | 5. | Person | 43 |
| 6. | Natural object | 9 | 6. | Symbol or text | 37 |
| 7. | Ground-line | 8 | 7. | Tree | 33 |
| 8. | Tool or product | 8 | 8. | Cloud | 31 |
| 9. | Cloud | 8 | 9. | Flowers | 29 |
| 10. | Flowers | 8 | 10. | House | 27 |
| 11. | Mammal | 8 | 11. | Bird | 23 |
| 12. | Tree | 6 | 12. | Vehicle | 20 |
| 13. | Bird | 4 | 13. | Mammal | 19 |
| 14. | Insect | 1 | 14. | Insect | 18 |
| 15. | Rainbow | 1 | 15. | Rainbow | 14 |
| 16. | Im. character | 1 | 16. | Im. character | 8 |
| 17. | Aquatic animals | 0 | 17. | Aquatic animals | 7 |
| 18. | Other... | 0 | 18. | Other... | 4 |

The values in percentages for each gender are shown in Table 3 for preschoolers and Table 4 for first graders. The statistical significance for the sex difference was assessed by calculating the χ^2 and Eta tests. The Eta is interpreted after multiplying by 100 as a percentage of the explained variance.

Table 5: Themes on the pictures of Preschoolers: chi square and ETA

| Theme | % b | % g | χ^2 | p | Eta (sex dep.) |
|-------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|----------------|
| Vehicle | 52,94 | 0,00 | 20,27 | <,001 | 0,577 |
| Sun | 2,94 | 33,33 | 10,14 | 0,001 | 0,408 |
| Flowers | 0,00 | 18,52 | 6,86 | 0,009 | 0,335 |
| Cloud | 0,00 | 18,52 | 6,85 | 0,009 | 0,335 |
| Natural | 2,94 | 18,52 | 4,11 | 0,042 | 0,260 |
| Bird | 0,00 | 11,11 | 3,97 | 0,046 | 0,255 |
| Mammal | 2,94 | 14,81 | 2,82 | 0,093 | 0,215 |
| Tree | 2,94 | 11,11 | 1,64 | 0,200 | 0,164 |
| Rainbow | 0,00 | 3,70 | 1,28 | 0,258 | 0,145 |
| Insect | 0,00 | 3,70 | 1,28 | 0,258 | 0,145 |
| Person | 29,41 | 18,52 | 0,96 | 0,326 | 0,126 |
| Imaginaries | 2,94 | 0,00 | 0,81 | 0,369 | 0,115 |
| Symbol | 17,65 | 25,93 | 0,62 | 0,433 | 0,100 |
| Ground-line | 8,82 | 7,41 | 0,04 | 0,841 | 0,026 |
| Tool | 8,82 | 7,41 | 0,04 | 0,841 | 0,026 |
| House | 20,59 | 18,52 | 0,04 | 0,840 | 0,026 |

There is a statistically significant difference: boys draw objects from the category Vehicles more often, girls in the categories Sun, Clouds, Flowers, Natural objects, and Birds. Furthermore, we can conclude that preschool girls are more varied from the thematic point of view (they used 14 out of 17 thematic categories overall), while preschool boys are rather monotonous (they used "only" 11 out of 17 categories).

The results for first graders show that the frequency distribution of drawn objects is different for boys and girls in nine topics: Vehicle, Insect, Clouds, Rainbow, Natural objects, Houses, Flowers, Birds and Sun. Compared to preschoolers, there are differences in the topics of Insect, Rainbow (drawn more often by first-grade girls) and Houses (drawn more often by first-grade boys). Both sexes used all categories.

Finally, we will compare sex differences for higher categories. Table 5 shows that, with the exception of animals in preschoolers, girls draw more animals, plants and inorganic themes, boys draw more products of human activities.

Table 6: Themes sex differences: Mann-Whitney test (N=204)

| up-theme | preschoolers | | | | firstgraders | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------|-------------|--------------|
| | U | p | m rank boys | m rank girls | U | p | m rank boys | m rank girls |
| animals | 480 | 0,711 | 30,3 | 31,7 | 3086 | 0,024 | 64,6 | 79,4 |
| plants | 581 | 0,004 | 27,4 | 35,5 | 3172 | 0,006 | 63,4 | 80,6 |
| inorganic | 608 | 0,006 | 26,62 | 36,52 | 3228 | 0,006 | 62,66 | 81,47 |
| products | 277 | 0,003 | 36,3 | 24,2 | 1850 | 0,003 | 81,8 | 62,0 |

Each child named his or her picture. The names of pictures of preschoolers were usually one-word, first-graders gave more complex names. We took all the names from each group and created in the WordArt program word clouds, see

Figure 1 Word clouds from the picture's titles - preschoolers on the left, first graders on the right.



Discussion

The study focuses attention on free unguided drawing of preschoolers and first graders. The aim was to describe and analyze the content of free drawings and to perform analyze regarding gender and grade. Data from 204 children were obtained and a total of 2304 individual objects were analysed.

In our study, it turned out that preschoolers draw significantly fewer objects than first grade children. The result is in accordance with the present state of knowledge. Developmentally, the number of drawn objects increases with age, culminating around the age of ten (Oguz, 2010). The increase is related to object recognition and working memory (Bensur, Eliot, and Hegde (1997).

The number of single-object drawings in preschoolers is high (the median of boys and girls is 1 object). This in itself is not uncommon, but the proportion of single-object drawings compared to older studies is almost doubled (in the study Frost, 1958 they were less than 10 percent, in our study of over 50% of drawings of preschool children). Havigerová et al. (2021) explains that it may be a specific consequence of the time — the current generation of children has more activities that do not require demanding fine motor skills (mouse movements or swiping on the screen are less complex and less challenging than moving a pencil on a paper). However, first-grade children a year older draw multiple objects in one drawing. Why? The development of graphomotrics is enormous in the first grade. Large part of the curriculum consists of the development of writing, where children train intensively every day. It is shown that around 7th year a boom in the graphomotor skills is the biggest (Spasova, 2020). Maturation and training are combined, hand movement is more precise and reliable, resulting in first grade children being able to express themselves better by drawing.

Intersex differences are reflected in the number of objects: girls draw on average 1 - 2 objects more than boys. The result is very variable (the standard deviation is high) and is not statistically significant, yet it can represent generally known intersex developmental differences: girls mature in terms of graphomotorics earlier than boys (Benenson, Gauthier, & Markovits, 2021), according to H Henderson and Pehoski (2005) girls have about a half-year to a year "head start" in drawing. Better drawing performances are given until about twelve years of age (Picard, 2015). Girls seemed to gain a greater sense of achievement and self-esteem through their drawing work (Cooke, Cox, Cox, & Griffin, 2004). They are more willing to draw longer and more intensively, perhaps because the detail of drawing in girls increases with age, while in boys it is more of a permanent feature (Lange-Küttner, 2011). Graphomotor maturity and satisfaction of drawing may explain differences in the number of objects, but note that in our study the difference was not significant.

The thematic focus of the drawings was investigated using frequency analysis. The seventeen themes were used, grouped into 5 higher themes. Age was reflected only in the number of categories used (the older, the more categories are represented in one drawing), not in the preference. Overall, the most frequent objects are from categories: ground-line, person, sun, symbol or text, tool, nature object (lake, mountain, etc.) and vehicle. On the contrary, insects, rainbow, imaginary character and aquatic animal were least represented.

In various research studies, it has been observed that natural subjects tend to be the most prevalent (Hass-Cohen et al., 2016). Within the realm of natural themes, the sun tends to be one of the most commonly depicted elements (Labitsi, 2007). The rationale behind the prominence of the sun in drawings has been explained in a prior study by Havigerová et al. (2021): anthropological reason (a well-known everyday object, a life-giving object, mediates a sense of security), an observational reason (the sun occurs in many stimulus materials, adults like to draw it), and practical reason (simplicity of own drawing – just know the circle and radial lines). The occurrence of clouds, flowers, mammals, and birds can be explained by the same story line (Anderson, Ellis, & Jones, 2017).

The preference for themes differs based on gender. Boys tend to favour themes associated with human products, with preschool boys showing a preference for vehicles and houses. Additionally, boys in the first grade demonstrate a high inclination towards tools and symbols, often accompanied by written inscriptions. Conversely, boys in both age groups display a limited interest in birds, insects, rainbows, and aquatic animals.

In contrast, girls prefer a diverse range of natural themes. During the preschool age, there is a prevalence of themes related to nature and inorganic matter, such as plants, sun, flowers, clouds, and other elements of nature. As girls progress to the first grade, there is an increasing occurrence of themes involving trees, birds, insects, rainbows, and mammals — and draw them with greater details. They also depict tools, persons, and symbols in their drawings. Interestingly,

the least popular topics among girls are houses, vehicles, and imaginary persons. Overall, girls tend to draw more animals, plants, and inorganic themes, while boys depict more products resulting from human activities.

These findings align with previous research studies. Benenson et al. (2021); Robert (2012) found that girls exhibit a preference for and derive greater satisfaction from drawing human subjects (individuals), while boys benefit from drawing non-human objects (houses, trees, cars). Alter-Muri and Vazzano Alter-Muri and Vazzano (2014) verified that boys incorporate vehicles (particularly modes of transportation), weapons, and sports more than girls. Wolpert (2014) asserts that girls gravitate towards flowers, butterflies, and female figures, while boys are more inclined towards mechanical subjects (cars, trains) or depictions of soldiers and fighting. Girls at this age draw their objects more accurately, larger (Barendse et al., 2018), and with more realistic colors than boys (Deaver, 2009).

According to Garner (2012), Golomb (2021), and other scholars, the origins of these preferences may be rooted in the inclination of boys to prioritize action, strength, and movement (such as explosions, violence, battles, and destruction) and girls to prioritize beauty, tenderness, romance, and family life (such as cute little animals, landscapes, games, and children playing).

In a broader context, the sex differences arise from distinct brain development influenced by sex hormones, which exert a specific impact on brain lateralization and are specific to the brain regions or networks involved. As a result, there are variations in abilities related to fine motor skills (Peyre et al., 2019), mental rotation (Beking et al., 2017), visual system (Shaqiri et al., 2018; Vanston & Strother, 2017) and other neuromotor and sensomotor abilities. However, it is important to bear in mind that these differences between the sexes are typical during the preschool years, and over time, the prerequisites for drawing become equalized.

Developmental differences and gender differences in drawings not only have a biological determination given by differences in maturation, but of course psychosocial and educational contexts also play an important role. The influence of the home environment, home literacy, and family educational approach has a significant impact on graphomotor skills, with proximal factors exerting a greater influence than distal factors (Sinvani, Golos, Zagmi, & Gilboa, 2023). The educational process plays a crucial role in fostering the development of diverse skills and interests necessary for the acquisition of drawing skills as well (Wolpert, 2014). To identify the specific factors that affect drawing in the school setting, a separate study would be required. However, it is generally acknowledged that intensive guided graphomotor training in the art class has been empirically demonstrated to positively influence the progress of children at this stage Taverna, Tremolada, Tosetto, Dozza, and Renata (2020). Furthermore, preparatory programs and specialized exercises have the potential to enhance this progress further Taverna, Tremolada, Dozza, et al. (2020). This knowledge provides us with an avenue

to gain a deeper understanding of the unique needs of children and to adapt the educational environment accordingly in order to foster their development and creativity.

Conclusion

This study dealt with free unguided drawing of children. We can summarize the findings as follows. Children can choose typical or new themes for their drawings, with new themes requiring more effort and resulting in original or innovative drawings. Typical themes in child drawings include 'man,' 'tree,' and 'house,' with 17 thematic categories grouped into 5 higher themes. The number of objects in drawings increases with age, reflecting object recognition and working memory development. Preschoolers often draw single-object drawings, while first-graders draw multiple objects, likely due to the significant development of graphomotor skills in the first grade. Gender differences influence drawing content, with boys preferring products of human activity and girls favoring natural themes. These differences are rooted in brain development influenced by sex hormones and societal influences, but they tend to equalize over time.

These findings can be utilized for assessing a child's cognitive and motor development and for identifying potential delays or issues. Recognizing gender differences in drawing content can serve as a foundation for educational strategies. Educators can tailor artistic activities to engage and support both boys and girls, fostering their creative expression and skill development. The results open avenues for further research questions, such as how children choose to draw themes, how personality, creativity and other variables manifests in the draw, how free drawing provides reliable insight into children's cognitive and emotional development, how to create educational materials and diagnostic tools tailored to age and gender, based on free drawing (rather than predetermined themes).

In summary, understanding children's drawing is beneficial for education, psychology, and research, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of how children grow and express themselves. However, it is important to recognize that one drawing alone cannot fully represent a child, as significant inter-individual differences exist among children. Each child is unique and should be comprehensively assessed based on their individual needs and interests. Drawing serves as a valuable tool not only for uncovering general developmental patterns and gender differences but also for identifying individual needs and specificities for each child.

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Človek s postihnutím v diele Srdce Edmonda de Amicis

Person with a disability in the literary work Heart by Edmondo de Amicis

Zuzana Chanasová

Abstract

The aim of the report is to analyse the issue of disability in the literary work Heart by Italian children's writer of the 19th century Edmondo de Amicis, in which there appear several characters with different types of, predominantly physical, disability. The report, in addition to the theoretical analysis, also includes a short empirical part presenting the results of interviews about the book from the perspective of primary education. In conclusion, we present a didactic reflection.

Keywords: Disabled person. Italian literature. Heart. Child.

Introduction

Italian literature for children and youth of the 19th century, similarly to our Slovak literature, was perceived as a space in which adults tried to raise a child to be a decent person (Kováčová, 2023). It tried as much as possible to contribute in such a way that the child could become responsible as soon as possible, so called small adult (Chanasová, Libertini, 2018). In adults and educators of the 19th century the basic principles of pedagogy and psychology were absent and thus they did not write *for a child*, but they wanted to *raise a child into someone "proper."*

Children's literature was largely focused on re-education of the child and at that time a person with a disability was given a very limited space (Kováčová, Benčíč, 2023). Based on this, the reflection we offer in our article on the book *Heart* by *Edmondo de Amicis* appears to be very interesting, in which the child recipient meets a literary character with a predominantly physical disability.

Heart

An important literary masterpiece for children and youth of the 19th century with the title *Heart* (1886) was written by *Edmondo de Amicis* in 1886. He found inspiration in the first school years of his two sons. At the time, the book captured interest. It educated, but mainly formed a sense of belonging to Italy, especially in children and young people who came from different parts of Italy. De Amicis was a huge success, as evidenced by the fact that in 1886 and 1892

more than a hundred issues of this book were published (Anselmi, Fenocchio, Ferrandini, 2010, p. 272). The weaker point of the book is its historical context and the author's efforts to build Italian patriotism. The strong point is its deep moral message intended for children of younger school age focused on forming respect and helping the poor, sick and weak.

The book *Heart* is written as a diary whose author is *Enrico*, a pupil of the third grade of primary school. The story of the school year is recorded in the book in chronological order from 17 October 1881 to 10 July 1882, with each month corresponding to one chapter. The diary ends with the description of the family move and loss of friends, since *Enrico* will have to attend the fourth grade of primary school in a different town. In the form of diary, along with his own reflections, there also appear the advice and thoughts of his parents and sister. Additionally, there are also nine short stories that the teacher dictates to his pupils every month in order to educate them through these narratives.

The main character of each story is a young boy, who each time comes from a different region of the Italian kingdom. These young boys do some heroic deeds to protect their homeland, family or simply out of honesty or love for their neighbour. The main characters of the book *Heart* are the same throughout the storyline. Their characters, attitudes, age remain unchanged.

De Amicis wanted to be the educator of the new Italian generation and therefore in the book he implements his own educational plan on two levels. The first level is manifested primarily in examples. The character of the teacher Giulio Perboni reads and dictates a story to the third-grade boys every month. The boys have to write it down and learn it by heart. There are ten stories. Among others, there is a story called *The little vidette of Lombardy* (De Amicis, 2017, e-book, pos. 496). In this story, the main character accompanies Italian soldiers in the battle against the Austrians until he dies, killed by the enemy bullets. Fallen on the field, he is covered by the Italian flag and all of the Italian army passing by him shows him military honours. In some ways, this part may seem similar to the book by Hana Zelinová - *Jakubko* (Chanasová, Libertini, 2018). However, what can be a great benefit for a Slovak child reader is the dimension in the stories about people with different types of disabilities. In an interesting way, *De Amicis* shows the child reader the essence of a good life. In every story about such poor and poverty-stricken people, he emphasises how important it is to help them, to have compassion for them and to appreciate all that one has.

Story 1: Children with rickets

In one story called *Children with rickets*, the main character *Enrico* writes about his visit with his mother to the institute for disabled. *De Amicis* writes: "*poor children, left to their own devices for hours in a corner of a room or yard, poorly fed and sometimes even ridiculed.*" In this story, Enrico's mother is the person pointing out the complicatedness of the life of a handicapped child. She takes her son to visit the physically disabled to teach him to value health and to sympathise with sick children. Even during the visit to the institute, she says to

her son: "*Oh, Enrico, the rest of you who don't value health, it's not enough for you that you are healthy. I thought of those handsome boys, strong and blooming, carried around by their mothers as if in triumph, proud of their beauty - and I would have loved to hold all these poor heads close to me; I would have desperately hugged them all close to my heart. If I were on my own, I would have said: I will not move from here, I want to sacrifice my life to you, to be your mother until the end of my life*" (De Amicis, 2012, p. 207).

Story 2: Blind boys

In this story, *De Amicis* presents a school and hall of residence for the blind in Turin, where one of the teachers who tells the story in the book worked. The teacher talks about what it means to be blind and what such visually impaired boys experience in their everyday life. He talks about what they can do and how they use their other senses. The teacher describes how they like music, what is the greatest joy in their lives, how they recognise the faces of their loved ones using their hands and how they recognise footsteps by hearing. He says: "*When a person first enters the institute for the blind and in the time for rest one hears those blind boys from all sides, playing the violin and flute, hears them talking loudly and laughing, flying up and down the stairs, with a nimble footstep running freely along the corridors or bedrooms, he would never admit that they are quite so unfortunate*" (De Amicis, 2012, p. 134). The teacher tells the pupils that at the time there were 26,000 blind children in Italy and if they were all to march as an army under the windows of the school where he is telling the story, it would have taken around four hours. The pupils are amazed when he talks, but at the same time they are touched by the wretchedness. In the next part, the teacher explains that: "*All the other senses are softened for them because they have to substitute for sight. That is why they are trained more and better than in case of the sighted. For example, in the morning they ask each other in the bedroom: - Has the sun risen? The one who is able to dress quickly runs to the yard and moves his hands in the air to feel if it is warm, and then runs back to tell the good news*" (De Amicis, 2012, p. 135). But even the writer himself cannot answer the big question in the book, which he, however, reminded by the lips of the teacher. "*Imagine how they must worry and how much they must suffer when they think in confusion of the terrible difference between themselves and those who are able to see. They ask themselves: - Why is there this difference, after all, we have done nothing wrong?*" (De Amicis, 2017, e-book, pos. 1657). The pupils, as well as the child readers, gradually develop compassion for the blind during the teacher's talk. The students ask what they could do for the blind and one of them asks if it would be possible to visit them. The teacher replies: "*Maybe, but you boys cannot go there for now. You will go there later, when you will be able to understand the full magnitude of the unfortunate and feel the compassion it deserves. It's a sad sight, my sons*" (De Amicis 2012, p. 138).

Through the teacher's lips, De Amicis conveys an important life message in for a child very clear and simple way, using comprehensible words. "I have spent several years among them, and when I think of my class, of all those forever-sealed eyes, of all those sightless and lifeless pupils, and then I look at the rest of you... it seems incomprehensible to me that you are not all happy" (De Amicis, 2012, p. 135).

Story 3: Nelli's protector

We also find an interesting encounter with disability in one of the stories called *Nelli's protector*. *De Amicis* introduces a boy *Nelli*. He introduces him as a hunchback who does well in his studies, but is very thin, frail and has difficulty breathing. During the first days in school his classmates mocked him and hit him in the back with their briefcases. He never complained. He did not complain especially to his mother, who picked him up from school, since he would not have been able to manage on his own. He did not want to add to her pain. Another important character appears in the story - a boy *Garrone*, whom *De Amicis* already presents in the previous stories as the one whom the main character *Enrico* likes very much and talks about him. *"I find it funny, that he is so big and fat and that his coat, trousers and sleeves are too tight and short for him, the hat does not sit properly at all on his shaved head. Also, his shoes are too big and his neckerchief is always twisted like a rope. Dear Garrone, you only have to look into his face once to feel affection for him. The smallest ones would all like to sit near his bench"* (De Amicis, 2012, p. 30). Precisely this *Garrone* is the one to stand up for *Nelli* the hunchback. We can see it in the scene when one morning *Garrone* announces to his classmates: *"Anyone who dares to touch Nelli I will slap so much they will spin thrice!"* (De Amicis, 2012, p. 45). However, one of the classmates ignores this and gets a good slap from *Garrone*, spins three times and since then no one hurts *Nelli*. The hunchback *Nelli* and *Garrone* become friends. The story clearly points out how very important and good it is to stand up for the weak, defend the disabled and to help them.

Didactic reflections and empirical part

It is important to mention some aspects that appear in the book *Heart*. One of them is a certain prejudice regarding disability. It mainly pertains to the 19th century, and it is also recognisable in the book *Heart*. According to Italian criminologist *Cesare Lombroso*, a physical handicap is a toll or retribution for a crime committed by the disabled person or their parents (Cario, 2014). In the book, we can sometimes find certain hints of this toll in the words of some characters. At the same time, the writer tries to point out those characters who have a strong tendency to help and sympathise with these "poor people". Another aspect is the significance of family. An example of *De Amicis's* pedagogy is that the family is seen as the first place in which a child is formed, and which reflects and processes all the experiences that the boy goes through

at school. The family of *Enrico* was a typical bourgeois family: the father was the absolute authority; the mother, who was the emotional support for the whole family. The family also included various brothers and sisters who were placed in the family hierarchy according to their age. Typical expressions of the family were letters that the father and mother (De Amicis, 2017, e-book, pos. 347) and once even the elder sister wrote to little *Enrico*. In the letters, they used to praise him, scold him, but also thank him. The content of these letters were various events, such as "All Souls Day", or the description of different characters or categories of people, such as "the poor."

In addition to the theoretical part, we conducted two interviews in the empirical part conducted in September 2022 in one of the schools in the Trenčín region. One group interview was with the pupils of the second grade and one with the pupils of the third grade. The pupils were selected at random in both cases, eight in total. A part of the interviews with the pupils was reading of two stories from the book *Heart*. The first one was the story about a boy who had a hump and was called *Nelli*. The second one was the story told by the teacher about the blind boys from the institute. The questions asked in both groups of pupils were identical. We were interested in whether the pupils understood the storyline, whether they understood all of the words, etc. We asked them what characters appeared in the stories, how they behaved. We wanted them to describe the characters' personalities and so on. At the same time, we were interested in whether they know who a person with a disability is, what types of disabilities they recognise. Almost all pupils talked about physically disabled people from their environment, i.e. he does not have a leg, he cannot walk, he limps when he walks (they did not know how to describe a person with cerebral palsy.) With the help of questions, they came to the conclusion that there is a hearing and visual disability. Interestingly, they failed to identify mental disabilities. According to them, a disabled person had a very significant disability that they were able to identify at first glance.

In the story about the blind boys, they were most interested in how the blind find out that the sun is up. In the story about *Nelli*, they reflected on the behaviour of the classmates who laughed at *Nelli*'s disability, but also on the courage of his classmate *Garrone*, who stood up for *Nelli* and helped him. The pupils in both groups were interested in the Italian names of the main characters and they felt the need to ask or talk about Italy as a country. At the same time, they wanted to know more details regarding both stories, i.e. what happened to the blind boy? What happened to the hunchback *Nelli*? Why did he have a pale face and why couldn't he walk?

In general, we can say that pupils recognise a certain type of disability. A disabled person is in some way interesting to them. They would like to know more about him. The stories were somewhat unusual for them, and they felt the need to ask for details. A distinctive discussion arose about whether they find some disabled people funny sometimes and whether they would be able to stand up for them at an important moment. These questions took the direction

rather towards so called philosophising with children. In both groups, there was a strong consensus aimed at the importance of helping people with disabilities.

One primary school teacher says that *a child has no prejudices. He/she is naturally curious and willing to know and communicate with his/her able-bodied and disabled classmates. Especially between the ages of three and six, it is important for adults to prevent the emergence of prejudices and mistrust towards different types of disabilities, so that children can naturally create meaningful deep relationships with each other regardless of their ability.*

Conclusion

The aim of our report was to point out people with disabilities in the Italian literature for children and youth of the 19th century by the writer *Edmondo De Amicis*, who in his book *Heart* talks in a very sensitive and clear way about fellowship and helping people with disabilities. From the statements in the empirical part, it is clear that in inclusion (Kováčová, 2019; Kováčová, Benčíč, 2023) as well as early intervention (Magová, 2020) it is important to create space for dialogue, with the possibility of using the given literary works. The essence is captured by the final quote from the book *Heart*, which highlights why the book bears this title and what is the essence of inclusion. "*Perhaps, now that you finished reading the book, in your memory remained only a mixture of short stories and events, which did not captivate you like a thrilling adventure novel. Do not be disappointed, the meaning of the modest plot remains a hidden treasure of your heart. Listen to how it's beating. It will give you its wealth at a moment that will demand action from you, which will call upon you to take up responsibility*" (De Amicis, 2012, p. 291).

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Vnímanie vizuálnych obrazov akčného umenia v dospelom veku

Perception of visual images of action art in adulthood

Paula Maliňáková

Abstract

The paper discusses a research study that offers readers an insight into the perception of visual images of action art in adulthood in the form of secondary and university students' responses to non-verbal communication through selected visual images. A work of art is an extra surplus product we can live without, but we do not rule out its existence. However, we want to decode non-verbal communication through action art correctly. In that case, it is necessary to know the composition of works of art or the works themselves, which an individual creates at any age.

Keywords: Non-verbal expression. Motive. Form-forming elements. Action art. Adulthood.

Introduction

Non-verbal communication through visual art reflects human consciousness, which reflects the entire human psyche. That is, what we think, imagine, feel, etc. But the psychological subconscious includes our instincts and intuitions, which are a wellspring of subjects for creating works of art.

Non-verbal communication

The stimulus for creating a work is a problem, a problematic situation, which is a motive for inducing creative activity. Of course, it is also a reflection of the experience and often the life of the creator of the visual product.

A visual image is the result of a particular human activity, which usually always expresses something. In it, the individual reflects a specific image of the world through his sensory aesthetic ideas about the given issue, phenomenon, or event. An artistic image could not exist without man because he is its creator. It is a reflection of the human psyche; it has signs of reality, but the execution can be subjective. "The work of a great artist is characterized by timelessness and universality because he wants to express something extraordinary and because for such an artist, painting is not an end in itself, but a means to reach

the essence of human truth" (Cumming, 2008, p. 6). State that every painting by a painter evokes a specific aesthetic experience in us, whether positive or negative. This is related to the assessment of a person, which can stick more to the real world and its manifestations than to the world that was born inside the painter. So, each of us has our evaluation criteria. This is where the already-mentioned problem arises: Modern painting relies more on the subconscious of the painters, their feelings, experiences, opinions, or attitudes with which they stand towards the society in which they live (Kováčová, 2023). The artistic images of these painters are a reflection of their subjective perception. For people not interested in this kind of art, these can represent only some kind of geometric shapes, lines, smears, spots, etc. They cannot understand the characteristic reduction of shapes, stylization, or simpler colors, as well as other manifestations of this painting. A painting can also have a non-visual form expressed through symbols or signs.

Artistic representation is not only a sensory perception of reality but a humanly spiritualized vision, i.e., a vision of meaning - a semanticization of reality. Reality in a work of art is not only present from its point of view but also from the point of view of a person. In this human vision, reality in a work of art acquires a figurative character - the character of humanly understood reality" (Maliňáková, 2022).

Visual communication

According to us: "Looking at the painting, the viewer conducts a silent dialogue with the work. His imagination, taste, and expectations contribute to the experience of the work. The longer and more thoroughly he looks at the painting, the more the work reveals to him" (Weltonová, 1995, p. 6). According to Kent (1996, p. 34), three factors are most important in visual communication: the author, that is, the painter; the work of art, the result of the painter's creative activity; and the recipient, i.e., the viewer. These factors influence each other and influence each other. A painter almost always puts some message into his work, with which he wants to impress the receiver somehow, to convey something to him. Especially with modern painting art, it is sometimes challenging to know the intended meaning of the work the artist wants to show the world. As a result, the possibility of fantasy enjoyment is open to the viewer. He is looking for his idea or thus becomes a co-author, which may be one of the painter's intentions to draw the viewer into a creative imagination. Even Weltonová (1995, p. 20) states that when perceiving a work of art, a problem may arise in understanding the painter's visual language. Therefore, if we want to understand what is depicted in the painting and the idea the painter puts into it, we must also get to know the author himself. It will help us clarify possible discrepancies and understand the artist's intention. We believe that: "The subjective relationship of the artist to objective reality is characteristic of every work of art and manifests itself in the expression of the work" (Phillips, 2013). The perception of a work of art is also influenced by two other determinants:

the viewer's experience and education. Age, gender, habits, etc affect the experience complex. With precision, each individual is an individual, has different experiences, and is at a different level of development of psychological processes (Kováčová, 2023). Already states that every person's imagination is different, as well as emotional life, thinking, life destinies, and others. The educational complex consists of what we know about a given artistic image, etc., but it also adheres to the facts of reality.

Image content

The content page of a work of art always tells us something, draws our attention to something, tries to interest us in some way, etc. Artworks have different content choices, which depend on the painter's intention. One of the main components of the content page of the picture is the subject: The thematic range of art is extensive. However, it is roughly divided into the so-called external (landscape, still life, society, etc.) and internal (feelings, emotions, love, etc.). The subject does not have to be tied to reality and has plot elements. The period of modern painting of the first half of the 20th century is characterized by a wide range of subjects. The work of art's content side is connected with the form-forming components, which we will mention later. However, one cannot talk about the content of a work of art without its form because they complement and are related to each other. Weltonová (1995, p. 30) proves this in her book, where she claims that any color intervention in the image can change the content of the work of art. When the form changes, the image's content, etc., also changes directly. Their existence is, therefore, mutual and inseparable. One of the definitions of art says that: "Art presents a multifaceted reflection of the world; it expresses ideas, discoveries, and messages in an aesthetic form" (Fila, 1991, p. 88). The choice of the subject of the painting is up to the painter himself, but: However, the artist must become more familiar with the problem, its ideological content and social context. Only then, based on his knowledge and imagination, he chooses a topic that prompts the selection of certain aspects and relationships to real reality (Maliňáková, 2022). In a realistic depiction, the artist relies more on describing the depicted object, person, landscape, etc. An idea, a thought, capturing a given atmosphere, plot, and many other components make up the content of a work of art, which depends on the painter.

Image form

According to Roeselová (1996, p. 15), the formative components of a work of art are the individual means of expression that the painter uses in his artistic activity. The artist's handwriting, with which he completes his intention or content part of the image. The painting style can be influenced by the time the artist lives; specifically, in our case, both world wars played a role here. We meet individual painterly expressions with Pablo Picasso; for example, we mean his cubist expression. Shapes and surfaces in Picasso's paintings are

realized with rich colors as if creating a new expressive language of painting. (Martin, 2004, p. 56). The form is the mode of existence of the content. It cannot be separated from the content. What exists cannot be separated from how it exists. In summary, the form includes all means of expression of the painter, which cannot be excluded from painting.

Table 1: Creative means of expression

| | |
|---|---|
| Weltonová (1995, p. 16) discusses shape in her book: | which also includes means of expression we always perceive as part of the background. For example, the greater the contrast between the background and the object or depicted person, the more we perceive their shape, etc. |
| Light | is the primary condition of perception. Thanks to it, we see objects, people, and the world around us plastically. Another means of expression is also associated with light, and that is the shadow, which is the result of lighting an object, a person, etc. |
| According to Kentová (1996, p. 46), another means of expression is space: | is the primary condition of perception. Thanks to it, we see objects, people, and the world around us plastically. Another means of expression is also associated with light, and that is the shadow, which is the result of lighting an object, a person, etc., which man understands as a three-dimensional environment. In the art sphere, however, we work with an imaginary space created on a two-dimensional canvas, a drawing, etc. According to Welton (1995, p. 18), we create illusions by changing the size of the displayed objects, objects, and persons. This means that what is further from us is more minor, and what is closer is bigger. |
| Composition | it forms an essential part of the beginning of the realization of the work of art. Therefore, it must be noticed. We understand composition as: "A way of layout, arrangement, assembly of certain parts or elements in a work of art" (Štofko, 2007, p. 133). This definition of composition tells us that the means mentioned above of expression also belong to the artistic composition of the painting. The composition is, therefore, characterized by a specific formal arrangement of these means, components within the painter's creative image. Furthermore, we could analyze the phrase "way of layout, arrangement," which indicates that the composition will also have some scheme for storing individual elements in the picture. |

Source: own processing

Image identity reflection

A person's aesthetic perception is an overall part of his social being, thanks to which his consciousness was formed. Phillips (2013) states that the aesthetic assessment of a work of art is always subordinated to the viewer's experiences, ideas, or ideals about beauty. The viewer, when looking at a picture, perceives the picture as a whole, which constantly affects him in some way. However, the perception of observers also has specific differences. Therefore, it is understandable that the perception of the same image will evoke different feelings in different people. From this, it is clear that works of art are perceived differently by experts versed in this field or people more interested in this topic than non-specialists.

