



International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies

Volume 4, Issue 1

January 2017

DOI: 10.17220/ijpes.2017.01

2017

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Turkish social studies teachers' opinions about performance tasks in elementary education*

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 02.09.2016

Received in revised form
06.10.2016

Accepted 08.12.2016

Available online

01.01.2017

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal how Turkish social studies teachers regard performance projects in elementary education, to determine problems experienced and to find out their recommendations for them. The study is based on phenomenology, a qualitative study design. The population of the study is comprised of 20 social studies teachers working for schools located in the city of Sakarya. They were provided with the interview form designed by the researchers. The interview form consists of six questions designed in a way that will reveal how social studies teachers regard performance projects. The data were analyzed through descriptive analysis. The study concluded that the great majority of the teachers use performance projects for evaluation purposes. However, they do not believe that performance projects serve their purpose. They also stated that both teachers and students experience a number of problems during implementation and evaluation. According to the participants, both students and parents have a negative attitude towards performance projects.

Keywords:

Elementary education, social studies, performance task, teacher opinions

1. Introduction

In modern societies, elementary education is the most significant step in schooling individuals in a way that will enable them to adjust themselves to developments and changes. Thanks to elementary education, children learn that they are an important element of society. Therefore, elementary education is the basis of the formal education system and other educational stages are based on it in Turkey, as is the case for many other nations throughout the world. Seeing how important it is, curricula for elementary education should develop students' basic knowledge of and high-level thinking skills in all subjects. Furthermore, they should facilitate the process of learning at the next stages (Duban and Küçükyılmaz, 2008). The developments and changes in many areas of life have been reflected on the process of learning and teaching through curricula for elementary education (Çalışkan, 2011). Learning is no longer regarded as a process during which individuals react to the stimuli around them (Saban, 2004), but rather as a process that explains how individuals use and develop cognitive processes, and how learning occurs (Airasian and Walsh, 1997). This shift in the process has not only modified the philosophy of education but also brought about new opportunities in teaching practices. It has enabled one to witness different practices and models designed with the aim of schooling individuals with desired skills. In parallel with the shift in the philosophy of learning, an objective approach to learning and learner-centered teaching practices have started to be recognized (Tezci, 2002). Constructivist learning is a product of this approach and requires recognition in practices for teaching social studies. Basing the Curriculum for Social Studies on the constructivist approach has made alternative approaches to testing and evaluation necessary.

Testing and evaluation is an indispensable part of the learning/teaching process that aims to test and evaluate whether the curriculum is successful or not, whether students are able to develop the desired skills and

*This study was presented in ERPA International Congresses on Education on 2-4 June, 2016 as a verbal statement.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.17220/ijpes.2017.01.001>

attitudes, whether they can gain the required level of knowledge, and to what extent particular instructional methods are efficient. With different testing and evaluation tools, teachers determine the developmental process of their students and their level, and they provide feedback to them (MEB, 2005). They employ a number of testing and evaluation methods to do so. One of them is performance tasks. These tasks can be defined as "short-terms tasks that require students to associate their educational attainments with daily life, to use and develop cognitive, affective and psycho-motor skills at the same time and produce something (Çalışkan and Yiğittir, 2008). Performance tasks are used to test students' high-level thinking skills, to reveal how students will solve problems in their daily life and to determine how they will use their knowledge and skills to solve such problems (MEB, 2005).

Since they reflect a holistic, authentic and more complex approach to testing and evaluation, performance tasks draw attention to real-life experiences. Furthermore, they reflect a focus on the connection between school activities and non-school activities, and on personal accomplishment. The way learners carry on the process of constructing knowledge is of great importance, and so is the way they learn and divergent solutions are set forth (Tezci, 2002). Therefore, testing and evaluation for social studies should prioritize what students know rather than what they do not know. Accordingly, performance tasks should be taken into consideration as well as conventional testing and evaluation methods (Safran, 2004; Sağlam, 2006).

In parallel with the shift in the approach to learning, a corresponding change is experienced in the approach to testing and evaluation. In this sense, the emphasis of evaluation is not only learning products or solutions that are always right or wrong, but rather suitability for the task and reflecting learning ways are recognized as significant criteria for the evaluation, for the curriculum designs do not focus on producing or gaining knowledge but construction of knowledge on the part of students. Accordingly, teachers help learners to monitor their own development and to set standards for learning and qualified studying. Testing and evaluation is not considered as a process irrelevant to teaching, but rather as a continuing process in the center of teaching which directs teaching. Testing and evaluation is not undertaken at the end of the process, but provides constant information as to how to continue learning and curriculum development activities (Yurdakul, 2005). In this sense, it is not an end but a guideway to future learning (Erdem and Demirel, 2002). This perspective enables students to interpret the world within the framework of their own cognitive structures and previous experiences (Jonassen, 1994). It is an indicator of learning when a student constructs knowledge with a harmony between previous learning and new learning, and he/she puts the knowledge into practice in order to solve real-life problems (Perkins, 1999). Learners should be provided with such opportunities in order for them to be able to be trained as thinkers and problem-solvers. In this way, they can be taught how to cope with complex and conflicting multiple realities and facts, which they will encounter throughout their life (Brooks and Brooks, 1999; Johnson and Johnson, 2002; Korkmaz, 2004). Such learning requires a process-oriented evaluation that puts learners in the center and charges them with guiding teachers. Performance tasks can be considered within this scope (Çalışkan and Yiğittir, 2008). A review of literature suggests that there are a number of studies on the approaches to testing and evaluation for several subjects (Duban and Küçükylmaz, 2008; Çiftci, 2010; Kumandas and Kutlu, 2010; Okur and Azar, 2011). Even so, there are a limited number of studies on social studies teachers' opinions about performance tasks (Kabapınar and Ataman, 2010; Palaz et al., 2015). This study aims to reveal how Turkish social studies teachers regard performance tasks in elementary education, to determine problems experienced and to find out their recommendations for them.

2. Method

2.1. Study design

The study is based on phenomenology, a qualitative study design. Studies on revealing and interpreting individual perceptions and perspectives about a certain phenomenon are generally defined as phenomenology (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

2.2. Study Group

The study group is comprised of 20 social studies teachers working for schools located in central districts in the city of Sakarya. Whereas 11 of them are male, the remaining nine are female. Seven of them work for schools located in city centers, eight in central districts and five in villages. The study was conducted on social studies teachers selected through maximum sampling from elementary schools with different socio-economic levels. The reason for choosing a sample based on maximum diversity is not generalization, but rather an attempt to determine whether such conflicting situations have anything in common and to reveal different dimensions of the problem in accordance with the diversity (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

2.3. Data Collection Instrument

A semi-structured interview form was designed following a review of literature. In semi-structured interviews, questions are predetermined and an attempt is made to collect data through those questions (Karasar, 2005). Designed by the researchers, the interview form consists of six questions prepared in a way that will reveal how social studies teachers regard performance tasks. In order to ensure content validity of the questions, two specialists were asked for their opinion and required modifications were made in accordance with their recommendations. In addition, three teachers were interviewed in order to test whether the teachers included in the study will have difficulty in understanding the questions. Following the interviews, certain statements were revised and the form was finalized. The form consists of the following questions: "Do you use performance tasks in evaluating students for social studies course? Is it necessary to use them? Why?", "Do you think performance tasks serve their purpose? Can you explain?", "What difficulties do you encounter in implementing and evaluating performance tasks in social studies lessons? Can you explain?", "What difficulties do you think students encounter in the process of implementing and evaluating performance tasks in social studies lessons? Can you explain?", "How do students and their parents regard the use of performance tasks in social studies lessons?, "Can you explain?" and "What can you recommend for the process of implementing and evaluating performance tasks in social studies lessons?".

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through descriptive analysis. The purpose of descriptive analysis is to make raw data more comprehensible and usable. The data obtained through descriptive analysis are summarized and interpreted in accordance with pre-specified themes. Moreover, direct quotations are often included so as to reflect the opinions of individuals interviewed or observed in a striking manner (Altunışık et al., 2001; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). The data were assessed and coded separately by the researchers. The consistency between the codes was found to be 0.91. Considering that the level of consistency was higher than 0.70, the analysis was thought to have inner consistency (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Direct quotations were included during the process of reporting. The validity of the themes and codes were ensured through direct quotations from the teachers (Patton, 1997). For reporting the quotations, each of the teachers was granted a number from 1 to 20 and reflected in the form of T1 (Teacher 1), T2 (Teacher 2) and so on.

3. Results

As a result of the analysis carried out, the seven category were obtained from the social studies teachers: (1) The use of performance tasks, (2) The belief in the necessity of performance tasks, (3) Serving their purpose, (4) The difficulties experienced by teachers during implementation and evaluation, (5) The difficulties experienced by students during implementation and evaluation, (6) The attitudes of students and parents attitude to performance tasks and (7) Teacher recommendations for implementing and evaluating performance tasks. These categories are presented and explained below.

When the Table 1 is analyzed, the great majority of the social studies teachers stated that they use performance tasks. Only one of them said that he/she implements performance tasks as assignments and does not use them for evaluation purposes. "The reason why I do not use them is because I use them as assignments. Since I use them as assignments for fear that I cannot catch up with the curriculum, I have no expectation of feedback concerning them. In other words, I do not include them in the process of evaluation whether students take them to classroom or not (T4)" explained the teacher. "Another reason why I do not include performance tasks

in evaluation is the regulations. The regulations stipulate that the score students get on them must not be below the score they get on examinations. How am I supposed to evaluate those students who never carry out performance tasks then? If the GPA of a student who never carries out performance tasks is 60, then his-her score on performance tasks will be at least 60! Seeing that such students get 60, why do not those who carry out them at least incompletely get 100? (T4)” added the teacher.

Table 1. The distribution of the use of performance tasks

Category	The use of performance tasks	f
Sub-category	I use	19
Codes	For evaluation	16
	For enabling them to develop the feeling of responsibility	3
	For instructional purposes	2
	As an obligation	2
Sub-category	I do not use	1
Codes	Because of the fact that they are assigned as homework	1
	Because of the regulations	1

The teachers using performance tasks noted that they use them for “evaluation purposes”. “I think students should be responsible for performance tasks for one or two courses...I use performance tasks in evaluation and I believe that this is very useful (T1)” said one of those teachers. “In other words, I take performance tasks into consideration while evaluating students (T18)” said another. Some of the teachers stated that they use performance tasks “for the purpose of enabling them to develop the skill of taking over responsibility”. “However, the purpose is to enable students to develop the skill of taking over responsibility, of performing a task on time, of attaching importance to the task they assume, etc. (T12)” said one of them. “They enable students to develop the feeling of responsibility (T13)” said another. Some of the teachers noted that they use performance tasks “for instructional purposes” or “as an obligation”. “I use them not for testing and evaluation purposes but rather for instructional purposes (T9)” said one of them. “I think such an evaluation is not reliable, for both teachers and students regard them as an obligation. Teachers use them since they are obliged to so. Students carry out them since they are obliged to do so (T18)” said another.