Modern directions are less known or unknown to the general public than those that gave the world painters "par excellence". We can already see the problem with the perception of such works since the audience may not have a relationship with them due to their lesser popularity and shorter duration, but it cannot be forced on them. However, another criterion can also be their deviation from the realistic depiction of reality, which were significant trends such as the Renaissance, Baroque, etc. subordinate. The modern art, painters created their own rules, laid new foundations and painting procedures, and changed the color scheme, which was not subject to reality. It should not be overlooked that the period in which the painters created was affected by world wars, in which some painters also personally participated, which left certain traces on them, which they then transferred to their work. Therefore, there is a problem with the perception of such works, as it is a significant deviation from "classical" realistic depiction, and the painters of this modern art paint more emotionally. They use different geometric shapes, dividing individual objects and people into parts; some deform or stylize more, reduce their color palette, deny the traditional mixing of colors, paint directly from the tube, i.e., use pure colors, create canvases with other painting procedures, etc. These innovative specific features may not suit the viewer, and he considers them to be a devaluation of the art of painting. However, we are convinced that: A work of art is an unrepeatably statement of the artist both in its content and form. The perception of works of art is, therefore, a very questionable fact, especially when it comes to the issue of modern art, but this could be the main focus of knowledge of this issue using art action, as stated by Kováčová and Hudecová (2023).

Cumming (2008) claims that when looking at an abstract painting, we are attracted by its color, which comes to the fore thanks to its literal layering of colors. The painter applied it to the canvas in various ways by pouring, dripping, pushing, spilling, or using his sophisticated dripping technique. Dripping is a specific method that creates a particular structure on the surface of the canvas by dripping and pouring paint. This helpful information will help us better understand the work of this artist.

Research Methodology

The subject of our survey was to find out general knowledge or experience of knowing the visual identity of images by society, while we focused on avant-garde and postmodernism. We used the questionnaire method to collect this data. The questionnaire contained six open-ended items with personal interaction with the respondents. Here, we present a selection of 2 answers that touch on the non-verbal communication of visual images. We approached secondary school students in Levoča, university students from Prešov, Košice, Žilina, and Bratislava, and randomly selected adults over the age of 30 in a total number of 86 respondents. The selection of three groups was deliberate in examining the entry into the issue of non-verbal communication of visual images from the point of view of different age categories. The survey was carried out for less than three months.

Table 2: Research sample

| THE RESEARCH SAMPLE | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Secondary school students | 25 respondents |
| University students | 33 respondents |
| Adults | 28 respondents |
| TOTAL | 86 respondents |

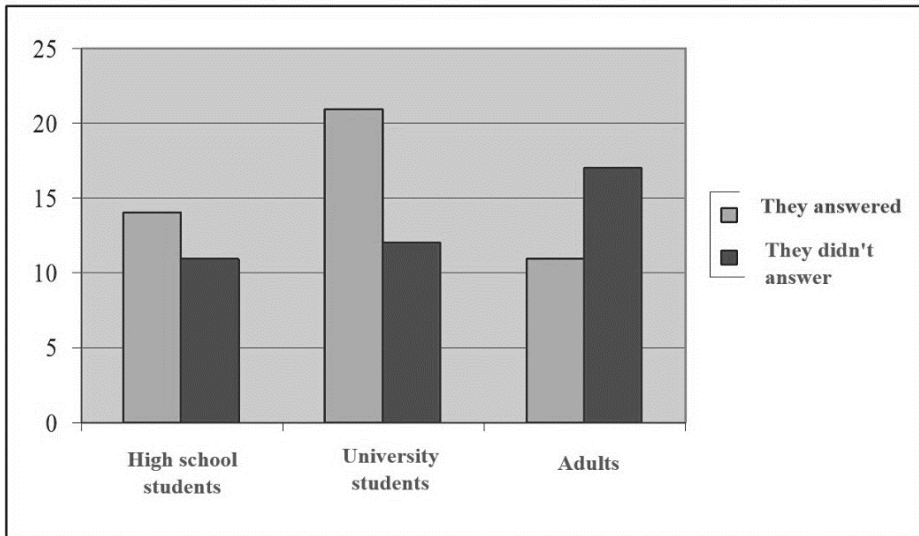
The purpose of the survey: The goal of the monitoring was to discover the general knowledge or experience in the non-verbal communication of visual images in the target group of adult adepts, where we focused on the avant-garde and postmodern. The research sample was identified based on an exploratory survey, and it was an initial entry into the space.

Survey findings: We offer a selection of the developed findings from the survey investigated using the questionnaire method in tables and graphs. At the same time, we also provide the opinions and attitudes of the respondents to the selected questions, which we note constitute an initial field entry into the space with the aim of exploratory detection of interest in non-verbal communication of visual images. We do not rule out the use of statistical procedures in further research. Adult high school and university students took part in the survey. At the same time, we also do not rule out the possibility of publication of these survey findings.

Content-forming and form-forming components of geometric abstraction

The individual data were created as part of the answers to the fifth question from the questionnaire (Q5: Write what comes to your mind when you look at this painting (Wassily Kandinsky – Composition No. 8) (Cumming, 2008).

Figure 3: Number of responses to the image description within individual categories



Most respondents agreed that the presented image reminded them of geometry, geometric shapes, circles, or space for this open-ended item. Only 46 respondents answered us, and 40 respondents did not answer, which is quite a lot. It's probably because they were completely unknown things to them, so they didn't even comment on them. We got the most answers from university students (21), then from high school students (14), and then from adults (11). Several answers were the same, so we chose different answers.

Table 3: Respondents' statements have a description of the image

| |
|---|
| <i>It is undoubtedly difficult for me to judge what the author wanted to say with this image, and I can't believe it either because I am ignorant of this issue. Still, since there are sharp edges and straight lines, I have an unpleasant feeling about it. The professional eye of an artist may explain it entirely differently.</i> |
| <i>I only see geometric shapes there; it doesn't remind me of anything.</i> |
| <i>Composition of geometric shapes.</i> |
| <i>The first thing that came to mind when I looked at this picture was the solar system.</i> |
| <i>The setting sun, mountains in the background, and a busy city in the foreground.</i> |
| <i>It is an abstract painting with various colors in the foreground; even complex things can be beautiful.</i> |
| <i>Confusion of geometric shapes, time stress.</i> |
| <i>It reminds me of geometry class.</i> |
| <i>Pleasant tuning of colors, lines, geometric shapes, chaos and energy, and bubbles.</i> |
| <i>Infinite world.</i> |

It is a composition of the founder of abstractionism, the painter of Russian origin, Wassily Kandinsky. I saw it as a successful abstract composition of colors, lines, and surfaces. When I let my imagination run wild, this abstract composition can express the struggles of modern man in his historical struggle for survival, gains and hopes from this struggle, or threats by the interpretation of the dividing geometric shapes, colors, and lines, evaluated individually and about each other. Contexts. This image seemed wildly optimistic, except for the black annulus of the largest circle in the picture, representing a negative moment.

Image selection

The individual data were created as part of the answers to the sixth question from the questionnaire (Q6: If you had to choose which of these paintings you would buy and why? See pictures No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4. (see Table with the names of works of art)

Table 4: Image selection together for all categories

| | Total |
|---|-------|
| No. 2 Blue Poles (Kentová, 1996) | 24 |
| No. 3 The Ladies od Avignon (Weltonová, 1995) | 17 |
| No. 4 Henri Matisse (Martin, 2004) | 13 |

54 respondents responded to this question, representing 63% of the respondents, and 32 respondents did not comment or answer that they did not like any image. We got the most answers from university youth (25 respondents), followed by high school students (16 respondents) and adults 13. The most votes went to picture no. 2. Blue pillars (24). Respondents rated this image as the most acceptable of all three. The second place was taken by picture no. 3 (17), on which there are the Avignon ladies, and as the third painting in the order, painting no. 4 Henri Matisse (13). We present more detailed opinions of the respondents in some answers in the tabular overview.

Table 5: Respondents' answers to the choice of three pictures

| |
|--|
| <i>I wouldn't choose either one because they are not works of art.</i> |
| <i>None of the above paintings are particularly sympathetic to me enough to invest financial resources. If I were forced to choose from these three offered paintings, I would choose painting No. 2 because it is pleasantly abstract with a reasonable amount of soft colors. It is impersonal and non-specific.</i> |
| <i>It is painting No. 2 because it is painted extraordinarily; I also like the color combination and painting technique; it charmed me the most at first sight.</i> |
| <i>I would choose picture no. 2 because painting no. 3 and 4 are character paintings, and I prefer landscapes or abstract paintings. It is exciting but dark; it reminds me of a destroyed, dried-up forest.</i> |
| <i>Image no. 2, because I wouldn't say I like pictures of people, but rather something abstract.</i> |

| |
|--|
| <i>I was most interested in Pablo Picasso's painting of the Miss from Avignon, which is the most interesting because abstract art doesn't mean anything to me, and the portrait of an older man seems rather dull.</i> |
| <i>About painting no. 2 because image no. Three and no. I wouldn't say I like 4.</i> |
| <i>Picasso, because I like Picasso's painting style.</i> |
| <i>It would be picture no. Three because the first seemed chaotic and gloomy, the third did not appeal to me, and the second exuded intimacy. These images evoke a feeling of rebellion at that time.</i> |
| <i>It is painting no. 3, but only to sell it more expensively. Otherwise, I wouldn't buy any, because it's not my style.</i> |
| <i>I would choose picture no. Three if I had enough money.</i> |
| <i>I wouldn't choose either one, because they don't fit our interior and I'm happy when positive energy radiates from the picture. I don't feel that way about any of the three. If I were forced to choose one, it would be picture no. 3. Image no. 2 seems chaotic to me, in picture no. 3 is a certain hardness and angularity. Image no. 4 looks relatively calm, although a bit sad.</i> |
| <i>It would be picture no. 4 because he caught my eye at first glance; he has an attractive face.</i> |

Summary of results

Based on the knowledge gained from the exploratory investigation, we offer the following ongoing and unfinished findings:

Table 6: Interim survey findings

| Ongoing pending survey findings |
|--|
| 1) The survey showed that modern trends appeal to adults less. However, university students already know how to choose the works offered because they encounter these modern movements more often, whether in real space or via social platforms. |
| 2) Form-forming components of images are less known in modern art. |
| 3) More than half of the respondents did not comment at all on the description of the Kandinsky painting. |
| 4) Content-creating components of modern directions are less readable. |
| 5) Of the famous painters, the world-famous painter Leonardo Da Vinci with his Mona Lisa still prevailed. The respondents also ranked Picasso as a representative of Cubism; although these artists are different in their handwriting, they are "notorious" artists in society. |
| 6) What a person does not understand, he can label as unsatisfactory. |
| 7) The symbolism of many modern works is perhaps complex for the viewer, the consumer, which we also discussed in the theoretical context of the work. Understanding the images of modern art means knowing basic knowledge and symbols of the present, but also historical realities, which can only be acquired through education. Then modern art belongs |

only to a narrow circle of people and those who want to understand art. For this reason, on the other hand, they are unnoticed, which can be used precisely in action art and space-time.

Conclusion

The questionnaire showed us that the general society was more inclined towards classical fine art painting. The most famous painter of the respondents is Leonardo da Vinci with his famous painting of Mona Lisa, who is a representative of the Renaissance, and it is these visual art trends are much more popular with people than the manifestations of modern art (Roeselová, 1996). This is probably because these current art groups did not last long compared to the directions whose influence was carried for over a century. Perhaps it is also because their popularity has not reached such a character as the artistic directions of past times, and they attribute more seriousness to them, etc. Maybe it's because modern action art needs a longer time for its "media boom," the generations after us will put it on the same level as artistic trends of eras with a longer duration. In the following period, we want to focus on the application level and thus offer the possibilities and uses of action creation in the current era, where modern art, whether avant-garde or postmodern, has excellent potential with the option of using non-verbal communication through visual images.

Affiliation

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Obraz(y) seba samého ako súčasť vizuálneho zobrazenia života

Self-image(s) as a part of the visual representation of life

Daniela Valachová, Miroslava Repiská, Dominika Weissová

Abstract

The formation of self-image is part of being human. Human communication with the surrounding environment can occur in various ways. A specific kind of communication is the visual self-image. It is a specific kind of communication characteristic for visual arts and also for a group of young adult participants. This paper, on the theoretical and research levels, focuses on the presentation of young adults' self-image in their visual representations. The aim of the research was to explore self-image through portraiture in photography. The research was conducted not only through an analysis of visual data, i.e. photographs, but also through thematic analysis of the authentic reports given by the participants. The results highlight the self-image of young adults for whom the arts provide a medium for self-expression.

Keywords: Self-image. Self-expression. Self-reflection. Conceptual art. Visual representation. Photography.

Preface

Through self-expression, a person presents themselves in different ways using various media. One communicates, expresses oneself, experiences emotions and holds particular attitudes. We can express ourselves in different ways. A distinctive mode of communication through art is communicating by action.

Communicating self-expression through action

Communication is a part of behaviour and includes three basic modes, verbal, non-verbal and action communication (Kollárik, 2008):

- Verbal communication - communication mediated by linguistic signs and meanings attached to them. We understand the process of communication as the exchange of information in a broad sense, involving the exchange of knowledge, attitudes, opinions, ideas, moods and feelings.
- Non-verbal communication - including body signals, facial and visual signals, spatial and territorial communication, communication through objects, communication through touch, extra-linguistic expressions and silence, temporal communication.

- Communication by action - this type of communication is characterised by action and its execution.

Humans are not just passive thinkers and doers of the bidding of others. Humans act in accordance with their own values and intentions. These are the intentions of human behaviour, which include motives, desires or beliefs that are based on a man's personality and take a certain shape and form based on the foundations of human individuality, peculiarities, individual and specific interests, attitudes, values or beliefs that are inherent in a person. However, our behaviour, the way we present and express ourselves, its triggers, manifestations or consequences, are not only about us, but also about others who form our environment and part of our lives (Kollárik, 2008).

Self-expression through visual media

Most human experiences are distinctive in their individual focus because they take place in the autonomous realm of the individual's psyche, while experiences of art are, understandably, co-determined by external influences, these are, for example, the reactions of 'neighbours' to the same stimulus in collective perception. However, the experience of interacting with a work of art enhances the psychic potencies of each individual and, as it were, heightens the consciousness of one's own individuality (Cigánek, 1972). In addition to perceiving art visually, we focus on experiencing it, thinking about why I am a part of art, what influence it has on my individuality. The incomprehensibility of art, that may accompany us through life, can be broken by striving for understanding and by creation. By getting involved in the process of art making, we gain an insider's view of art, because "*creation requires us to have a greater intensity of perception, we gain a deeper satisfaction*" (Fila, 1991, p. 63).

Photography as a medium does not have to be understood only in the sense of an image capture, it is not just a pure transfer of reality onto the image. Photography can capture the inner feelings and beliefs of the photographer, it conveys opinions and attitudes (Repiská, 2023). Photography, as a full-fledged way of artistic language, has become not only a means of documentation in art, but has also become a means for expression of the artist, a medium in its own right. Photography captures moments that are ephemeral, impossible to see in everyday life. A photographer is able to convey his perception of the world, of himself, in one shot. The interest in depicting one's own image dates back to approximately the 15th century and persists to this day. Recent studies (Giannachi, 2023) suggest that the self-portrait is not only about self-presentation but also about anticipation of reception. It is about the construction of a space-time that is turned towards both the past (implied by the artist's presence) and the future (implied by the viewer's presence), so that the depiction of the self-portrait pushes the boundaries between artist and viewer. The agent in action perceives, interprets and seeks to understand the body within the environment that he or she creates and adapts through his or her actions (Kováčová, 2020). Self-expression through the photographic medium

is close and typical of young adults in their artistic self-expression (Valachová, 2021). The inspiration for this research project came from the work of the internationally renowned contemporary Czech artist Jiří Kovanda. His work is being received and reflected internationally, especially through his artistic actions, installations and interventions (Jeřábková, 2010).

Figure 1: Jiří Kovanda, *Untitled*, 19.11.1976, Prague, Václavské náměstí



Source: Jeřábková (2010)

The artistic action *Untitled*, but similarly his other actions in the public space, are powerful despite their "simplicity". Morganová (Jeřábková, 2010) describes this as the most iconic artistic action of Czech action art. It is one of the few actions of Czech body art that takes place directly on the street. This action is created for the unprepared spectator - the casual passer-by. Kovanda's photography often has a minimalist impression, and he also uses his body as a rather minimalistic material. Kovanda is present as if in passing, but at the same time he addresses several layers of reality.

These artistic actions look like visual "anecdotes", they may appear random, but nevertheless they are not here completely by accident (Budak, 2016). In an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, Jiří Kovanda says that this was a slightly different position than his colleagues' work, it was something they were not involved in, yet it was important to him (Havránek, 2006). The very fact that these events took place in a public space in the city centre was extraordinary for the time. Also, the venue, Václavské náměstí, is a symbolic place with many historical connotations and meanings. The *Untitled* action was not just an attack on passers-by, an attempt to bridge the anonymity of the city and to break down the barrier that everyone carries around them. As Kovanda himself explained, the reason for the action was mainly an attempt to break through his own timidity that confined him to loneliness, even though there were a large number of people around him (Morganová, Seidl, 2013).

The research project

The primary aim of the research was to create a series of self-portraits of the participants, created as a reaction to the original photographs by Jiří Kovanda. Our research focused on exploring the idea of the self represented by:

- the physical form (the creation of one's own visual image),
- the visual form (the plan and realisation of one's own image) through photography.

As a research method, we used thematic analysis as a qualitative method of inquiry within art and artistic expressions (Urban, 2020).

A group of young adult participants were the respondents of the research. The group consisted of 35 undergraduate students.

In this paper, we describe the research probe taken from a broader empirical research and we outline the process of evaluating the thematic analysis research data. We have drawn directly from the authentic accounts and experiences of the participants. We focused on three categories of thematic analysis in the interpretation:

- the idea of self-expression,
- social reaction,
- the author's own experience.

Theme of the project: Self-image in the outdoors

For the self-image project we chose one reference point, the photographs of Jiří Kovanda. In order to come as close as possible technically and visually to the original photographs, we took advantage of the circumstances and nature of the photographs. The form of the photographs remains identical in both material and visual aspects (black and white photography). The thought analysis develops according to the personal preferences of the participants.

Participants were instructed to create a self-image that captures the participant in an environment and in an action/position/location that portrays them as a person with a specific characteristic that distinguishes them from others (Kováčová, 2023). These photographs were to be taken outdoors, in an environment where there are random passersby who are not informed about the photography session beforehand.

The task was to involve a photographer who would be given an assignment. It was necessary to explain to the photographer exactly what to take a picture of and how to take this picture. It was also important to describe what was meant to be in the picture. To instruct the photographer so that the shot would be according to the author's ideas. It was necessary to create several photographs and select one as the final one, which the student would give a title to - a descriptive caption (gallery caption), that conveys the message of the photograph.

One of the aims of the activity was to observe people reacting to the action in some way during the activity. To observe their reactions - interactions (communication - questions) or ignorance. In the initial discussion (before the

event) we discussed a time that is acceptable and requires minimal effort to remain in the moment. Together we set a goal to stay in one pose for at least 10 seconds.

Due to the active involvement of the participant in the photography taking process, the basic requirements for the photographs have emerged:

- the performer will be placed centrally or according to the principle of the golden ratio - thus the author will be clearly recognizable in the photograph, not only by his/her action but also by his/her placement.
- the performer will be clearly distinguished from the surroundings by his/her movement/position/gesture, the audience will not know what is being planned and that a photo is being taken,
- the photographer must be hidden from passers-by,
- the photographer and the author who instructs him/her must keep in mind that the photograph must have a broader scope - not only the subject, but also the people in the surroundings and the surrounding environment, so that it is clear from the photograph where the subject is being photographed and in what context.

In addition to the photographs, the outcome of the project was also a reflection where the authors of the photographs described the feelings and reactions they experienced. By its nature and assignment, the self-portrait photograph became an artistic action in a public space. The participants experienced the whole process, from planning, to choosing the subject, to selecting the photographs that were taken during the photo shoot. The participants chose one final photograph that represented them the most. They chose a photo in color and in black and white and gave it a title.

Parcial results of the research

The subject of the self-portrait: It was immediately clear to the author what idea she was using. *"What comes to mind when you see pillows? Rest, relaxation, sleep, comfort. I'm a big sleeper. I like sleep, but I hate mornings. For years, I have been setting at least 20 alarms for every morning. I just can't wake up. Every 3-5 minutes my alarm goes off and I turn it off each time, and I can do this for good 30 minutes or more."* The author wanted to say that every morning when the city wakes up, people run away to work and school, she is still *"asleep and enjoying sweet dreams"*. When she saw a park bench she immediately had to lie down and was curious how people would react to it, take pictures of it, and show it to her.

Figure 2: Sleep



Source: authors' archive (D. Z.)

Societal reaction: The author has chosen to realise her project noon, around 12.15 pm. It is the time when there is a lot of people in the park. During the artistic action, people were either sitting on other benches, lying on the grass, or walking along the paths. Most people who saw the author from a distance usually turned around to avoid her and took a different route. If they finally decided to go in the direction where the author was, they walked on the complete opposite side of the pavement to be as far away as possible, and only few people looked at her. Only one elderly lady walked quite close by her, but she didn't look at her. The author lay there for more than 5 minutes repeatedly, as people did not always walk by and she had to choose situations when it was appropriate to lie down and when she could sit. Later, there was a situation where a mom was walking with her young son who ran up to the author. The mother immediately reacted and called him over. Another pensioner passing by walked slowly because he had a walking stick and pointed it at the author and looked horrified. The author assumed: "*...that people would stare at me in that position but look surprised, and most of the people walked by without looking. It was quite embarrassing for me, and for a few minutes I was encouraging myself to lie down on the bench.*"

The experience, the mood: The author stated "*it was nothing pleasant*", but after the realization, which lasted a total of 30 minutes, this unpleasant feeling turned into "*an experience and great fun, as we enjoyed the performance itself.*" (both her and the photographer) "*If I closed my eyes and stopped perceiving the world around me, suddenly it was much more pleasant and I could even remain lying still for quite a long time.*"

Fig. 3: The cycle of life: love, food, education



Source: authors' archive (T. H.)

Interpretation of the photograph The cycle of life: love, food, education

The subject of the self-portrait: According to the author, the theme of the self-portrait was a challenge, *"a way of discovering myself"*. The author described this task as difficult, even though it seemed easy at first. She describes how she came up with the idea of how she wanted to work on her photograph: *"So I was sitting with myself and I was thinking about life, and that's when it came to me, I'm going to take a picture of the circle of life."*

Although the author generalized the theme, she chose her own three apt words that she personified. By the circle of life, she imagined love, food, and education. These are themes that resonate in her life and influence her personality. She explained her need to portray not only herself but also these elements in the form of artefacts: *„ One constantly needs attention, emotional support, hope in something/someone. Food as our pillar of support, we need it to exist/be, as the most important thing. And of course education, we educate ourselves everywhere, constantly, soaking up knowledge from all around us, wherever our feet take us."* And it was the topic of education, which is a theme that is present in her life and takes up a lot of her time, that she decided to process into a photographic image. She learns everywhere, in different places, meaning even in places where people are doing things and thinking about things that are completely different from hers. That's why she laid out her school notebook at the bus stop.

Societal reaction: The author chose a place where there are lots of people, where there are lots of eyes, feet and hands: *„But I chose a place so ordinary that it was extraordinary. Without thinking too much about the possible circumstances, I laid down on the ground in the middle of the street, spreading*

out my elements like a book, roses, and snacks." Here she sits, motionless and bent over her school notebook, reading her notes. Other people move around, shifting throughout the day to different places that give them different functions. The reactions she described were varied, as "*people all around didn't understand what I was feeling*", or why she was lying on the ground. Passerby were looking, they would stop, they would speak, they would pretend not to see her, but at the same time they were looking at her with or without wonder. The author perceived this as a great rush, a rush of the day, when she realized: "*The way YOU stand out in the midst of all those people speaks volumes about your uniqueness! It speaks volumes about your life, your choices, your priorities, etc.*"

The experience, the mood, the atmosphere: In the process of taking the photographs, the author had time to reflect, and during the final evaluation she expressed that she found the whole task enjoyable and that she felt good: "*I realized that it was all meaningful, if only because I realized an important thing. That thing is that not everyone in life will understand you, not everyone will speak to you and look at you kindly, but you will never lose faith in yourself. Just like I did when I was lying there proudly, on that ground, and I felt really good.*"

Sub-conclusions of the thematic analysis

Based on the responses of the authors of the photographs, it was clear that planning and coming up with the theme was easy and effortless for them. The most difficult part of taking the photographs was their own experiences and thoughts about how they were perceived by those around them. The challenging part for them was perceiving how they are being watched and misunderstood, they stand out from the crowd and this makes them insecure. Just as it was Jiří Kovanda's attempt to break through his own timidity, our interpretation of the process of making the photographs brought exactly the same theme. Fearfulness, insecurities, vague feelings accompanied the participants who had to change their behaviour for 10 seconds in front of strangers. Only they knew what they were doing and why. But the moment of incomprehension turned into pleasant feelings in the time of those 10 seconds, because the participants realized that they were doing this action for themselves and the attitude and behaviour of others was not important. The final reflections of the authors seem to be positive despite the atmosphere of their surroundings.

Conclusion

This research probe has helped us to create the basis for our broader empirical research. We are aware that the photographs could undergo further analysis and interpretation, which we will include in our next broader empirical research.

Affiliation

This text was created within the project KEGA 001/KU-2023 Embodied experience with the use of art action II - against stagnation in adulthood and senior age (project leader doc. PaedDr. Barbora Kováčová, PhD.).

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Faktory ovlivňující proces osamostatňování u osob se zdravotním postižením

Factors Impacting the Process of Independence for People with Disabilities

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Abstract

Empowering people with disabilities to become independent and autonomous is crucial to their fulfilling life. Studies and background search show that crucial factors in this process include personal assistance, support for independent living and programmes aimed at vocational rehabilitation. What is also important is the development of skills for everyday life. In addition, support for the families caring for these people is key to successfully coping with the challenges. In general, the development of independence for people with disabilities requires a multidisciplinary approach and respect for individual needs. This article provides an overview of different forms of support and interventions aimed at helping these individuals reach their full potential for independent and quality living.

Keywords: Gaining independence. Disability. Young adults. Support. Intervention. Qualitative research.

Introduction

Identifying pathways to independence and autonomy for people with disabilities is a complex task that requires a systematic approach and a firm grounding in relevant data and information. There is a wide range of services and interventions available to provide the support needed to enable them to live full and independent lives.

Studies and background search provide insights into different aspects of supporting people with disabilities. Personal assistance, which enables people with disabilities to remain independent and active in their everyday lives is one of the key elements. Another important factor is the promotion of independent housing, which provides a suitable and accessible environment for them to live in. In the area of employment and vocational rehabilitation, there are various

programmes, such as supported employment, helping people with disabilities to find and keep their jobs. The development of skills for everyday life also plays a vital role in the independence and self-esteem of these individuals. In addition, it is obvious that support for families caring for people with disabilities is crucial to the successful management of everyday challenges. Programmes and services that respect the individual needs of families can contribute significantly to the overall quality of life and independence of everyone involved.

In general, the development of independence for people with disabilities requires a complex and multidisciplinary approach. In this article, we take a closer look at the different forms of support and interventions that can help these individuals reach their full potential for a fulfilling life.

Persons with Disabilities

There are several definitions for categorising people according to their disability. However, in terms of their approach to independent living, the used terminologies can be seen as identical. An individual with a disability is independent until they encounter an obstacle preventing them from doing so. These may be internal or external barriers preventing them from developing independence. At this point, the individual, in order to overcome the obstacle, becomes dependent on the assistance of another person and is therefore affected by their disability. The medical model sees medical care as the main solution of the problem. On the other hand, the social model works with integration as much as possible. It does not perceive the limiting factors for full independence as characteristics of the individual, but rather as a picture of the whole society, which deepens or even creates these limitations (MKN-10, 2001; Act No.108/2006 Coll. on Social Services, 2006). However, if these limiting internal or external barriers can be modified, the boundaries of independence for people with disabilities can be pushed significantly. The fact is that their needs are not any special or specific – as the terminology used may mislead. People with disabilities have the same needs as the majority society and can be characterized by the Maslow's well-known hierarchy of human needs. What prevents them from meeting these needs in the common way set by society is a physical disability, chronic illness, sensory impairment, reduced intellectual level or mental illness (Novosad, 2009). Thus, individual conception of a value system may not be consistent with the societal setting of these values (Maslow, 2014). The basic set of values remains the same from the beginning, but higher order values may rank differently for each individual (e.g. the importance of the value of one's own life). A disability therefore imposes physical or mental health limitations that can be detrimental to full participation in common life and achieving optimal health condition.

Specifics that can negatively affect the life of persons with disabilities include:

- **Physical limitations** leading to reduced or restricted mobility and the ability to perform specific physical activities; these can be manifested in the individual's independent movement (walking, handling objects, everyday tasks);
- **Impairment of cognitive abilities**, including intellect and mental capacity; manifestations can be found in thinking, memory, attention, imagination, perception or speech and communication skills;
- **Limitations in the communication area**, namely problems in speaking and expression, as well as comprehension; alternative or augmentative communication systems can be learned and used;
- **Limitations of sensory functions**, i.e. reduced or fully impaired perception using one or more of the senses (sight, hearing or touch); the issue may be manifested in the field of communication, spatial orientation, independent movement, self-service activities or information acquisition;
- **Limitations in the emotional area**, when the individual is unable to adequately regulate and work with their emotions; problems may be manifested in the area of self-awareness, self-assessment, self-regulation, etc.; health problems may have direct impact on the psyche of the person with a disability leading to states of anxiety, stress, deprivation, etc;
- **Specificities in the area of social relationships and inclusion**, where health conditions can lead to social isolation; also includes prejudices, stereotypes and misinformation of mainstream society in relation to people with disabilities (Fischer & Škoda, 2008; Slowík, 2016).

Determination of the Stages of the Independence Process

Independence and autonomy are key concepts in human development and social integration. These concepts, defined and discussed by various authors, are crucial to an individual's ability to manage their own life and make decisions about themselves. Independence, often understood as self-sufficiency or self-reliance or even autonomy, is associated with freedom of choice and personal decision-making. It thus forms the fundamental pillars of individual development and quality of life, not only for people with disabilities. Various authors approach the independence concept slightly differently. For example, Pacovsky (1994) conceptualizes autonomy as the capacity for self-sufficiency, while Maddux et al. (1982) include self-determination, self-direction, and the perspective of personal control. According to Zavázalová (2001), the idea of self-sufficiency is extended to include the ability to take care of oneself and the household, and she also attributes importance to it in everyday activities. These activities can be personal, i.e. related to biological needs, or instrumental, involving more complex activities in the domestic and social environment. Autonomy is closely linked to freedom and individual choice and is a key factor influencing an individual's quality of life. Thanks to autonomy, a person has

the ability to influence their actions and environment, which brings them a certain responsibility and freedom of choice. This concept promotes not only a sense of control over one's own life, but also the individual's active participation in planning and directing their activities (Reed & Sanderson, 1999).

For an individual with a disability, the very process of becoming independent is a crucial step towards self-reliance and autonomy. The individual learns to deal with common life situations and to plan their life according to their needs and preferences. This process requires an inclusive approach by society, technological support and coordinated work by professionals. As stated by Jovanović et al. (2022), the carers can play a key role in supporting an individual's autonomy, providing the necessary help and support and maintaining their decision-making abilities.

The process of becoming independent for people with disabilities is complex and involves several key stages. These stages are accompanied by different emotional and psychological reactions and require support and help from a variety of sources, especially family, friends, therapists and specialist disability services. Individual stages of the independence process can be specified as follows:

- **Increasing sensitivity and awareness of one's own needs:** The individual is aware of their need for independence and recognises their own abilities and limitations in the context of their disability.
- **Planning and preparation:** The person starts actively planning and preparing for independence. They seek information about available sources of support and services that can help them achieve independence.
- **Acquiring skills:** A person with a disability actively develops the skills necessary for independent living – self-care, household care, financial literacy, communication development and other practical skills.
- **Implementation of plans:** At this stage, the person with a disability actively applies their skills and plans to achieve independence and self-reliance as much as possible.
- **Adaptation and coping with obstacles:** During this process, obstacles and challenges may arise that require adaptation and coping with new situations and environments.
- **Maintenance and further development of independence:** After reaching a certain level of independence and self-reliance, the individual works to maintain these achievements and can continue to learn and develop skills.

All of these stages are dynamic and individual; therefore it is important and crucial to provide the individual with support and resources appropriate to their needs and abilities.

Factors Impacting the Process of Independence

An individual's health and type of disability have a significant impact on their ability to achieve independence and autonomy. Physical disabilities or chronic illnesses can mean mobility limitations, making everyday activities difficult even with the use of special aids. People with sensory impairments, such as hearing or vision loss, may have limited ability to communicate or navigate, which affects their ability to participate fully in common activities. People with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties may have problems understanding information and learning new skills. The severity of the disability can also affect the social support an individual receives. It can lead to prejudice, discrimination or social exclusion. According to Pei et al. (2016), individuals who need help with everyday activities can feel abandoned and isolated from society, therefore maintaining their independence in these activities is a key factor in their quality of life.

The support of family and friends plays an irreplaceable role in the process of becoming independent. Close people, such as family, friends and loved ones can provide the individual with crucial emotional and practical support. Emotional support includes encouragement, understanding and acceptance, which can be essential for maintaining motivation and overcoming difficulties possibly arising in the process of gaining independence. In addition, family and friends can provide practical help in everyday life (household care, transport, health care, etc.). This practical support can make routine tasks for people with disabilities easier, enabling them to focus on their goals of independence and autonomy. And with the support of family and friends, individuals feel empowered and are more likely to successfully achieve their goals (Wagner, 2004). Vymětal (2003) adds the necessity of emotional response in a positive sense, especially from loved ones, as well as the necessity of social placement, encouraging the growth of the individual's self-esteem.

The availability and quality of support services have a major impact on the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve independence and self-reliance. Quality rehabilitation programmes are key to providing people with the necessary skills and tools to manage their daily activities and maximise their potential. It is crucial for these programmes to be accessible and to provide the professional support and training needed to develop skills and independence. Additional important services include personal assistance that can provide practical help in everyday life, whether it is help with hygiene, meal preparation or transport. The availability and quality of these services can significantly affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to successfully integrate into society and achieve their goals of independence. Special education programmes are also key to providing the necessary resources and support to educate individuals with disabilities and prepare them for a successful transition to working life and full participation in society. Improving the availability and quality of these services is therefore essential to support the independence and

autonomy of people with disabilities (Garwood et al., 2023; Patton & Polloway, 1992).

Financial status plays a key role in the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve independence. The availability and quality of services and support available to these individuals often depends directly on their financial means. Some services, such as rehabilitation programmes, personal assistance, or special education programmes, can be expensive and may not be completely affordable for individuals with disabilities. This can lead to a lack of access to essential services and limit their ability to achieve independence. In addition, financial constraints can cause stress and uncertainty, which in turn negatively affects an individual's overall well-being and mental health. It is therefore crucial to ensure that funding is available for those who need it, and that appropriate financial supports and subsidies are available to help individuals with disabilities gain access to necessary services and supports. Such measures can significantly contribute to their ability to achieve independence and fully integrate into society (Anderson et al., 2018; Braddock et al., 2008).

Social and environmental barriers can form significant obstacles to the process of gaining independence for individuals with disabilities. Insufficient accessibility of public buildings such as schools, workplaces or public transport can make it difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to fully participate in life. It is important to identify and remove these barriers through appropriate policies and measures. This can include improving the accessibility of infrastructure, educating the public about the needs and abilities of people with disabilities, and reinforcement of legal protection against discrimination. Eliminating these barriers can significantly improve the chances of individuals with disabilities to achieve independence and full participation in society.

Personal motivation and self-esteem are key factors in the process of gaining independence by individuals with disabilities. Individuals who are unable to perform activities of everyday life tend to be demotivated, which also affects their self-confidence. This impact is manifested in the wider environment of the individual. These are the aggregate activities everyone needs to be an independent member of society. Therefore, instrumental ADLs include activities such as managing finances, raising children, caring for family or pets, managing the household, shopping, and preparing meals. Task performance consists of three stages: starting the activity, continuing and completing it. Motivation and the ability to plan and manage one's own life can empower individuals to overcome obstacles and achieve goals. At the same time, it is important for them to have a positive relationship with themselves, which can encourage them to actively seek opportunities and solutions. Ensuring access to support services and resources promoting the development of motivation and self-esteem is key to successful independence and full participation in life (Krivosiková, 2011; Hartigan, 2007; Rogers et al., 2003).

Methodology, Working Procedure

The investigation based on which this paper was written focuses on two basic areas – background search of foreign research followed by the research among users of services (family or persons with severe disabilities themselves) aimed at increasing the independence of individuals with severe disabilities as well as among providers of these services. Bellow, we would like to present the results of foreign background search.

Background Search

In the research preparation phase, we conducted two searches. First, we analysed the literature and sources to define the terms used within the study. This analysis allowed us to identify specialist terms that are relevant to the research brief and are clearly and accurately described. To ensure accurate use of terminology, we searched electronic and print sources published in August and September 2022 in both Czech and English. This literature search also provided us with a basis for developing questions for subsequent interviews. The second part of the background search consisted of searching for existing systematic reviews. What we focused on were the studies providing information on empowering the people with disabilities for independence and, in particular, their eventual transition to independent lives.

Search Strategy

The search process was carried out in several steps.

First, the Epistemonikos and Cochrane databases were searched. The initial search was carried out using keywords:

- Independent living,
- People with special needs/disability,
- Services.

Due to the very low number of results (10 systematic reviews), additional sets of searches were conducted using keywords based individual interventions:

- housing, employment, assistance and disability.

What followed in the next phase was the screening of studies. At this stage, the publications found were included or excluded based on the reading of titles and abstracts according to predefined criteria. The included publications were then assessed by reading the full texts. Data from the included publications were extracted and organised into summary tables. The results helped to define examples of best practice in the system of supporting the independence of young adults with disabilities.

Inclusive and Exclusive Criteria Defined Using the PICOS Tool:

- Population: Young adults with special needs aged 16 and over (studies involving people aged 0–18 or adults aged 18 and over were also included)

- Intervention: any supporting procedures connected with the process of independence (personal assistance, digital assistance, transition programmes, supported housing, employment assistance, community living, etc.)
- Outputs: any degree of independence in any area of life for people with disabilities
- Design of the study: Secondary research – systematic review or evidence synthesis
- Studies focused on children with disabilities or older people with disabilities, as well as systematic reviews looking at people without disabilities were excluded. Studies dealing with hospital or other institutional care and systematic reviews dealing with any type of medical intervention (drugs, treatments, therapies, etc.) were also excluded. Studies in languages other than English were excluded as well.

Results

Our criteria were met by 13 systematic reviews from which data extraction was performed. The included systematic reviews provided us with an overview of interventions empowering people with high levels of support needs for independence and the scientific evidence of their effectiveness or impact on the participants' self-reliant living. Even though all the included studies deal with interventions provided abroad, most of them are present in the field of support in the Czech environment as well. An overview of the included studies is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Overview of All Included Studies

| Support area | Intervention | Author, title of article |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Personal assistance | Personal assistance | Mayo-Wilson E., Montgomery P., Dennis J.A., 2008. Personal Assistance for Adults (19-64) with Physical Impairments. |
| | Personal assistance | Mayo-Wilson E., Montgomery P., Dennis J.A., 2008a. Personal Assistance for Adults (19-64) with Both Physical and Intellectual Impairments. |
| | Personal assistance | Mayo-Wilson E, Montgomery P., Dennis J.A., 2008b. Personal Assistance for Children and Adolescents (0-18) with Intellectual Impairments. |
| Housing | Design, placement, environment | Wright, C.J., et al., 2017. What housing features should inform the development of housing solutions for adults with neurological disability? A systematic review of the literature. |

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| | Dispersed community housing | Mansell J., Beadle-Brown J., 2009. Dispersed or clustered housing for adults with intellectual disability: a systematic review. |
| Employment | Supported employment | Kinoshita Y. et al. 2013. Supported employment for adults with severe mental illness. |
| | Job preparation, transition programme | Suijkerbuijk Y.B. et al. 2017. Interventions for obtaining and maintaining employment in adults with severe mental illness, a network meta-analysis. |
| Development of skills | Training and practice of life skills | Tungpunkom P., Maayan N., Soares-Weiser K., 2012. Life skills programmes for chronic mental illnesses. |
| Complex intervention | Individual and group programmes, interconnection of social skills and work experience | Gross J.M.S., Monroe-Gulick A., Davidson-Gibbs D., Nye C. 2020. Multifaceted interventions for supporting community participation among adults with disabilities. |
| Case management | Intensive case management | Dieterich M. et al. 2017. Intensive Case Management for Severe Mental Illness. |
| Transition intervention | Education, therapy, mentoring, self-managed programmes | Lindsay S. et al. 2018. A systematic review of post-secondary transition interventions for youth with disabilities. |
| Transformation of services | Transition care models | Campbell F., O’Neill P.M., While A., McDonagh J., et al. 2012. Interventions to improve transition of care for adolescents from paediatric services to adult services. |
| | Transition care models | Jacobs P., MacMahon K., Quayle E., J., 2018. Transition from school to adult services for young people with severe or profound intellectual disability: A systematic review utilizing framework synthesis. |

Results of the Initial Background Search

The initial search was conducted as a preliminary research strategy aimed at finding systematic reviews that looked at how to support the independence of

people with disabilities, particularly those with severe physical, intellectual or combined disabilities whose level of independence is severely limited and who require extensive support due to the extent of their special needs.

The research was based on the selected services supporting independence provided pursuant to Czech laws under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services (MoLSA, 2006, as amended), Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on Employment (as amended), and relevant decrees. These services include social services and Services of vocational rehabilitation. Social services are designed to help people achieve mental and physical self-reliance in order to integrate them into their natural social environment and daily life as much as possible. In relation to the issue of persons with disabilities and the support of their independence, we consider the following services to be particularly important: personal assistance, outreach and outpatient care services, support for independent living, day service centres, day and weekly residential homes, homes for persons with disabilities, for persons requiring regular assistance from another person, and social therapy workshops (MoLSA, 2017; Decree No.505/2006 Coll.).

The aim of the systematic review search was to find evidence-based services that participants in various research studies identified as effective in the process of empowering the people with disabilities for independence.

The systematic reviews identified in this study addressed supportive interventions in several areas. Three of the included systematic reviews focused on personal assistance, two focused on support for independent living, two on support for vocational rehabilitation, and the remaining six focused on different types of interventions to support the independence of people with disabilities in one or more areas of their lives or their transitioning from childhood to adulthood in terms of services. The total number of participants in all included studies was 34,219, including those in the control groups. The reviews looked into interventions for people across a wide range of ages and disabilities, whereas our focus was primarily on outcomes for people aged 16–30. It was this group of people who fell within the age range stated in the individual studies. The following text describes the results connected with individual interventions.

Personal Assistance

Three of the systematic reviews found dealt with personal assistance services, two of them with services for people aged 19-64 and one with services for people aged 0-18. According to the review results, the personal assistance service is preferred over other services, regardless of age groups, for people with both physical and intellectual disabilities. The use of personal assistance services has a positive impact on the quality of their lives and the satisfaction of both users and carers. Personal assistants help clients manage activities of everyday life and meet their needs.

The specific results of the systematic review state the following: *Even though PA was generally preferred over other services, some people do prefer other care models. PA can provide certain advantages for some recipients and can be also beneficial for the carers* (Mayo-Wilson et al., 2008; 2008a; 2008b). The main findings confirm the impact of the use of personal assistance services on the overall quality of life and satisfaction of users with disabilities, and on the lives of caregivers as well.

Some evidence suggests that *personal assistance can reduce unmet needs*. For carers, personal assistance increases satisfaction *with overall care arrangements* (Mayo-Wilson et al., 2008b), with this service having little effect on their emotional burden or leisure time.

Support for Independent Housing

Two included studies (Wright et al., 2017; Mansell et al., 2009) look at supporting independent housing in different areas. The first of the studies focuses on dispersed and clustered housing and the comparison thereof, the second one deals with the necessary elements related to the promotion of inclusive housing.

Dispersed housing is developing rapidly in Scandinavia, USA, UK, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand as a substitute for residential care for people with intellectual disabilities (Mansell, 2006, in Mansell, 2009). It can be defined as housing of the same type and size as the majority population. Units are located in residential areas. These may be small group homes owned by a service organisation with paid support staff for residents, or the so called supported housing, which is not as common. People with disabilities in need of a higher level of support have the same housing rights as other citizens; they can rent or own a house or flat and, if they wish, share it with someone of their choice. They receive the necessary personal support as an in-home service from the agency of their choice (Mansell, 2009).

Clustered housing is defined as multiple housing units that form a community separate from the surrounding population. These are usually village communities, such as Camphill communities, of which there are about 100 in Europe, North America, southern Africa, and India, which support people with intellectual disabilities (Mansell, 2009). Residential complexes are another option, partly based on the principles of village communities, however, serving people with higher levels of support needs and employing staff to provide support to complex residents. They were established after the closure of institutions, mainly in the UK, the Netherlands, and Belgium, on the sites of institutions run by health service providers. Usually, they consist of a small number of housing units that may form the background of a larger community. Inclusive housing requires consideration and adherence to certain principles in terms of design, location and surrounding environment.

According to research, the following principles are important for design. The housing should:

- *Facilitate physical access* (e.g. physical accessibility, easy access to household items and resources, technological features) both inside and outside the home;
- *Create a cosy environment*;
- *Increase the safety, security and privacy of the person* (without compromising the cosy environment);
- *Improve the comfort* of users, the health and *safety* of clients and carers in the workplace, and the *accessibility and efficiency of the care provided*;
- *Provide access to rehabilitation and exercise facilities* (Wright et al., 2017).

In terms of location, housing should be in good proximity to local amenities, social networks and local services (Wright et al., 2017).

In terms of environment, it is important that the housing was established in neighbourhoods that:

- *Support physical access to public places and areas*;
- *Provide suitable community services* and resources for adults with neurologically based disabilities;
- *Enable the development of positive social networks*, thereby facilitating social support (Wright et al., 2017).

Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Services

Two systematic reviews dealing with vocational rehabilitation were included in the overview. Kinoshita (2013) monitored the effectiveness of supported employment for people with intellectual disabilities, and Suijkerbuijk (2017) compared the effectiveness of different types of vocational rehabilitation interventions and attempted to rank these interventions according to their effectiveness in facilitating competitive employment for adults with severe mental illness. Results have shown that supported employment can increase the level of obtaining and retaining any employment (Kinoshita, 2013).

Suijkerbuijk (2017) compared supported employment and extended supported employment with transitional employment, pre-vocational training and psychiatric care for people with severe mental illness. Supported employment *refers to programmes aimed at helping people with severe mental illness quickly gain competitive employment and provide ongoing support to maintain employment* (Bond, 2001a, in Suijkerbuijk, 2017). Extended supported employment is *enriched with additional interventions to increase employment outcomes, such as cognitive skills training with supported employment, etc.* (Loveland, 2007; McGurk, 2004; Tsang, 2009, in Suijkerbuijk, 2017).

Transitional employment refers to segregated programmes designed *to help people with disabilities who are not (yet) able to work in a competitive environment*; it can also be used *as a first step towards more gainful forms of employment*. They are usually operated by non-profit organisations that receive funding from state or federal sources (Boardman, 2003; Krainski, 2013). In our

conditions, social therapy workshops are the closest to this programme. Known as “*train, then place*” or “*traditional vocational rehabilitation*”, pre-employment training is a *step-by-step approach in which participants are trained prior to employment*. This procedure applies *training courses, workshops, assessments or counselling, training general work skills or personal development such as self-esteem, assertiveness and stress management* (Corrigan, 2001; Loveland, 2007). Some specific training programmes may focus on *improving social or cognitive skills* (Corbière, 2009).

One study found that *people in supported employment needed shorter time before getting their first job in the open labour market in the long term* (Kinoshita, 2013).

As part of the comprehensive approach, psychiatric care is described as a complement to the aforementioned programmes and is defined here as routine care for people with serious mental illness without a specific professional component. This includes meditation, support psychotherapy and case management.

Extended supported employment, supported employment and pre-vocational training were found to be more effective than psychiatric care alone. Extended supported employment has been more effective than supported, transitional employment, and pre-vocational training.

Supported employment has been more effective than transitional employment and pre-vocational training (Suijkerbuijk, 2017).

Programmes Supporting the Development of Skills for Everyday Life.

The six studies included in this overview defined a specific group or individual programme to support independent functioning in everyday life (e.g. training in money management, household organisation and management, domestic skills, self-care and social skills).

So-called multi-component programmes, i.e. programmes with comprehensive focus containing several related and interconnected interventions, were reported to be more effective. Although the studies varied in terms of duration, length and number of sessions or form of provision, all reported *improvements in at least one area* (e.g. transition planning from residential care to independence, self-determination, career exploration, readiness and transition skills; social effectiveness, knowledge of disability in relation to career planning; enrolment for higher education, self-determination, self-confidence, transition and independent living skills, autonomy, social support, self-advocacy) (Lindsay et al., 2018).

When evaluating interventions aimed at supporting the transition from childhood to adulthood services, the findings were as follows: *Intervention may slightly improve young people’s readiness for transition, enabling them to better self-manage and adapt to the use of adult health services* (Tungpunkom et al., 2012).

Little or no difference was found between the intervention and control groups (Tungpunkom et al., 2012) for interventions that could be described as short-term, one-off or telephone-based (Campbell et al., 2012). In such comparison, what was important were the results showing that long-term programmes focusing on multiple training, comprehensive approach, and linking multiple areas of support had a positive impact on users' acquired skills (Lindsay et al., 2018).

Programmes directed at supporting families and young people with disabilities had an overarching theme of *discrepancy in relation to the family's experience and the young person's needs and to wider ecological levels*. Policy and societal values emphasizing a young person's independence and self-determination seemed to stand in contrast to their lifelong high dependency (Jacobs et al., 2018).

Findings on selected topics related to interventions:

1) Family: *Prevailing support from parents as primary carers; only a minority living in supported housing or residential facilities* – little data on assessment of types of accommodation and quality of services.

2) Changing support networks: the end of a child's or young adult's education is perceived as a loss by parents. Similarly, differences can be seen in the perception of adult services, where there is a clear discrepancy between standards and parents' perceptions. According to parents, the ideal *placement for adults* would be *in a centre with small groups of the same age, which facilitates learning and skills and which is available 4-5 days a week, with caring and qualified staff*.

3) Decision-making and collaboration: parents perceive *a lack of accessible local services* to provide them with clear information about their choices. This includes *advisory services, financial security services*.

4) Organisational context: parents perceive *a lack of coordination of services, budget, and funding* (Jacobs et al., 2018).

Conclusion

The vision of autonomy and independence from family care tends to be the goal of most adolescents, as well as their parents. If a person's disability affects the independence from the family and its care, it is advisable to think about possible alternative or augmentative forms of independent living to help fulfil this goal. Both the aforementioned background search and the follow-up research in the Czech Republic have shown that for an individual with severe disabilities there is not only a single way to achieve independence. There are indeed multiple supports that can be used, offered both in state departments and in non-profit, non-state departments. In the stage of preparation for independence, elements of support have been shown to include:

- Functional communication, including the use of the AAC system,
- Training and development of skills needed for everyday life,

- Personal assistance,
 - Parent support groups,
 - Educational programmes and activities focusing on parents,
 - Early care,
 - Homesharing,
 - Multi-day stays, residential summer camps, sports convalescent stays.
- During the stage of gaining independence as such, the research identified the following areas supporting the independence of a person with severe disabilities:

- Various forms of supported housing and programmes supporting independence in the housing area,
- Social-therapeutic workshops,
- Human-centred planning,
- Case management,
- Educational activities for parents, however, aimed at promoting specific skills for the children's own independence (ABA, PBS therapy),
- Support aimed at developing the competences of young adults with disabilities themselves (ergotherapy, empowerment and self-advocacy, crisis plan, peer mentoring).

All of the above forms a very essential part of the lives of families caring for individuals with severe disabilities, as well as the individuals themselves. At the same time, all the energy of the options, services and strategies described above would be wasted if the family or the person with a disability did not want them. It is therefore important to listen to these voices and develop options that support and saturate their needs.

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Význam pohybu v životě člověka s Parkinsonovým ochorením

The importance of movement in human life with Parkinson's disease

Zuzana Fábry Lucká

Abstract

The contribution is focused on the issue of movement in human life, as its natural part. It specifically focuses on the use of movement and movement activities in patients with Parkinson's disease. It presents research studies from abroad focused on the use of dance as a non-pharmacological therapy in supporting the overall wellbeing of patients with Parkinson's disease.

Keywords: Movement. Dance. Parkinson's disease.

Introduction

The issue of movement and expression through movement has been topical for a long time in the helping professions in the local context. A person expresses their current mental state through movement, but their relationships with the environment are also reflected in the movement representation. Movement is a natural part of a person's life, their daily experience, even if it is limited due to health or other reasons. Movement is therefore an indivisible part of human life (Szabová, 2001). It can have different quality and meaning with respect to the conditions in which it takes place (Fábry Lucká, 2014).

Expression through movement can be understood in the biodromic context of human life. Hátlová et al. (2014) states that learning movement patterns takes place throughout the entire period of human development.

Movement is a creative space for a child's self-development, a basic and essential prerequisite for positive stimulation of development from early childhood (Mitašíková, 2020). From an early age, movement is a part of play, which is a safe way to establish contacts, engage in interactions and space for building relationships (Habalová, 2022).

In addition to play itself, which naturally has a multifactorial potential, the proximity of the person to relate to and the environment in which the play takes place are also important attributes (Habalová, 2010). Movement is a natural part of play, it is not only a matter of physical movement, but also of the overall awareness of one's own body in the context of the surrounding conditions in the

understanding of psychomotor skills. After the period of childhood, play develops and passes into other forms of interest activities, often connected again with physical activities. Such integration into a person's life has a direct impact on their experience on a psychosomatic level as well. A person creates in the play and at the same time the play becomes a part of their being (Mitašíková, 2023).

The term psychomotorics appeared for the first time already in the second half of the 19th century, when it was defined as part of psychology as a scientific discipline (Zimmer, 2019). In the current understanding, there has been a paradigm shift even in our conditions in the Slovak understanding, when the term psychomotorics includes the body in the context of one's own experience and bodily boundaries (Fábry Lucká, 2019). From a neurophysiological point of view, psychomotor skills are closely related to the maturation processes of the nervous system and targeted perceptual and movement stimuli (Panten, 2005). The share of movement in a person's somatopsychic state is relatively high during the entire period of a person's life, from birth to the period of senior age (Hátlová et al., 2014). Through one's own physical manifestations, a person builds their own self-image. It is actually a view of oneself that reflects the personality and the physical side (Hartl, Hartlová, 2009).

Experiencing one's own physicality is the basic pillar for building one's own identity. This experience makes it possible to understand the meaning of one's own existence, it provides space for the creation of one's own "I" and bodily boundaries. Hátlová et al. (2014) states that the perception of information through one's own body thus becomes a real object through which a person can confront their activity. Based on the above, movement in the understanding of psychomotorics is a lifelong human need, the fulfillment of which also contributes to a person's psychological experience.

As we have already mentioned, movement play is a part of a person's life from an early age to the period of senectitude. It has therapeutic potential even in the case of various diseases that affect physical and psychological wellbeing. In the following text, we will deal with the issue of patients with Parkinson's disease and targeted movement interventions, specifically with the use of dance as a therapeutic medium.

Dance as a complementary non-pharmacological therapy in patients with Parkinson's disease

The use of non-pharmacological approaches in the therapy of patients with Parkinson's disease is a long-term proven strategy in other countries, in combination with traditional pharmacological treatment.

For example, Haynes et al. (2023) investigated the use of dance and dance exercises in the context of the healthy aging model in the prevention of neurodegenerative diseases. Considering the problems that manifest themselves in people with Parkinson's disease, especially in the area of motor skills and walking, dancing or dance therapy is a long-proven approach.

Unfortunately, in our conditions, such a strategy of help is available only rarely, based on the equipment of a specific healthcare setting or organization. It is the possibility of self-expression that is key in movement-oriented therapy. The possibility of expressing one's emotions through artistic means can be a suitable way to overcome the difficulties associated with diseases in a person's older age (Kováčová, Hudecová, 2023).

Currently, in our conditions, a program focused on support for speech disorders in patients with Parkinson's disease is being implemented, where music therapy is the key approach. This program also includes movement activities that are adapted to the clientele of people with Parkinson's disease with a mild cognitive deficit and problems in the area of speech (both production and volume).

Given the fact that in this program we also use movement as a therapeutic medium, we processed a selection of research studies published in the last 4 years - in the years 2019 - 2023, which used movement and dance as a support medium specifically for problems in the area of mobility and motor skills. Studies were searched in PubMed, Scopus and Web of Sciences databases. The search keywords were dance, movement, quality of life. Based on this set of conditions, we identified 6 published research studies, which we discuss in more detail in the text below.

Bar et al. (2021) conducted a cross-sectional comparative study of 50 patients with Parkinson's disease aged 50-87 years, in addition to the effect on mobility, they also focused on their psychological experience and subjective perception of quality of life. In the conclusions, they stated that the positive influence of dance on overall mobility and subjective experience of one's own quality of life was proven. The limitations of the research were mainly the fact that since it is a degenerative disease, it is particularly problematic to apply standard methods of investigation, as the patients also had a problem with filling out the questionnaire - especially due to their physical limitations.

In their study focused on the use of dance in people with Parkinson's disease, Sundström and Jola (2021) focused not only on motor and psychological factors, but also on the experience of their life partners. Living with a person with Parkinson's disease and caring for them can cause a lot of emotional, psychological and financial pressures in the family environment. The dance program implemented in the research was completed by 6 couples, in each of which there was one person with Parkinson's disease. The results showed that dancing as a coordinated activity had a positive effect especially on improving the maintenance of overall body balance. The results in the emotional experience of both partners were also undeniable, especially the re-enjoyment of physical proximity without fear of harming the partner with Parkinson's disease.

In their study, Carapellotti et al. (2022) verified dance as a therapeutic approach with a direct effect on motor and non-motor manifestations, but also on the quality of life of a person with Parkinson's disease. The dance intervention was implemented as a 12-week program, inspired by the certified Dance for PD®

model. It was designed for a relatively small sample of 10 patients with Parkinson's disease who had demonstrable problems in the field of functional mobility, symptoms of depression and a negative self-image about their own quality of life. The data were compared in the form of a questionnaire, where significant differences were shown especially in the field of improving the perception of one's own quality of life. The implementation of the program did not affect functional mobility, not even in one case, it was more about maintaining the current physical condition, which is also perceived as beneficial in the case of a neurodegenerative disease.

Bek et al. (2020) in the conclusions of their research focused on the use of dance to support the motor skills and emotional state of people with Parkinson's disease also concluded that dance could improve motor planning and has a direct effect on psychological experience. This is the only one of the presented studies where a special space was also dedicated to rhythm and music in the context of the motivation of the research participants and the direct impact on the speed and accuracy of the performed movements.

In further research, Bek et al. (2022) also focused on the use of dance as a feasible non-pharmacological approach in people with Parkinson's disease. In their research study, they presented their own dance program that included motor stimulation combined with other expressive artistic means and focusing on the psychological experience of a person before, during and after the end of the program. So far, the research study has been conducted in a 6-week pilot sample, the research conclusions have been incorporated, and the research team has created a final program that is currently in the verification process.

Finally, Gyrling et al. (2021) focused on identifying the health benefits of using dance for people with Parkinson's disease. In the research carried out in Sweden, they understood the concept of health as consisting of three areas - physical, social and emotional experience. The results showed that positive changes were noted in all three areas, especially in the area of self-perception and self-esteem.

Conclusion

The issue of Parkinson's disease in the context of non-pharmacological approaches is still an understudied area in our conditions. The aim of our study was to focus on relevant research already carried out in this area during the last four years, and thus to confirm the effectiveness of already implemented programs linked to movement as a therapeutic medium. This was our second study dedicated to this issue, this time also focusing on the area of mobility, which is one of the areas most affected by the disease. An interesting finding from the described research was mainly a factor that turned out to be secondary - namely the social participation of a person with Parkinson's disease, who often voluntarily isolates from society as the disease progresses. Such avoidance of society can worsen the overall condition of a person with Parkinson's disease,

which is why a group form of a therapeutic program with expressive potential is a suitable form of intervention.

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Význam pohybu v edukácii žiakov s mentálnym postihnutím

The Importance of Movement in the Education of Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities

Bohuslav Stupák, Viktor Hladush

Abstract

The article deals with the importance of movement in the education of pupils with intellectual disabilities. There is now a growing body of research that emphasizes the positive impact of physical activities on the physical, mental, and social aspects of the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. This article evaluates the importance of including diverse forms of exercise in educational programs for this group of learners. Research has shown that comprehensive and adapted exercise programs have the potential to significantly improve the functional abilities, psychological well-being, and social integration of students with intellectual disabilities. This article highlights the need to provide physical education teachers and coaches with specific guidelines that reflect the latest scientific findings and assist in the effective planning and implementation of exercise programs for this specific population. In the final recommendations, the article highlights the necessity of integrating physical activities into the educational environment for students with intellectual disabilities as a key factor in promoting their overall development and quality of life.

Keywords: Pupil with intellectual disability. The impact of movement. Movement activities.

Introduction

Currently, the educational environment is moving towards the continuous development of inclusive disabilities. This study aims to further understand and evaluate the utility of such integrated approaches and their impact on the development of motor skills, social interactions, and overall health of students with intellectual disabilities. The proliferation of movement integration within inclusive education raises questions regarding the optimal adaptation of teaching methods, the creation of conducive learning environments, and the identification of the specific benefits that such approaches bring. In the context of learners with intellectual disabilities, we face the challenge of properly adapting teaching strategies that not only support the development of motor

skills, but also take into account the individual needs and abilities of each person. Approaches that take into account the diversity of pupils within the education system are also crucial. One of the key areas of this inclusive guidance is the integration of movement resources in the education of pupils with learning disabilities.

Physical fitness and literacy of pupils with intellectual disabilities

Promoting physical activity and trying to reduce sedentary lifestyles has a positive impact on the health, well-being and social development of young people with intellectual disabilities, which carries over into their adult lives. Considering the importance of promoting active lifestyles in teenagers, researchers decided to develop and assess a new "exercise package for young people with intellectual disabilities" (Sport Science Research Institute - SSRI) to improve the motor and social development of this group of individuals (Kashi, Dawes, Mansoubi, & Sarlak, 2023) . The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) defines intellectual disability as a condition with significant limitations in intellectual function and adaptive behavior that affect a variety of daily social and practical skills and manifest before the age of 18. Intellectual disabilities impacts not only on the individual, but also on their family and society. Given the high prevalence of this disability, ensuring quality of life, motivation, development, access to education, employment, culture and leisure activities, as well as maintaining an adequate level of physical health and fitness (including cardiovascular and respiratory health, muscular endurance, flexibility and balance) for these individuals carries a significant public responsibility with important public health implications. Several researchers (Cuesta-Vargas, Paz-Lourido, & Rodriguez, 2011) have investigated the physical fitness of young people with intellectual disabilities, with most of these studies reporting disappointing results compared to their able-bodied peers. In addition, it is found that young people with intellectual disabilities often lag behind in motor and social development compared to their peers without disabilities. Another common problem among young people with disabilities is the high amount of time spent sitting. In addition, various studies on physical activity levels among this group have shown that, on average, they are not as physically active as their able-bodied peers. It is a challenge for individuals with disabilities and their families to find appropriate leisure activities because they are not able to participate in all activities and there are not always sufficient programs available for each group of individuals with disabilities. As a result, these people often do not participate in specific activities, which leads to their isolation and exacerbates their social and health problems, reducing their overall quality of life. In the context of increasing physical fitness with a view to the healthy development of the individual with intellectual disabilities, the development of movement abilities, movement skills and movement competences is very important.

Weinert (2001) considers movement competencies as context-dependent and functional dispositions of performance that evolve from the specific demands of a given situation in a culture of movement, exercise and sport. These competencies maintain control of motor demands, take into account acquired experience and are permanently learnable. Basic movement competence is not just the performance itself, such as catching, throwing, rebounding, etc., but rather represents the basic dispositional mastery of performance required to solve given types of tasks (Scheuer et al., 2014).

Movement competencies represent the movement skills and abilities that an individual with intellectual disabilities possesses. Using them, he or she is able to move economically and confidently in a variety of movement situations. environment in which the individual moves and the culture of the society (Vasickova, 2016).