Table 2. The distribution of the belief in the necessity of using performance tasks

Category	The belief in the necessity of using performance tasks	f
Sub-category	They should be used	18
Codes	Since they ensure a better and more permanent learning	7
	Since they promote self-confidence	5
	Since they develop the feeling of responsibility	4
	Since what is learned can be transferred to real life	3
	Since they enable one to determine competency and deficiencies	3
	Since they make students active during the process	3
	Since they reveal different aspects of students	3
Sub-category	They should not be used	2
Codes	Because of lack of time	1
	Because of the fact that performance can observed during lessons	1
	Because of their failure to reveal facts	1

When the Table 2 is analyzed, nearly all the teachers believe that performance tasks are necessary. Only two of them think otherwise. “...performance tasks require at least two weeks. Seeing that especially curriculum for social studies is extensive and current lesson hours are insufficient, we cannot catch up with the curriculum even if we implement only one performance task, for it means two hours of implementing and another two hours for evaluating...In addition, we undertake evaluation during lessons owing to the new educational system. Furthermore, students produce

things during lessons. They carry out activities regarding the topic in question. I do not think implementing performance tasks are necessary at all since the activities I mentioned above can also be regarded as performance tasks (T3)", said one of these teachers, emphasizing "lack of time" and the fact that "student performance can be observed through other classroom activities". "Students performance cannot be reflected truly since performance tasks are considered as an obligation (T18)" said the other teacher.

Some of the teachers believing that performance tasks are necessary emphasized that they "ensure a better and more permanent learning". Some of the participants stated as follows: "Students can learn better thanks to the performance tasks on the topic in question (T2)", "It is necessary to use performance tasks in order to enable students to better understand and internalize the kind of knowledge and skills they acquire (T5)", "Performance tasks provide permanent knowledge (T11)" and "However, performance tasks help them acquire permanent knowledge since they learn through practice. The more sense organs are involved, the higher the quality of learning (T17)".

Some of the teachers noted that the reason why they use them is that they "promote self-confidence". "I think performance tasks are important in that they promote self-confidence (T5)" explained one of them. "If we can make students present their performance tasks, they will be more self-confident (T2)" said another. Some of the teachers stated that they use performance tasks "for the purpose of enabling them to develop the skill of taking over responsibility". "The purpose of performance tasks is to enable students to develop the skill of taking over responsibility, of performing a task on time, of attaching importance to the task they assume, etc. (T12)" said one of them. "They enable students to develop the feeling of responsibility and skill of performing a task on their own (T13)" said another. "I believe that performance tasks are important in that they enable them to develop the feeling of responsibility (T17)". Among other justifications for using performance tasks are "enabling what is learned to be transferred to real life", "determining competencies and weakness", "making students active" and "revealing their different aspects".

Table 3. The distribution of serving their purpose

Category	Serving their purpose	f
Sub-category	They serve their purpose	9
	When proper guidance is provided	4
	When time is managed properly	3
	When scientific research steps are used	2
	When students are enabled to participate in the process of evaluation	2
	Since they ensure a better and more permanent learning	6
Sub-category	They fail to serve their purpose	11
	Because of the fact that they are not attached importance	8
	Because of the fact that resources cannot be found or used properly	5
	Because of environmental impossibilities	3
	Because of lack of time	2
	Because of the fact that scientific research steps are not used	2
	Because of high number of students in a classroom	2
	Because of students' worry about marks	2
	Because of the differences in goals	2

When the Table 3 is analyzed, most of the participants noted that performance tasks do not serve their purpose whereas some of them think otherwise. Some of these teachers stated that "a better and more permanent learning is ensured thanks to performance tasks". They stated as follows: "I think they mainly serve their purpose, for I can observe that students can still remember what is learned through performance tasks even after two months (T9)", "They enable students to learn better and in a more permanent way (T6)", "They enable students to attempt to acquire or construct knowledge on their own. Since they do not get ready knowledge but gain it through their own efforts, a more permanent learning is ensured (T13)" and "They help them understand especially Geography (T15)".

Some of the participants thinking that performance tasks serve their purpose noted that "they guide students in a proper way". "I believe that they will prove to be very useful on the condition that teachers enlighten students and guide them in a proper way about performance tasks (T5)" said one of these teachers. "They will serve their purpose if suitable topics are chosen for their level and the process is guided in a proper way (T10)" said another. "Performance tasks will serve their purpose if they are used with scales and instructions (T17)" said another. In addition, there are

other teachers who believe that *“time management”* is a must for performance tasks to serve their purpose. *“I maintain that performance tasks will be very useful if time is determined well (T5)”* said one of these teachers. Among the other requirements for performance tasks to serve their purpose are *“the use of scientific research steps”* and *“participation of students in the process of evaluation”*.

The participants thinking that performance tasks do not serve their purpose mostly noted that *“they are not attached importance”*. *“The reason for this is that we can observe that students are still overwhelmed by certain conventional thoughts, they have fears of mark and they perceive performance tasks not as an opportunity to study, analyze and synthesize things, but rather they just copy a resource and write down something. Thus, I do not think that they serve their purpose properly (T11)”* said one of these teachers. *“Since students are assigned performance tasks also for other courses, they suffer from burnout, do not manage their time properly, leave them to the last minute and botch them (T12)”* said another. *“Whether they can serve their purpose is 90% dependent on students. I do not think they serve their purpose. Only a limited number of students carry out them willingly and by learning (T14)”* said another teacher similarly. *“Students do not attach enough importance to them although research topics, steps and marking are explained in a clear way (T16)”* said another teacher.

Other two reasons provided by the teachers who do not think that performance tasks serve their purpose are *“inability to find resources”* and *“inability to use resources”*. *“Students print something from the Internet or use just one resource. Another reason is that they have difficulty in finding research resources (T2)”* explained one of these teachers. *“I cannot say that they fully serve their purpose. The reason is that students cannot find enough resources owing to the conditions of the environment they live in...(T12)”* said another. Other reasons are *“lack of opportunities owing to their environment”, “lack of time”, “not using scientific research steps”, “high number of students in a classroom”* and *“students’ worry about marks”*.

Table 4. The distribution of the difficulties experienced by teachers during implementation and evaluation of performance tasks

Category	The difficulties experienced by teachers during implementation and evaluation of performance tasks	f
Codes	Performance tasks not submitted on time or not submitted at all	9
	Too crowded classrooms	9
	Being time-consuming and tiring	7
	Students being indifferent and inattentive	6
	Problems caused by evaluation scales	5
	Students not using different resources	5
	The difficulty in following tasks	3
	Parents-induced problems	3
	Students unaware of research steps	3
	Extensive curriculum	2
	Problems caused by the regulations	1

When the Table 4 is analyzed, the participants noted that they experience a number of problems while implementing and evaluating performance tasks. In the order of importance, they list the problems as follows: *“students not performing or submitting tasks on time”, “too crowded classrooms”* and *“implementation and evaluation being time-consuming and tiring”*.

Most of the teachers emphasized that tasks are not submitted on time as follows: *“The primary problem is that students either do not submit their performance tasks on time or do not submit them at all (T3)”*, *“I experience problems with students who do not submit their tasks on time...(T8)”*, *“Not submitting performance tasks on time or not submitting them at all create problems...(T10)”*, *“Problems are experienced since tasks are not prepared on time (T12)”* and *“Tasks are not submitted on time although sufficient time is allocated (T14)”*.

Most of the teachers emphasized that classrooms are too crowded as follows: *“Too crowded classrooms create problems with evaluation (T14)”*, *“Performance tasks are difficult to implement especially in classrooms with 55 to 60 students. Teachers are obliged to evaluate too many performance tasks considering that classrooms are too crowded (T5)”* and *“Evaluation of individual performance tasks might create problems in classrooms with too many students (T14)”*.

Some of the participants emphasized that it is time-consuming and tiring to implement and evaluate performance tasks. *“Evaluating each performance task in accordance with rubrics is both tiring and time-consuming on the part of teachers (T5)”* said one of these teachers. *“One of the problems for the process of evaluation is time. Considering the number of students classrooms have, there is really a limited amount of time for evaluation (T11)”* said another. Other problems are *“indifferent and inattentive students, “problems brought about by the scales of evaluation”, “students using different resources”, “difficulty in following tasks”, “parents-induced problems, “students unaware of research steps, “extensive curriculum” and “difficulties caused by the regulations”.*

Table 5. The distribution of the difficulties experienced by students during implementation and evaluation of performance tasks

Category	The difficulties experienced by students during implementation and evaluation of performance tasks	f
Codes	Failure to find resources	6
	Performance tasks above their level or incomprehensible performance tasks	5
	Their obligation to undertake performance tasks for each course	4
	Necessity of using too many tools and materials	3
	Their failure to plan their tasks properly	2
	Difficulties in group-work	2
	Problems caused by the socio-economic level of parents	1
	Lack of teacher counsellorship	1

When the Table 5 is analyzed, the participants noted that students experience a number of problems while implementing and evaluating performance tasks. In the order of importance, they list problems as *“not being able to find resources”, “performance tasks above their level and incomprehensible performance tasks” and “their obligation to undertake performance tasks for each course”.*

As for the first problem, some of the participants stated as follows: *“They sometimes have difficulty in finding resources for performance tasks. This is the biggest problem especially in schools located in villages (T3)”, “They have problems with how to find information resources (T8)” and “They have difficulty in conducting research and finding resources (T15)”.* As for the second problem, some of the participants stated as follows: *“Performance tasks are sometimes beyond their level (T3)” and “They cannot produce anything as expected since they cannot comprehend topics properly (T9)”.*

Some of the participants emphasized their obligation to undertake performance tasks for each course. *“They have difficulty in carrying out performance tasks properly, for they undertake them for each course. They cannot complete tasks on time or have to do them inattentively...(T1)”* said one of them. *“In addition, they are tired of doing them when performance tasks for different courses coincide with each other in a couple of weeks (T3)”* said another. Other problems are *“the necessity of many tools and materials”, “not being able to plan tasks properly”, “difficulty in group-work”, “problems caused by the socio-economic level of parents” and “lack of teacher counsellorship”.*

Table 6. The distribution of the attitudes of students and parents towards performance tasks

Category	The attitudes of students and parents towards performance tasks	f
Sub-category	Students	20
Codes	Positive	4
	Negative	16
Sub-category	Parents	20
Codes	Positive	3
	Negative	17

When the Table 6 is analyzed, the participants think that both students and parents generally adopt a negative attitude to performance tasks. Very few teachers maintain that they are considered positive by students and parents. The teachers thinking that students generally adopt a negative attitude to performance tasks emphasized as follows: *“Most students do not open up to performance tasks. Therefore, they slide around with simple*

preparations (T2)", "Students consider performance tasks as a great bother and unnecessary (T3)" and "Students dismiss performance tasks as trivial. It is clear that examinations like SBS have an influence on that perspective. A child attending to a private course for such examinations prefers to do tests rather than waste their time on performance tasks (T19)". "Students are generally willing to conduct performance tasks. However, some problems might be experienced with submitting on time (T20)" said one of the participants who maintain that students have a positive attitude to these tasks, which means that some problems might occur no matter how positive a child regards them.