Table 1: *Differences and characteristics of the terms: motor competences, motor abilities and motor skills*

| Motor abilities | Motor skills | Motor competencies |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| conditioning/coordination/hybrid | floating on the water surface, submergence under water | movement in the aquatic environment |
| conditioning/coordination/hybrid | throwing, ball handling, dribbling, catching | movement with tools/ball |
| conditioning/coordination/hybrid | cycling, skiing | movement on the means (vehicle) |
| conditioning/coordination/hybrid | running, balancing, jump, roll | movement of your own body |

Source: Masaryková (2021)

A key prerequisite for physical activity and sport for pupils with intellectual disabilities is the development of basic motor competences, which are also a basic requirement for participation in physical activity. Movement literacy is one of the basic and significant human abilities, which represents an acquired disposition of a pupil with intellectual disabilities, which includes motivation, confidence, movement competences that form the basis of physical activity as an integral part of every person's life (Vrbas, Vlček, 2017). The basic elements of movement literacy for pupils with intellectual disabilities include movement competencies, rules, tactics and strategies of movement, motivation and behavioural skills of movement, personal with social attributes of movement (Dudley, 2015).

The importance of physical and sport education for pupils with intellectual disabilities

Physical education and sport education in special primary schools and inclusive education creates a space in which skilled and meaningful opportunities can be created for pupils, and should play a critical role in the acquisition of skills with subsequent development of competence (Gerlach et al., 2017). Pupils with intellectual disabilities and young people with reduced levels of physical activity have a higher risk of cardiovascular problems, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes and other diseases in adulthood. Research has also shown that inactivity in young individuals with disabilities can cause secondary problems such as osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, loss of balance, strength, endurance, fitness and flexibility, obesity and depression. The fact that people with disabilities tend to have lower physical fitness than their mainstream peers highlights the importance of developing physical exercise and sporting activities specifically for this group of individuals.

It is widely accepted that physical activity has beneficial effects for all individuals with ID, regardless of any disability. However, for a variety of reasons, people with disabilities show less interest in participating in physical activities and exhibit lower levels of physical fitness compared to the intact population. Nevertheless, students with ID or disabilities can benefit from regular physical activity in the areas of physical development, bone health, mental health and social participation. Accordingly, physical activity positively influences factors of physical and psychological well-being, including mood, life satisfaction, self-acceptance, and self-confidence in individuals with disabilities. Movement competencies developed and refined through movement enable students with intellectual disabilities:

- to be able to participate in a culture of sport and exercise,
- to be able to gain certain experiences,
- understand sport and exercise as an enrichment of their lives,
- to be able to make a decision whether to integrate sport into their lives (Gogoll, 2012).

For this reason, movement competencies do not represent movement performances per se for students with intellectual disabilities, but general performance dispositions that condition their execution (Hermann et al., 2019).

Movement programme for pupils with intellectual disabilities

Teens with disabilities are more likely to be less active and may be overweight or obese. Therefore, they need support and suitable physical activities and sports that enable them to move and be physically active, and at the same time motivate them to maintain their health. These exercise programs do not only focus on specific movement problems of individuals, but also contribute to their overall health and well-being through participation in activities and games. These activities improve not only physical but also psychological qualities, while individuals learn positive aspects of social behavior such as fair play,

cooperation and group participation. Undoubtedly, learning to move and moving actively is an important addition to structured programs of physical education and physical activities. Physical activity increases adaptive behavior through regular physical activity. In addition, physical activity helps individuals with intellectual disabilities to develop the skills necessary for independent living, finding employment and maintaining overall health. We consider physical activity to be a biologically necessary stimulus for the development of the child's movement and health, as well as psychological and social areas (Weinert, 2001). This process is significantly influenced by neuromuscular maturation, growth dispositions, genetic component, growth rate, maturation rate, movement experiences, or motor learning, while the process itself can be perceived as gradual (Malina, 2013). Given the increased incidence of secondary disabilities and other health complications in individuals with ID compared to the general population, it is imperative that these individuals have access to specialized care, exercise, and physical activity that is tailored to their needs, more than is common in the rest of the community. According to Scheuer et al. (2020), the level of movement competence is a decisive element for the inclusion of a child with intellectual disabilities in physical activity, both in the school facility and outside it. It is with regard to the nature of the activities that compulsory physical education enters this process in a significant way.

In the 2022/2023 school year, we conducted research to determine the most frequently used physical education tools and exercises by teachers in special elementary schools in connection with the development of motor skills of students with mental disabilities. In Table 2 we present the information obtained from 63 teachers from the Košice region and Košice surroundings. We live in a time when most students with intellectual disabilities actively perform any regular physical activity exclusively as part of physical education at school. Physical and sports education often became the only opportunity for them to develop their motor skills to the required extent. If this development is not sufficient, it negatively affects physical activity, which is necessary for health itself and their health fitness. Lack of physical activity is considered by the World Health Organization to be the main cause of mortality, while physical inactivity ranks fourth in this assessment. Research shows that physical inactivity will be the number one cause of human mortality in 2030 (Antala, 2014).

Table 2: *The most commonly used means of developing motor competences*

| Type of exercise | always | very often | often | seldom | never |
|-----------------------------|--------|------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Exercise with tools | 1,59 | 87,30 | 11,11 | 0 | 0 |
| Movement games | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Yoga exercises | 0 | 0 | 26,98 | 73,02 | 0 |
| Music-movement games | 11,11 | 79,36 | 9,53 | 0 | 0 |
| Psychomotor games | 15,87 | 46,03 | 31,74 | 6,36 | 0 |
| Balance exercises | 68,23 | 19,04 | 3,19 | 9,52 | 0 |
| Endurance exercises | 3,19 | 7,93 | 25,39 | 63,49 | 0 |
| Strength exercises | 0 | 3,19 | 88,88 | 7,93 | 0 |
| Breathing exercises | 9,53 | 90,47 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Relaxation exercises | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: own elaboration

Conclusion

In the past, we have seen many reports of the positive impact of exercise programs that focus on different types of exercise, including strength, aerobic, muscular endurance and flexibility, on people with intellectual disabilities. Recently, researchers have begun to investigate combinations of strength, balance, aerobic and other types of exercises, with the aim of creating complex individualized training programs that would achieve higher efficiency. Studies in this area have shown that multimodal exercises can be more effective in improving the functional abilities and physical fitness of people with intellectual disabilities compared to exercises targeting only one area (Kashi, Dawes, Mansoubi, Sarlak, 2023). Nevertheless, it is important for physical education teachers and athletic trainers to have general guidelines based on the latest knowledge in the field in order to successfully plan long-term exercise programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Pupils will achieve better results in other subjects as well, if high-quality physical education is provided in schools, the goals of which also include basic motor skills.

With purposefully guided movement activities with an accent on the development of movement competences, we work on the student with intellectual disabilities without him being aware of it. It is movement that represents a peculiar way where a person meets the surrounding world and gains new experiences. Through movement, a person comes to terms with his

surroundings and at the same time with himself. Movement mediates multifaceted sensory experiences about one's own body and surroundings. Movement can be described as self-knowledge. Through movement, a student with a disability receives feedback about himself, his abilities, weaknesses and strengths, he learns to recognize his boundaries and the limits of his body. By knowing his own body, the student comes to terms with himself. Through movement, a student with intellectual disabilities enters into interaction with others, creates the basics of communication, trains consideration, empathy and learns to follow the rules. Through movement, the student expresses his feelings, perceptions and moods. He does it mostly unconsciously, through body posture, facial expressions and gestures. Movement also represents an emotional experience. When moving, endorphins are released, which cause a feeling of joy. Intense emotional involvement is a characteristic feature of movement activities. Positive emotions that are induced by physical activity can be awakened in different ways. Movement is not only the shaping of the outer body, but it is the refinement of the whole human personality, because the cultivation of the body must go hand in hand with the cultivation of the spirit.

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**Miesto hravých aktivít pri prekonávaní strachu
vo vyučovaní zjazdového lyžovania v názoroch učiteľov
nižšieho sekundárneho vzdelávania**

**The Place of Playful Activities in Overcoming Fear
in Teaching Downhill Skiing in the Opinions of Lower
Secondary Education Teachers**

Štefan Adamčák, Miroslav Nemeč,
Rastislav Kollár, Gabriel Bujdoš

Abstract

Downhill skiing evokes many emotions. In more experienced skiers, they manifest themselves primarily in a positive form, in beginners often in a negative form, in the form of apprehension or fear, mainly due to an unfamiliar way of moving - sliding and moving on skis. In the school environment, we encounter these phenomena quite often on ski training courses. The aim of the paper was to find out through a survey among teachers of lower secondary education (n=105), the fear and apprehension of pupils during ski courses, as well as the use of playful activities during their teaching. We analysed the results from the aspect of intersex differences using the chi-square test on the significance level of $p < 0.05$, resp. $p < 0.01$. We carried out the survey itself from January to March 2023. The results of our study showed that after the completion of ski course, the fear and anxiety of primary school pupils showed a clear trend of decrease. The use of games as one of the forms of warming up, practicing and perfecting selected elements of methodological series of skiing, but also at the end of daily job, is significantly ($p < 0.01$) used to a greater extent by women. During the entire duration of the course, teachers make the most use of movement games of traditional nature - chases, relays, etc. therefore, we recommend that when teaching downhill skiing, movement games with the use of non-traditional aids (skis, poles, etc.) are included to a greater extent, but also games that require the cooperation of pupils, the so-called cooperative games. The results of our study also pointed to the fact that, according to teachers, students' fear of skiing is dominantly caused by an unfamiliar way of moving, when students lose their balance, which they cannot control ($p < 0.01$).

Keywords: Downhill skiing. Intersexual differences. Movement games. Playful activities. Pupils.

Introduction

Downhill skiing is often considered a fun winter activity that can provide many wonderful and exciting experiences for participants, but it can also be a nightmare and stressful activity for some people or children. There can be several reasons, whether it is fear and concern that they will get hurt, fall, or "embarrass themselves" in front of their friends, classmates, a narrow riding space, when, especially for less skilled skiers, fear often manifests itself in poor skiing technique (Modrák -Lajčák-Povrazník, 2010) or just a change in snow conditions - powdery, frozen snow, etc. (Blahutová, 2017). This situation can seriously affect not only their first acquaintance, but also other possible exposures and skiing experiences. This state of mind is also reflected in ski training as common part of physical education in elementary schools in Slovakia. How to overcome these various negative fears and lead individuals to the motivation to learn the necessary skills and consequently to feel relaxed and calm on the slopes? The path to understanding, controlling, overcoming your fear, or removing disturbing stimuli from the environment is not an easy one. Every person encounters various stressful situations during his life, which can negatively affect his entire life.

Armstrong, Stroul & Boothroyd (2005) characterize them as circumstances that increase the likelihood that a child will experience negative behaviour or stress. Stress is a daily part of the life of an increasingly large part of the population, including pupils. It appears in all spheres of life - in the family, school, peer group, sports, etc. Fontana (1997) characterizes stress as increased psychological demand and the physical side of the individual with an emphasis on adaptation, which can be perceived as a positive phenomenon (which some individuals seek, e.g., adrenaline sports), but for other people, stress can represent a burden that is manageable for them.

According to Barnová & Gabrhelová (2017), the composition of pupils in each school is very diverse, children and youth of different abilities and possibilities meet in it, from different social environments, different religions, nationalities, races, etc. Many children are emotionally overwhelmed and confronted with experiences that they are unable to process internally. Despite such diversity, the school has the need to provide all its students with the same chance to obtain a quality education. The basic prerequisite for the success of the educational process from the point of view of students' handling of the workload is to cope with the fact that not all problems are in the students themselves, but often also on the other side, i.e., in the teacher, the curriculum, but especially in the way it is presented. From the point of view of the student's successful or unsuccessful settlement with a difficult situation, such as the fear of skiing, not only its intensity is key (although it is undoubtedly an important factor), but the whole range of circumstances, internal and external factors and their combination that can cause it is decisive. Creating an environment that supports the development of students' resilience and success places high demands on the work of teachers. As the authors Wang, Haertel & Walberg (1998) state, the

development of students' resilience in the school environment is influenced by variables such as the organization of the school and its climate, the presence of caring, enthusiastic teachers, adaptation of the curriculum content, and the teaching method to the needs of the students. A teacher who, in addition to knowing the methodology of learning (ski training), also emphasizes the elimination of fear and therefore the development of the resilience of his students, reduces the probability of their failure and provides them with a greater opportunity to achieve success (Doll, Zucker & Brehm, 2004). It is necessary for such teacher not only to try to formally teach the student, but to look for ways to adapt the environment, forms, and methods of educational work to all students and thus create the necessary inclusive environment.

According to Bubelíniová et al. (1999) playful activities in a physical education environment, especially in the form of movement games, have enormous potential capable of positively influencing children's thinking. They specifically enable the development of their knowledge and understanding and at the same time help to stimulate the child's emotional side. At the same time, we include movement games among the so-called experiential activities, as they often contain not only competition, but also adventure and movement with a certain degree of risk. The subjective feeling of risk and danger activates the individual, allows him to survive the unknown and expand his experiences so much that they become new knowledge (Andreasen, Fedorko & Gerka et al., 2018).

The importance of games in winter sports is also pointed out by Šiška-Blahutková-Krška et al. (2021), as according to them, games help children eliminate fear, worries, i.e., to build a pleasant atmosphere, a happy and safe environment, e.g., during ice skating training, they recommend teaching children how to get up from the ice in the form of games and competitions, which we can similarly apply to ski training. The main feature of winter sports in the form of downhill skiing is that we dominantly use the sliding of skis on snow. Here, for many pupils, a way of movement unknown until then arises, when they often lose their balance, which they cannot control - they slip and possibly fall. This new reality is often a very stressful situation for many beginners. That is why it is very important that we use a wide range of games when practicing and improving the motor skills necessary to master skiing, so that the students take away primarily positive experiences - finally, that the first contact with skiing, or the learning process itself, brings the student as many positive experiences as possible (Roučková, 2013). The advantages of systematically including games and competitions in ski training e.g., in the case of basic changes of direction - an arc in a two-sided return have a positive effect on the process of learning individual skiing styles. Modrák-Lajčák-Povrazník (2010) state in their publication that the games themselves will ensure students' concentration and a positive emotional balance - emotionality, activation, higher efficiency, and motivation, creating an atmosphere for the development of sociability and the removal of subjective obstacles (fear, stiffness).

According to the mentioned authors, the ratio applies: the younger the students, the more games.

Pišot-Kipp-Supej (2015) are of the opinion that if the teacher is to understand the entire skiing experience to which the child is exposed during skiing lessons, it is necessary, especially for children, from the point of view of the instructor, the teacher, not only to have information about physics, skiing methodology, but also about suitable application of games, as the motto of their publication *Skiing is a Game* is "Teaching children to ski is an activity that should be enjoyed by the student and the teacher". Winter (seasonal) physical activities such as downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding, skating, ice hockey, sledding, etc. are included in the content of the education of elementary school students in Slovakia as part of physical education. Pupils of both levels of education (primary and lower secondary) should acquire the necessary competencies during their course of the mentioned winter physical activities so that they can subsequently apply them naturally in their free time. Considering the above facts, we consider it important, that teachers of physical education not only have the required qualifications to lead the physical education process in schools, but constantly look for ways to teach physical education so that education is more experiential, creative and, above all, evoking positive emotions.

Aim

The aim of the paper is to present the current state of implementation of ski courses for primary school pupils regarding the use of games as one of the forms of elimination and overcoming fear of learning.

Methods

The survey was carried out in the form of a handout as well as an electronic survey (Google forms) of our own design from January to March 2023. The focus of the survey itself was based on the partial tasks of the project KEGA 032UMB-4/2022 - " Innovative teaching materials for physical education and sports teachers in primary schools with a focus on winter seasonal physical activities". The survey sample of teachers was represented predominantly by teachers from the Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Košice and Prešov regions of Slovakia participating in the teaching of the thematic unit winter seasonal physical activities. The research group consisted of 105 teachers - 40 men and 65 women of lower secondary level of education implementing ski courses. We quantified the results of our study using percentages and statistical analysis using the χ^2 test at the level of $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$ from the aspect of intersex differences.

Results

The opening question of our survey was concerned with finding out in which form skiing courses are most often implemented. Our findings show that almost 2/3 of the ski courses, according to the teachers, are implemented in form of ski courses with overnight stays. We recorded a higher percentage of answers in the form of ski courses with overnight stays in the group of women - 76.92%. When evaluating this question, from the point of view of men and women, we noted significant differences at the significance level of $p < 0.05$. (Fig. 1).

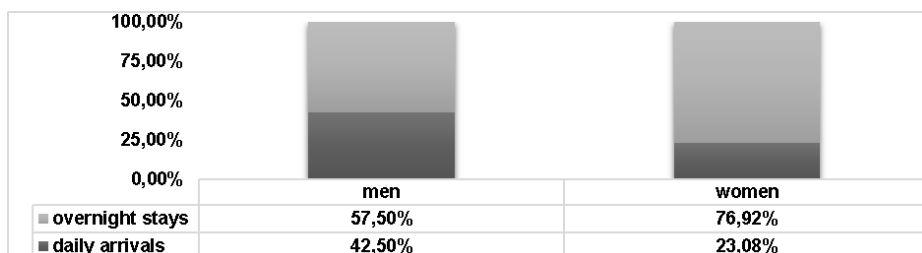


Fig. 1 Form of implementation of the ski courses ($p=0.035$; $\chi^2(1)=4.408$)

76.92% of women and only 37.5% of men regularly use playful activities as one of the forms of warming up on the ski courses (Fig. 2). The option "sometimes" was indicated by 62.5% of men and 15.38% of women. 8% of women do not use games as a form of warming up on the ski courses. The responses from the perspective of men and women were significant at the $p < 0.01$ level of significance (Fig. 2).

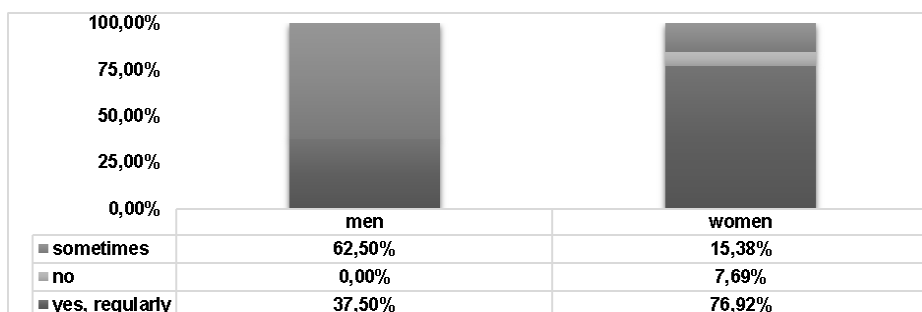


fig. 2 Using games as one of the forms of warming up on the ski course ($p=2.518 \text{ E-}06$; $\chi^2(2)=25.784$)

We also tried to find out (Fig. 3) the extent to which teachers use games when practicing and improving selected elements of the methodological range of skiing, while we found out that women are more active in this direction, as up to 61.54% said that they use games regularly, in the group of men, the answer "sometimes" dominated, which was indicated by 75% of the men. The

responses from the perspective of men and women were significant at the $p < 0.01$ significance level (Fig. 3).

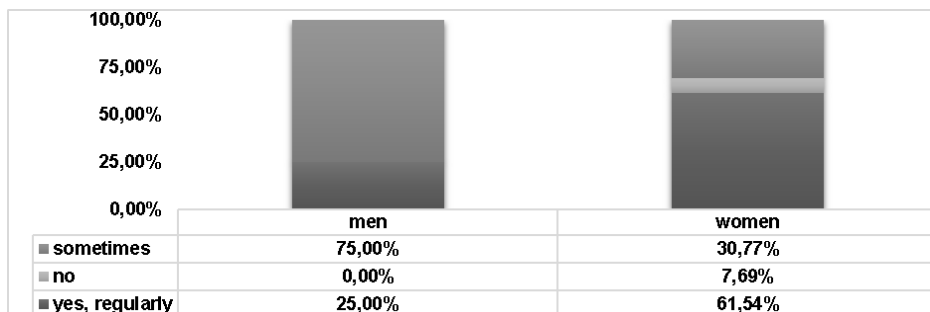


fig. 3 Use of games during teaching and improvement of selected elements of the methodological series of skiing during the ski courses ($p = 4.123 \text{ E-}05$; $\chi^2(2) = 20.192$)

Even in the last question (Fig. 4) regarding the issue of using games in the final part of the day when teaching skiing - at the end of the daily job at the ski courses, women were more active from the point of view of using playful activities. Almost 38.46% said that they regularly use games in the final part. In the group of men, only 25% regularly use games at the end of their daily work, and up to 62.5% of men said that they do not use playful activities at all in this part of the ski course. The facts we found were statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level from the point of view of men and women.

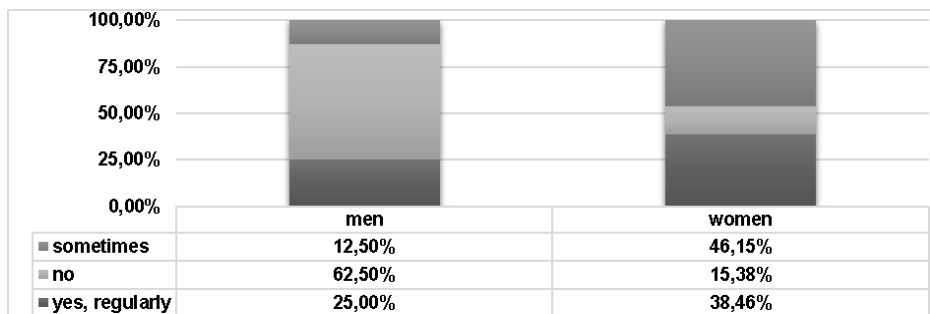


fig. 4 Use of games at the end of daily work on a ski course ($p = 1.994 \text{ E-}06$; $\chi^2(2) = 26.250$)

The following questions were about the students' fear of skiing. From the point of view of women, up to 53.85% said that 20 percent of students are afraid of skiing before starting the course, 23% of women said that 40% and up to 60% of students are afraid of the course. In the group of men, the answers were more balanced, in terms of individual percentage items, the answers did not exceed

40%. When evaluating this question, we did not notice significant differences in the answers of men and women (Fig. 5).

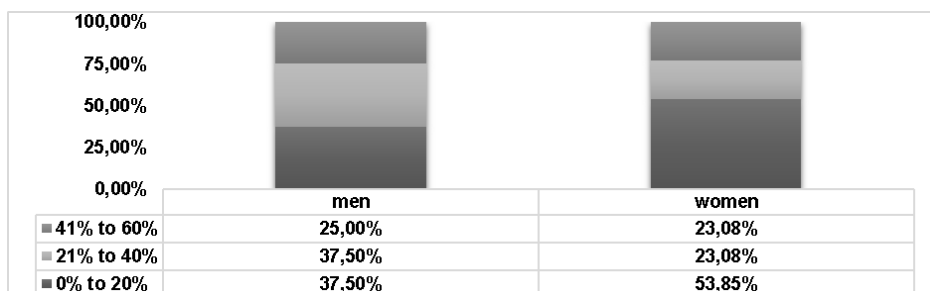


fig. 5 Pupils' fear of skiing before starting a skiing course ($p= 0.198$; $\chi^2(2) = 3.230$)

Subsequently, we found that the main reason for fear and apprehension about skiing from the teachers' point of view is "new, unfamiliar movement" which is presented by the statements of 87.5% of men and 84.62% of women. From the men's point of view, 12.5% expressed that the fear of skiing among pupils is caused by the fact that the pupils consider their level of physical fitness to be low, and 7.69% of the female answers that the fear is caused by a low level of movement skills. Differences in responses from male and female perspectives were significant at the $p < 0.01$ significance level (Fig. 6).

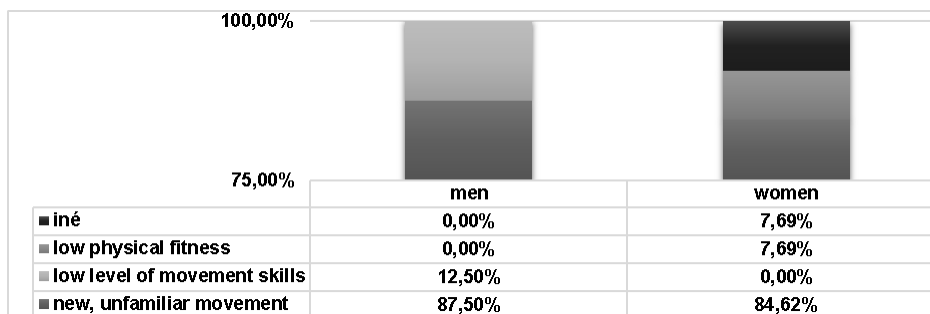


fig. 6 Supporting reasons for pupils' fear of skiing from the teachers' point of view ($p=0.002$; $\chi^2(3) =14.302$)

In the next question, we wanted to find out from the teachers what their opinion is about the use of playful activities in the form of games to reduce or eliminate fear or anxiety about skiing. We present the results in Figure 7, which shows that almost 1/3 of men and women hold the opinion that games have a positive effect on overcoming fear and anxiety about skiing. Another almost 1/3 of women, however, hold the opinion that the use of games in pupils does not reduce the fear of skiing, a similar opinion is held by only 12.5% of men. Almost 40% of women and 50% of men could not assess the effect of games

on suppressing fear when teaching skiing. When evaluating this question, we did not notice significant differences in the answers of men and women (Fig. 7).

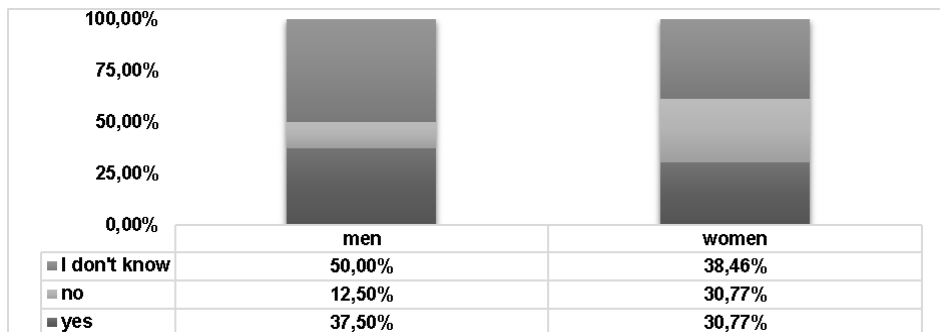


fig. 7 Influence, effect of games on reducing (suppressing) fear (concerns) about skiing ($p=0.101$; $\chi^2(2)=4.576$)

The final question of our survey was about the preferred nature of playful activities (Fig. 8). When evaluating this question, teachers had the opportunity to mark-up up to 5 answers. The results show that teachers mostly use movement games of a traditional nature - more than 60% of the answers, followed by movement games with the use of non-traditional aids - which mostly represent ski equipment in the form of ski poles, skis, etc. When evaluating this question, we did not find significant differences from the point of view of men and women.

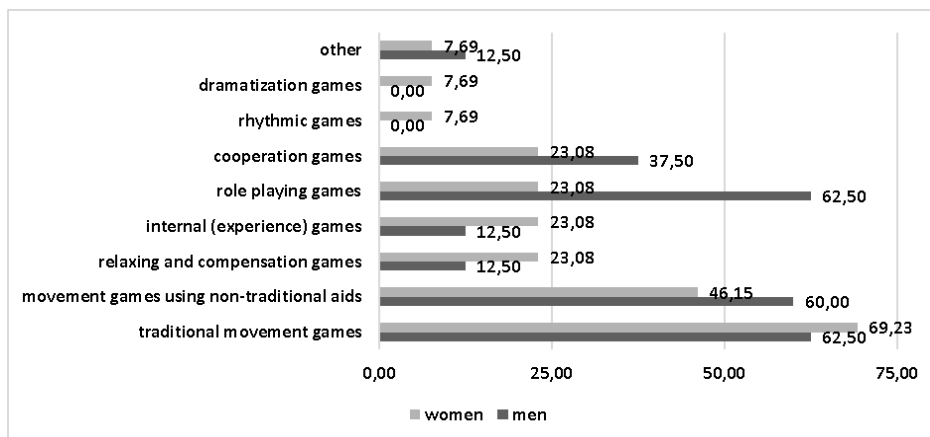


fig. 8 Preferred nature of games used during ski courses by teachers (possibility to mark up to 5 answers) ($p=0.085$; $\chi^2(8)=13.868$)

Discussion

According to the findings of several Slovak authors, the popularity of winter sports among pupils is relatively high. A survey by Nemeč, Michal & Beňák (2013) shows that downhill skiing is the favorite winter sport for elementary school students in their free time. We find similar findings in the studies of Burtscher, Federolf, Nachbauer, & Kopp, (2019) and Russell, Arthur, Goulet, et al., (2020). From the point of view of pupils' preferences for winter and summer exercise-sports activities, Beňák (2012) found that up to 66.07% of boys and 55% of girls stated that they have a more positive attitude towards winter sports than summer sports and that the most popular winter exercise-sport activity in free time is downhill skiing and snowboarding. Cipov (2012) also found a relatively high popularity of skating and sledding (58.6%) in his research. According to a survey by Straňavská & Michal (2022) carried out on a sample of 925 primary school pupils from the region of central Slovakia, almost 75% of the pupils completed ski course, while the pupils dominantly (67%) preferred downhill skiing.

The implementation of winter courses itself is different from the point of view of several authors, while the preferences from the point of view of the organizational form from the perspective of pupils or teachers are also different (Vráblová, 2013). Michal (2012), Straňavská, (2019) state in their research that, especially after 2010, ski courses are mostly implemented in a form of overnight stays. This form was suspended in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic, but this trend continues after overcoming it, according to our findings - on average, up to 67.21% of our respondents indicated this form of implementing ski courses. According to Evans (2020), the overnight stay form is preferred by schools from areas where the conditions for teaching skiing are not suitable.

The problem of using and including the teaching of games in school physical education was addressed by a number of domestic e.g. Argaj, (2004), Mazal, (2007), Adamčák & Nemeč, (2013), Beňák & Török, (2018), or foreign studies, e.g. Ferrer-Caja & Weiss, (2000), Light, Curry & Mooney, (2014), Pill, (2016), Smith, Ovens & Philpot, (2021), Dodd & Lester, (2021) and others, while none of them dominantly investigated the relationship between games and fear reduction. The results of these studies point to the fact that playful activities in the form of movement games are still very popular activities among pupils, and their use in physical education lessons is diverse, but they are mostly used in the preparatory part as one of the forms of warming up. Hubinák-Ondrejka-Potočný-Šiška (2021) draw attention to the positive impact of including movement games with an emphasis on the development of coordination skills of 2nd grade elementary school students in physical education classes and during sports training. Neuman (2001) says that many movement games in the educational process lack activity and interest - children's motivation, exploration, and a certain amount of risk. Therefore, new ideas and topics should be based on activities from nature. This means using the children's imagination and creativity and turning the exercise into a problem that they will

solve with the help of cooperation in a group or based on the courage and healthy risk-taking of an individual. Also, according to Argaj (2015), it is crucial to look for new, unfamiliar games for pupils, which positively increase pupils' interest in physical education lessons.

Nemeč & Beřák (2015) when implementing games focused on skiing and snowboarding, recommend games that strengthen the students' relationship with the physical activity they are performing. For practice and improvement, they recommend games of a non-traditional nature, and to ensure the highest possible level of development and acquisition of new movement habits and skills, they also recommend the concept of indoor (experiential) skiing, the so-called "inner skiing".

The positive inclusion of games in ski training is also pointed out by Kiss (2016), who compared the teaching of the four basic elements of skiing in two groups of skiers - 4th graders - the first group was taught using the traditional method of teaching skiing and the second group was taught with the help of movement games. He found that through games, pupils mastered the basic elements of skiing more easily and with more enthusiasm, and he believes that pleasant - playful learning represents a "viable" alternative to the traditional learning of this winter sport.

Michal & Beřák (2014) also dealt with the use of games in the teaching of downhill skiing in secondary schools from the perspective of gender differences. They found that up to 94.3% of teachers use games in teaching downhill skiing, while 46.43% of teachers prefer using games in teaching downhill skiing in the main part of the lesson and 55% of female teachers prefer using games as part of the warm-up, in the initial part of ski training. However, they did not notice significant differences from the aspect of gender.

Through our research, we have found that movement games of a familiar nature, so-called "traditional games", are used to the greatest extent on ski courses, but as stated by several literary sources - movement games enriched with various implements and tools make playing more attractive for the students themselves (Novotná, Blahutková & Ottmárová, 2007; Adamčák & Novotná, 2009; Kozanáková, 2010). Slováková & Tachezyová (2016) also describe similar findings in their survey - from the point of view of games and running movement games, triathlons, chases, and group games have the largest share.

Our findings revealed that during ski courses, teachers prefer to use the so-called traditional games and games with the use of non-traditional aids - in our case with the use of ski equipment. We believe that if teachers used other types of physical games more often, not only the fear factor, but also the overall learning process could achieve even more favorable educational results. We were surprised to find that a large part of teachers are not sure whether the reduction of the level of fear and anxiety about skiing can be positively influenced by the inclusion of movement games - this is evidenced by the high

percentage of neutral answers (44.23%) in the form of I don't know or up to 21.65% of negative answers.

Several research, e.g., Bublíniová et al., (1999), Roučková, (2013), Andreasen, Fedorko & Gerka et al., (2018), Michal, Nemeč, Adamčák & Straňavská, (2019); Smith, Ovens & Philpot, (2021), Dodd & Lester, (2021) and others present that it is games and a playful approach to teaching that clearly help to reduce the level of stress or fear in students from the physical activity.

According to our findings, cooperative games are used by almost 1/3 of teachers, while according to Onušková & Šurinová (2020), cooperative games are one of the ways to minimize students' fear or apprehension about learning more demanding physical activities (which, in our opinion, includes skiing). Their characteristic feature is that the players do not play against each other but together, i.e., so nobody loses in co-op games, there are only winners. Cooperative games are characterized by the fact that they require mutual trust and sympathy, cooperation in a group, respect for others, consideration, communication, patience, etc., which gives the participant courage to carry out this activity and benefits not only the individual but also all participants. These are important signs of inclusion, i.e., group dynamics can provide a sense of support and safety, which can help alleviate anxiety and fear. The use of cooperative games in pupils' learning is also recommended by, for example, Fernandez-Rio, Sanz, Fernandez-Cando & Santos (2017), Lyons (2022), who state that if students begin to perceive each other as allies and not as rivals, interpersonal relationships also deepen, strengthening not only the community of students (cooperative) but the positive climate is also improving, and the pupils are significantly thriving as a result.

Conclusion

The results of our study point to the fact that the organization of skiing courses is dominantly realized in the form of overnight stays and the very fear and anxiety of the students about skiing is relatively high before starting the course. Our results clearly pointed to the fact that the rate of use of games during ski courses differs significantly from the aspect of gender. Only 37.5% of men regularly use it as one of the forms of warming up and creating a pleasant "working atmosphere" ($p < 0.01$). Also, the use of games during teaching and improvement of selected elements of the methodological series of skiing in the group of women is significantly different ($p < 0.01$) from the group of men, where only 25% use them, while up to 61.54% of women regularly use games in this part of the course. Similar findings were also observed at the end of daily work - where up to 62.5% of men do not use games ($p < 0.01$). Our findings also show that teachers (both men and women) dominantly use games in the form of movement games of a traditional nature in the form of chases, relays, etc. in ski courses. We consider it important to make greater use of games and

playful activities during the entire daily work of pupils as one of the possibilities to eliminate fear and anxiety even better.

When conducting ski courses, we also recommend using cooperative movement games to a greater extent, which in our opinion are much more special, bring the required psychological benefits to students, to reduce fear, anxiety, or concerns about skiing. We consider it important that all games and playful activities are presented to students in a comprehensible way, with the help of suitable examples, with more frequent repetition of their progress or rules, and especially with activation to find different options for completing the task. It is also important to keep in mind the fact that every student is unique and responds differently to different methods and strategies. Overcoming fear is an individual process and not all games will be equally effective for every student - games can be a useful tool to manage fear, but it is also important to keep safety in mind and respect each student's own boundaries.

We also see the benefit of our findings in the fact that we can apply the knowledge gained in the implementation of other theoretical and practical skiing educational activities, or the creation of new methodological and teaching materials for teachers and students of physical and sports education.

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Rozvoj životných zručností u žiakov základnej školy

Development of life skills of primary school pupils

Mária Hrobková

Abstract

In the article, we focus our attention on the development of life skills that equip children with strong thinking, so that they can navigate different aspects of life and become responsible, independent and capable individuals. We categorize life skills and describe the process and methods of their development. We present some ideas for evaluating individual skills as well as proposals for procedures for their introduction and reinforcement.

Keywords: Life skills. Introduction. Reinforcement. Integrated thematic teaching.

Introduction

Currently, a number of changes are taking place that have a great impact on our society and especially on our children. These changes place great demands on children and they are expected to be able to integrate into society without any problems. Some of the essential factors influencing children are their parents and teachers. They should be able to provide knowledge and skills so that children can lead a meaningful and quality life in this society.

Concept and categorization of life skills

Everyone needs life skills in order to be able to lead a quality life, to know how to develop himself, to create and maintain good interpersonal relationships and to achieve the goals he sets in life. The concept of life refers to the skills necessary for a better life of a person in society (Bednařík et al., 2009) According to the Psychological Dictionary, the term "skill" refers to manual skills and means the disposition acquired through learning to correctly and quickly perform a certain activity using a suitable method (Hartl, Hartlová, 1994). There are several terms for life skills, but for our purposes we will use this one: „*Life skills are those skills that help a person to effectively manage normal as well as stressful life situations and contribute to improving the quality of his life*“ (Bednařík et al., 2009).

Similarly, there are more categorizations of life skills. As stated by Miron Zelina (1996) in the KEMSAK system, these strategies are:

- Cognitivation - its goal is to learn to recognize, think, solve problems using DITOR heuristics;
- Emotionalization - the goal is to teach to feel and develop competences for feeling, experiencing, developing feelings and emotions;
- Motivation – the goal is to develop the interests, needs, desires, wants of the personality and its activities, it is about activation;
- Socialization and communication - the goal is to teach a person to live with other people, to know how to communicate with them, to create progressive interpersonal relationships, prosocial education;
- Axiologisation of personality - the goal is to develop the value orientation of the personality, to teach to evaluate;
- Creativity – the goal is its development, education for creativity.

Paligová (2012) talks about categorization according to social levels:

- Intrapersonal - personal level - managing emotions, creativity, self-reflection, cognitive skills, positive self-evaluation;
- Interpersonal - interpersonal level - active listening, conflict resolution, teamwork, cooperation;
- Community - social level - communication at the office, volunteer work, ecological feeling and behavior and others.

Kovalik in collaboration with Karen Olsen created the educational model of Integrated Thematic Teaching (ITV), which is described by theorists as pupil-oriented, humanistic and experiential education. In ITV, life skills were created as tools for achieving the best personal performance of the student. Life skills together with the norms of desirable behavior outline which aspects of behavior need to be developed in children so that their "working community" has an atmosphere that supports learning. They form an open system that is completed according to needs. These include: flexibility, initiative, communication, consideration, organization, participation, friendship, trust, trustworthiness, problem solving, self-confidence, cooperation, care, patience, effort, perseverance, common sense, sense of humor, responsibility, curiosity, courage, imagination, pride, acceptance, active listening (Bednařík et al., 2009).

The process of developing life skills

Children come from different social, economic and cultural conditions that affect their personality development. It is very important that teachers have an overview of how they can develop these skills in a child. Developing life skills is more effective when teachers manage to involve parents in cooperation as well.

Process of life skills development

Concrete life skills development procedures can lead children to master the chosen life skill. We present the individual steps that must be followed:

- **The first step** is defining the problem and choosing a life skill. In this phase, the problem is defined through behavioral manifestations, a key life skill is selected and analyzed.
- **The second step** is the introduction of the chosen life skill. In this phase, the understanding of the life skill will be explained and unified, the selected life skill will be divided into individual manifestations of behavior and the advantages and disadvantages of using the given skill will be compared.
- **The third step** is choosing the right method of developing life skills. In this phase, an appropriate activity developing a specific life skill is selected, practiced with the children and then used in real life.
- **The fourth step** is the evaluation of the success of acquiring life skills. In this step, it is necessary to focus on the level of life skills achieved by the children, on the identification of problematic behaviors that continue to persist, on the assessment of the appropriateness of the selected methods and on the identification of other life skills that need to be developed (Bednařík et al, 2009).

Development of life skills in the program of Integrated Thematic Teaching

An important part of ITV is the educational methodology of working with life skills. ITV, or highly effective learning creates a positive social climate in the classroom, the supporting environment that is necessary for teaching to be effective. The process of learning life skills takes place in two phases: introduction and reinforcement (Chlebničánová, Lašová, 2022). During the introduction, we answer the questions What? and Why? In this phase, it is important to identify the life skills that need to be worked on, to clearly justify the choice of the life skill, and to identify the components of the life skill. When reinforcing, we answer the question How? In this phase, we focus on the skill that we try to develop, teachers and parents model the life skill for children and we also practice the skill with various activities. *„Comprehensive and systematic learning of life skills increases the effectiveness and quality of learning and the prerequisite for their successful use, both in the classroom and in everyday life“* (Paligová, 2012).

Methods of developing life skills

In the teaching process, the teacher can use different situations in which children can learn something new. When creating activities aimed at developing life skills, we use methods that we divide into three categories:

- **Cognitive methods** - cognitive methods include those activities that primarily initiate cognitive processes. When learning with these methods, it is appropriate to consider how we can use students and their possible interactions to support cognitive processes.
- **Experiential methods** - are characterized by the fact that students have a direct experience of the implementation of a practical activity. The activities

are usually playful, and the game draws students into powerful experiences through which they learn spontaneously.

- **Experience-based methods** - in their essence they require not only student's emotional investment, but also conscious cognitive processing of events and control of behavior throughout the activity“ (Paligová, 2012).

Proposals for the introduction and consolidation of life skills

The goal of developing life skills is to lead students to understand which social behavior will increase their success. It is not necessary to use them all at once and theoretically explain them to the students, but it is important that they gradually adopt them so that they become part of their personality. We present proposals for introducing and strengthening selected life skills that teachers can use in the teaching process.

Life skill active listening

Activity name: In the farmyard

Type of activity: introduction

Tools: cards with names of animals

Duration: 30 minutes

Realization: Each child chooses a card on which an animal living in the farmyard is drawn or written. At the teacher's command, all the "animals" start making sounds. The children start to move around the classroom and their task is to find all the relevant animals (all cats, goats, rabbits are grouped together).

Activity Name: Corrupt Listener

Type of activity: reinforcement

Utilities: none

Duration: 20-30minutes

Realization: Talk about active listening. We divide the pupils into pairs, the first of each pair goes out the door. The first in the pair has the task of thinking about a topic on which they will lead a monologue for about 5 minutes. The second of the pair receives the following instructions (the first are still behind the door, they cannot hear): initially they actively listen to their partner while he is talking, look at him, follow him with their eyes, keep their whole body still, supplement him with questions, summarize his thoughts. At the agreed upon signal of the teacher (e.g. opening the window, etc.), they immediately stop listening so actively, look away, or jump into the conversation, etc. After about two minutes, the teacher ends the exercise and invites the students to the community.

Life skill trustworthiness

Activity name: Walk of trust

Type of activity: introduction

Accessories: scarf, shawl

Duration: 30 minutes

Realization: The children are divided into pairs. One of the pair blindfolds himself. The task of the second of the pair is to safely guide him through a route prepared in advance, which also has obstacles. Then the children in pairs change and follow the same route back to the classroom.

Activity Name: Circle of Trust

Type of activity: reinforcement

Tools: paper, pen

Duration: 15 minutes

Realization: All the children form a circle, standing next to each other. One child stands in the center of the circle, crosses his arms over his chest and closes his eyes. Then he falls against the outstretched hands of someone in a circle. The group gently catches him and pushes him back again. (Portmanová, 1999).

Life skill friendship

Activity name: Advertisement for friendship

Type of activity: introduction

Tools: paper, pen

Duration: 20-30 minutes

Realization: First, we start a conversation with the children on the topic - what I expect from my friend, what my friend should be like. Then we show them various newspaper advertisements. Each child writes an advertisement "Looking for a friend." and "I offer friendship." Advertisements are anonymous or under a pseudonym, or everyone can put their own brand or picture under them. This is followed by an evaluation interview - how writing these advertisements made the children feel, what came to their minds, etc. We will display advertisements on the wall. We will attach an envelope or a bag under each of them, in which the children can put their reactions to the advertisement (Karnsová, 2001).

Activity name: Jigsaw puzzle

Type of activity: reinforcement

Tools: paper, pen

Duration: 20 minutes

Realization: Each student receives a piece of paper on which he writes his name. He hands the paper to a classmate on his right. He writes something positive about the classmate, folds the paper and passes it to another classmate. We play until everyone from the group has had a turn. Each student gets his

paper back and reads what his classmates wrote about him (Lokšová, Lokša, 1999).

The life skill of cooperation

Activity name: **Balancing with a pencil**

Type of activity: introduction

Tools: pencil

Duration: 15 minutes

Realization: Pupils divide into pairs. Each pair takes a pencil, holds it between their index fingers and moves around the room. They must not talk and their pencil must not fall. Gradually, the teacher gives them instructions: e.g. go forward, backward, raise your arms, do a squat and others. A group that fails to complete the instructions and drops the pencil is out of the game (Portmanová, 1999).

Activity name: **Relay race**

Type of activity: reinforcement

Tools: textbooks, notebooks, school bag, pencil case

Duration: 20 minutes

Realization: We divide the children into 2-3 groups with the same number of players. The groups stand behind the starting line. At the same distance from all groups, there are desks on which notebooks, books, pens, pencils and a school bag are laid out. The task of each student is to run to the chair and pack things into the bag. When he is done, he bows, which is also a signal for the next teammate, who runs out, puts all the things back on the desk, the third one runs up, packs the things into the bag, and everything is repeated until the last player (Szaboová, 1999).

Life skill patience

Activity Name: **Treasure Hunt**

Type of activity: introduction

Supplies: ancient coins that are no longer in use

Duration: 15 - 30 minutes

Realization: The players sit in a circle. One volunteer goes behind the door. The leader gives one of the players a coin, which this player may (or may not) give to another player. All players then clench their hands into fists, place them on their knees and the treasure hunter can come. He can search three times and he has to justify his guess every time. He can talk to others and explain his thoughts out loud. After three wrong guesses, the player who has the treasure in hand shows it, the unsuccessful seeker goes back out the door and tries his luck one more time. After guessing correctly, another player is selected to be the treasure hunter. The leader points out that during the search, the player must pay attention not only to the hands, but also to the facial expression, gaze, body posture, etc. We can motivate children with stories about treasure guardians

who were determined to protect the treasure from thieves and cave finders with their own lives. It was not because of greed, but many things, for example: Indian tribes kept the treasures of all members of the tribe in one cave, in one place (Hermochová, 1994).

Activity name: Fishing

Type of activity: reinforcement

Tools: fishing rods made of twigs and twine, there are magnets at the end of the rods, candies, paper clips

Duration: 21-30 minutes

Realization: There are candies with attached paper clips in the enclosed space that symbolizes the pond. Each angler receives a fishing rod with a magnet at the end of the twine. When hunting, a magnet will attract a candy with a paper clip. The task of the fishermen is to catch as many candies as possible within the specified time limit. The winner gets five candies, the others get two.

Life skill confidence

Activity name: Washing line

Type of activity: introduction

Utilities: none

Duration: 20-30 minutes

Realization: We divide the class into two halves, which are placed in two parallel rows quite close to each other. One student (chosen by the teacher, the class or randomly chosen) goes between the rows - the washing line. Everyone touches him on his way through the washing line and says something to encourage him, please him, praise him. Touches - patting, caressing, shaking hands, verbal support... A happy, radiant and "clean" child leaves the washing line (Canfield, Wells, 1995).

Activity name: Collage of my top 10

Type of activity: reinforcement

Materials: quarters of A3 cardboard, glue, newspaper clippings and magazines

Duration: 45 minutes

Realization: We give quarters of A3 cardboard to the children. They should collect and cut out pictures, names, words, symbols that characterize their top 10 - best qualities or behaviors. Children stick the prepared material on the cardboard either in order (best - worse) or just randomly to create a collage. They do not sign their creations. At the community, we put the collages in a circle and the children try to guess which collage belongs to whom. Each child explains what the individual parts of the collage mean to him (Canfield, Wells, 1995).

Life skill sense of humor

Activity name: Funny stories

Type of activity: introduction

Tools: notebooks, pens

Duration: 30 minutes

Realization: By brainstorming, we write all the words that evoke a sense of humor in the students on the board. The teacher writes six of these words on the board, e.g. smile, sun, mouth, darkness, joy, sadness (words can be varied and supplemented). The students' task is to write a funny story or a short poem in which they use these words.

Activity name: Advertising campaign

Type of activity: reinforcement

Tools: paper, pen

Duration: 45 minutes

Realizácia: Pupils are divided into tribes and in the form of brainstorming, they come up with certain products and write their brief description on cards. All tribes hand over their cards to the teacher, who shuffles them and turns them upside down. Each student draws 1 card and invents and presents an advertisement for the given product. Originality, sense of humor and persuasiveness are evaluated (Portmanová, 1999).

Conclusion

Life skills do not only refer to the skills themselves, but also to personal qualities, values, attitudes and knowledge, which give a person a real internalization of the given skill. Nowadays, many educators and parents are aware of the acute need to teach children life skills. If we guide children in this direction, we will help them live a better life, they will be more successful in defending themselves against threats, and it will be much easier for them to find a job.

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Použitie materiálnych didaktických prostriedkov vo vyučovaní

Use of material teaching aids in teaching

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Čestmír Serafín, Hana Bučková

Abstract

The contribution focuses on material didactic means. We described the material didactic means in the work as teaching aids and technical devices. Subsequently, we outlined the possibilities of using material didactic tools in practice. In the end, experimental research on the use of material teaching aids is processed. In the conclusion, the possibilities of using material didactic aids in teaching at secondary industrial schools, secondary vocational schools and primary schools in Slovakia and the Czech Republic are shown.

Keywords: Material teaching aids and their use in practice. Technical devices.

Introduction

Material didactic means are means of a material nature and are an important component of education. They serve as a means to achieve educational goals. They are part of the didactic means. Before we start thinking about creating and choosing a method of inclusion in the classroom, we need to know the content of the education for which it is intended. The main criteria for the selection of didactic means are the goal pursued, the content of the teaching, the nature of the phenomena demonstrated, the age, level, level of education of the pupils, the purpose of the teaching and the level of the teacher and his ability to use the intended didactic means.

Different authors define material didactic (teaching) resources differently. According to Průcha et al. (2009), the term "material didactic means" narrows the class of didactic means to material carriers of information, to technical devices, equipment of schools and classes that serve educational purposes. Didactic aids accompany teaching since the beginning of cultural history, e.g. when familiarizing with objects and phenomena when using tools, etc. According to Turek (2010), material didactic resources are divided into teaching aids, didactic techniques and teaching macro-interiors and micro-interiors. Didactic tools according to Švec (1989) are material didactic tools for

managing the teaching process. About the mission of didactic processes, he states that MDPs enter into teacher-pupil interaction. They affect the teacher's work, but also the student's cognitive learning activity. Didactic means are divided into didactic technique and didactic content. Didactic technique is a set of technical means. The didactic content is a set of signals with the subject matter. Teaching depends mainly on the quality of didactic contents. Even the best-prepared teacher cannot apply the didactic technique unless he has a high-quality didactic content.

1. Current state of material didactic resources

Material didactic means are a means of achieving the goals of the educational process and are part of Engineering Pedagogy. According to Driensky (2007), engineering pedagogy is a frontier scientific discipline that transforms the knowledge of pedagogy and psychology into technical sciences. Its purpose is to increase the didactic effectiveness of engineering education. Material didactic aids are part of didactic aids. We divide the material didactic resources into technical equipment and teaching aids, which increase the clarity of the teaching and bring the subject matter closer to the student. Integrated didactic workplaces are part of material didactic workplaces.

When creating integrated didactic workplaces, it is necessary to take into account the principles that apply to any classroom, workshop, regarding e.g. intensity of light, heat, colour of rooms. For these workplaces, the content and volume in the room per person must be taken into account from the point of view of OSH principles, work hygiene principles and ergonomic principles. When working, it must be taken into account that students work on machines, devices and equipment that have a valid revision and have undamaged tools, tools and accessories.

1.1 Didactic resources

The tool serves to achieve educational goals. It complements the word of the teacher, which is a very powerful argumentative tool. The term material-didactic means narrows the class of didactic means to material carriers of information, to technical devices, equipment of schools and classes that serve educational purposes (Průcha et al., 2009). The most important part of them are aids, because they ensure immediate participation in classes. Didactic means as an element of teaching occupies a fixed place in the structure of system links teacher → content → student and teacher → didactic means → student. When learning the subject, there should be an interaction between the teacher and the student - feedback. According to their nature, didactic means are material or immaterial. Didactic tools have an irreplaceable place in the educational process. They became necessary not only in the work of a teacher, but also in the work of a student. The results of use do not only depend on the technical level and ability of the teacher, but especially on the level of didactic content (Kučerka, 2011). Part of the teaching aids are non-material teaching aids,

among which we classify forms and methods. These ensure the professional component, while the teaching methods are focused on the thought process of the teacher and the pupil, on the other hand, the forms ensure the teaching-educational process, i.e. the external side.

Organizational forms of teaching are most often divided according to the number of pupils participating in the teaching process together with the teacher (individual, collective and mixed), the place of implementation of the teaching process (school and extra-curricular) and the degree of independence of pupils' work in the teaching process (individual work of pupils, group work of pupils and students' frontal work).

We understand the methods of the teaching process as a deliberate arrangement of the curriculum, activities of the teacher and students, which are aimed at achieving the goals of the teaching process while respecting didactic principles (Turek, 2010).

Průcha et al. (2013) state in the pedagogical dictionary that organizational forms of teaching in general didactics are understood in connection with the management of the teaching process and with specific teaching methods. It is differentiated according to the environment: teaching in the classroom, in specialized areas of the school, in the natural environment. According to the type of teaching, it is differentiated into frontal teaching, group and team teaching. Due to the differentiation of the students' role, a distinction is made between: cooperative teaching and forms of individualized teaching. The basic form of school teaching in the time dimension is the lesson.

Another organizational form of teaching is project teaching. Project teaching is carried out individually or in groups and allows for the combination of some organizational forms. Short-term projects solve simpler, often narrowly focused tasks, but force students to work independently or collectively. Long-term projects are one semester long at universities, half a year at high schools, or year-long projects.

Material teaching aids have an important position in the educational process. They are a means of achieving the goals of the educational process. They include teaching aids and technical means, which inseparably include integrated didactic workplaces.

Material teaching aids are teaching aids and those technical aids that perform didactic functions (Driensky & Hrmo, 2004). Driensky & Hrmo (2004) define a teaching aid as a material means that is a direct carrier of information and can provide content directly (e.g. a model) or through a technical means (e.g. a data projector).

We must know and respect certain requirements for the selection, creation, use and appropriate inclusion of teaching aids in the teaching process. Such requirements are didactic requirements, ergonomic requirements, aesthetic requirements, technical requirements and economic requirements (Hlásna et al., 2006). Driensky (2007) ranks the information, transformation, activation and regulation functions among the basic functions of material teaching aids.

1.2 Technical devices

Technical devices are basic devices, auxiliary devices, technical aids and machines and devices. Appropriate equipment of the school with technical equipment is a basic condition for ensuring the quality of the educational process. Here there must be harmony and agreement between the school management and the school's teaching staff. Basic facilities include classrooms, specialist classrooms, language classrooms, laboratories, school workshops, etc. Kindergarten students' classrooms are basic classrooms for the educational process, where, as a rule, some re-educational subjects are taught or, when the capacity of professional options is insufficient, and their equipment is basic school furniture, among which we include school desks, chairs, a chair for the teacher and a green or white board, or their combination. In addition to the mentioned equipment, if the schools have the funds, the classrooms are additionally equipped with a PC, a data projector, a projection screen and possibly speakers.

In vocational classrooms, vocational subjects are taught according to the nature of the study or teaching field. Such classrooms are, in addition to basic, or extended equipment supplemented by the necessary material didactic means according to the character of the subject or group of subjects taught in the given classroom. Here can be pictures, models, real objects in section, functional machines, etc.

There are laboratory tables in the laboratories and school workshops, in the chemical laboratories there are special sinks, water, distribution systems for a special cooling liquid for machine tools, sewerage, etc. For auxiliary equipment, we recommend heating, cooling, air conditioning, darkening, electrical distribution, water supply, etc.

Technical aids are such material didactic aids that create the conditions for passing on the prescribed curriculum to pupils. They are only an intermediary who fulfill a secondary function in relation to the content of education, e.g. data projector with PC.

Technical aids include display surfaces, projection surfaces, projection technology, sound technology, television technology and video technology, teaching machines, computers and multimedia devices. We also call this group of aids didactic technique.

Audiovisual technical aids include projection technology, sound technology, television technology and video technology.

Teaching machines also belong to the group of technical aids. They can download learning information according to the embedded program. Furthermore, they can assign tasks for practice, repetition, to consolidate the learning material, evaluate the achieved knowledge and manage learning using feedback.

As a rule, special classrooms are equipped with instruments and measures. The equipment of special classrooms is usually extended by machining and forming machines, welding aggregates or their combination in school workshops. There

are secondary schools that have classrooms equipped with machines and devices.

Both the machine tool and the didactic machine tool serve to separate small parts of the material from the blank (workpiece), and the mutual movement of the blank and the tool is defined as a method of machining.

1.3 Learning aids

According to Driensky & Hrmo (2009), we divide teaching aids into auditory, visual, audiovisual and cybernetic. The way they are made depends on the function (information, transformation, activation, regulation, etc.) and the task in teaching (motivational, application, demonstration, simulation, descriptive, repetition, examination, etc.). If we want to achieve the best possible didactic effectiveness, we need to know in what form we will make the curriculum accessible using a teaching aid. When preparing it, it is necessary to take into account the educational goal, forms and methods, the subject, its nature and the focus of the material covered, the target group, the level of knowledge, skills and experience of the participants, the type and level of education of the target group.

2 Use of material teaching aids in education

Material teaching aids are used at all levels and types of education. Specialized texts, workbooks, various types of presentations, videos, construction kits, real aids or other aids are used to bring the students closer and better understand them (Voltík - Figure 1, Figure 2; Boffin - Figure 3), Merkur and others are used in the subjects of technology and physics at elementary schools in thematic units of electricity or in electrical engineering subjects at secondary vocational schools. different levels of difficulty.



Figure 1: Voltík I

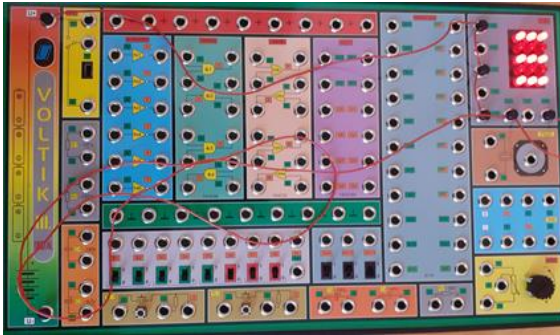


Figure 2: Voltík III



Figure 3: Boffin 750

In the subject of technology, students make various products from wood, plastic, paper, etc. They are products according to your own theme, e.g. from wood (Figure 4 or paper models from magazines, Figure 5 or glue from vehicle construction companies Figure 6, combat equipment and aircraft Figure 7 and others).



Figure 4: Chair



Figure 5: Paper models



Figure 6: Plastic model



Figure 7: Models of combat plastic techniques I.



Figure 8: Models of combat plastic techniques II.

The listed subjects are preparatory subjects for professional studies. There are more of these preparatory subjects, e.g. for engineering subjects as maths, chemistry etc is important. Pupils will use them in subjects such as Parts of machines, Engineering technology, Science of materials and others. These parts were produced based on a drawing and programming on a PC on a CNC machine.

Another practical example is 3D printers (Figure 8). 3D printers for the creation of three-dimensional objects began to be promoted in teaching as a didactic aid only in recent years, that is, only at the moment when they became financially available for wide use in industry and in households. Although the principle, the technology of 3D printing has been known for more than thirty years. The production process is very simple. It is this technology that has enabled a more massive spread of 3D printing not only in high schools, but also in elementary schools.

Introducing 3D printing into teaching is not an end in itself. On the one hand, it brings the world of new technologies closer to the pupils on a very simple and clearly functioning machine, at the same time it enables them (and the school) not only to create computer 3D models at minimal costs. Examples of student works from SPŠSaS in Tábor are the production of plastic whistles (Figure 9), the mechanical parts of a robotic hand, where all were made by 3D printing (Figure 10) and a design shelf, the connecting black parts of which are made by 3D printing (Figure 11).

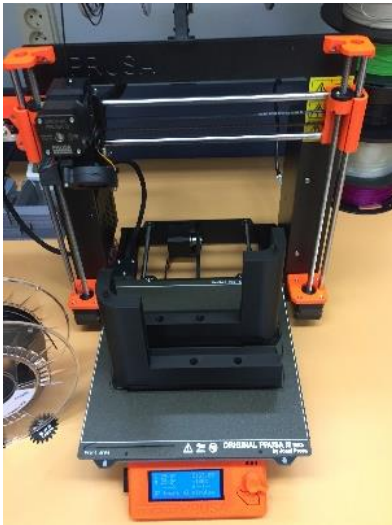


Figure 9: 3D printer

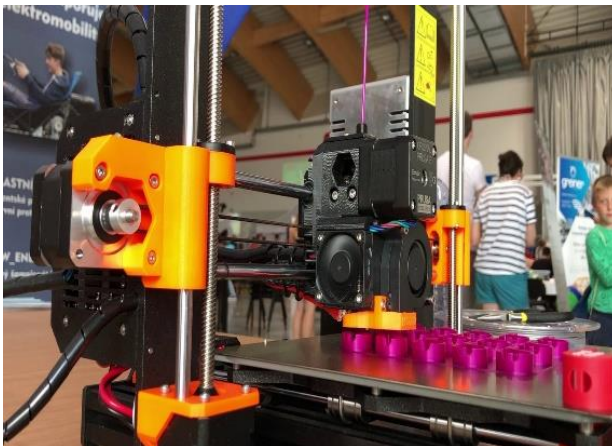


Figure 10 Detail of the print head of the 3D printer



Figure 11: Mechanical parts

With this procedure, student projects reach the level of practice, where the early detection of design errors has been solved in this way for several years, even before proceeding with the production of, for example, highly expensive steel molds for castings.

Conclusion

The educational system should ensure high-quality technical education, preparation and education of the individual in preparation for the future profession. Each individual needs to acquire the corresponding competences and key competences in his field during his studies and thus be prepared for future practice or higher professional training. In primary schools, preparatory subjects for future technicians are mainly mathematics, physics and technology. Material teaching aids play a key role in the teaching of these subjects and their visualization. Their task is to approximate and clearly show the principles, possibilities and other essentials of the approximated element, group of elements, or the activities of the entire e.g. technical systems.

The aim of the contribution was to bring closer the possibilities of using e.g. 3D printers in high schools and show students' products. At the same time, show the products of elementary school students on the subject of technology, or their skills at technical clubs and preparation for secondary schools

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Výskumné atribúty pri používaní didaktických prostriedkov v školskom prostredí

Research attributes in the use of teaching aids in the school environment

Daniel Kučerka, Michal Mrázek, Hana Bučková

Abstract

The paper describes research findings oriented towards the use of didactic resources in school settings. It presents a comparison of findings regarding the use of didactic technology in teaching in vocational schools in the Czech and Slovak Republics. A self-constructed questionnaire was used to find out the data. The research confirmed that didactic technology is used in the classroom to make the educational process more attractive.

Keywords: Didactic technique, educational process, pedagogical research

Introduction

Didactic technique in conjunction with appropriate teaching aids and suitable teaching methods increase the didactic effectiveness of teaching, but also facilitates the presentation of the material covered. According to Kučerka (1991, 2019), didactic tools have an irreplaceable place in the educational process. They have become necessary not only in the work of the teacher, but also in the work of the student. The results of their use do not depend only on the technical level and ability of the teacher, but also on the level of didactic content.

The current didactic technique is designed to have the best possible characteristics and the least complex user control. The requirements for modern didactic technology can be defined from the point of view of their didactic and technical properties.

Its effectiveness, if we achieve that it fulfills a motivational function, and if its application succeeds in increasing the students' study activity, we can significantly contribute to the development of key competences.

1 Empirical research

The quality of technical education in schools can be supported by using modern innovative concepts of the teaching process. Innovation is generally understood as "a new phenomenon, a new idea, a new product". Innovation in relation to education is "the introduction of something new, new methods, new forms in

teaching, the introduction of new teaching aids and resources" (Vargová, 2014, p. 28-29).

1.1 Objectives and subject of the research

According to Čabalová, (2011) pedagogical research is a systematic investigation of pedagogical reality with the aim of confirming or refuting a certain level of knowledge, or discovering and explaining new knowledge. In other words: Pedagogical research examines pedagogical processes, phenomena and relationships, uses the information obtained to explain, refute or predict them.