Among the responses by the participants who believe that parents have a negative attitude towards performance tasks are "Students and parents maintain that performance tasks are unnecessary. We often have to face their struggle about them. Parents think that their children should do tests rather than waste their time on such tasks, for their examination schedule is very busy. Considering that performance tasks are mandatory, it is parents who generally prepare them (T18)" and "According to students, parents remark that performance tasks are very boring by saying 'Another performance task!' (T6)". "Parents regard performance tasks as tasks and do their best to support their children during the process, for they believe that performance tasks are very useful for students. (T13)" said one of the teachers who believe that parents have a positive attitude towards performance tasks.

Teacher recommendations for implementing and evaluating performance tasks. Teacher recommendations for implementing and evaluating performance tasks are grouped under four categories: "recommendations for the content of the tasks", "recommendations for evaluation of the tasks", "recommendations for remedying the deficiencies of the tasks" and "recommendations for parents about the tasks". General recommendations for the content of the tasks are as follows: "Students should be expected to undertake performance tasks not for all courses but just one or two of their favorite courses. They should be provided with the opportunity to choose between tasks depending on their age and skills. Performance tasks should make learning permanent and focus on developing those skills that can be used in their daily lives. They should attract students' attention and encourage them to conduct study, investigation and original research. They should facilitate adaptation to social life. They should enable them to be aware of their duties and responsibilities to their state, nation and family. They should focus on not memorization but comprehension and reasoning. Comprehension and reasoning should be taken into account during the process of evaluation. Materials and subjects should be accessible."

General recommendations for the evaluation of the tasks are as follows: "Instead of assigning performance tasks, their year-long activities should be kept in their product files and evaluated as a whole. More detailed scales should be used for evaluation. The statements for the marking should be brief and concise. Evaluation scales should be designed and implemented with a consideration into the characteristics of the system".

General recommendations for remedying the deficiencies of the tasks are as follows: "Students should be informed about research steps. Teachers should be helped with their deficiencies in testing and evaluation. It is a must that performance tasks should be carried out in class under the guidance of teachers and they should not be regarded as homework. The time necessary for implementing and evaluating performance tasks should be specified and included in curriculum. They should be allocated more time than now." General recommendations for parents about performance tasks are as follows: "Parents should be informed about performance tasks. They should provide their children with more support. Performance tasks should not be considered as an activity that must be carried out by parents".

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Implications

It was observed that most of social studies teachers use performance tasks for evaluation purposes. This finding is supported by that of Çiftci (2010), who found that teachers believe that performance tasks are useful and use them for evaluating students. Among other uses of performance tasks are *enabling students to develop the feeling of responsibility, instructional purposes, assigning them as homework and as an obligation*. Nearly all of the participants believe that performance tasks are necessary in that *they ensure a better and more permanent learning, they promote self-confidence, they develop the feeling of responsibility, what is learned can be transferred to real life, they enable one to determine competency and deficiencies, they make students active during the process, and they reveal different aspects of students*. The finding supports that of Kabapınar and Ataman (2010), who discovered that performance tasks make students socialized and increase their awareness of responsibility. In addition, it is in parallel with that of Erdal (2007), who found that alternative testing and evaluation techniques encourage students to do research and thus increase their self-confidence. Two of the participants thought that performance tasks are not necessary *because of the fact that student performance can be observed during lessons and*

performance tasks cannot reveal facts. The finding is in parallel with that of Yücel (2008), who discovered that students tend to dismiss performance tasks as trivial.

More than half of the participants maintain that performance tasks fail to serve their purpose *since they are not attached importance, since resources cannot be found or used properly, because of environmental impossibilities, because of lack of time, since scientific research steps are not used, because of high number of students in a classroom, because of students' worry about marks and because of the differences in goals.* This finding is supported by that of Kabapınar and Ataman (2010), who found that performance tasks are prevented from serving their purpose owing to high number of students, lack of time and insufficient physical conditions. On the other hand, nearly half of the participants believe that a better and more permanent learning is ensured and thus performance tasks serve their purpose *when proper guidance is provided, when time is managed properly, when scientific research steps are used and when students are enabled to participate in the process of evaluation.*

The participants listed the problems they experience during implementation and evaluation as *performance tasks not submitted on time or not submitted at all, too crowded classrooms, performance tasks being time-consuming and tiring, students being indifferent and inattentive, problems caused by evaluation scales, students not using different resources, the difficulty in following tasks, parents-induced problems, students unaware of research steps, extensive curriculum and problems caused by the regulations.* This finding is supported by the study conducted by Duban and Küçükyılmaz (2008). It is also similar to that of Çiftci (2008), who listed the problems as lack of time, parents' attitudes towards performance tasks and too crowded classrooms. Studies carried out by Adanalı (2008), Kabapınar and Ataman (2010) yielded similar findings.

The participants listed the problems students experience during implementation and evaluation as *failure to find resources, performance tasks above their level or incomprehensible performance tasks, their obligation to undertake performance tasks for each course, necessity of using too many tools and materials, their failure to plan their tasks properly, difficulties in group-work, problems caused by the socio-economic level of parents and lack of teacher counsellorship.* Similarly, Erdal (2007) found that parents consider new testing and evaluation materials as costly and thus do not support their children properly, which, in turn, causes them not to carry out performance tasks properly. This finding is similar to that of Çiftci (2008).

According to the participants, both students and parents generally have a negative attitude towards performance tasks. This finding is similar to that of Çiftci (2010), who found that those students who are neither successful nor in the habit of studying regularly consider performance tasks as a bother and get uncomfortable about them. The researcher discovered that nearly all parents have a negative attitude towards performance tasks. Furthermore, he-she found that parents either are indifferent to them or do them on their own on behalf of their children. In the study conducted by Kanatlı (2008), the teachers noted that negative attitudes adopted by parents are reflected on their children. The finding is supported by that of Ay, Karadağ and Çengelci (2008). The recommendations made by the participants of the present study for implementing and evaluating performance tasks are grouped under four categories: *"recommendations for the content of the tasks", "recommendations for evaluation of the tasks", "recommendations for remedying the deficiencies of the tasks" and "recommendations for parents about the tasks".*

In conclusion, the great majority of the participants noted that they use performance tasks for evaluation purposes. They believed that performance tasks ensure a better and more permanent learning, increase students' self-confidence, develop the feeling of responsibility, enable what is learned to be transferred to real life, make students active and reveal their different aspect. More than half of participants maintained that performance tasks fail to serve their purpose because of students' failure to find resources, environmental impossibilities, lack of time, not use of scientific research steps, high number of students, their worry about mark and differences in goals. The participants listed the problems they experience during implementation and evaluation as *performance tasks not submitted on time or not submitted at all, too crowded classrooms, being time-consuming, students being indifferent, problems caused by evaluation scales, students not using different resources, the difficulty in following tasks, parents-induced problems, students unaware of research steps, extensive curriculum and problems caused by the regulations.* The participants listed the problems students experience during implementation and evaluation as *failure to find resources, performance tasks above their level or incomprehensible performance tasks, their obligation to undertake performance tasks for each course, necessity of using too many tools and materials, their failure to plan their tasks properly,*

difficulties in group-work, problems caused by the socio-economic level of parents and lack of teacher counsellorship. According to the participants, both students and parents generally have a negative attitude towards performance tasks. The recommendations made by the participants of the present study for implementing and evaluating performance tasks are grouped under four categories: "recommendations for the content of the tasks", "recommendations for evaluation of the tasks", "recommendations for remedying the deficiencies of the tasks" and "recommendations for parents about the tasks". The following recommendations could be made in the light of the findings:

1. Students should be assigned performance tasks for their favorite courses. They should be suitable for their level.
2. The materials used for performance tasks should be readily-available.
3. More detailed scales should be used for evaluating performance tasks. The statements for the marking should be brief and concise.
4. Students should be informed about scientific research steps and performance tasks should be carried out in class under the guidance of teachers.
5. Teachers should be helped with their weakness in testing and evaluation through in-service training.
6. Schools should be provided with necessary tools and equipment. Students should be enabled to carry out their performance tasks.
7. Parents should be informed about performance tasks properly. Necessary precautions should be made in order to make parents provide their children with more support.

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Predictors of the Social Validity Judgments of Early Childhood Intervention Performance Checklists and Practice Guides

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 10.09.2016

Received in revised form
21.11.2016

Accepted 20.12.2016

Available online
01.01.2017

ABSTRACT

Early childhood intervention practitioners (N = 42) reviewed three early intervention performance checklists and three intervention practice guides and made social validity judgments of the acceptability and importance of the products. Both the checklists and practice guides included evidence-based characteristics and indicators that are known to be related to improved child learning and development. Hierarchical regression analyses of the relationship between five predictor variables and the study participants' social validity judgments and found that only practitioners' cognitive appraisals of the checklists and practice guides accounted for significant amounts of variance in their social validity judgments beyond that accounted for by the other predictors (education, years of experience, primary role, and type of program). The importance of cognitive appraisals for understanding their influence on practitioner social validity judgments are described as are the limitations of the study.

Keywords:

Early childhood intervention, social validity judgments, performance checklists, practice guides, practitioner cognitive appraisals

1. Introduction

Early childhood intervention practices for young children with developmental disabilities or delays include different kinds of activities, experiences, and events designed to enhance child learning and development (Dunst, 2007). The extent to which intervention practices are used with fidelity is dependent, in part, on practitioners' or parents' judgments of the acceptability and importance of the practices and the expected outcomes of the practices (Dunst, Trivette, & Raab, 2013). These types of value statements have been described as social validity judgments (Foster & Mash, 1999; Schwartz & Baer, 1991). According to Strain et al. (2012), evidence "suggests that there is a positive correlation between [end-users] 'liking' an intervention (i.e., finding it acceptable and doable) and implementing the intervention with fidelity" (p. 197).

Findings from studies of the relationships between social validity judgments and the fidelity of use of different kinds of intervention practices (Pittenger, Barahona, Cavalari, Parent, & K., 2014; Vancel, Missall, & Bruhn, 2016; Wehby, Maggin, Moore Partin, & Robertson, 2011), including studies of early childhood intervention practices (e.g., Dunst, Raab, & Hamby, 2016; Strain et al., 2012), show that positive judgments of the acceptability and importance of the practices account for significant amounts of variance in adherence to the use of the key characteristics of different kinds of intervention practices. Little is known, however, about the personal and situational characteristics that influence practitioners' judgments of the social validity judgments of different kinds of intervention practices. Vancel et al. (2016), in one of the few studies investigating factors associated with variations in the social validity judgments of school-based practices, found that school level

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.17220/ijpes.2017.01.002>

differences (e.g., elementary vs. high school) but not teacher personal characteristics (e.g., gender) were associated with differences in teacher social validity ratings.

There is reason to expect that practitioners' cognitive appraisals of intervention practices might contribute to variations in their social validity judgments of different kinds of practices. Cognitive appraisals are a person's personal interpretation of life experiences and events (Yap & Tong, 2009). According to self-efficacy and cognitive appraisal theories, these beliefs can be either positive or negative and differentially affect personal interpretations of the same or similar life events and experiences (e.g., Bandura, 1993; Tong, 2013). Findings from a number of studies indicate that positive and negative cognitive appraisals in fact result in different interpretations of the same life events and experiences (e.g., Nyer, 1997; Paškvan, Kubicek, Prem, & Korunka, 2016; Silvia, 2005).

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the analyses described in this brief report was to determine if early childhood practitioner personal characteristics (e.g., years of experience, educational degree), practitioner primary intervention role, type of early childhood program (U.S. Department of Education Early Childhood Intervention vs. U.S. Health and Human Services Early Head Start), or early childhood practitioner cognitive appraisals, were associated with variations in practitioners' judgments of early childhood intervention performance checklists and practice guides. The data were collected as part of field-tests of the importance and acceptability of three different early childhood intervention performance checklists and three different early childhood intervention practice guides.

The performance checklists were developed using a conceptualization-operationalization-measurement framework (Dunst, Trivette, & Raab, 2015) to delineate subsets of evidence-based intervention practices for several of the Division for Early Childhood (2014) recommended practices. The checklists include internally consistent sets of practice indicators that, taken together, are the key characteristics of a particular intervention practice (e.g., practices for strengthening adult-child interactions). The checklist indicators in turn were used to develop practice guides that included specific activities for using the checklist indicators to influence child outcomes. The two different products (checklists and practice guides) are intended to be used by early childhood intervention practitioners with the children with whom they work or with parents to promote their use of the practices with their children.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants were 42 practitioners in early childhood intervention programs in three different United States. The practitioners' degrees, disciplines, years of experience, and program type are shown in Table 1. Most participants had bachelors or masters degrees (76%) in education or special education (81%). The participants' years of experience varied considerably with the majority (74%) having six or more years of experience. The early childhood practitioners were employed in either U.S. Department of Education Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) early childhood programs ("Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-446, 118 Stat. 2647," 2004) or U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Early Head Start Programs ("Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, P.L. 110-134," 2007).

Table 1. Background characteristics of the early childhood intervention field-test participants

Respondent characteristics	Number	Percent
Education degree		
Associates degree	8	19.0
Bachelors degree	15	35.7
Masters degree	17	40.5
Doctorate degree	2	4.8
Professional discipline		
Early childhood education	24	57.1
Early childhood special education/special education	10	23.8
Other ^a	8	19.1
Years of experience		
< 1	1	2.4
2-5	10	23.8
6-10	12	28.6
11-15	7	16.7
16-20	7	16.7
21+	5	11.9
Type of Program		
Early childhood intervention programs	24	57.2
Early head start program	18	42.8

^aSpeech and language pathologists, child and family specialists, and early interventionists.

2.2. Field Test Survey

Each participant reviewed a performance checklist and companion practice guide and then completed a survey that included social validity judgments of the (a) checklists, (b) the practice guides, and (c) the relationship (compatibility) between the checklists and practice guides. The three sections each included four social validity items that were developed using Foster and Mash's (1999) framework for assessing the importance and acceptability of intervention practices and the outcomes of the practices. Each item was rated on a 5-point scale ranging from do-not-agree-at all to agree-a-great-deal with the social validity statements (e.g., "The checklist items are easy to understand and follow," "The practice guide would be worth my time and effort to use"). Factor analysis of each set of ratings produced single factor solutions with coefficient alphas of 0.90, 0.85, and 0.92 for the checklist, practice guide, and compatibility items respectively.

The survey also included questions about the background characteristics of the participants shown in Table 1, a 5-point scale for ascertaining each practitioner's primary role providing early intervention to young children, and a series of open-ended questions asking participants for suggestions to improve the checklists and practice guides. The responses for identifying the practitioners' primary role choices were: (1) work directly with children on a one-to-one basis, (2) work directly with children in groups, (3) explain my interventions to the parents of the children, (4) illustrate my interventions to the children's parents, and (5) build parent capacity to implement my interventions with their children. The scale is modeled after one used by Dunst et al. (2014) to represent contrasting types of intervention practices (child-focused vs. parent-focused).

The open-ended questions specifically asked for suggestions to improve or change the checklists and practice guides. There were four open-ended questions for the checklists and three open-ended questions for the practice guides. The suggestions to improve the checklists or practice guides included statements such as "The checklist items need to be restated in simpler words," and "The practice guide needs more examples of intervention activities"). Many participants also made positive comments about the checklists (e.g., "The checklist items were concise, understandable, and to the point") and practice guides (e.g., "The format of the [practice guide] was well designed and easy to follow"). The practitioners' suggestions to improve the checklists and practice guides and their positive comments about the products were used to compute personal interpretation indices which were used as proxy measures for positive or negative cognitive appraisals of the

checklists and practice guides. The measure was computed as a balance score for the number of positive comments minus the number of suggestion comments for each practitioner.

2.3. Predictor Variables

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, ranges for five predictor variables, and the variable codes used in data analysis. All of the predictor variables except type of early childhood program were coded at an ordinal or interval scale level, whereas program type was coded as a nominal scale for ascertaining type of program differences on practitioner social validity judgments.

2.4. Method of Analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003) was used to evaluate the relationships between the predictor variables and the practitioners' social validity judgments. The variables were entered into the analyses in the following order: Practitioner education level, practitioner years of experience, practitioner primary role, program type, and practitioner cognitive appraisals. Three regressions were performed: One for the checklist social validity judgments with the number of practitioner checklist cognitive appraisals as the predictor variable, one for the practice guide social validity judgments with the number of practitioner practice guide cognitive appraisals as the predictor variable, and one for the checklist-practice guide relationship social validity judgments with the total number of practitioner checklist and practice guide cognitive appraisals as the predictor variable.

Table 2. Predictor variables for the social validity analyses

Predictor Variables	Variable codes	Descriptive statistics		
		Mean	SD	Range
Practitioner education degree	AA = 1 to PhD/EdD = 4	2.30	0.85	1 to 4
Years of practitioner experience	< 1 = 1 to > 21 = 6	3.58	1.43	1 to 6
Practitioner primary role ^a	Child = 1 to Parent = 5	3.97	1.35	1 to 5
Type of early childhood program ^b	EHS = 0 and IDEA = 1	0.14	0.98	0 or 1
Checklist cognitive appraisals ^c	-3 to 3	0.31	1.49	-3 to 3
Practice guide cognitive appraisals ^c	-4 to 4	0.00	1.79	-4 to 4
Total number of cognitive appraisals ^c	-7 to 7	0.31	3.09	-7 to 7

^aScored on a continuum from primarily child-focused to primarily parent-focused interventions.

^bEHS = Early Head Start Program

IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Early Childhood Programs.

^cThe balance scores were computed as the number of positive comments minus the number of suggestions for each practitioner.

3. Results

3.1. Correlations

The correlations between the predictor variables and social validity judgments are shown in Table 3. The different social validity measures were correlated with one another, and each was correlated with practitioner cognitive appraisals. Practitioner degree, years of experience, and professional role were all correlated with type of early childhood intervention program. Practitioners employed in IDEA intervention programs had more formal years of education and were more likely to involve parents in their children's early intervention. In contrast, practitioners employed in Early Head Start Programs had fewer years of early childhood intervention experience.

Table 3. Correlations between the predictor variables and the practitioner social validity judgments

Study measures	Social validity			Predictor variables				
	PC	PG	CP	ED	YE	PR	TP	CA
Social validity judgments								
Performance checklists (PC)	-	.53 ^e	.58 ^e	.08	.03	-.24	-.04	.54 ^e
Practice guides (PG)		-	.73 ^e	.29	-.05	.08	.01	.37 ^b
Checklist-practice guides (CP)			-	.27	-.06	.04	.06	.42 ^d
Predictor variables								
Education degree (ED)				-	-.25	.16	.61 ^e	-.13
Years of experience (YE)					-	-.15	-.40 ^c	-.18
Practitioner primary role (PR)						-	.32 ^a	.10
Type of program (TP)							-	.12
Cognitive appraisals (CA)								-

^a*p* = .041, ^b*p* = .015, ^c*p* = .008, ^d*p* = .006, ^e*p* = .000 (two-tailed tests).

To be assured multicollinearity among the predictor variables would likely not affect the regression analysis results we first ran diagnostic tests to determine if the VIFs (Variance Inflation Factors) were below a recommended threshold of three. This was done by treating each predictor variable as a dependent measure and the other four variables as predictors. Five analyses were run with each predictor variable as a dependent measure. The median VIF was 1.19 (Range = 1.04 to 1.84) indicating that multicollinearity was minimally present among the predictor variables.

3.2. Regression Analyses

The results for the three regression analyses are shown in Table 4. In each analysis, R² was significant only at the last step in the regression analyses. Between 36% and 41% of the total variance in the practitioners' social validity judgments was explained by the five predictor variables.

Practitioner cognitive appraisals of the checklists and practice guides were the only predictor variables significantly related to variations in the social validity judgments in each of the three analyses. Between 22% and 34% of the variance in social validity ratings were accounted for by the practitioners' cognitive appraisals after the effects of the other predictor variables were partialled from the analyses. In all three analyses, the more positive the practitioners' cognitive appraisals, the more socially valid they rated the checklists and practice guides as evidenced by the direction of the signs of the standardized regression coefficients for cognitive appraisals.

Table 4. Predictors of the social validity judgments of the early childhood intervention practitioners

Predictor variables	Hierarchical regression results			
	R ²	IR ²	β	<i>p</i> -value
Performance checklists				
Respondent education level	.01	.01	.08	.600
Years of experience	.01	.00	.05	.764
Practitioner primary role	.07	.06	-.26	.112
Type of early childhood program	.07	.00	-.05	.818
Checklist cognitive appraisals	.41 ^a	.34	.62	.000
Practice guides				
Respondent education level	.09	.09	.29	.060
Years of experience	.09	.00	.03	.865
Practitioner primary role	.09	.00	.04	.817
Type of early childhood program	.14	.05	-.32	.137
Practice guide cognitive appraisals	.36 ^b	.22	.49	.001
Checklist/practice guide relationship				

Respondent education level	.07	.07	.27	.085
Years of experience	.07	.00	.01	.934
Practitioner primary role	.07	.00	.00	.998
Type of early childhood program	.09	.02	-.20	.363
Total number of cognitive appraisals	.36 ^c	.26	.54	.000

NOTES. IR² = Increment in R² at each step of the hierarchical regression analyses. The *p*-values for the regression analyses are for IR². β = The standardized regression coefficient at the step of entry into the regression analyses.

^a*p* = .002, ^b*p* = .006, and ^c*p* = .005.

4. Discussion

The analyses reported in this paper showed that cognitive appraisals of the early childhood intervention performance checklists and practice guides that were targets of evaluation were the only predictor variables that accounted for significant amounts of variance in practitioners’ social validity judgments. In contrast, none of the practitioner background characteristics or type of early childhood program proved important in terms of accounting for significant amounts of variance in the practitioners’ social validity judgments.

Cognitive appraisals play central roles in a number of theories where personal evaluations are viewed as determinants of how individuals interpret life experiences and events (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Berlyne, 1960; Scherer, 1999). Different individuals often interpret the same life experiences and events differently, where cognitive appraisals represent a person’s unique evaluation of those events and experiences. Bandura (1997), for example, argued that past experiences that result in outcomes confirming or disconfirming expectations shape and influence subsequent beliefs about and evaluations of new experiences or events.