In research, according to Chráska (2007), hypotheses form the core of classical research.

The main goal of the research is to evaluate the use of didactic technology in selected secondary schools. The research focuses on the use of didactic tools in secondary schools within the European Union with a research sample in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

The research was carried out at four secondary schools in the Czech Republic and at three secondary schools in the Slovak Republic.

The subject of the research is the evaluation of the use of didactic technology in secondary schools in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic.

1.2 Research hypotheses

Main (starting) hypothesis: Didactic technology is used in secondary schools and the lesson is more interesting with its use

For the investigated problems, we established a hypothesis with two auxiliary hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: More than 60% of the respondents evaluate that didactic technology is used in secondary schools and that the lesson with its use is more interesting.

Hypothesis 1.1: More eye 60% of the respondents confirm that the didactic technique used in the classes of vocational subjects at secondary school

Hypothesis 1.2: More eye 60% of respondents confirm that didactic technology is used in classes on all subjects of secondary school and that the lesson is more interesting with its use.

2. Use of didactic techniques in classes of vocational subjects in secondary schools

506 students filled out the questionnaires. Of these, 302 students were from four schools in the Slovak Republic: Secondary Vocational School of Electrical Engineering Trnava (SOŠE TT), Secondary Vocational School of Automotive Trnava (SOŠA TT), Secondary Industrial School of Transport Trnava (SPŠD TT) and 204 students from four schools in the Czech Republic (Secondary Vocational School of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Velešín (SOŠ SaE) and Higher Vocational School, Secondary Vocational School and

Secondary Vocational School of Crafts and Services Strakonice (VOŠ, SPŠ-SOŠRaS), Secondary Vocational School of Construction and Machinery Tábor (SPŠSaS Tábor) and Secondary Vocational School mechanical and electrical engineering school (SPŠSaE ČB) .

The results of the assessment of individual items are shown graphically in graphs 1 to 5. Individual values are expressed as a percentage.

Item 1: Is the didactic technique used in the lessons of professional subjects?

Table. 1 Use of DT in classes of professional subjects

| School | CR | | | | SR | | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|--|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | |
| Definitely yes | 65 | 37 | 17 | 16 | 32 | 140 | 31 | |
| Rather yes | 12 | 22 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 47 | 14 | |
| I can't judge | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | |
| Rather not | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | |
| Certainly not | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | |

The legend:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| A – SPŠSaS Tábor | E – SOSA Trnava |
| B – SOŠSaE Velešín | F – SOŠE Trnava |
| C - VOŠ,SPŠ Strakonice | G – SPŠD Trnava |
| D – SPŠSaE České Budejovice | |

Item 1 shows the use of didactic technique in teaching. In the Czech Republic, 66.48% of respondents rated +2 and 26.6% of respondents +1, i.e. 93.08% of respondents agreed with the statement that didactic technology is used in classes of professional subjects in the Czech Republic and in the Slovak Republic 67.22% of respondents rated +2 and 24.59% of respondents rated +1, i.e. 91.81% of respondents agreed with the statement that didactic technology is used in the classes of professional subjects in Slovakia and in tab. 1.

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, 66.9% of respondents rated definitely yes and 25.3% of respondents rather yes, i.e. 92.2% of respondents agreed with the statement that didactic technology is used in the classes of professional subjects in the Slovak Republic + the Czech Republic.

Item 2: Is the lesson in which the didactic technique is used more interesting for you?

Tab. 2 Evaluation of the interest of the lesson

| School | CR | | | | SR | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| Definitely yes | 46 | 37 | 16 | 17 | 32 | 142 | 31 |
| Rather yes | 23 | 20 | 11 | 11 | 16 | 54 | 15 |
| I can't judge | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Rather not | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Certainly not | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

The legend:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| A – SPŠSaS Tábor | E – SOSA Trnava |
| B – SOŠSaE Velešín | F – SOŠE Trnava |
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In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, 63.44% of respondents rated definitely yes and 29.64% of respondents rather yes, i.e. 93.08% of respondents agreed with the statement that didactic technology is used in the lessons of professional subjects in the SR + CR.

Item 3: When using didactic technology in class, are you also involved in the teaching process?

Table. 3 Evaluation of pupils' involvement in the lesson

| School | CR | | | | SR | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| Definitely yes | 45 | 34 | 20 | 21 | 32 | 151 | 36 |
| Rather yes | 21 | 16 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 38 | 12 |
| I can't judge | 8 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 10 | 1 |
| Rather not | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Certainly not | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

The legend:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| A – SPŠSaS Tábor | E – SOSA Trnava |
| B – SOŠSaE Velešín | F – SOŠE Trnava |
| C - VOŠ,SPŠ Strakonice | G – SPŠD Trnava |
| D – SPŠSaE České Budejovice | |

The third item was aimed at involving students in the teaching process when using didactic techniques. When using didactic techniques, students in the

Czech Republic said definitely yes in 58.82% and rather yes in 25%, i.e. 83.82% of cases said yes, and 75.52% of pupils in the Slovak Republic said definitely yes and 18.54% rather yes, i.e. 94.06% of cases positive opinion (graph 3a,b). The rate of agreement definitely yes and Rather yes is expressed by the respondents in tab. 3.

Definitely yes was assessed by 66.98% of respondents and rather yes by 21.14% of respondents. I.e. 78.12% of respondents agreed with the statement that students are involved in the teaching process in SR + CR when using didactic technology.

Item 4: Is the didactic technique more important than just describing the notes of the subject?

Tab. 4 Describing notes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

| School | CR | | | | SR | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| Definitely yes | 57 | 52 | 16 | 19 | 32 | 164 | 38 |
| Rather yes | 14 | 7 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 28 | 11 |
| I can't judge | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| Rather not | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Certainly not | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

The legend:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| A – SPŠSaS Tábor | E – SOSA Trnava |
| B – SOŠSaE Velešín | F – SOŠE Trnava |
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According to table 4, it appears that DT is more important and does not only serve to describe notes when explaining the curriculum in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. 74.69% of respondents rated definitely yes and 18.37% of respondents rather yes, i.e. that up to 93.06% of respondents expressed an agreement with the statement that DT has a greater meaning and is not only used to describe notes when explaining the curriculum in SR + CR.

Item 5: Do you remember more knowledge from the presentation when using the didactic technique than in a classical lesson?

Tab. 5 Remembering knowledge from the interpretation

| School | CR | | | | SR | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| Definitely yes | 61 | 41 | 17 | 18 | 39 | 137 | 34 |
| Rather yes | 12 | 17 | 9 | 6 | 11 | 45 | 9 |
| I can't judge | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 12 | 7 |
| Rather not | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Certainly not | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

The legend:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| A – SPŠSaS Tábor | E – SOSA Trnava |
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Based on table 5, it shows that students remember more knowledge from the presentation when using didactic techniques than in a classic lesson in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. 68.58% of respondents rated definitely yes and 21.54% of respondents rather yes, i.e. that up to 90.12% of respondents rated yes.

Item 6: Write what didactic tools you use in the lessons of professional subjects. In the last item of the questionnaire, the respondents - secondary school students in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic - answered unanimously that the teacher uses an interactive whiteboard, data projector, PC, tablet, special drawing programs, 3-D models, real machines and tools, devices, devices in professional subjects and also classical paintings.

Verification of hypothesis no. 1

H1: More than 60% of the respondents evaluated that didactic technology is used in secondary schools and that the lesson with its use is more interesting. We verified the hypothesis with questionnaires for pupils. With the help of these questionnaires, we investigated whether the didactic technique in the lesson is used and whether it makes the lesson more interesting. To verify hypothesis 1, we established two auxiliary hypotheses.

H1.1 More eye 60% of the respondents confirmed that the didactic technique is used in the classes of vocational subjects at the secondary school.

We evaluated 5 items in the questionnaire. We also evaluated each item in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Table 6 shows that, on average, 77.5% in the

Czech Republic and 77% in the Slovak Republic confirmed that didactic technology is used in the classes of vocational subjects at secondary schools.

Tab. 6 Evaluation of questionnaire 1

| P | % of success | |
|-------|--------------|------|
| | ČR | SR |
| 1 | 86 | 80 |
| 2 | 82 | 84 |
| 3 | 73,5 | 77 |
| 4 | 78 | 76,5 |
| 5 | 68 | 71 |
| Avg.% | 77,5 | 77,7 |

The average in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is 77.6%.

The result is more than 60% and thus the working hypothesis H1.1 was confirmed.

H1.2 More eye 60% of respondents confirm that didactic technology is used in classes on all subjects of secondary school and that the lesson is more interesting with its use.

We evaluated 5 items in the questionnaire. We also evaluated each item in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Table 7 shows that on average in the Czech Republic 77.4% and SR 79.2%.

Tab. 7 Evaluation of questionnaire 2

| P | % of success | |
|-------|--------------|------|
| | ČR | SR |
| 1 | 82 | 82,5 |
| 2 | 82 | 81,5 |
| 3 | 78 | 74 |
| 4 | 78 | 78 |
| 5 | 67 | 80 |
| Avg.% | 77,4 | 79,2 |

The average in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is 78.3%.

The result is more than 60% and thus the working hypothesis H1.2 was confirmed.

Based on the confirmation of H1.1 and H1.2, we can evaluate H 1

The final decision from the results of working hypotheses H1.1 and H1.2:

Hypothesis H1 is valid.

More than 60% of the respondents evaluated that didactic technology is used in secondary schools and that the lesson with its use is more interesting.

Respondents assessed that DT is used in questionnaire 1 by an average of 77.6% and in questionnaire 2 by an average of 78.3%. The overall average in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is 77.95%

3 Summary of research results

In the submitted contribution, we set ourselves the goal of analyzing the researched issue, evaluating the usability of didactic techniques at secondary schools.

Based on the set goals, we formulated the main hypothesis:

Didactic technology is used in secondary schools and the lesson is more interesting with its use.

To fulfill the main goal, we formulated 1 hypothesis with two auxiliary hypotheses.

The sample consisted of 506 pupils (respondents) of secondary schools in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The validity of working hypotheses is shown in tab. 8.

Tab. 8 Summary evaluation of hypotheses

| Hypothesis | Metod | Validity of the hypothesis | Investigated phenomena |
|------------|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| H1 | questionnaire | valid | The use of DT at secondary schools and its interest in teaching |
| H1.1 | questionnaire | valid | Use of DT in vocational subjects of secondary schools |
| H1.2 | questionnaire | valid | The use of DT in all secondary school subjects and its interest in teaching |

In the experimental part, we evaluated one working hypothesis. This hypothesis was divided into 2 auxiliary hypotheses. The hypothesis was confirmed and valid.

H1 confirmed that DT is used in secondary schools and their use makes teaching more interesting, pupils are involved in teaching and remember more of the material they learn. At the same time, they confirmed that DT is not only used for describing notes.

Conclusion

The goal of the contribution was to analyze the state of DT, to point out the necessity of using DT, creating and using UP in the teaching process.

Real life shows that we need more and more people with technical education. Pupils at secondary vocational schools are provided with professional technical education. Pedagogical employees, in addition to being professionally

competent in terms of pedagogical knowledge and skills, i.e. those who can teach professional technical subjects, must also be able to use computer technology. Such personnel must be educated. In addition to the media, we also acquired this claim during meetings with the principals of secondary vocational schools, which lack professionally and pedagogically prepared personnel to ensure the teaching of vocational technical subjects.

In the experimental part, it was shown that the use of didactic technology in the lessons of professional subjects is comparable in teaching at secondary schools in the Slovak Republic and in the Czech Republic. The results convinced us that teachers participate in changing and dynamizing the current education system. In all items, more than 60% of the students expressed a positive opinion. Their answers differed only in the strength of agreement.

The paper analyzes the current state of didactic technology, the inclusion of the creation and necessity of IDP for students and shows the possibilities of processing didactic text. The results presented in this thesis can be used in further pedagogical practice as a starting point for further pedagogical research.

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Edukačné a marketingové predpoklady pre komunikáciu v kultúrnej diplomacii

Educational and marketing prerequisites for communication in cultural diplomacy

Natália Dadíková

Abstract

The paper examines the relationship between education and marketing aspects that are applied in cultural diplomacy and intercultural communication. It analyses their synergistic potential and practical applications. The paper identifies the knowledge penumbra needed in the educational process acquired in cultural diplomacy and the appropriate marketing tools. The paper focuses on the interaction of several disciplines and analyses their contribution to international relations, the image of organizations, and intercultural understanding. The paper highlights the challenges and opportunities that cultural diplomacy has to cope with in the current digital environment and focuses on the definition and importance of competent cultural diplomacy in the international context. It explains and presents sources from which to draw adequate themes for an international cultural strategy that strengthens understanding and cooperation between countries through cultural exchange programs, art, music, film, and literature. It emphasizes public relations (PR) in cultural organizations and institutions, which contribute to the success of cultural diplomacy through proper communication and positive image building.

Keywords: Cultural diplomacy. Education. Country image. Cultural events public. Relations. Synergy. International relations. Communication. Cultural exchange programs.

Introduction

Cultural diplomacy cannot be implemented as an instrument of international relations aimed at strengthening understanding, cooperation, and diplomatic ties between countries without the education or knowledge base provided by the education, Culture and education are intended to provide mainly the content of the speech from which the form of communication tools is derived, which covers the strategic management to create a positive image of the state, the region, the area and the cultural organizations themselves. The analysis of the objectives and principles commonly defined for the content of education

concerning national culture and its application in the framework of international diplomacy is one of the continuous activities of each state. Building up confidence and creating a positive reputation is important for the individual and society. Research in this area focuses on cultural strategies in the international dimension and becomes part of a policy that takes advantage of public relations of the fact that the presentation of culture in many areas does not need an interpreter and has become an international language.

It is possible to identify examples of cultural events where international communication strategies have produced positive results. This can include a wide range of activities, such as the Olympic Games (even if at first glance it is a global sporting event), or global forums where international communication strategies work alongside the main event and play an important role in representing the cultures of the participating countries. Campaigns to promote cultural exchange programs cannot do without planning that selects symbols, designs, and messages in a form with a high narrative value. Examples help the percipient to better understand the practical application and effectiveness of the synergy between cultural diplomacy and PR.

The paper discusses how the digital age affects these areas and what opportunities it offers for their further development and effective use. It will also highlight the ethical aspects and risks that may arise from the use of cultural diplomacy and PR, such as manipulation of information and image, lack of transparency or disrespect for cultural values. The observed results confirm the links between the outcomes of educational processes and international cultural strategy in marketing. Of particular importance is their mutual synergy and contribution to international relations which are based on mutual understanding between cultures and the building of a positive image. The article on international cultural strategy offers insights, particularly on the relationship between educational content and country image in diplomacy.

Finally, the synergy between education and international cultural strategy helps to build a positive image and relationships with members of different nations... Their effective use and proper linkage can contribute to better understanding, cooperation, and development of international relations in the context of today's globalized world.

Primary educational prerequisites for the cultural enrichment of society

Each carrier of the cultural message of a country is a personality characterized by a set of intellectual qualities and abilities, based on which he becomes an emissary of the promoted cultural body, territory, or object. Such an 'emissary' should have a good historical memory and the ability to perceive cultural, geographical, and political backgrounds. An important role is played by his or her personality and expertise, which is reflected in the knowledge and expertise acquired in lifelong learning, which includes first- and second-cycle education. The knowledge of history, geography, and culture gained in primary and secondary schools is often lacking in graduates of all levels of higher education,

who are more familiar with contemporary culture and knowledge of current socio-political and economic events.

When preparing an intercultural marketing strategy, it is necessary for every responsible person in the field of education, public administration, politics, and cultural diplomacy to acquire a minimum of information about his/her country and to supplement and innovate the processed minimum purposefully. Finding objective reasons for decisions in the field of values requires a deeper knowledge than that provided by the second level of higher education. An information minimum is - an organized set of basic information from several fields about a particular country. This term is used in theory and practice in the education of tourism guides, who are also emissaries in the mediation of cultures. The authors of guide methodology textbooks use an information minimum of 25 points. Processed and organized information about the country can then be reduced by the participant in the intercultural marketing strategy and also used in his work. An important aspect is the attempt to mediate objective information, which is acquired by studying independent, or contradictory tendentious sources from different periods, from which factual and logical conclusions are drawn. The following structure of information is recommended:

1. State symbols, the official name of the state, the head of state - when teaching, special attention should be paid to state symbols, which should be the basis of the semiotic conception of culture and the world. State symbols play an important role in representing the identity, values, and history of a state or nation. These symbols are often chosen to convey a sense of belonging. Interpretations of state symbols can vary, but in general, they carry deep cultural, historical, and political significance. These symbols and the interpretation of their colours often represent key aspects of a nation's identity, such as its history, struggles, or achievements. Symbols of a flower (leaf), bird, or animal can represent qualities such as beauty, resilience, strength belonging, or freedom and reflect values and characteristics that are close to all nations. Specifically in Slovakia, this would be, for example, the linden leaf, or the chamois and the Tatra eagle (The best known is the Golden Eagle – a Slovak national bird, that lives in mountainous areas of northern Slovakia).

2. Population - knowledge and general overview of the population structure is important for several aspects that benefit governments and institutions, but also society as a whole. This information is essential for demographers and scientists who study population dynamics and various social trends. Population structure is an important factor in the study of migration and the integration of new residents into society. Knowledge of the demographic characteristics of immigrants and their adaptation to new environments can help in the design of effective integration policies.

3. Ethnography and folklore play an important role in cultural diplomacy because they represent authentic and unique expressions of people's culture and identity. These elements can serve as bridges of understanding between

different cultures and contribute to building positive international relations. Ethnography and folklore can act as a universal way of crossing linguistic and cultural barriers (Stranovska, 2012, p. 134). Knowledge of creative expressions such as traditional dances, music, crafts, and arts can create emotions and relationships that do not need to be expressed verbally. Contemporary art also plays an important role. Sharing national traditions and cultural heritage can help to build trust and respect between peoples, which can lead to peace and stability. (Pitoňáková, 2018, p. 203) Knowledge of ethnography and folklore can attract foreign visitors, which can have a positive impact on tourism and the economy.

4. Economy - industry, agriculture, transport, trade, finance, health, education. Incentives from these areas chart the history, achievements, or personalities of world significance in a given country. Establishment of the first university Implementation of heart transplantation, establishment of the first universities (Banská Štiavnica, Academia Istropolitana), the first production companies (in Kremnica), working relations of Slovak and foreign scientists of world importance (Aurel Stodola- Albert Einstein, Dionýz Ilkovič – Jaroslav Heyrovský), economic firsts (number of cars produced per capita).

5. Culture, arts, and education play an important role in international communication and diplomacy by contributing to understanding, cooperation, and the promotion of mutual respect between nations. Here are a few ways in which culture and the arts intersect with international communication and diplomacy. Culture and the arts are powerful tools for showcasing a country's "soft power." Soft power is the ability to influence others through appeal, persuasiveness, and shared values, rather than through coercion or force. Cultural Education Programmes: Encouraging the study of other peoples' cultures can help break down stereotypes and promote a more informed and nuanced understanding between people. Arts in education International educational exchanges promote intercultural awareness and appreciation.

6. The places of interest and historical monuments - sites and historic monuments contribute to strengthening a nation's identity and its place in the history of the world, serve as educational resources, and as bridges of understanding and learning between different cultures. Tourism can be a means of exchanging cultural experiences and building positive relations between people. Shared cultural values can act as a bridge to strengthen political and economic relations. Monuments are often symbols that represent a country's values, traditions, and history. Their proper use can reinforce the positive image of a country and contribute to a better understanding between cultures.

7. Church and religious institution - It is important to consider the diversity of cultural and religious beliefs in intercultural education strategies. Church and religious institutions can play an important role in shaping these strategies. Marketing campaigns should be sensitive to cultural norms and values. Different cultures and religions may have different perspectives on ethics, advertising, and communication. It is important to study and understand the

cultural and religious values of the target groups. Working with local religious or religious leaders can also be useful as they can help interpret and properly contextualize marketing messages (Coronation festivities, visit to the tomb of Khatam Sofer, Dr. Safvet Beg Bašagić's collection at the University Library in Bratislava, relics of saints), Cardinal Tomko's signature in the tower in Baiterek tower in Astana.

8. Famous personalities with ties to Slovakia are systematically listed in encyclopedias and there are many websites in the digital space that inform about the fates of various politicians, writers, athletes, inventors, scientists, artists, and religious dignitaries who are of Slovak descent or have certain and sometimes very significant ties to Slovakia and their activities fall under the topic called "bridges". One can mention, for example, Alexander Dubček, M.R. Štefánik, Štefan Banič, Ján Jesenius, Jozef Murgaš, Lucia Popp, Edita Gruberová, Alexander Rudnay, Juraj Haulík and others.

An attractive topic in the education of the young generation and adult education is the knowledge and ability to present the relations of Slovak intellectuals with personalities of world importance. One can mention the publicist, writer, and translator Dušan Makovický, who was the personal physician of L.N. Tolstoy (Benčíč-Kharitonova, . The Slovak physicist and engineer Aurel Stodola was described by Einstein as a genius. The paths of Aurel Stodola and Albert Einstein crossed in Zurich, where Stodola was already working as a university teacher and Einstein as a student. Classical music fans around the world are interested in the life of opera diva and bel canto queen Edita Gruberova. From the point of view of cultural diplomacy, it is also important to know about her artistic beginnings in Slovakia and her activities in the diplomatic field, during which she met with presidents, and artists and presented Slovak culture.

9. Calendar - public holidays, and religious holidays are shared with other nations, and public holidays are commemorated by many nations of the world including May Day, All Souls 'Day, and St. Valentine's Day.... Labor Day is commemorated around the world despite the transformation and status of the working class as well as events associated with the end of World War II. International Workers' Day also known as Labour Day is often referred to as May Day. Christmas and Easter are commemorated in dozens of countries around the world. Visual symbols such as the nativity scene, the Last Supper, and the cross are identical in all continents with slight variations. Religious and public holidays can be important for culture and marketing communications that promote the recognized values of society. Holidays provide an opportunity for marketing activities as people are often in an exceptional mood and ready to shop or attend events. Cultural organizations and businesses often use the holidays to organize various cultural events that can contribute to the enrichment of cultural life in society. These events may include ceremonies, concerts, exhibitions, theatre performances, and other cultural activities. Only an educated person can link celebrations with an adequate cultural program. Holidays often have deep symbolic meaning and can therefore be used to create

an emotional connection with the celebrants who do not realize that they are in the position of customers. It is important to note that the use of holidays in marketing requires sensitivity to the cultural context and respect for cultural norms to avoid potential controversy or misunderstanding.

Without mentioned above knowledge it is questionable to build international marketing strategies, in several areas related to contemporary culture or cultural heritage in the sphere of cultural diplomacy that requires the highest level of performance.

Objectives and forms in the digital environment

Cultural diplomacy is a field of international relations that deals with the use of culture, art, education, language, and other cultural expressions to achieve diplomatic goals and strengthen relations between countries and their cultures. The definition of cultural diplomacy may vary depending on the sources and context, but its essence is always the use of culture as a means of improving communication, understanding, and cooperation among different peoples and cultures.

Cultural diplomacy is also a powerful and important tool for building the identity of small states. In practice, it is implemented through different types of actors. Diplomatic missions can be considered the most important, but cultural institutes, which can be diplomatic as well as non-diplomatic, also play an important role. The agents are then involved in the performance of the cultural diplomacy of the state. In the background of this activity is the effort to make an economic impact on the country, which creates a multiplier effect through the presentation of culture and is part of the digital business (Petrenko et al., 2019, p. 17). Cultural diplomacy is part of the public diplomacy of states contributes to the soft power of states and is an effective modern foreign policy tool. Cultural diplomacy is, therefore, an important tool today, as culture itself and cultural events are directly used to promote democracy, development, education, human rights, and freedom of expression. Culture is increasingly seen as a tool to achieve these value-oriented goals and cultural diplomacy is increasingly used as a way to promote liberal democratic values. Cultural diplomacy seeks to overcome linguistic, cultural, and political barriers through the organization of cultural exchange programs, artistic performances, exhibitions, literary festivals, film shows, and other events. In this way, it seeks to foster mutual dialogue, understanding, and tolerance between different cultures. Cultural diplomacy aims to create a positive image and reputation of the country, to promote international cooperation, and to encourage education, development, and cultural exchanges among countries (Chovanová, 2014. p. 14). Cultural diplomacy is often used to strengthen diplomatic relations and peace initiatives, not only at the bilateral level but also at the international level, for example through cultural programs and organizations such as UNESCO. In today's globalized world, cultural diplomacy plays an important role in shaping

international relations, overcoming conflicts, and building trust and understanding among nations.

Major components of a digital environment generally include websites, cloud servers, search engines, social media outlets, mobile apps, audio and video, and other web-based resources. The digital environment is a fundamental part of children's daily lives. It offers tremendous benefits to children, opening new channels for education, creativity, and social interaction. However, it also presents serious risks, including cyberbullying, sextortion, and privacy risks. Many of the environments can be reproduced in a digital environment, such as an immersive digital environment in which an artificial, interactive, computer-created scene or "world" is generated for the user to be placed in.

The digital environment is a fundamental part of children's daily lives. It offers tremendous benefits to children, opening new channels for education, creativity, and social interaction. However, it also presents serious risks, including cyberbullying, sextortion, and privacy risks. In the digital age, where technological advances, changes, and accelerations are constantly changing the way people communicate and interact, cultural diplomacy plays an increasingly important role. Due to the internet and social media, the boundaries between nations and cultures are disappearing, opening up new opportunities for cultural exchange and understanding. The digital age offers platforms through which artists, intellectuals, and cultural organizations can disseminate their works, ideas, and values around the world, regardless of geographical constraints. Virtual exhibitions, online concerts, interactive discussions, and other such initiatives have become part of cultural diplomacy, fostering mutual understanding and building bridges between different cultures. The digital age also gives individuals access to diverse cultural expressions and perspectives, helping to broaden their horizons and fostering tolerance and respect for other cultures.

Nevertheless, with this new digital world come challenges such as copyright protection, the diversity of information, and the risk of digital platforms being exploited for political or economic interests. It is therefore important for cultural diplomacy in the digital age to take these challenges into account find ways to overcome them and use digital tools to promote inclusive cultural exchange and understanding among peoples and cultures.

Ethical challenges in public relations

The use of cultural diplomacy and PR brings with it ethical considerations and risks that should be carefully considered. One of these risks is the manipulation of information and image (Hajduk, 2020, p. 39). Cultural diplomacy and PR can involve the selective presentation of information and give the impression that the host culture is always positive and appealing, while at the same time minimizing or ignoring controversial or negative aspects. This can lead to a distorted view of the culture and a lack of understanding of its true nature.

Another ethical aspect is the lack of transparency. In the case of cultural diplomacy and PR, clear information must be provided to the public about the purpose and objectives of specific activities. Lack of transparency can give rise to suspicion and mistrust, undermining the credibility and legitimacy of those initiatives.

In addition, disrespect for cultural values is another important risk. When using cultural diplomacy and PR, care must be taken to ensure that the host culture is represented with respect and sensitivity. Misinterpretations or misuse of cultural symbols and traditions can lead to insults or misunderstandings and undermine relations between countries. It is essential that organizations responsible for cultural diplomacy and PR pay sufficient attention to ethical principles such as truthfulness, objectivity, and respect for cultural differences (Chudinová, 2023, p. 28). At the same time, the public must have access to information, critical thinking, and the ability to evaluate the information presented. Only in this way can we minimize the risks of manipulation and shortcomings and achieve an authentic and mutually enriching cultural exchange.

Conclusion

The first prerequisite for cultural diplomacy is quality education, the appropriate content of which forms the basis for the implementation of cultural marketing. The above concepts are based on the principles of communication, mutual understanding, and cultural exchange. Through the presentation and promotion of cultural values, arts, and traditions, cultural diplomacy seeks to win the goodwill and support of other countries. However, manipulation of information and image, lack of transparency, or lack of respect for cultural values are risks that can accompany their use. It is therefore essential to apply ethical principles to education and intercultural strategy in marketing and to strive for authentic and mutually beneficial exchanges.

Synergy, sophistication, and planned thoughtfulness between education and cultural diplomacy bring benefits to organizations, countries, and their people. Their synergy provides an opportunity to strengthen perceptions and understanding of cultural differences, develop international relations, promote trade and tourism, and build lasting reputations and other dimensions that go beyond the above-mentioned educational content and its marketing implementation.

Education and intercultural marketing strategies encourage dialogue and contribute to the creation of a harmonious and inclusive global community. In any case, these activities must be carried out by competent professionals who have insight not only into communication strategies but also into the cultural contexts and values of different societies, which are acquired through continuous training. Ultimately, as mentioned above, the combination of cultural diplomacy and PR is a potential tool for tackling global challenges, strengthening peace and stability, and building relationships based on trust and

cooperation. Their role is to raise the profile of cultural values, arts, and traditions, contributing to the creation of an open and inclusive international environment.

The above-mentioned studies explore the definitions, objectives, principles, and practical ways, contents, and strategies that result in the highest form of cultural diplomacy. Through examples and case studies, this paper initiates the challenges and opportunities associated with these areas and stimulates further discussion and research on the subject.

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Charakterová výchova na vybraných pedagogických fakultách v České republice

Character Education at Selected Faculties of Education in the Czech Republic

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Abstract

This paper attempts to map the state of character education at selected faculties of education in the Czech Republic. The aim of the study was to analyze courses from education and psychology modules of teacher training study programmes to find out to what extent the courses match the prototype of character education designed by McGrath (2018). Qualitative content analysis of the course descriptions showed that only a small number of the courses match the prototype in all the criteria, but many courses contain several aspects of character education.

Keywords: Character education. Prototype. McGrath. Faculties of education. Teacher training. University courses.

Introduction

The main aim of the research presented in this paper was to ascertain to what extent character education is part of teacher training programmes at selected faculties of education in the Czech Republic. The paper presents the analysis of courses from the compulsory modules for future teachers focused on education and psychology, identifies to what extent they match the prototype of character education introduced by McGrath (2018), and provides examples of the courses related to character education at the selected faculties of education.

Definition of Character Education

Lickona (2018, p. 54) views character education as “deliberate effort to develop virtue”. Character education is often framed by its goals (McGrath et al., 2022, p. 231). A commonly defined goal of life is “human flourishing” (The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education in Schools, 2022, p. 6), which is, in Aristotle’s account, an “enduring contentment with one’s life” (Aristotle, 1985, p. 33). Similarly, the goal of character education can be seen in the increased manifestation of qualities that benefit oneself and others (Duckworth & Meindel, 2018, p. 37). US Department of Education (2005) summarizes character education as “a learning process that enables students and adults in a

school community to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others”. Ideally, character education should permeate all school subjects and develop virtues of common morality and understanding of excellence in diverse spheres of human excellence (The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education in Schools, 2022, p. 6).

The comprehensive goal of character education is, in some authors’ perspective, the goal of all education. The concept of Aristotle’s *eudaimonia* should be enriched by a spiritual aspect of character education, which should help children realize their awareness of transcendent ideals (Kristjánsson, 2016, p. 717).

Not all character education scholars consider teaching character education in structured courses necessary to achieve the aims of character education. However, many believe that intentional character education classes are beneficial and crucial to successful character education (e.g. Berkowitz & Bier, 2008, Sternberg, Jarvin & Reznitskaya, 2008). Therefore, identifying the standard features of a course in character education is one of the key problems that educators face and that authors such as McGrath et al. (2018, 2022) have offered a solution to. This study attempts to contribute to the discussion by assessing university courses for future teachers.

Character Education in the Czech educational context

Character education is a term that is not yet deeply rooted in Czech academic discourse. It is often used interchangeably with other terms, such as ethical or moral education. The goal of ethical education is educating learners for prosocial behavior (Lesňák & Štěrbá, 2016, p. 48). Ethics is a course taught only at some Czech primary and secondary schools that choose to add it to their school curricula. It addresses multiple topics including ecology, economy, human health, and sexuality from the standpoint of key values (Brestovanský, 2020, pp. 93–94).

Character education is not a stand-alone subject, but rather a toolbox that helps schools create a suitable environment for character development of their learners and supports the efforts of the teachers of ethics education. Character education must be complex, well thought-through and permeate all aspects of school life (Vacek, 2010, p. 70). Hábl (2022) also sees character education as not different in its content from moral education, but as an education philosophy, an all-encompassing attitude towards teachers’ work. Vacek & Švarcová (2007) claim that the condition to implementing character education well at any school is the teachers’ belief in the idea that character development is a crucial task of all educators.

Prototype Matching and McGrath's Prototype of Character Education

Prototype theory, first developed by Eleanor Rosch, suggests that items can be sorted into categories based on their possession of certain criterial features (Rosh & Mervis, 1975). Because category boundaries are often unclear, each member of the category has a unique status. A prototype is the most central member of a category as it has the most features commonly associated with the category. Other less typical members of the category possess only a few of the typical characteristics (Guo & Wang, 2020).