The analyses described in this paper were undertaken to a large degree by the fact that the study participants viewed the early childhood intervention performance checklists and practice guides differently as evidenced by the diverse nature of their comments, feedback, and evaluation of the products. These appraisals proved highly predictive of the practitioners’ judgments of the importance and acceptability of the checklists and practice guides. Including cognitive appraisal measures in studies of both the social validity and fidelity of use of intervention practices could help identify why practitioners do and do not see the value of different kinds of early intervention practices (see e.g., Dunst et al., 2016). Cognitive appraisal measures might also prove important as mediators or moderators of the relationship between social validity judgments, fidelity of use of intervention practices, and outcomes of interest (e.g., Dunst, Pace, & Hamby, 2007; Swanson, Roper, Raab, & Dunst, 2006).

There are a number of limitations to the methodology used in the study that need to be highlighted to place the findings in context. First, the use of respondent comments to open-ended questions as a proxy measure was not a direct assessment of cognitive appraisals which may have influenced the study results. Second, the small sample size and the fact that the participants were from only three early childhood intervention programs limits generalizability of the results. Third, other predictor variables not included in the study might prove to be important determinants of social validity judgments. Despite these limitations, the strength of the study is highlighted by the fact that social validity judgments are not made in a vacuum but rather are influenced by personal evaluations shaped by the previous experiences, beliefs, and values of early childhood intervention practitioners as our results indicate.

Acknowledgements

The research reported in this paper was supported, in part, by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (Grant # H326P120002) to fund the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center awarded to the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill. The opinions expressed, however, are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Department, Office, Institute, or University.

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Teachers' Attitudes Regarding the Development of Socio-Emotional Skills in Elementary Schools in Greece

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 15.08.2016
 Received in revised form
 13.10.2016
 Accepted 07.12.2016
 Available online
 01.01.2017

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' attitudes regarding the development of socio-emotional skills of students in primary general schools and the implementation of programs concerning the development of these skills within the school context. Socio-emotional skills are of particular importance in children's lives, as they help to develop appropriate codes of behavior, which would allow them to survive in the contemporary demands of society. Students should be able to communicate in acceptable ways, both with their peers and with other members of their family and society. An important contributor to the development of socio-emotional skills is the teacher (Elias & Arnold, 2006). The contemporary teacher must be thoroughly informed about techniques and approaches that should be followed to develop and strengthen the cultivation of these skills to all students and particularly to those who experience difficulties of social adaptation and show disruptive behavioral disorders.

Keywords:

socio- emotional skills, teachers' attitudes, behavioral disorders

1. Introduction

The term *socio-emotional skills* means skills that support and develop the bilateral process, through which the children are introduced to the wider community, while at the same time they differentiate as separate people, with the coexistence of personality, of feeling and their organization and control by mental mechanisms (Cole & Cole, 2001).

Basic socio-emotional skills, which pupils need to develop in the school environment-with the help of teachers-are empathy, understanding and management of basic emotions (joy, sadness, anger, fear) and especially of those which are extremely negative. The cultivation of techniques for handling situations that are created through conflicts is considered particularly important. By developing skills and techniques, students are empowered to avoid aggressive and provocative behaviours in resolving problematic situations (Matsopoulos, 2000).

Socio-emotional learning is the field of education that connects the academic knowledge with the abilities and skills that are important for success in school, but also in family, or society, working life and, more generally, in life (Elias & Arnold, 2006, p. 6). In accordance with the above, the combination of academic and socio-emotional learning is a prerequisite for effective education nowadays.

Caldarella & Merrell (1997) classified social skills during childhood. These are the *relationships with peers* (compliments, helping others, invitation for cooperation, encouragement for dialogue, leadership etc), *self-management* (self-regulation, rule sequence, compromise on cases that need, acceptance of criticism, collaboration in many cases etc.), *academic course* (organization, completing activities, teacher's instruction sequence, search help in courses when it is needed, etc.), *compliance* (sequence of instructions and rules,

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.17220/ijpes.2017.01.003>

acceptance of the hand, responsibility in completing assigned work, etc.), *claim* (dialogue or conversation, return to compliments, self-confidence, introduction to others and expression of feelings to injustice, etc.). The degree of conquest and successful implementation of the above mentioned skills determine the extent of social adequacy and individual customization (Caldarella & Merrell, 1997).

According to researchers, negative attitudes, which are heavily dependent on the sex and age of the children are observed within the school environment (Burke, Loeber & Birmaher, 2002; Farrington, 1998; Loeber & Stouthamer- Loeber, 1998) such as, taunting of students among themselves, threats, intimidation, physical abuse, rejection and isolation, reactions to teachers and non-cooperation accompanied by lack of teamwork (Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1991).

Often, the absence of development of social-emotional skills of children is the reason for the appearance of negative behaviours that should be dealt with at an early age, so that they are not solidified as permanent characteristics of the child. Negative behaviours are usually accompanied by very low school records, lack of social relationships, emotional difficulties, rejection and isolation from companies and aggressive behaviour against parents and teachers (Loeber et al., 1998; Maguin & Loeber, 1996; Wilmhurst, 2009).

Capsi & Moffit (1995) argue that children with aggressive behaviors usually present lack in developing some basic verbal skills. This absence affects negatively the development of self-control; consequently, children have difficulties expressing negative feelings and they exhibit delinquent behavior. Additionally, these children have not developed the skill of empathy, as they are unable to put themselves in the place of others and understand the feelings of other people.

The development of psycho-emotional and social skills of children in the general population is in the foremost position of importance as early as the kindergarten curricula (2003) and the special education consider that these skills play an exceptionally important role in children's progress. One of the key objectives of preschool education as well as the Institution of Integration is the children's socialization and enhancement of self-reliance (Cross Curricular Curriculum Study Framework, 2003). However, in accordance with other researchers, an inclusive programme for young children, who exhibit a variety of problems, is considered successful if sets short-term or long-term social and emotional objectives, other than the teaching goals (Bailey & Wolery, 1992).

In Greece, there have been a few efforts to promote developmental programs regarding socio-emotional skills. According to the few such interventions in schools, research has shown great improvement of social skills of participating students and especially those who were less popular and experienced rejection by their peers (Triliba & Chiementi, 1996).

An indicative program of intervention that was designed and implemented in schools within Cyprus and Greece is the *Program for Promotion of Mental Health and Learning: Social and Emotional Education*. This program was designed by the *Centre for Research and Applications of School Psychology at the University of Athens* and was implemented in collaboration with the *Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation*. That program focused on developing socio-emotional skills for all students. The application was undertaken by both school psychologists and teachers following who were specialized educated (Hatzichristou et al., (a), 2004).

Also, a *Preventative Program of Social-Emotional Learning* was applied to a high school in the island of Crete with the aim to promote psychological resilience and emotional intelligence of children. The survey results showed that such programs are even more effective when supported by the educational community as a whole. Generally, Matsopoulos & Triliba (2004) support that teachers ought to promote schedules and try to prevent problems before they appearing. The research data, however, in relation to programs of socio-emotional skills were presented incomplete and insufficient for carrying out inferences.

Finally, there is a gap in bibliography, as regards the collection of teachers' attitudes concerning the socio-emotional development of students. The completion of this research is important and necessary in order to provide information about the attitudes and the knowledge of teachers regarding the development of socio-emotional skills of their students and the use of programs targeted towards this direction.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sample

In this research five primary education teachers were involved. During that particular school year (2015-2016), they taught in an elementary school situated in a semi-urban area in the vicinity of the city of Heraklion, in Crete. The overall number of registered students in the school was one hundred and six (106).

Every one of the aforementioned teachers was solely in charge of one class from 1st to 5th grade. One of them was male, while the rest were women. With regards to their educational background one holds a Masters degree while the remaining four are holders of a bachelor degree from a University Department of Primary Level Education. Three teachers have 10 years of professional experience while the rest have 15 years respectively.

2.2. Process

This work is both a qualitative study and a case study and was carried out by applying the methodological approach of the *educational action research*. The researcher primarily aimed at creating a friendly and cordial atmosphere in his initial meeting with the teachers participated in the survey. On the brink of the meeting the participants discussed general educational issues, and then, the teacher-researcher introduced to the team to the topic of the research, that is *the knowledge they have about the socio-emotional skills of their students and their development techniques*. Finally, the contributors were asked to give their permission to the teacher-researcher to enter occasionally their classrooms to attend different subjects of the curriculum each time, in order to carry out observation and to maintain a *diary of reflection*.

Then, the teacher-researcher started the obvious non-participatory observation of teachers during their teaching, completing the *diary of reflection* in parallel, six times for each teacher, over the period of three weeks. The duration of observation was 45 minutes, one teaching hour.

Upon completion of the above mentioned non-participatory observations with simultaneous data recording into *the diary of reflection*, a *focus group* session was held with the participation of all teachers, in order to complement collectively a *semi-structured* interview.

The interview lasted for 1 hour and 45 minutes. The preliminary discussion focused on both the research topic and the interview process and in particular, it was stressed that the interview aimed at receiving responses from the focus group as a whole and not individually. Consequently, it became clearly clarified that the participants will not respond individually to the questions, but would provide a group response after discussion between them. Shortly after, the recording began and teachers were discussing the questions of the interview under the guidance of teacher-investigator (coordinator). After that, the teacher went through the transcript of the interview, the recording and the analysis of collected data.

2.3. Research tools

According to Vrasidas (2014), in order for a properly structured and well organized qualitative research to be accomplished, there must be adherence to the basic criterion of validity. Also, there should be an application of techniques, which can ensure the validity of research results. The use of multiple techniques to collect data from the interviewer is considered of particular value. So, the researcher could use several data collection methods to ensure the utmost validity (Vrasidas, 2014). Therefore, this research study used three data collection methods such as, apparent *non-participatory observation*, *reflection diary* and *focus group interview*, in order to achieve the triangulation of data, which reinforces the validity of a qualitative research (Kyriazi, 1999).

In the context of the *clear non-participant observation*, the teacher-researcher observed the teaching process and was found in the natural environment of the observed that was the classroom. In this particular instance the researcher observed and recorded events associated with the observed teachers' reactions in unexpected and precluded behaviors of students. In addition, he recorded the ways in which the observed teacher came across the behaviors of students (punishments, rewards, incentive offer, children with low self-esteem and self-confidence, etc.).

All collected data were recorded into the *diary of reflection* and the information that emerged was used to draft the interview questions given to the focus group for further discussion and group's response. Finally, in the context of the *focus group interview* the participant teachers answered the questions of the interviewer as regards the knowledge of socio-emotional skills of their students, discussing in parallel to each other and posing new concerns.

2.4. Data Analysis

After careful transcription of the focus group interview, answer categories were created that were grouped into the following themes:

3. Results

3.1. Information regarding the proficiency of teachers on the socio-emotional skills of students

Generally, teachers presented the socio-emotional skills they consider most important for the smooth integration of the child in the school context. One of the basic socio-emotional skills which students must develop within the school environment with the help of teachers is *empathy*. According to Matsopoulos (2000), with empathy the person understands how others feel and thereby learns to refrain from conflicts, while at the same time, improves the social relations and resolves the problems more easily. Also, Malikiosi and Loizou (2003), indicate that empathy is an attitude whose characteristics are presented through behavior that demonstrates one against another. Supplementary, researchers consider very important the understanding and management of basic emotions (joy, sadness, anger, fear) and in particular of those that are negative, as well as handling situations that are created through conflicts, something that teachers do not mention.

In addition, researchers report that teachers taking advantage of the experiences of their students can bring them in front of different experiences that will impart knowledge and skills and develop their communication. Through the organization of cooperation activities, they can help students to acquire important skills (conversation, dialogue, acceptance of another's opinion, respect, honesty, etc.) that will enhance their cognitive skills, something that research participants do not present in their replies.

Moreover, the teachers determined the inadequacies of their knowledge regarding the socio-emotional skills that are required to support the social- emotional development of their students and also the techniques to follow in order to achieve this. In the past, Papanou (2003) collected the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in relation to educational activities they desire to participate and found that they wished to be further trained in child's psychology topics.

3.2 The presence of negative behaviors and their relationship with socio-emotional skills

Teachers argued that the absence of socio-emotional adjustment creates negative behaviors. Additionally, teachers reported that due to the lack of socio-emotional skills children show disrespect, phenomena of isolation and rejection of other children, anger, aggressive verbal behavior and selfishness. In agreement with the literature, the disruptive behavioural disorders in the context of the school are presented in the form of aggressive teasing, with rejection of friendships and interpersonal relations, with reactivity against teachers and pupils, aggressive outbursts and using physical and verbal violence (Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1991).

It is also worth mentioning that the absence of a representative vocabulary and terminology for the expression of behaviors observed by teachers was noticed, which are deposited and are described with simple everyday speech. Besides, teachers find it difficult to categorize the behaviors and match them with the characteristics of students e.g. sex, age, family circumstances etc. and to identify straightforward approaches to handle such behaviors.

3.3 Techniques used by teachers to develop socio-emotional skills to students. Recognition and management of cases with lack of socio-emotional skills

Most teachers converge to use punishment as a consequence of illicit behaviors of students. There are, however, teachers who do not use punishment but use discussion and reward in cases where needed (positive behaviors). The formation of groups in cases where teachers seek to develop the skill of cooperation to their students is also observed. In addition, teachers agree with the modern concepts that promote techniques as regards rewarding and punishing which focus on alternative ways of punishment with positive outline. So, teachers often are encouraged to develop student's feelings and their general ability to put one's self faced with others without manifesting destructive tendencies (Kourkoutas, 2011).

This demonstrates that teachers in different countries and in different educational systems do not consider themselves qualified to deal with children with socio-emotional difficulties and disruptive behavioural disorders. Numerous studies have shown that students with similar problems have less feedback and support from their teachers compared with those that are considered to fall within the standards of good social conduct (Alvarez, 2004). So, it is noteworthy that the findings of those studies are in agreement with the insights of the participant teachers in this research and their admission that in several cases sufficient feedback is not given.

Another important issue is the presence of the student as a member of a team. The group helps the student to develop communication skills, though it does not specify the positive development of social skills, since children do not always understand the needs and feelings of others (Sakellariou, 2002).

At the same time, due to the fact that social skills are a prerequisite for healthy and balanced school life, teachers bear responsibilities for developing and cultivating healthy relationships among students (Asher, Oden & Gottman, 1992). The educator must offer positive reinforcement, verbally guide and use effective strategies for the development of communication skills of students (Asher et al, 1992).

Moreover, there is a great percentage of children with disorders that have not managed to develop operational frameworks which meet the requirements of social relations that developed in the school environment, which is observed in the responses of the teachers. The integration of these pupils in the group and in the learning process is necessary (McMahon & Forehand, 2003). It seems that teachers try to facilitate various informal ways, which they base on their experience to support their students and resolve the problems that may be are create. Their alternatives are associated with the offer of opportunities to children by creating debates and the development of positive reward behavior patterns. Moreover, teachers recognize that if children are motivated they decrease negative behaviors within the school environment. At this point, it appears a contrast. The literature review suggests that children with anti-social behavior rarely obtain encouragement from teachers, while students who exhibit disruptive behavioural disorders more often receive negative behavior from them (training punishment, lack of support, etc.) (Mcevoy & Welker, 2000).

On the whole, teachers demonstrate their need for further training and their concern about the adequacy of the knowledge they have so far and are in agreement with surveys, where teachers indicate uncertainty and anxiety when they have to deal with students in their classroom with behavioral and emotional problems (Thanos, Kourkoutas & Vitalaki, 2006; Kourkoutas et al., 2011).

3.5. Necessity of developing socio-emotional skills in the school context

Teachers recognized their responsibility for the development of social skills in order to cultivate healthy relationships among their students. They understood that the absence of social skills can lead to isolation and low self-esteem in students agreeing to international bibliography (Asher, Oden & Gottman, 1992).

With proper socialization, students are involved in interpersonal relationships and develop specific, useful special skills like, feeling of acceptance, sympathy and empathy etc. These skills allow a smooth adaptation of students in the classroom team life (Schaffer, 1996) which result in avoiding aggressive and provocative behavior when resolving problematic situations (Matsopoulos, 2000).

4. Conclusions

The participant teachers in this research do not have the aptitude to even name some of the most basic and important social and emotional skills that they should teach to their students. In addition, the lack of such terminology from the teachers' side is proven through their answers and their inability to classify the basic social and emotional skills into categories.

However, teachers seem to know some emotional skills, such as empathy and the management of basic emotions (joy, sadness, fear, anger), at least by name. Additionally, they recognize that self-esteem affects the students positively or negatively and its absence creates conditions of rejection and isolation to them.

It was found that teachers did not have adequate knowledge *to teach and develop* socio-emotional skills to their students. The participants teachers mentioned that they did not have sufficient knowledge with regard to techniques concerning the development of social skills among children. Separately, participant – teachers consider that the development of social skills would help all students to advance their cognitive development, too. They also believe that they should give importance to the socio-emotional development, although they are not informed about this issue.

Additionally, teachers observe, correctly, that many times the lack of socio-emotional skills results to disruptive behavioural disorders. They understand that the aggressive behavior, lack of respect, lack of self-control and lack of limits is likely to come from small socio-emotional adjustment. They, also, observe that phenomena of isolation and rejection may stem from poor social adjustment; they find it difficult, however, to define how they will integrate the students facing these problems more easily within the school context. Although the courses give opportunities to students for collaboration and interaction, teachers are not able to express how they do this. So they need more specific training upon the development of social- emotional skills. Moreover, teachers agree that the development of socio-emotional skills is not a topic they have been taught in the university as much as necessary.

All the above mentioned correspond with the observations recorded into the *diary of reflection*, where teachers showed concern and anxiety regarding the insufficiency of their knowledge about creating and developing socio-emotional skills for their students in the classroom. Also, according to the *diary of reflection* it was observed that teachers were working intimately with their students by using the dialogue as well as rewarding them. But they found it difficult to use other techniques in developing socio-emotional skills, such as managing emotions, for example.

Teachers agree, however, that the teaching and the development of socio-emotional skills must be a philosophy, not just applied to their classroom condition, but to the entire school and to the educational system of the country as a general rule.

Unfortunately, the model of teaching and development of socio-emotional skills to pupils is not clearly and explicitly provided by the *analytical educational curriculum* for the Greek elementary school.

Therefore, it would be extremely useful in the future to integrate in the aforementioned curriculum courses that can offer insights as regards the techniques referred to the development and teaching of socio-emotional skills to the students.

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Relations Of Peer-Victimization Exposure In Adolescents With The Perceived Social Support, Parental Attitude, School Success, School Change And Area Of Residence

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 14.10.2016

Received in revised form
01.11.2016

Accepted 03.11.2016

Available online
01.01.2017

ABSTRACT

This study is made to determine the predictive powers of the perceived social support, parental attitude, school success, school change and living in different area of residences variables in the students of 8.grade who are exposed to peer-victimization. The data of the research has been procured from 550 students who are the eighth-grader in Diyarbakır and Kocaeli. The data related to the predicted variable has been collected by using Peer-victimization Scale (Mynard & Joseph, 2000) and the data related to the predictor variables has been gathered by using the Perceived Social Support Scale – Revised Form (Yıldırım, 2004), the Parental Attitude Scale (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbush, 1991) and the Personal Information Form prepared by the researcher. The statistical analysis of the gathered data has been performed in computer by using SPSS 11.5 packaged software. Multiple Regression Analysis is used in determining the variables predicting peer-victimization exposure which is the purpose of the study. On the other hand, the Stepwise Regression Analysis is implemented in order to determine the explanatory variables having high correlation coefficient and the predicted variable. The findings obtained by the research can be summarized as the following: School success, perceived social support and authoritarian parental attitude are the variables predicting the peer-victimization exposure. It has been found out that the other variables in the analysis do not predict the exposure of the students to the peer-victimization. The findings obtained in the research are discussed and commented and suggestions have been made based on the facts.

Keywords:

Peer-victimization, victim, exposure to peer-victimization, perceived social support, parental attitude.

1. Introduction

Bullying between children has been actually continuing from time immemorial despite increasing bullying attitudes in schools in recent years. Domination of a student or a group of students on another

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.17220/ijpes.2017.01.004>

student or groups with aggressive or terrorizing behaviours has been subject for many books. The stories of the children who are bullying or peer-victimizing in well-known books such as *Oliver Twist* (Dickens, 1989), *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (Hughes, 1993) and *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 2006) are the examples. The increasing number of the bullying students at schools gives way to increasing number of the children exposed to bullying. Many researchers underscore the resemblance of the children when they investigate the features of the bullying and victims and they qualify them as "risky children". The children who have negative features in terms of demographic variables, come from a lower socio-economical level of income, living in a stress-filled family environment, have problems in family functions, and living in negative conditions in terms of school lives and social interactions are considered as risky children. On the other hand, negative facts are observed when a comparison is made in terms of social skills and psychological structures of the risky children (Mash and Wolfe, 2002; McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter and McWhirter, 2004; Vernon, 2004).

Despite risky children have similar features some of them may be "bullying" and some of them may be "victim". It is well understood in the research that is made in this field the individual differences as well as the personal skills play a determining role in being bullying or victim. While the children having lower self-respect and social skills are playing victim role, the children having lower empathy level and showing a tendency to psychoticism are playing bullying role (Rigby, 2003). While the families of the bullying children are rather controlled exhibiting repressive and violent attitudes the victims come from family environments that are excessive protective (Besag, 1995). The probability of exhibiting bullying behaviour of the children who are witnessing aggressive and bullying behaviours in the environments they live are increased (McWhirter and et.al, 2004). The risky children who attend a new school or live in a new environment and being with the children who are older than them have more probability of being a victim (Vernon, 2003). The bullying/victim children are depicted as the persons who are less popular, the least-loved, being easily provoked and provoking others (Stevenson and Smith, 1989). The children in this group are lonelier than the bullying children and have high probability of being rejected by their peers (Pekel and Uçanok, 2005).