Using the method of prototype matching for our study seemed quite appropriate because though it allows us to clearly identify members of the category of character education, it does not completely exclude courses that have only some aspects of character education but are not typical examples of a course in the field.

Our study used McGrath's (2018) prototype of character education, which consists of seven central features. A course in character education should (McGrath, 2018, pp. 26-30):

1. be school based,
2. be structured,
3. address positive psychological attributes (where positive psychological attributes are both "enduring and malleable" (p. 26),
4. address identity (which is the feature that ought to distinguish character-focused courses from those that are skill-based),
5. address moral growth,
6. address holistic growth (this idea rests in the Aristotelian belief that all virtues need to be developed in order for a person to become truly virtuous),
7. be centred around practical wisdom (ability to use one's virtues well in different contexts).

Research Sample

The scope of this study was limited to three major faculties of education in the Czech Republic: Faculty of Education at Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Education at Masaryk University in Brno and Faculty of Education at Palacký University Olomouc. As each of these universities offers hundreds of courses, the focus of this study was narrowed down to the courses that impact most students, i.e. courses in the education and psychology modules. All compulsory and compulsory-elective courses from these modules in bachelor's, follow-up master's and primary education study programmes were subjected to the analysis. The analysis was based on curricular documents and course descriptions available at each university's websites.

Language courses were excluded from the analysis because they do not primarily address any of the attributes specified in the prototype. Exploring the potential of a language course for character development is intriguing but beyond the scope of this paper.

Similarly, all courses that deal with the matters of research, research methodology, and writing a bachelor's thesis were excluded. Finally, we also did not assess teaching practices at primary and secondary schools as they focus mainly on developing students' teaching skills, and since students carry out their practices at different schools, their experience might differ significantly.

Content Analysis and Categorizing

The research method used in this study is qualitative content analysis. As coding was based on an existing theory, in our case McGrath's (2018) prototype of character education, directed content analysis was used (Newby, 2010, p. 485).

The curricular texts were analysed in detail. Each section of a text was assigned a name – or a code (Corbin & Strauss, 1999, p. 43). Five categories based on McGrath's (2018) criteria were used, and the codes sorted into them, leaving out the ones that did not fit into any of the five categories.

The categories used were the following:

- positive psychological attributes,
- identity,
- moral growth,
- holistic growth,
- practical wisdom.

The first two criteria, i.e. that the courses have to be school-based and structured were omitted since the focus of this study are officially accredited university courses, which automatically meet these criteria.

For this study, we modified McGrath's (2018) criteria to be applicable to the course descriptions subjected to our analysis:

1. A code is categorized as a “**positive psychological attribute**” if it explicitly mentions a positive psychological attribute. For example, if a course description simply states that the course addresses the issue of stress, it was not added to the category because positive psychological attributes are not mentioned explicitly.
2. A code is categorized as “**addressing identity**” if it deals with enhancing students' understanding of their own identity or that of their learners. McGrath (2018, p. 27) emphasizes the difference between skill-based courses and courses that deal with “narrative identity”. It was, however, not always clear whether a course addresses identity and psychological

attributes from the standpoint of skill enhancement or narrative change. Frequently, these two approaches were tightly interwoven and difficult to separate. In this analysis, all the codes related to the topics of identity of students, or their potential learners were categorized as addressing identity.

3. A code is categorized as **“moral growth”** if it addresses values, morals or ethics in an implicit or explicit way. Moral development seems to be the least addressed criterion in all the analyzed courses and is explicitly mentioned only infrequently. Therefore, all the course descriptions that include topics of tolerance, courage or other values, while not explicitly addressing the concept of morality, ethics or values as central to the course were also considered in this category.
4. A code is categorized as addressing **“holistic growth”** if it studies the students’ and learners’ personality from more than a single standpoint. If the code explicitly mentions developing a student or learner holistically or that it aims to develop different areas of their life simultaneously, it is categorized as addressing holistic growth.
5. A code is categorized as addressing **“practical wisdom”** if it suggests that the course aims to help the students apply its principles in practice. Some of the analyzed documents attempt to explain how and when their students will be able to use the knowledge and skills they should acquire. For lack of a better indicator, we decided to rely on statements of this kind to decide whether a course addresses practical wisdom or not.

Prototype Matching

After analyzing each course description carefully and assigning the codes to different statements, we sorted the codes into the suggested five categories and eliminated those that did not fit into any category. If a category was assigned at least one code, the course was considered to match the criteria of McGrath’s (2018) prototype. Finally, we decided to what extent the courses match the prototype based on how many categories of the prototype were matched with a code from the analyzed text.

Overview of the Main Findings

A total of 231 courses were analysed: 91 courses at Charles University, 55 at Masaryk University and 85 at Palacký University in Olomouc. Out of these courses, six matched McGrath’s (2018) prototype in all the criteria (see Table 1 below). The following text focuses on the six prototype matches in more detail to illustrate the most typical examples of character education courses according to McGrath’s (2018) prototype. For the overall analysis of the criteria in the analysed courses, see Bačíková & Babická (2022).

| | Bachelor's degree courses | Follow-up master's degree courses | Primary education courses | Total |
|--|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Number of complete prototype matches | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Number of courses matching in 4 criteria | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Number of courses matching in 3 criteria | 8 | 3 | 6 | 17 |

Table 1: Prototype matches

The content analysis revealed the six courses described below to be clear prototype matches.

Introduction to psychology is a compulsory course at the bachelor's level at Charles University in Prague. The course syllabus states that its goal is to provide its students with the general overview of the discipline as well as to help them to apply it in real-life situations they could encounter as teachers, which clearly addresses practical wisdom. What seems to make it a good example of character education is its focus on studying humans as complex beings and dedicating some time to studying their moral, social, and emotional identity. On the other hand, the course addresses a lot of content that has little to do with character, which raises a question whether characteristics that prevent a course from being considered as character education should also be defined.

Self-education for teachers is a master's degree course at Charles University. In certain aspects it resembles the bachelor's degree course in *Social Skills* (see below). It also aims to help students understand themselves as human beings and future teachers, develop positive psychological attributes and try to see how the techniques used in the course can be beneficial in their future life and profession. The course also studies what role ethics plays in our quest for self-development and thus complies with all McGrath's requirements for a prototypical character education course.

Primary education teacher training programme at Charles University offers a course called ***Personality and social education*** consisting of two parts. Based on our analysis, both these courses also match the prototype in every aspect. Identity of the students is the most frequently discussed topic, focusing on positive psychological attributes and how the students can stay in line with their

values in their future profession. The second part of the course focuses on three basic aspects of a teacher trainee's development – personal, social, and moral.

Theory and methodology of education is an online course in the bachelor's degree study programme at Masaryk University in Brno, which attempts to address methods of stimulating personal growth and teach students to help their learners develop positive psychological attributes actively and effectively through games and other strategies. Its curricular document states that values education is one of the key terms that the course works with. Though this course clearly addresses all the concepts outlined by McGrath's (2018) prototype and we therefore consider it a well-rounded example of character education course, the fact that it is an e-course raises possible doubt about its effectiveness without the personal guidance of an educator.

Personal and social development is a bachelor's level practical course at Masaryk University heavily based on discussion, games, and self-knowledge. The content of the course centres around the student's identity, but it also aims to increase the quality of the moral and ethical development of its students and to help them understand how to address their emotions in a mature way.

Although the other analyzed courses were not representatives of clear prototype matches according to the analysis, many contain at least some attributes of character education. The following two courses are presented here as examples.

Social skills is a course for bachelor's degree students at Charles University. Unlike *Introduction to psychology* (see above), it does not cover a large amount of content but rather allows its participants some time to assess their own personalities, strengths and weaknesses and help them to consider how to become better humans and teachers. Everything is considered from the perspective of the student's personal and professional life. Communication skills are emphasized and practised throughout this course. The only aspect missing is moral growth.

Educational psychology 2 is a theoretical course for students of master's degree study programmes at Palacký University in Olomouc that focuses on learners, their personality and the relationship between teachers and students. It studies self-reflection, self-evaluation, and their use in the classroom. From the language used, it is not obvious if the course addresses the students directly or rather leads them to study identity and personality development as a theoretical concept. It matches the prototype in its focus on identity, holistic approach to students' development and its focus on practicality.

Research Limitations

This research study was limited by several factors. Firstly, it focused on courses at three faculties of education in the Czech Republic only. These were selected both for their prominence amongst Czech universities, for the authors' affiliation with one of the universities, and for the access to the curricular documents. Secondly, the study was limited to courses from the fields of education and psychology in the modules common to all the students in the teacher training programmes. Thirdly, it is based solely on the analysis of publicly available curricular documents.

Another key limitation of this study is the scope and form of the analysed documents. Each course description was written by a different person, the texts often do not follow one clear structure and vary in their length and style. During the analysis, it became apparent that more formal language might evoke an image of a lecture that is less character-oriented and more theoretical. Although the texts were carefully read many times to prevent researcher bias, the above-mentioned made the process of assigning the codes more difficult.

The lists of recommended literature were also included in the analysis. However, while some teachers provide as many as 50 titles, others only include several URL links, which might have caused unevenness in the level of understanding of the analysed syllabuses.

It is obvious that the analysis of course descriptions cannot be sufficient for well-rounded understanding of a course, as the texts might not fully reflect reality. Consequently, this study can be followed by research into how these courses are taught, if they are effective, and what teaching methods and techniques are used.

Conclusion

The occurrence of character education courses at the three selected universities seems to be relatively rare. We have identified six courses that match all five criteria of McGrath's (2018) prototype. In general, the courses that are prototype matches focus on psychology and personal development and typically occur in bachelor's degree study programmes.

McGrath's (2018) prototype proved to be a useful tool for the preliminary assessment of courses in character education. It appears to be simple to use, provides the necessary framework for determining if a course is character education or not without being unnecessarily restrictive. However, it may not be suitable for general use, as the criteria are not clearly defined, only based on literature overview, and do not take into consideration the teacher's intent, the used teaching method or the format of the lessons. The model recently designed by surveying field experts (McGrath et al., 2022), seems to be more

comprehensive and it might be beneficial to compare the curricula to the newly designed prototype.

Though this study does not aim to provide any conclusive results about the current state of character education at faculties of education in the Czech Republic, the obtained data provide a useful insight into the issue and can be used as a starting point to map the situation further.

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Integracja edukacyjna w ocenie młodzieży szkół ponadpodstawowych

Educational integration as perceived by secondary school students

Mieczysław Dudek

Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the problem of integration of students with special educational needs from the perspective of students from integrated post-primary schools. A total of 183 students in integrated classes were surveyed. Among the respondents were 60 pupils with a statement on the need for special education. The results of the research revealed a complex picture of the situation in these classes. The majority of pupils with special needs declare that they feel comfortable in these classes. At the same time, only half of their healthy peers believe that the presence of their peers with disabilities is beneficial to the classroom community.

Keywords: Education. Inclusion. Social inclusion. Inclusive education. Student with disabilities. Mainstream schooling.

1. Integracja edukacyjna w Polsce

W Polsce od dwudziestu lat konsekwentnie wdraża się ideę edukacji integracyjnej. Mimo krótkiej historii tych poczynań (jak na wagę tego typu zmian), mówić już można o pewnych doświadczeniach, które zostały zebrane zarówno przez teoretyków zagadnienia, jak i praktyków, tworzących nowe integracyjne formy edukacji specjalnej. Na bazie tych doświadczeń nasila się dyskusja nad celowością, efektywnością oraz optymalną organizacją tego typu kształcenia w polskich warunkach. Jeszcze nie do końca została wdrożona idea integracji edukacyjnej i społecznej, a już lansowana jest kolejna nowa idea zwana **inkluzją**, czyli włączenia w systemie edukacyjnym osób z niepełnosprawnością. Ta ostatnia, poddawana surowej krytyce ze strony części teoretyków oraz większości praktyków stanowi głównie założenia ideologiczne, które nie są oparte na badaniach naukowych, doświadczeniach czy psychologii osób niepełnosprawnych (Dudek, 2022). Dowodem tego jest intensywna wymiana myśli w literaturze naukowej i popularnonaukowej (Dolinska, Dudek, 2021). Należy jednak zauważyć, że w dyskusjach dotyczących integracji i inkluzji wciąż niedostateczny jest głos bezpośrednich

uczestników tych procesów, posiadających największe doświadczenie w tym zakresie, czyli uczniów, nauczycieli i rodziców. Na ogół opinie tych osób są wyrażane w ich własnych gremiach. W ten sposób wymiana informacji na ten temat jest bardzo ograniczona i niepełna, co niewątpliwie może tylko szkodzić idei integracji. Autor podejmował już wcześniej problematykę stosunku nauczycieli do stanu procesu integracji edukacyjnej w Polsce (Dudek, 2018). Kształcenie integracyjne miało stanowić przeciwwagę modelu segregacyjnego, które pod koniec lat 90-tych XX wieku uznano jako niewystarczające. Zgodnie z przyjętym założeniem, kształcenie integracyjne miało pozwolić dzieciom niepełnosprawnym na naukę w szkole ogólnodostępnej znajdującej się w pobliżu ich miejsca zamieszkania. Koncepcja ta wyływała z poszanowania podstawowej potrzeby dzieci niepełnosprawnych: ich przebywania na co dzień z rodzicami, bez konieczności rozłąki wynikającej z oddalenia od szkoły specjalnej. Nie mniej ważnym motywem była potrzeba kontaktu ze sprawnymi rówieśnikami oraz bycia uczniami na takich samych jak oni warunkach.

Zdaniem A. Maciarz, integracja społeczna, to „pełne włączenie osoby niepełnosprawnej w społeczność osób pełnosprawnych (Maciarz, 1999). Rozpoczęcie procesu włączania osób niepełnosprawnych w główny nurt życia społecznego powinno się rozpocząć już od najwcześniejszych lat ich życia. Aleksander Hulek, nestor polskiej pedagogiki specjalnej oraz propagator idei integracji osób niepełnosprawnych uważał, że podstawą integracji społecznej tych osób jest edukacja integracyjna, którą rozumiał jako maksymalne włączenie dzieci i młodzieży z dysfunkcjami do ogólnodostępnych szkół i placówek oświatowych (Hulek, 1977). Szczególnie integracja edukacyjna, zdaniem Hulka, daje szansę dzieciom z niepełnosprawnościami na pełniejszy rozwój w środowisku zdrowych rówieśników (ibidem).

Rozważania teoretyków oraz wnioski z doświadczeń praktyków legły u podstaw wyłonienia się dwóch nurtów badawczych. Część badaczy przyjmuje, że wspólną edukacją powinni być objęci wszyscy uczniowie niezależnie od rodzaju i stopnia niepełnosprawności (Al-Khamisy, 2013). W drugiej grupie autorów dominuje pogląd, że z uwagi na specjalne potrzeby części uczniów niepełnosprawnych ich wspólne kształcenie nie jest możliwe (Twardowski, 2007).

Autorzy prezentujący tą drugą opcję wskazują na brak przygotowania systemu edukacyjnego do realizacji tak istotnych zadań. Zdaniem Maciarz, podatność integracyjna uczniów z danym rodzajem niepełnosprawności bywa bardzo zróżnicowana (Maciarz, 2007). Wiąże się to z różnicami uwarunkowanymi czynnikami osobowościowymi, poziomem ich umiejętności, a także wsparciem otrzymywanym w ich środowisku rodzinnym. Coraz częściej słyszy się, że integracja edukacyjna realizowana w złych warunkach może przynieść więcej szkód niż pożytku zarówno uczniom z orzeczeniem o specjalnych potrzebach jak i ich zdrowych rówieśników (Gajdzica, 2011).

Już samo umieszczenie ucznia z niepełnosprawnością w klasie, w ramach edukacji integracyjnej czy inkluzyjnej, nie gwarantuje powodzenia w jego

integracji społecznej (Szumski, 2006). Zdaniem A. Maciarz *włączenia danej osoby dokonują sami członkowie grupy, a nie osoba z zewnątrz podejmująca działania w celu jej osiągnięcia* (Maciarz, 1999, s. 14). W dostępnej literaturze przedmiotu, autorzy wskazują na szereg czynników decydujących o powodzeniu integracji. Oprócz uwarunkowań systemowych, barierami w edukacji integracyjnej (i włączającej) są same osoby z niepełnosprawnością (rodzaj ich niepełnosprawności, cechy osobowościowe, ich zdolność do budowania relacji społecznych, otwartość itp.), jak również społeczne postawy wobec osób niepełnosprawnych (Gołubiew, Kraus, 2007). Nieuwzględnienie tych aspektów przy doborze formy kształcenia często jest przyczyną wielu porażek zwłaszcza w odniesieniu do uczniów niedostosowanych społecznie. Zdaniem Gajdzicy źle zorganizowany system integracji może pogłębiać praktyki dyskryminacyjne i prowadzić do sytuacji przeciążenia ucznia (Gajdzica, 2011). W obszarze literatury przedmiotu brak jest wystarczającej reprezentacji badań odnoszących się do opinii i poglądów samych uczestników procesu integracji czyli uczniów klas integracyjnych (Tymoshko, Hladush, 2023).

2. Metodologiczne założenia badań własnych

Celem prezentowanych badań było poznanie opinii uczniów niepełnosprawnych i ich pełnosprawnych rówieśników odnośnie wybranych aspektów edukacji w klasach integracyjnych. Problemy szczegółowe dotyczyły oceny obecności w klasach integracyjnych, oceny pomocy ze strony nauczycieli wspomagających, sprawiedliwości w traktowaniu wszystkich uczniów, relacji interpersonalnych. Badania zostały przeprowadzone w listopadzie 2022 r., w Zespole Szkół Integracyjnych nr32 w Warszawie. Objęto nimi 183 uczniów, w tym 60 uczniów niepełnosprawnych - 49 z LO i 11 ze szkoły Branżowej. Wśród badanych uczniów z orzeczeniem o potrzebie kształcenia specjalnego w szkołach integracyjnych dominowali uczniowie ze spektrum autyzm-58 osób, jeden niedosłyszący i jeden uczeń z niepełnosprawnością ruchową. Do badań wykorzystano autorską ankietę w dwóch wersjach: dla uczniów z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym i tych bez orzeczenia. Średni wiek badanych w grupie osób z niepełnosprawnością wynosił 16,5 lat (chłopcy: 16,4 lat; dziewczęta: 16,6 lat).

W pierwszym rzędzie zapytano uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami jak czują się w swojej klasie. Swoją ocenę uczniowie zaznaczali na sześciostopniowej skali przy czym liczba 1 oznaczała najniższą wartość a liczba 6 najwyższą. W pierwszym rzędzie zbadano równice wyników w tej skali pomiędzy chłopcami i dziewczętami. Wartość testu χ^2 jest daleka od istotności statystycznej. Oznacza to, że oceny samopoczucia w klasie w grupie chłopców i dziewcząt nie różnią się statystycznie. Drugim postępowaniem badawczym była analiza rozłożenia poszczególnych wartości w skali subiektywnej oceny poczucia w klasie szkolnej. Wykres nr 1. zawiera profil wyników uzyskanych w tej skali. W odpowiedziach dominują średnie i wysokie wartości co świadczy o tym, że

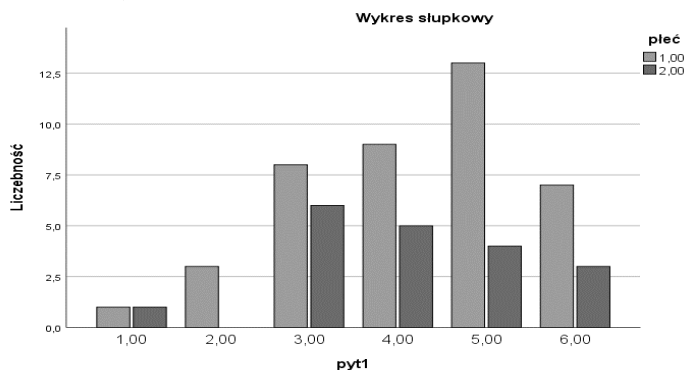
zdecydowana większość badanych uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi dobrze czuje się w swojej klasie. Uzyskane wyniki badań wskazują na wysoki poziom integracji społecznej i edukacyjnej osób z niepełnosprawnościami. Ponadto zdają się wskazywać na efektywną pracę zespołu pracowników tejże placówki.

Tabela 1. Różnice w zakresie średnich arytmetycznych uzyskanych w skali oceny jak się czują w swojej klasie chłopcy i dziewczęta z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym

| Ocena jak się czują badani uczniowie z niepełnosprawnością w swojej klasie | N | % | χ^2 | df | $p <$ |
|--|----|--------|----------|----|-------|
| Chłopcy | 41 | 68,3 | 3,15 | 5 | 0,677 |
| Dziewczęta | 19 | 31,7 | | | |
| Razem | 60 | 100,00 | | | |

Źródło: badania własne

Wykres 1. Subiektywna ocena samopoczucia chłopców i dziewcząt ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi w klasie integracyjnej. Ocena w skali od 1 do 6 oznacza wartości od najniższej do najwyższej. (1-chłopcy; 2-dziewczeta)



Źródło: badania własne

Drugim postępowaniem badawczym było porównanie wyników badań uzyskanych w skali mierzącej samopoczucie wszystkich uczniów w klasie - dotyczy to zarówno uczniów z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym jak ich zdrowych rówieśników-bez takiego orzeczenia (por. tabela 2 i wykres2). Porównanie średnich arytmetycznych uzyskanych w skali mierzącej subiektywną ocenę tego jak się czują w swoje klasie w dwóch grupach wyróżnionych z uwagi na posiadane orzeczenie wskazuje na brak istotnych statystycznie różnic ($\chi^2 = 4,227$; $p < 0,517$). Należy wnioskować, że wszyscy badani uczniowie w zbliżonym stopniu oceniają swoje samopoczucie w klasie

szkolnej. Wynik ewidentnie wskazuje na wysoki poziom integracji społecznej uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi i ich zdrowych rówieśników w klasie szkolnej.

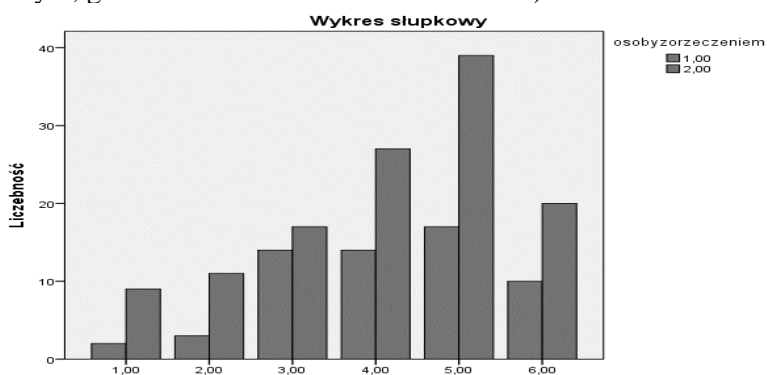
Tabela 2. Różnice w skali ocen od 1 do 6 w zakresie subiektywnej oceny tego jak się czują w swojej klasie wszyscy badani uczniowie

| Wyniki w skali mierzącej subiektywną ocenę jak się czują w swojej klasie | N | % | χ^2 | df | p< |
|--|-----|--------|----------|----|------|
| Uczniowie z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym | 60 | 32,8 | 4,227 | 5 | ,517 |
| Uczniowie bez orzeczenia (zdrowi) | 123 | 67,2 | | | |
| Razem | 183 | 100,00 | | | |

Źródło: badania własne

Profil wyników uzyskanych w skali mierzącej samopoczucie w klasie szkolnej wskazuje na dominację wyników średnich i wysokich (przy dość znaczącym poziomie wyników bardzo wysokich). Uczniowie oceniają swój pobyt w klasie szkolnej jako miejsce gdzie potencjalnie czują się akceptowani, równi i rozumiani. Należy zauważyć, że dwie trzecie (66,7%) z spośród badanych uczniów z orzeczeniem o specjalnym kształceniu czuje się integralną częścią zespołu klasowego.

Wykres 2. Profil wyników skali mierzącej subiektywną ocenę tego jak się czują uczniowie w swojej klasie (gr.1-uczniowie z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym; gr.2-uczniowie bez orzeczenia/zdrowi)



Źródło: badania własne

Szczególnie istotne są odpowiedzi na pytanie dotyczące kontaktu uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi z ich rówieśnikami bez orzeczeń, czyli zdrowymi. Okazuje się, że tylko 8,3% badanych nie ma żadnych kolegów i koleżanek i z nikim nie utrzymuje kontaktów. Nieco więcej, bo 11,7% deklaruje, że utrzymuje kontakt ze wszystkimi rówieśnikami z klasy, natomiast

połowa (58,3%) ma stały kontakt ale tylko z niektórymi osobami z klasy. Dla 13,3% respondentów najważniejsze okazują się kontakty z osobami spoza szkoły.

Podstawowym założeniem tworzenia klas i szkół integracyjnych jest indywidualne wspieranie uczniów z orzeczeniem o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych. W tym celu każda szkoła integracyjna powinna organizować dodatkowe zajęcia. Udział w takich zajęcia jest dobrowolny, czyli udział w nich wynika z osobistych potrzeb i akceptacji poszczególnych uczniów. Okazuje się, że 41 osób (68,3%) spośród ogółu badanych uczniów (odpowiednio: 68,3% chłopców i 68,4% dziewcząt) ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi uczestniczy w takich zajęciach. Tabela 3. zawiera informacje co do form wsparcia uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi oraz ilości uczestników.

Tabela 3. Uczestnictwo uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi w dodatkowych zajęciach

| W jakiego rodzaju dodatkowych zajęciach na terenie szkoły uczęszczasz ? | Chłopcy N=41 | | Dziew. N=19 | | Razem N=60 | |
|---|-----------------|------|----------------|------|---------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Zajęcia wyrównawcze: | | | | | | |
| - z języka polskiego, | 4 | 9,8 | 0 | 0,00 | 4 | 6,7 |
| - z matematyki | 2 | 4,9 | 0 | 0,00 | 2 | 3,3 |
| - z innego przedmiotu | 1 | 2,4 | 1 | 5,3 | 2 | 3,3 |
| Zajęcia rewalidacyjne | 3 | 7,3 | 1 | 5,3 | 4 | 6,7 |
| Zajęcia logopedyczne | 4 | 9,8 | 2 | 10,5 | 6 | 10,0 |
| Socjoterapia | 20 | 48,8 | 10 | 52,6 | 30 | 50,0 |
| Zajęcia korekcyjno-kompensacyjne (terapia pedagogiczna) | 14 | 34,1 | 4 | 21,1 | 18 | 30,0 |
| Zajęcia rekreacyjno-sportowe (w sobotę na terenie szkoły) | 0 | 0,00 | 0 | 0,00 | 0 | 0,00 |

Źródło: badania własne

W ocenie badanych uczniów szczególne znaczenie ma wyjaśnianie niezrozumiałych treści z lekcji (33,3%), przygotowanie do sprawdzianów (31,7%), uzupełnianie wiadomości z lekcji (28,3%), oraz usprawnianie zaburzonych funkcji (20,0%). W ocenie 13,3% badanych uczniów udział w tych dodatkowych zajęciach nic im nie daje, nie przynosi żadnych korzyści.

Klasa integracyjna to nie tylko osoby z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym ale także ich zdrowi rówieśnicy (zwykle stanowiący zdecydowaną większość zespołu klasowego). Ważnym z punktu widzenia procesów integracji społecznej i edukacyjnej są opinie zdrowych uczniów o to jak oni oceniają obecność osób niepełnosprawnych na terenie szkoły. Okazuje się, co trzeci badany zdrowy uczeń (34,1%) traktuje jako korzystną obecność swoich niepełnosprawnych rówieśników na terenie szkoły i klasy. Dla 15,4% badanych obecność osób niepełnosprawnych w szkole i klasie jest niekorzystna. Znamienne jest, że połowa badanych (50,47%) deklaruje, że nie ma w tej sprawie wyrobionego zdania. Tak wysoki odsetek badanych uczniów, którzy nie podają konkretnej odpowiedzi może wskazywać, że albo rzeczywiście mają problemy z obiektywną oceną w tej sytuacji, albo też próbują ukryć niechęć do tego systemu nauki i obecności w klasie osób niepełnosprawnych.

Kolejne pytanie badawcze dotyczyło różnic co do prowadzonych lekcji w klasie integracyjnej i ogólnodostępnej. Znamienne, że wśród zdrowych uczniów istnieją zbliżone ilościowo grupy, które widzą takie różnice (43,1%) jak i te które wskazują na ich brak (44,7%). Dla 12,2% badanych ocena tego stanu rzeczy jest niemożliwa.

Wiążącą się bezpośrednio z poprzednimi pytaniami jest ocena obecności drugiego nauczyciela wspomagającego na lekcjach. Ponad połowa badanych zdrowych uczniów (66,7%) deklaruje, że nie przeszkadza im obecność drugiego nauczyciela. Co trzeci badany (34,1%) uczeń deklaruje, że czuje się lepiej na lekcjach gdy blisko jest nauczyciel wspomagający. Jednocześnie 29,3% badanych informuje, że najczęściej ten nauczyciel pomaga im podczas kartkówek i sprawdzianów. Wiąże się to zwykle z prawidłowym zrozumieniem pytań, zachętą do pracy i naprowadzaniem na problematykę. Co piąty (22,0%) deklaruje wręcz, że obecność nauczyciela wspomagającego zapewnia im komfort psychiczny. W ocenie obecności nauczyciela wspomagającego są również opinie negatywne. Zdaniem 16,3% respondentów dodatkowo nauczyciel przeszkadza im w skupieniu się na lekcjach. Kolejnych 5,7% nie lubi jego obecności na lekcjach, a 10,6% oświadcza, że fakt ten wręcz ich denerwuje.

Jednym z kluczowych zagadnień dotyczących procesu integracji społecznej i edukacyjnej jest ocena ze strony uczniów sposobu traktowania przez nauczycieli uczniów niepełnosprawnych i ich zdrowych rówieśników. Okazuje się, że ponad połowa badanych (57,7%) wskazuje istnienie takich różnic, a nieco mniej bo 41,5% uważa, że nauczyciele w równym stopniu traktują uczniów z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym jak ich rówieśników zdrowych. Jedynie niewielki odsetek, bo 0,8% badanych nie ma w tej sprawie wyrobionego zdania.

Integracja społeczna wyraża się przede wszystkim bezpośrednimi relacjami interpersonalnymi w grupie klasowej. Zdecydowana większość (70,7%) uczniów zdrowych deklaruje, że ma stały kontakt poza lekcjami z niektórymi rówieśnikami z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym. Około 5,7% badanych

deklaruje, że utrzymuje kontakt ze wszystkimi osobami niepełnosprawnymi z klasy. Identyczny odsetek (5,7%) badanych wskazuje że nie utrzymuje kontaktu z innymi. Dla 13,0% respondentów utrzymywanie kontaktów jest możliwe tylko ze środowiskiem spoza szkoły.

3. Podsumowanie i dyskusja

Uzyskane wyniki badań wskazują na dosyć sprzeczne informacje dotyczące integracji społecznej i edukacyjnej uczniów z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym w szkołach ponadpodstawowych. Zdecydowana większość badanych uczniów (tych z orzeczeniem i bez orzeczenia) dobrze czuje się wśród rówieśników w swojej klasie, a dwie trzecie osób z niepełnosprawnością ma poczucie przynależności do zespołu klasowego. Prawie dwie trzecie badanych deklaruje, że utrzymują bezpośrednie kontakty z koleżankami i kolegami z klasy poza placówką szkolną. Zdecydowana większość badanych dobrze ocenia obecność nauczyciela wspomagające. Połowa badanych uważa, że wszyscy uczniowie traktowani są przez nauczycieli w sposób jednakowy. Niestety zbliżona ilość uczniów jest przeciwnego zdania. Połowa badanych nie potrafiła lub nie chciała ujawnić swoich poglądów na temat oceny obecności osób niepełnosprawnych w zespole klasowym. Fakt ten może wynikać z autentycznie negatywnych doświadczeń w kontaktach z osobami niepełnosprawnymi.

Należy przypomnieć, że spośród 60 uczniów z orzeczeniem o kształceniu specjalnym zdecydowana większość, bo 58 to osoby ze spektrum autyzmu, jedna niedosłysząca i jedna z niepełnosprawnością ruchową. Warto zauważyć, że obecnie w Polsce wielu uczniów ze spektrum autyzmu (wysoko funkcjonujących) kontynuuje naukę w liceach ogólnokształcących lub szkołach branżowych. Integracja uczniów ze spektrum autyzmu w środowisku szkolnym, z uwagi na charakterystykę kliniczną tej jednostki diagnostycznej jest bardzo skomplikowana. Wśród osiowych objawów tego zaburzenia są problemy w komunikacji i funkcjonowaniu społecznym, co znacznie utrudnia ich włączenie w środowisko rówieśnicze i otoczenie społeczne. Wyrazem deficytów w społecznym funkcjonowaniu są ograniczone możliwości w zakresie tworzenia więzi społecznych, trudności w zrozumieniu intencji, myśli i uczuć innych, trudności w inicjowaniu i uczestniczeniu w zabawach z dziećmi, preferowanie samotności (Cieszyńska, 2010). Osoby ze spektrum autyzmu cechuje dosłowność w odbiorze treści wypowiedzi innych osób (brak rozumienia przenośni) oraz brak zdolności do rozumienia treści humorystycznych (Frith, 2008). Wymienione cechy osób ze spektrum autyzmu znacznie ograniczają ich możliwość w zakresie budowania satysfakcjonujących relacji z otoczeniem społecznym. Specyfika rozwoju poszczególnych uczniów, poziom wymienionych deficytów jest odmienna u poszczególnych osób. W rezultacie uczniowie z zaburzeniami ze spektrum autyzmu stanowią niezwykle zróżnicowaną grupę pod względem nasilenia

objawów autystycznych, jak również pod względem rozwoju kompetencji społecznych (Pisula, 2005; Cieszyńska, 2010; Pisula, 2012).

Zakończenie

Prezentowane wyniki badań stanowią egzemplifikację sytuacji dotyczącej opinii uczniów na temat integracji edukacyjnej na przykładzie konkretnego środowiska szkolnego. Z uwagi na dominację wśród badanych uczniów osób ze spektrum autyzmu sytuacja w badanych szkołach nie odzwierciedla różnorodności postaw, sądów i ocen dotyczących procesu integracji w całym szkolnictwie polskim, przy uwzględnieniu szeregu innych zaburzeń rozwojowych, niepełnosprawności i długotrwałych chorób uczniów. Chociaż prezentowane wyniki badań nie wyczerpują problematyki integracji edukacyjnej i społecznej w perspektywie uczniów, to jednak stanowią ważny argument za potrzebą realizacji badań longitudinalnych na zdecydowanie większej populacji przy uwzględnieniu innych grup osób z niepełnosprawnościami.

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Personálne zabezpečenie školy v kontexte inkluzívneho vzdelávania žiakov so špecifickými vývinovými poruchami učenia

School Staffing in the Context of Inclusive Education of Students with Specific Developmental Learning Disabilities

Martina Magová, Monika Homolová

Abstract

The presented contribution focuses on the analysis of school staffing in the context of inclusive education of pupils with specific developmental learning disabilities. Staffing of schools is an important factor that affects the quality of inclusive education. We focused more closely on the analysis of personnel staffing at I. and II. levels of primary schools, which include students with specific developmental learning disabilities.

Keywords: Inclusive education. Personal integration. Specific developmental learning disorders.

Theoretical starting points

One of the most important factors affecting the quality of inclusive education is school staffing. We agree with the authors Hájková & Strnadová (2010) that the position of the teacher is crucial in the process of inclusive education, but it is necessary to emphasize that cooperation with other professional and pedagogical workers is also necessary. Vításková (2009) states that the personality of the teacher or other expert will always play an essential role in the process of inclusion, she also points out that it is very important his relationship to the practice of the profession, to the individuals he works with and the willingness to innovate or adapt his knowledge. As Rittmeyer (2015) emphasizes, a teacher in inclusive education is primarily expected to be competent in teaching towards all students. One of the basic characteristics of inclusive education is education in connection with diversity. In this process, the teacher must be flexible and adaptable, he must be able to recognize that each student has different ways of understanding and interpreting information. Creating inclusive pedagogy in ordinary schools means that education should be adaptive and imaginative in its approach to students and teaching itself (Bartoňová, Magová, 2018). As Mitler (2005) writes, teachers' opinions on

inclusive education are different. Due to the heterogeneity of students, it is important to have comprehensive knowledge in the field of special pedagogy, psychology, social pedagogy and other fields. "Many differences can be characterized as diverse, variable, unique. They are assessed from different aspects, not only depending on health status, somatic handicaps, intelligence, talents or current social situation. Heterogeneity can be understood from the aspect of belonging to a different culture, a different nationality, a different religion or a different native language" (Kováčová, 2019, p. 64). Therefore in inclusive education emphasis should be placed on staffing and interpersonal communication. If we want to achieve effective results in inclusive education, it should take place as a complex team collaboration between experts, such as a teacher, a special pedagogue, a psychologist, an educational consultant and a social pedagogue (Pudišová, 2014). Adamus (2015) also claims that mutual cooperation is considered one of the basic conditions for the functioning of the life of an inclusive school. As stated by Emmerová and Bělík (2022, p. 49) "current changes in school legislation introduce the concept of a school support team, which the school principal can create for the purposes of inclusive education". Team cooperation, consulting and sharing of knowledge from one's discipline will also help the personal and professional growth of other team members.

Research methodology

As part of the quantitative approach we used the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was self-designed. In the contribution, we present only partial research results.

The aim of the research is to find out satisfaction with staffing at schools where pupils with specific developmental learning disabilities are integrated from the point of view of special educators. Subsequently we have established partial goals:

- to find out satisfaction with staffing at the 1st grade of primary schools, where pupils with SDDL are included
- to find out satisfaction with staffing at the 2nd grade of primary schools, where pupils with SEN are included,
- find out the staffing at elementary schools where students with specific developmental learning disabilities are educated.

Due to the goal of the research a statistical hypothesis was chosen as it was not possible to find research papers related to these relationships in available domestic and foreign databases.

H10: According to special educators, the number of integrated pupils with SDDL in primary schools does not affect satisfaction with staffing.

H1A: According to special educators, the number of integrated pupils with SDDL in primary schools has an impact on satisfaction with staffing.

Selection of the research sample

The target group in the quantitative research was special educators who work with students with specific developmental learning disabilities as part of re-education in primary schools. We used purposive sampling. The basic set consisted of 528 approached primary schools in the Slovak Republic. These were schools where, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, students with diagnosed specific developmental learning disabilities are integrated. From the mentioned elementary schools, 118 special educators participated in the research, which made up our selection group. The analytical unit consisted of special educators working in elementary schools. The composition of respondents by gender was as follows: 97.46% women (i.e. 115) and 2.54% men (i.e. 3).

Quantitative analysis of the obtained data

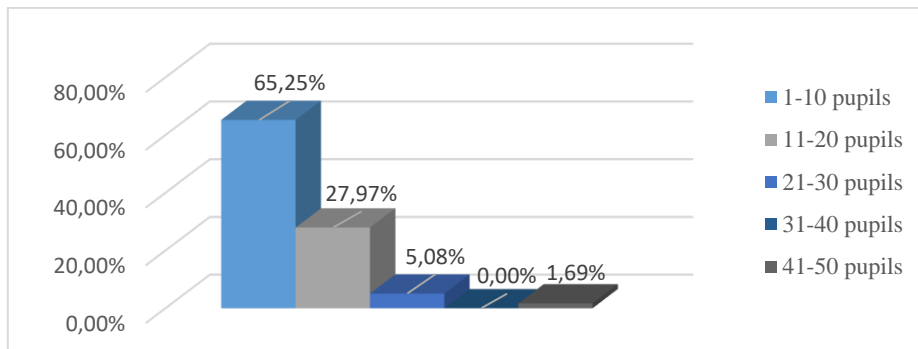
The obtained data were converted into numerical form in such a way that a specific number was assigned to each option for statistical data processing. The recoded data were processed in the form of relative frequency for each question separately. The second step of the analysis was the verification of hypotheses, therefore it was necessary to use the methods of inductive statistics, specifically because of the nominal nature of the data obtained, the Chi square - test of independence (χ^2) was used. Due to the fact that some variable contained more than 2 groups (e.g. length of practice), in order to accurately determine statistical significance, it was necessary to use the so-called z-score. An additional analysis was the determination of the strength of the relationship between the investigated pairs of variables through the Čuprov contingency coefficient. This coefficient takes the values $\langle 0;1 \rangle$, the closer to 0 the relationship is weak to none, and the closer to 1 it is stronger. The level of significance (p) was related to 3 values of $p < 0.05$; $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.001$.

Data evaluation using relative frequency

Data regarding the number of integrated pupils with specific developmental disorders in primary schools

Figure 1

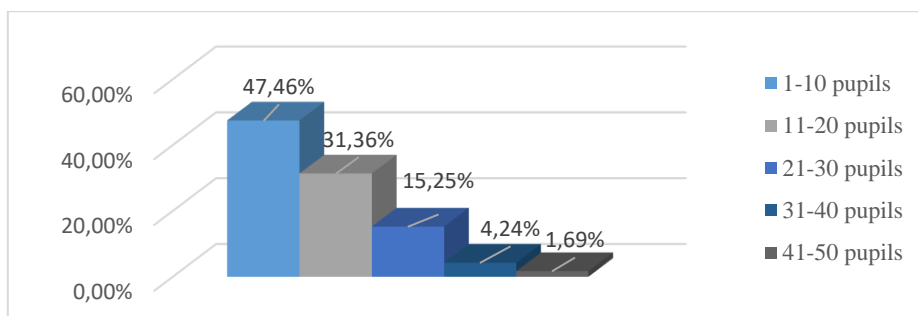
Number of pupils with specific develop. disorders who are integrated into elementary school at the 1st g.



In this question, we asked special pedagogues how many pupils with SDD they have integrated in elementary school at the 1st grade. The largest number of respondents, 65.25% (i.e. 77 respondents), said that they have 1-10 integrated students at school. The option of 11-20 pupils was indicated by 27.97% (i.e. 33 respondents). The range of 21-30 pupils was indicated by 5.08% (i.e. 6 respondents). No respondent mentioned the option of 31-40 pupils. The last option 41-50 pupils was marked by 1.69% (i.e. 2 respondents).

Figure 2

Number of pupils with SDD who are integrated into elementary school at II. degree.



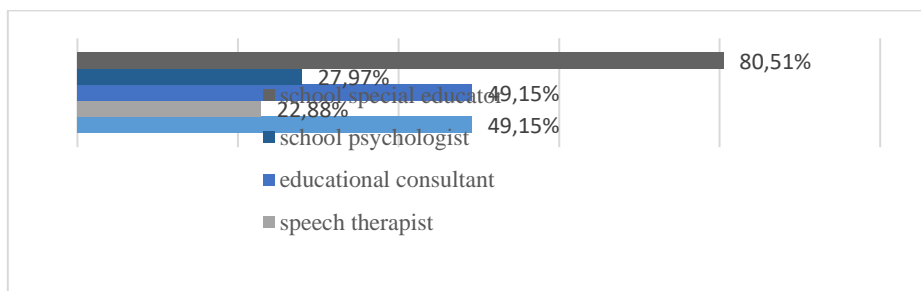
In this question, we found out from special educators how many pupils with SDDL they have integrated in elementary school at II. degree. The largest group, 47.46% (i.e. 56 respondents), was made up of respondents who marked the option 1-10 pupils. The option 11-20 pupils was marked by 31.36% (i.e. 37 respondents). The number of pupils in the range of 21-30 was reported by 15.25% (i.e. 18 respondents). 4.24% (i.e. 5 respondents) marked the following option 31-40 pupils. 1.69% (i.e. 2 respondents) indicated the last option of 41-50 pupils. According to the above results, we believe that the number of

integrated pupils with SDDL depends on several factors, such as from the number of pupils who attend the given school (the more pupils attend the school, the greater the assumption that there will be more pupils with SDDL), or from the number of professional employees who attend to pupils.

As part of the research, we wanted to know what kind of counsellors pupils with SDDL work with within the school. Respondents could indicate a number of options.

Figure 3

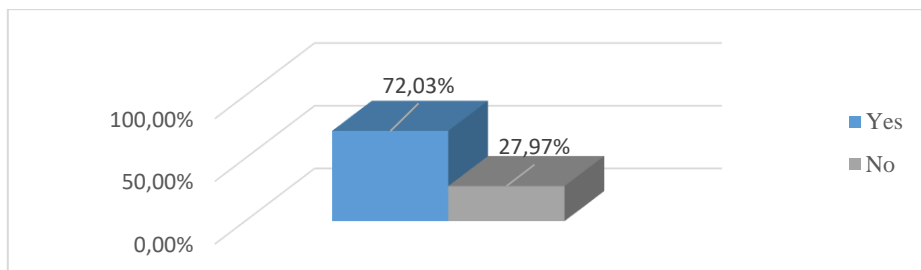
Counselors who work with students with SDD



The most frequent employee who works with pupils with SDDL is a special educator, 80.51% (i.e. 95 respondents) indicated this option. The school psychologist option was mentioned by 27.97% (i.e. 33 respondents). 49.15% (i.e. 58 respondents) indicated educational advisor. The least represented worker working with pupils with SDDL was a speech therapist, this option was mentioned by 22.88% (i.e. 27 respondents). Other workers within counseling facilities made up 49.15% (i.e. 58 respondents). Subsequently, we found out whether there is a teacher's assistant in the classes where students with SDDL are integrated.

Figure 4

Use of the services of a teacher's assistant in a classroom where students with SDD are integrated

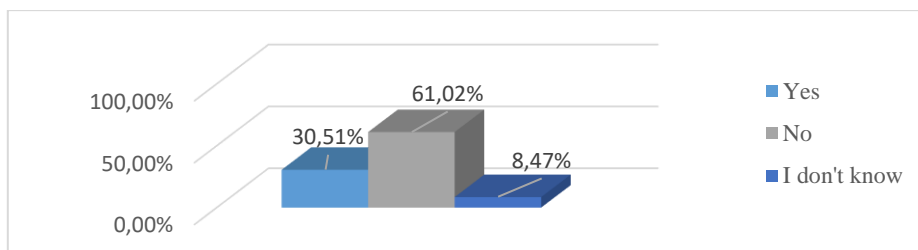


To the above question, 72.03% (i.e. 85 respondents) told us that they use the services of a teacher's assistant in classes where students with SDDL are

integrated. 27.97% (i.e. 33 respondents) indicated no. We were interested in whether the respondents think that the staffing at their school is sufficient considering the number of integrated pupils with SDDL.

Figure 5

Satisfaction with staffing at elementary schools where pupils with SDDL are integrated



To the given question, 30.51% (i.e. 36 respondents) answered that they are satisfied with the staffing at the school where they work, considering the number of pupils with SDDL that they have integrated at the school. Up to 61.02% (i.e. 72 respondents) expressed dissatisfaction with staffing. 8.47% (i.e. 10 respondents) could not comment on this question.

Statistical processing

Table 1

The relationship between the number of integrated students at the first level and satisfaction with staffing

| The number of integrated students at the first degree | Satisfaction with staffing | | |
|---|----------------------------|----|---------------|
| | yes | no | I do not know |
| 1-10 | 26 | 44 | 7 |
| 11-20 | 9 | 22 | 2 |
| 21 and more | 1 | 6 | 1 |

The relationship between the number of integrated students in the first grade and satisfaction with staffing proved to be insignificant ($\chi^2=2.26$; $p=0.69$; $\check{C}. K. =0.26$).

Table 2

Relationship between the number of integrated pupils at II. level and satisfaction with staffing

| The number of integrated pupils at II. degree | Satisfaction with staffing | | |
|---|----------------------------|----|---------------|
| | yes | no | I do not know |
| 1-10 | 20 | 30 | 6 |
| 11-20 | 9 | 25 | 3 |
| 21 and more | 7 | 17 | 1 |

The relationship between the number of integrated pupils at II. degree and satisfaction with personnel security turned out to be insignificant ($\chi^2=2.91$; $p=0.57$; Č. K. =0.28). From the above tables no. 18 and no. 19 showed that the number of integrated pupils with SDD at I. or II. level of elementary schools, according to special educators, does not affect satisfaction with staffing.

Hypothesis verification: Hypotesis H_{10} is accepted and hypotesis H_{1A} is **rejected**, because no significant relationship was detected between the number of integrated students in schools and satisfaction with staffing (see table no. 1 and no. 2).

Research conclusions

Respondents were of the opinion that the school where they work is insufficiently staffed. Some could not comment on the issue. Regarding the use of the services of a teacher's assistant, the majority of respondents stated that they use the services of a teacher's assistant. The most common expert with whom pupils with SDD work is a special educator. An educational advisor, a school psychologist and a speech therapist also work with students with SDLD.

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Medzinárodný, kultúrny a vzdelávací rámec Divadelného ústavu

International, cultural, and educational framework of the Theatre Institute

Adam Križan

Abstract

This article aims to describe the professional public in the field of educational sciences familiar with a cutting-edge scholarship that addresses the history, present, and perspectives of the performing arts about experiential education. Based on empirical experience and authentic materials, the article introduces the reader to the organizational structure and the work of the Theatre Institute in Bratislava at the national and international levels.

Keywords: Theatre events. Research. Public relations. Communication.

Communication base for the implementation of the objectives of the Theatre Institute

The Theatre Institute's PR staff is responsible for communication with cultural and educational institutions as well as the wider public. In addition to the main activities, this paper maps the complicated year 2020, which confirmed the ability to work in an extraordinary mode. The Theatre Institute is a professional institution with a nationwide scope under the direct management of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, which is engaged in comprehensive research, documentation, scientific processing, and provision of information on theatre culture in Slovakia since the establishment of the first professional stage in 1920. It manages the cultural heritage in the field of Slovak theatre culture (drama, opera, ballet, dance, puppet theatre, modern performance types). In its professional activities, it systematically collects, scientifically processes, makes accessible and promotes museum, library, archival, and documentary collections from the history and present of Slovak professional theatre and provides a comprehensive information system on professional theatre in Slovakia.

The function and position of PR in the structure of the organization

PR, or Public Relations, plays a crucial role within the structure of an organization. Its function is multifaceted, and its position varies depending on the

organizational structure and strategic priorities. Key aspects involve image and reputation management, communication, publicity and promotion, and relationship building (Chudinová, 2019). One of the most important pillars of the strategy of the Theatre Institute in Bratislava is the Centre for Presentation and Marketing (CPM). CPM comprehensively ensures the operation of the Secretariat of the Theatre Institute, the presentation, promotion, and marketing of all centers and activities of the Theatre Institute, ensures the activities of the CPM in cooperation with the heads of the specialized centers of the Theatre Institute, maintains the central register of the documents of the Theatre Institute, communication with the founder of the Theatre Institute - the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, and cooperation on the projects of the Theatre Institute in cooperation with other centers of the Theatre Institute [1].

On request, it provides information on Slovak theatre and theatre abroad, including consultancy activities not only for researchers but also for the younger generation of students, and works on the preparation of analytical materials in the field of cultural policy, based on which meaningful activities are developed. The institute creates a background for the work of some Slovak NGO centers in the field of theatre, e.g. SIBMAS Since 1954, SIBMAS has been the international network of cultural heritage in the performing arts., It promotes research in the performing arts, facilitates networking among our members, and shares resources about their specific collections and the performing arts in general. SIBMAS organizes biennial conferences focusing on challenges and recent developments of current practical interest for its members encourages genuine collaboration and invests in spreading best practices among its members. Information is delivered through a quarterly newsletter, providing up-to-date news and information about the activities of SIBMAS and its members.

Another international institution that covers cooperation in the field of culture is the IETM, which is an international network for contemporary performing arts is one of the oldest and largest international cultural networks, representing the voice of over 500 performing arts organizations and individual professionals working in the contemporary performing arts worldwide. Its mission is to advocate the value of the arts and culture and empower performing arts professionals through access to international connections, knowledge, and a dynamic forum for exchange. IETM works to stimulate the quality, development, and context of the contemporary performing arts, in all their diversity. The members of IETM are organizations and freelancers working worldwide in the contemporary performing arts. They represent all performing arts disciplines: theatre, dance, circus, street arts, mime, music theatre, new media, performance art, interdisciplinary live art forms, puppetry, object theatre, site-specific work, participatory performance, and more. The members include artistic companies, collectives, organizations, festivals, venues, residencies, producers and independent artists, theatres and dance houses, cultural/research/resource centers, fellow artistic and cultural networks, universities, and institutional bodies. They work in all aspects of international cooperation: education, creation, production,

presentation, curation, promotion, support, and research (Benčíč, 2013; Balme, Fischer, 2022).

The above-mentioned organizations cooperate with cultural institutes operating in Slovakia and Slovak institutes abroad, especially in the exchange of information and documentary materials on theatre events. They communicate with the media, with state and nongovernmental theatres. They ensure cooperation with organizers of theatre events, festivals, conferences, theatre associations, and professional organizations active in the field of theatre. The Theatre Institute thus cooperates on an international level in the preparation of events, especially exhibitions and other presentations of Slovak theatre. It prepares analytical documents for the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and, in exceptional cases for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. It coordinates individual supporting projects, both domestic and foreign, as well as co-production projects financed from EU grant funds (Chovanová, Supeková, 2022). The CPM covers the New Drama Festival, the Night of Theatres, drama competitions, and the activities of the multimedia space Studio 12, which has emerged as a center of new theatre and new media. The CPM is also responsible for coordinating the monthly magazine *Kød* - specifically *ø* theatre.

The centenary of Slovak Theatre

The centenary of Slovak theatre brought an opportunity to recall the activities that led to the establishment of the Slovak National Theatre, the first professional theatre scene, and at the same time, it was an important theatrical event in a broader context. The events of the nationwide project under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic - Year of Slovak Theatre 2020 fulfilled common goals: to present the values of the past and present period of Slovak theatre culture at home and abroad, to raise awareness of the values of our theatre culture, to contribute to the development of the aesthetic perception of reality, to enrich spiritual life; to help establish new partnerships and creative collaborations between institutions and to link theatre with other forms of art. On the occasion of the Year of Slovak Theatre, the Theatre Institute, which initiated and coordinated the project, prepared several events and activities for the general public and theatre professionals.

When looking for the artistic form and design of the presentation and promotional materials for the Year of Slovak Theatre, the Theatre Institute, as with the RSD (*Rok slovenského divadla - Year of Slovak Theatre*) logo, continued the idea of approaching Slovak professional designers. The author of the visual of the Year of Slovak Theatre is graphic designer Jana Gavalda Bellanová, who also prepared and programmed the website www.rokdivadla.sk. In addition to basic information about the RSD project and its flagship events under the auspices of the Theatre Institute, SND (*Slovak National Theatre*), and NOC (*Národné osvetové centrum – National Education Centre*), the website provided up-to-date information about events of all

theatres and other cultural institutions from all over Slovakia throughout 2020. Following the introduction of pandemic measures and the related restrictions on 'live' events, the website mapped in detail the online activities and offerings of theatres in Slovakia, as well as many of the Theatre Institute's online activities and projects.

In the first phase of the project, the Theatre Institute prepared several presentation and promotional materials for the Year of Slovak Theatre, such as an English-Slovak folded leaflet with information about the RSD flag events, a weekly Diary 2020, a postcard for the Year of Slovak Theatre 2020, thematic bookmarks with quotations from the most famous Slovak dramatic texts, leaflets and posters in A1 and A3 format.

The identity of the RSD project was supported and promoted by well-known personalities from the field of theatre - honorary ambassadors Emília Vášáryová (actress of the Slovak National Theatre), Stanislav Štepka (artistic director and founder - Radošina Naive Theatre), Gabriela Mihalčinová Marcinková (actress), Jolana Fogašová (opera diva), Nina Poláková and Roman Lazík (soloists of the Viennese State Ballet).

For the RSD project, the Theatre Institute also created special social networks Facebook and Instagram, on which it published current information (Chovanová, Supeková, 2022) from the world of theatre, as well as short presentations and promotional videos throughout the year. After the introduction of security measures against the spread of COVID-19, the Theatre Institute moved the presentation of the Year of Slovak Theatre to the online space and also used this space to inform about current events. One of the first online questionnaires "Mapping the situation regarding the impact of measures against the spread of coronavirus in the field of theatre" was also published on the website rokdivadla.sk in March to gather indicative data from theatres, civic associations, and individuals regarding the state measures introduced, which resulted in the banning and cancellation of cultural events in Slovakia. In this way, the CPM obtained information from more than 60 entities (state, municipal, independent theatres, and individuals), which it evaluated and included in a comprehensive statistic mapping the first period of theatre closures. The RSD also paid special attention to the continuation of the presentation of the jubilee of Slovak theatre abroad and made available on the RSD website and drew attention to several theatre projects and websites available in foreign languages: Slovak Drama in Translation, Contemporary Slovak Directors, and Ten Choreographers of Slovak Contemporary Dance, the Theatre.sk catalogue.

Media coverage of Theatre Institute activities

In 2020, the Theatre Institute's PR informed the media and the professional public about activities and projects through 24 press releases. Press releases and information on these events are published on the Theatre Institute website www.theatre.sk. It also provided information on the achievements of the

Theatre Institute, on new publications and exhibitions of the Theatre Institute, on events and presentations of the Theatre Institute and Slovak theatre in Slovakia and abroad, on the program of Studio 12 as well as on other events related to theatre culture. He informed about the deaths or life anniversaries of theatre personalities. It published information through a monthly newsletter (activities of the Theatre Institute /events and challenges in Slovakia and abroad in the field of performing arts), through the internet portal www.theatre.sk and www.navstevnik.sk, the Facebook fan page of the Theatre Institute www.facebook.com/divadelnyustav and the Nová dráma festival (*New Drama 2020 Festival*). The Theatre Institute's PR covered new publications of the Theatre Institute, World Theatre Day and International Dance Day, awards of the Theatre Institute, exhibitions of the Theatre Institute, projects of the Theatre Institute, competitions of the Theatre Institute, Nová drama (*New Drama 2020 Festival*), Nová drama (*New Drama – alternative*), Night of Theatres, theatre co-production and Studio 12 program, as well as various organizational changes and announcements, invitations to events, foreign and out-of-Bratislava activities of the Theatre Institute, as well as information concerning the activities of the Theatre Institute related to the situation of the COVID 19 case. The worldwide pandemic also resulted in the interruption of projects in the pipeline that the department was working on the New Drama Festival/New Drama

Conclusion

Scientific and international collaboration between the Theatre Institute in Bratislava and between those studying theatre history, theory, and practice brings several important benefits to education. In particular, there is the broadening of knowledge and perspectives, based on exchanging information and ideas. In the international context, it is the implementation of new trends from different cultures, countries, and continents. Particularly important is the promotion of creativity and innovation. This helps students and professionals to broaden their understanding of theatre, its history, its cultural context, and its significance. It also contributes to the knowledge of the history and specificities of different cultures, as it allows the audience to enter a simulated environment that faithfully depicts the specificities of different ethnic groups. The plays outline solutions to contemporary problems in a divided society. The use of authentic sources and archives is important for credibility and the promotion of truthful information. Dramatic works can be used, especially by young people, to discover new facts about cultural traditions. Developing concepts and strategies through the dramatic or operatic arts that contribute to cultural exchange can have a positive impact on global understanding and tolerance in a non-coercive way (Shepherd, Wallis, 2004; Oliva, 2014).

Scholarly and international collaboration among theatre studies scholars plays a key role in the provision of theatre studies education by enabling students and practitioners to access diverse perspectives, resources, and opportunities for

critical reflection and innovation. Generally public cultural institutes, often play a crucial role in supporting action art, which encompasses various forms of performance art, interventionist art, and happenings. These institutions provide platforms for young artists to showcase their work, engage with audiences, and provoke thought and discussion. Cultural institutes provide physical spaces for action artists to exhibit their work. This can include galleries dedicated specifically to performance art or spaces within larger museums and cultural centers. Many cultural institutes offer funding and commissions to action artists to create new works. This financial support allows artists to dedicate time and resources to develop and present their projects (Kováčová, 2020; Kováčová et al., 2021).

Documentation and Archiving: Cultural institutes often document and archive action art performances, preserving them for future generations. This documentation can take the form of photographs, videos, written descriptions, and other records, ensuring that the work is not lost after the performance is over. Documents from the archives and exhibitions of the Theatre Institute are used in professional and scientific journalism, which reaches the international level, i.e. the publication outputs are also in international peer-reviewed databases such as Elsevier SCOPUS, EBSCO, ERIH PLUS, DOAJ, CEEOL and CEJSH. Scopus is a large, multidisciplinary database consisting of scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings, which deliver a comprehensive overview of the world's research output in the fields of science (Benčíč, 2010). As an example, the supervisor of the author of this article, who conducted his scientific studies (and one of the last articles of international dimension) in collaboration with the Theatre Institute. In 2021, Stanislav Benčíč worked for several months on his research in the archives of the Theatre Institute and in his article (Benčíč, 2022), uncovered unknown facts from the life of Edita Gruberova. This article was published by the Slovak Academy of Science (SAV) in the Journal "Slovenské divadlo" "Stanislav Benčíč, through the analysis of reviews and shorter journalistic pieces, brings to light the circumstances, opportunities, and conditions in which the future "queen of bel canto", opera singer Edita Gruberová, whose professional beginnings (1968-1970) are linked to Slovak stages, was formed before the beginning of her great international career. Since the author of the text, Stanislav Benčíč, works in the field of media studies, he offers a view of Slovak music journalism in the late 1960s in addition to a reconstruction of Gruber's Slovak career, which is only minimally reflected in the foreign memoir literature on the artist" (Mojžišová, 2022, p. 108).

Educational programs and workshops related to action art, help to contextualize and explain the work to audiences. This can include artist talks, panel discussions, and interactive activities that engage viewers with the concepts and techniques behind action art (Kováčová, 2020). Curators and art professionals working within cultural institutes play a crucial role in selecting and presenting action art exhibitions. Their expertise helps to contextualize the work within

broader artistic movements and provide critical analysis and interpretation to audiences.

Theatre education in a broader context is part of theatre pedagogy. The concept of theatre pedagogy and the term itself is becoming more and more well-known in the world. It encompasses all attempts to use at least some elements of theatre, dramatic activity in a school or after-school setting, among children, youth, or adults, to teach the world through theatre or theatre as an art form. The practice of theatre pedagogy encompasses a wide range of activities in a variety of forms, such as: performance activities, performance and preparatory and/or processing activities, introductory theatre, classroom theatre, comprehensive packages, multi-session sessions (not related to performance but to the theatre), and supplementary programs within theatre activities. In addition to the above, these include special literature classes, matinees, talks, etc. The work of the Theatre Institute also encourages the use of action art in the production, whether in the form of elements or the entire script (Kováčová, 2021).

Education through drama uses a series of activities carried out by children or young people under the guidance of experts in different disciplines to achieve specific educational outcomes aimed at understanding interpersonal relationships and other issues. The aim is to connect the listener to a specific role in a specific situation and to achieve a specific educational goal. That goal may be to develop the ability to express oneself or to solve problems posed by contemporary issues. PR of Theatre Institute is integral to the success of the organization, as it helps to shape public perception, build trust, and maintain positive relationships with all social groups. Its function and position within the organizational structure align with the organization's strategic goals and priorities.

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**Manuscript Submission Guidelines for:
STUDIA SCIENTIFICA FACULTATIS PAEDAGOGICAE
UNIVERSITAS CATHOLICA RUŽOMBEROK**

Accepted contributions will be published after recommendation of at least two reviewers and after an evaluation of journal's Editorial Board.

Formatting your article:

Size B5 (18,2x25,7 cm)

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|------|
| Margins | top | 3 cm |
| | bottom | 3 cm |
| | left (outer edge) | 3 cm |
| | right (inner edge) | 3 cm |

Font Times New Roman

Font Size: 11: Line spacing – 1.0 (simple)

Scope of a contribution: Maximum of 10-15 standard pages in A4 format is recommended.

An article must contain the following items in their respective order: title, subtitle (if there is any) in the language of a contribution and in English, contributor's name (names), email address, author's workplace, abstract in English (up to 200 words), key words (up to 6 words in English), text, list of bibliographical references, picture descriptions (if there are any), picture and graph references.

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Citations and Lists of Bibliographical References:

Citations should take the following form:

STN ISO 690 – Documentation.

Bibliographical References:

References to these standard works should be consistent: the method of the first indication and the date.

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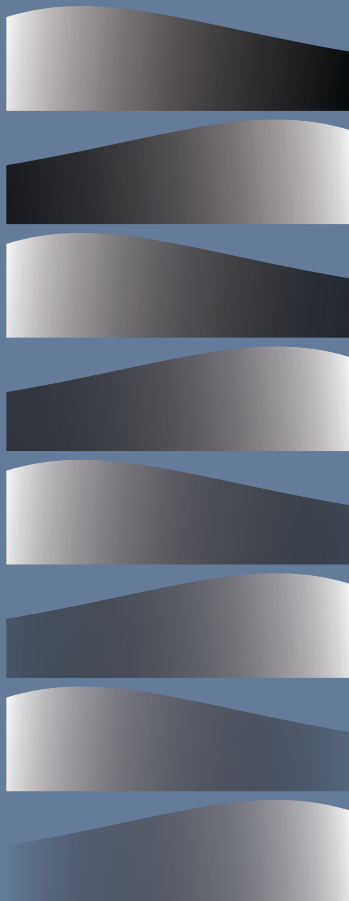
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