The ecological environment in which children live is of significance in terms of being exposed to peer-victimization (McWhirter and et al., 2004). Family attitudes, characteristics of school environment, socio-economical characteristics of the region have significant role in being bullying or victim. Kocaeli and Diyarbakır provinces where the research has been made are different from each other in terms of their socio-cultural and economical textures. In the research in which socio-economic development 10 levels have been examined in terms of regions by Albayrak, Kalaycı and Karataş (2004) any province under the Turkey average in Marmara region which is the most developed region according to the socio-economic development is placed. On the other hand, the Southeast Anatolian Region is ranked in the sixth slot in the socio-economic development ranking and it is found out that all provinces in the region are under the country average. It is considered that the research in which school, family and social environment are taken together may be basis for the works for the protection of peer-victimization as the unfavourable behaviours such as bullying has multi etiologic according to the developing and ecological model. Starting from this point of view, the predictive powers of the factors arising from regional differences in the peer-victimization exposure have been examined by taking the schools in Diyarbakır and Kocaeli. The facts to be obtained from the research may be a benefit in point of emphasizing taking different precautions according to the regions in terms of giving support to the victim children. On the other hand, it is also considered that the results to be obtained from this study may contribute the preventive and corrective psychological consultation and guidance works in school by giving information about the characteristics of the victim students.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The individuals in the scope of the research are the students in 8.grade in the provinces of Diyarbakır and Kocaeli. One each class from three schools in the settlements where middle-income earner families

are in majority is elected by chance and the students in these classes are taken to the scope of the research. 277 students (50,6%) in the research scope are from the schools in Kocaeli and 273 students (49,4%) are from the schools in Diyarbakır. Totally 550 students comprise the research group.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

2.2.1. The Scale Determining the Victims of Peer Bullying

The scale determining the victims of peer bullying has been developed by Mynard and Joseph (2000). Adoption and standardization in Turkish have been made by Gültekin (2003). The scale is in self-rating type and implemented in individual or group forms.

The scale is comprised of 27 items and each item in the scale requests participants to mark one of the choices of "at no time", "once" and "more than one" which is the most appropriate for each of them. The answers are graded as (2) for "more than one", (1) for "once" and (0) for "at no time". The high point that is taken from 39 scales indicates that the person is targeted to the peer attack frequently, lower point indicates that the person is targeted to the peer attack rarely or nothing (Gültekin, 2003).

In the credibility study that is made by Gültekin (2003), it is found out that internal coefficient of consistence of the scale is 0.86 for the total point. It is 0.73 for terror, 0.68 for "mockery", and 0.72 for "relational aggression, 0.72 for "open aggression" and 0.67 for "personal effects" respectively for sub-factors.

2.2.2. Perceived Social Support Scale- Revised Form (PSSS-R)

The Perceived Social Support Scale has been developed by Yıldırım (1997) and revised by Yıldırım (2004). In this study, the version of the scale that has been revised in 2004 is used. The scale is comprised of three sub-factors and totally 50 items. The scale is comprised of three sub-factors as family, teachers and friends. The Cronbach alpha internal coefficient of the consistence is calculated for all scale as 0,93, as 0.94 for family dimension, as 0.93 for teacher dimension and 0.91 for friend dimension. 47 items in the scale consisted of positive statements and three items consisted of negative statements. Correspondingly, total points are obtained by calculating three items reversely.

In this study, the internal coefficient of the consistence of the scale is calculated and the factor structure of the scale is tested by the confirmatory factor analysis. Accordingly, Cronbach alpha internal coefficient of the consistence is calculated as 0,94 for all scale, as 0,89 for family dimension, as 0,89 for friends dimension, as 0,95 for teacher dimension. Fit indexes that are calculated after the confirmatory factor analysis that is made for the scale are calculated as $\chi^2/Sd = 2,49$, $RMSEA = 0,063$, $NNFI = 0,96$, $CFI = 0,96$, $IFI = 0,96$ and $AGFI = 0,74$. The findings indicate that PSSS-R is a credible and valid scale.

2.2.3. The Parental Attitude Scale

The original Parental Attitude Scale is developed by Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg and Dornbush (1991) and its adaptation studies for Turkey have been made by Yılmaz (2000).

The Parental Attitude Scale which is of 26 items is based on 3 factors. They are Acceptance-Interest, Control-surveillance and Psychological autonomy. There are 9 items in the Acceptance-interest dimension of the scale, 8 items in the Control-surveillance and 9 items in the Psychological-autonomy. Acceptance-interest dimension contains the perception of the children how they percept their parents as controlling and supervising, Psychological-autonomy dimension contains the fact that to what extent the parents implement the democratic attitude and to what extent they encourage the child in terms of his or her individuality.

Continuity (test again test) and internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) coefficients of the measuring agent for the children in primary education period respectively is .74 and .60 for Acceptance-interest sub-scale, .93 and .75 for Control-surveillance scale, .79 and .67 for Psychological-Autonomy. Four parental attitudes are distinguished from intersecting Acceptance-interest with Control-surveillance dimensions. It is accepted that the parents of the children who are graded over median in Acceptance-interest and Control-surveillance dimensions are "democratic", the parents of the children who are

graded under median are “negligent”. The parents of the children who are graded under median and the parents of the children who are graded over median in the acceptance-interest dimension are accepted as “authoritative”. The parents of the children who are graded above median in Acceptance-interest dimension and the parents of the children who are graded under median in Control-surveillance dimensions are accepted as “permissive”. Psychological-autonomy dimension is left out of the assessment as it is made categorically (authoritative-permissive-democratic-negligent). If the assessment is made based on dimension (autonomy, acceptance and control) psychological autonomy dimension is also included into the assessment (Yılmaz, 2000). Only first two items of the Control-surveillance dimension with seven degrees, other items with 3 degrees. The items in the other dimension are in Likert type. Nine items of the scale with numbers of 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17 form Acceptance-interest dimension, nine items of the scale with numbers of 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 form Psychological-autonomy dimension and eight items of the scale with numbers 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 form Control-surveillance dimension.

In the assessment items with odd numbers are taken as they are (Acceptance-interest dimension). The items with even numbers are graded reversely in the Psychological-autonomy dimension. The only 12. item is not graded reversely. The first two items of Control-surveillance dimension are graded between 1 and 7: 7 for “no” answer, 1 for “until the hour I wish”. As for 21. Question 1 for “no effort”, 2 for “less effort” and 3 for “more effort” (Yılmaz, 2000).

2.2.4. Personal Information Form

Personal information form is regulated by the researcher in order to collect information about school success, province and continuing education at the same school which are predicting variables in this research.

2.3. Data Analysis

Prediction related to the peer bullying exposure of the individual participating in the research is made by the points they obtained from the peer-victimization scale and stepwise regression analysis that is made for the independent variables of the same individuals. In the regression analysis social supports perceived by the children, parental attitudes, school success, whether they change school and living in different socio-economical regions are investigated for finding out if they predict the peer-victimization.

3. Results

The election of the best model relating to the prediction of peer-victimization exposure point is researched by the stepwise regression analysis and finally four different regression models have been obtained. Multiple correlation (*R*), multiple determination coefficient (*R*²) and changing *R*² values to the next model are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Stepwise Regression Analysis in relation with prediction of points about Peer-victimization exposure

Model	R	R ²	Estimated standard error	Change in R ²	Change in F'	Sd ₁	Sd ₂	p Change in F'	r Double correlation	r Partial correlation
1	0,622	0,387	13,1499	0,387	328,188	1	519	0,000	-0,622	-
2	0,704	0,495	11,9509	0,108	110,360	1	518	0,000	-0,532	-0,419
3	0,733	0,538	11,4443	0,043	47,876	1	517	0,000	0,488	0,291

1 Predictors: (Fixed) , School Success

2 Predictors: (Fixed) , School Success, Perceived Social Support

3 Predictors: (Fixed) , School Success, Perceived Social Support , Authoritative Parental Attitude

As it is well seen in Table 1 it is observed that at the end of each steps R coefficient is found significantly from 0 (zero). In the first step dependent variable and perceived social support variable ($r=-0,622$, $R^2 = 0,387$) which have the highest correlation has come into the mode. The contribution of the predictors to the variability of the peer-victimization exposure points is seen Table 2.

Table 2. Contribution of the variables in the model to peer-victimization exposure points

Model	β	Standard Error	Standard β	t	p
Fixed	55,605	1,962		28,336	0,000
SCSUC	-5,197	0,416	-0,421	-12,491	0,000
SOCSUP	-0,177	0,018	-0,316	-9,724	0,000
PARAT (AUTHORITATIVE)	7,584	1,109	0,225	6,839	0,000

Dependent variable: Peer-victimization exposure

PEER-VIC = 55,605 - 5,197* SCSUC - 0,177* SOCSUP + 7,584* PARAT (AUTHORITATIVE)

As it is understood from the regression coefficients given in the plenary equation, as long as the points of the individuals that peer-victimization exposure points increase school success points show a tendency to be dropped or as long as the peer-victimization exposure points drop school success points show a tendency to increase. The average of the school success of the students forms 38,7 per cent of the total change explanation amount (38,7%) in the points of peer-victimization exposure ($\beta(\text{standard})=-0,421$). The related statistical is ($t= -12,491$, $p<0,001$). This value is significant.

As it is well seen Table 1, in the second step dependent variable and the social support variable perceived as having the highest correlation coefficient ($r= -0,532$; $R^2= 0,495$) entered in the model and it explains significantly the peer-victimization exposure in addition to the school success variable ($R^2\text{change}=0,108$; $F(1,518)$ $\text{change}= 110,360$; $p<0,000$). The partial correlation between the perceived social support and the dependable variable is observed as $r= -0,419$.

On the other hand, as long as the peer-victimization exposure points of the individuals increase social support points are dropped or as long as the peer-victimization exposure is dropped the perceived social support points increases. The perceived social support points contribute the explanatory amount of total change (10,8 %) in the peer-victimization exposure points in the rate of 10,8 per cent ($\beta(\text{standard})=-0,316$). The related t statistical is ($t= -9,724$, $p<0,000$). This value is significant (Table 2).

In the third step, parental attitude variable is included in the model. In this model $R= 0,733$; $R^2 = 0,538$. On the other hand, $R^2 \text{change}=0,043$ and $F(1,517)\text{change}= 47,876$, $p<0,000$. Authoritative parental attitude variable owns the highest partial correlation together with the dependent variable ($r=0,291$). According to the parental attitude perceived by the students who are included in the research when the students who have authoritative parental attitude is taken into consideration $t= 6,839$, $p<0,00$. In other words, the points of the students who have authoritative parental attitude forms 22,5% of the total change in the points of peer-victimization exposure points (Table 2).

It is observed that the number of member in the family, school change and region variables cannot be included into the plenary model that is obtained by stepwise multiple regression analysis as being a significant predictor of the peer-victimization exposure.

4. Discussion

In the regression analysis related to the predicting peer-victimization exposure the prediction power of the perceived social support, authoritative parental attitude, school success, school change and living in different environments variables have been investigated. The dependent variable is found in the independent variables and school success is found out as the variable having the highest correlation. As long as the peer-victimization exposure increases the school success points drop or as long as the peer-victimization exposure drops the school success points increase.

Juvonen et. al. (2000) indicate that the living of the children who are exposed to peer-victimization is stressed and this living gives way to academic failure by specifying that psychological adaptation may be a mediator between peer-victimization exposure and school success. According to this point of view, the children who are targeted to bullying may experience various psychological problems due to the maltreating they experience. The psychological problems that they experience cause dropping in their academic success (Pekel, 2004).

The students who are exposed to peer bullying in school environment generally continue their education in a bad grace even the reject to go to school or they are not able to be motivated to the 53 activities in school (Olweus, 1993). In time school environment becomes a scene in which negative events are experienced as the victims are insulted and mocked by the bullying students and ostracized and even they are exposed to physical violence. Academic failure becomes inevitable for the victims.

In the independent variable of the research, the perceived social support is the variable having the highest second correlation. As long as the points of the students for peer-victimization exposure increase social support points drop or as long as the peer-victimization exposure drops the social support points increase.

When the research investigating the relation between the peer-victimization exposure and perceived social support is taking into consideration (Graham and Juvonen, 1998; Kochenderfer-Ladd and Skinner, 2002; Pekel, 2004; Pişkin, 2003) it can be said that the students whose social support level is low are lonelier students and to be lonely is a risk factor in the peer-victimization exposure.

School period is a rich environment for children and adolescents in terms of social relations. In this period friendship circle is of great importance for individuals. The lonely children who are not placed in any group or failed to make friendships have a high tendency to be exposed to bullying. On the other hand, there may be children experiencing some psychological problems such as depression due to being exposed to bullying or turning on himself or herself. In this sense, the social support given by teachers or others placed in an ecological cycle is of great importance in order to 54 establish adaptation in preventing exposure to bullying.

Another question in the research was whether authoritative parental attitude predicts the peer-victimization in the students of 8. grade. According the findings that have been obtained it can be said that the individuals who perceived authoritative parental attitude are exposed to the the peer-victimization.

In the researches explaining the relations between parental attitude and the peer-victimization exposure (Akgün, 2005; Finnegan, Hodges and Perry, 1998; Ladd and Kochenderfer-Ladd, 1998) it is found that the relations between authoritative parental attitude and the peer-victimization exposure is significant.

When it is noted that personality development of individual is originally formed within family it may be said that the individuals who are raised with authoritative attitude of parents may have some

problems in dealing with the problems they face in their childhood and adolescent periods. In this attitude it is very difficult to establish relations with children and rough rules and sanctions impose on them. As corollary children have difficulty to make decision for their own and have to behave according to the choice of their parents. Accordingly, the autonomy emotion in the children is not developed when it is compared to their peers.

When the school environment is taken into consideration in which social relations are experienced intensely it cannot be anticipated that children who are raised with this kind of parental attitude could develop healthy attitudes as it is necessary that the skills of the children must be developed in order to roll with punches against the peer-victimization exposure. The children who are raised with authoritative parental attitudes try to be obedient to the rules set by their parents. They cannot express themselves, they are insecure and they are suppressed easily. Accordingly, the children who are raised with this attitude appear as risk groups in the peer-victimization exposure as they lack the support to encourage them in defending themselves.

When the literature related to bullying is reviewed, it is well understood that ecological theory is very significant in explanation of the peer-victimization exposure and it is discussed in a theoretical framework. According to the ecological theory, the sociocultural characteristics of the region has an effect on the individual development and behaviour by interacting with the other units in the ecological cycle (Espelage and Swearer, 2003). On the other hand, McWhirter and et al (2004) specified that the reasons of negative behaviours in the adolescent period such as bullying, perpetration and ganged up can be dealt with the ecological point of view. The ecological factors such as family, peer groups, school and other social factors affect both individual characteristics and are affected by them. A part of the individual characteristics are the variables such as age, gender and ethnic origin. In most research that are made in abroad relations between peer-victimization exposure and ethnic origin is explained (Eslea and Mukhtar, 2000; Moran, Smith, Thompson and Whitney, 1993; Seals and Young, 2003).

It can be said that provinces of Kocaeli and Diyarbakır are different settlements which accommodate different socio-cultural characteristics (Albayrak, Kalaycı and Karataş, 2004). When Diyarbakır is taken in terms of socio-economic conditions, it is placed in Southeast Anatolian Region in Turkey which is in a lower level in terms of regions. When it is taken specific conditions, it is seen that this has been continued in long years. Diyarbakır has been let in immigrants from near provinces, districts and villages in the last ten or fifteen years due to the terrorist incidents experienced in the region. The immigration movements causing rapid urbanization and rapid population growth as well as social and economic situations of the spaces which let in immigrations have subversive effects on all structures and establishments. On the other hand, these developments as well as changes in social living conditions and adaptation to the new conditions cause the development of substructure allowing crimes and perpetrators. Especially, unhealthy immigration and population growth made speed the cultural deflections in children and youngsters (Şimşek, 2006).

When differences between the two cities are taken in the ecological theory, it created a curious about if it created a different also on peer-victimization exposure or not. However, the findings obtained from the research living in different regions do not predict the peer-victimization exposure.

The characteristics of the schools that are elected (election of the school in middle socioeconomically level) make way to no differences between two cities in terms of peer-victimization exposure. On the other hand, not comparing family characteristics of the students in the elected school it can be given a way that the children can be placed in these school from the families who do not come from these regions. As both Kocaeli (after August 17 earthquake) and Diyarbakır (after the terrorist incidents) are placed in the provinces in which immigration is living intensely. When these features are taken into consideration, it can be beneficiary that this research finding must be investigated with the studies having larger samples. School change variable cannot be integrated with the plenary model obtained by the stepwise multiple regression analysis as a significant predictor of peer-victimization exposure.

Students come into a new environment by school change and during the adaptation period in the new environment may be considered as a risk factor for peer-victimization exposure during the period lasted

until having friendship relations. Pellegrini and Long (2002) obtained findings in the research they made in relation with the children between 11 and 14 ages supporting the school and environment change is related to the peer-victimization exposure. However, the finding obtained from the research is in the direction that school change does not predict peer-victimization exposure. When the data is examined obtained from the research the distribution of frequency of the students who participated in the research are similar. Accordingly, it can be easily obtained healthier results related with the predictive forces of these variables in the peer-victimization exposure by making larger samples.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this research, school success variable is determined as the first predictor of the peer-victimization exposure. According to the findings obtained from the research, as long as the peer-victimization exposure points of the individuals increase school success points drop or as long as the peer-victimization exposure drops the school success points increase.

On the other hand, the findings of the research on the perceived social support are in the direction that the perceived social support predicts peer-victimization exposure. On the other hand, authoritative parental attitude is another variable predictive peer-victimization exposure.

It is observed that school change and region variables are not included in the plenary model obtained by the stepwise multiple regression analysis as a significant predictor of the peer-victimization exposure variable.

When the findings obtained from the research are evaluated, it is well understood that the perceived social support predicts peer-victimization exposure. In this sense, in the research that is made in relation with the peer-victimization exposure in determining risk groups it is significant whether students take social support or not. For this reason, social support training programs may be organized by psychological counselling and guidance services in which parents participate. Group activities to be made with the students and the activities to be made collectively (drama, sports, musical activities etc.) may be effective on the development of the friendship relations of the students.

The importance of the parental attitude on the students' development can be explained by benefitting from brochures and seminars and may be given weight to give consultation service for teachers and children.

Another aspect of peer-victimization exposure is the existence of the children who make peer victimization. In this subject, peer-victimization exposure may be decreased with the works directed to the teachers and administrators. Especially, peer-victimization behaviours may be decreased by directing children's energy to good practices by the administrators and to enhance their life qualities in the school surrounding. On the other hand, the children in the bullying group may be trained by anger management.

This research is made with the children in 8. grade elected from the provinces of Kocaeli and Diyarbakır. It may be beneficial to make these researches in a comparative manner with larger scope samples in terms of verifying the precautions to be taken.

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A Study Of Creative Writings In Urdu Of The Secondary School Students

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 13.05.2016

Received in revised form

03.11.2016

Accepted 01.12.2016

Available online

01.01.2017

ABSTRACT

Psychologists and educators throughout the world paid attention to creativity and creative thinking. The routine type of tasks in the school appears to be very simple and uninteresting to the creative students. Atmosphere of some schools is conducive for the development of creative potential. Whereas the atmosphere of many schools comes in the way of its development. Children prefer to learn in creative ways rather than just memorizing information provided by a teacher or parents. It is generally assumed that Children are highly creative, with vivid imaginations, and that they learn by exploring, risking, manipulating, testing, and modifying ideas. Language allows children to talk to each other and to write their thoughts and ideas and mother tongue is the most important and comprehensive medium for expression. Self-expression in reading, writing and speech; reading of suitable general books of high quality with interest rather than concentration on textbooks: approach to literature as a source of joy and inspiration rather than killjoy drill in grammar and vocabulary. Children learn to connect individual words with objects, ideas, and actions. In the process, they write their thoughts and ideas in very creative ways. The Researcher took this study to know the written potential of Urdu medium students. In this paper, The researcher emphasized that Urdu speaking children are not less than children of any other language. The only problem is less opportunities for them. The Researcher found that Urdu medium students are naughty, distracted, disturbed due to various reasons but at the same time they are highly creative in writing.

Keywords:

Creative writing, Urdu, Secondary school

1. Background

Curiosity is an important characteristic of a creative person. Every child is born with this trait and continues asking a B type of questions to satisfy it. Instead of giving satisfactory answers to their simple but strange questions; many parents choose to silence them by administrating a strong dose of reproof. Discouraging children's curiosity-One of the surest indicators of creativity is curiosity; yet we often brush questions aside because we are too busy for "silly" questions. Children's questions deserve respect. We pressurise children to be realistic and to stop imagining. When we label a child's flights of fantasy as "silly", we bring the child down to earth with a thud, causing the inventive urge to curl up and die. We compare their children with other children. This is a subtle pressure on a child to conquer yet the essence of creativity is freedom to conform or not to conform.

Young children are naturally curious. They wonder about people and the world. By the time they enter preschool, they already have a variety of learning skills acquired through questioning, inquiring, searching, manipulating, experimenting, and playing. They are content to watch from a distance at first; however, this does not satisfy their curiosity. Children need opportunities for a closer look; they need to touch; they need time for the creative encounter. But we place many restrictions on children's desire to explore the world and we discourage them. The school life of a child is mostly language centred. The ability to understand the

meaning of life and also that of way of living increases in a child very rapidly after the onset of language. A child is overjoyed if he can express himself effectively and creatively. The tremendous increase in vocabulary

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.17220/ijpes.2017.01.005>

leads to enrichment of child's verbal environment. Appropriate and inappropriate use of language affects our social relations too. Only a couple of inappropriate words are enough to develop unpleasant barriers between brothers, friends, husband and wife and parents. On the other, hand one or two sentences spoken with imagination have got power to be a friend even the enemies. Thus, it is obligatory for a teacher to help his student to develop the ability for creative self-expression.

It has been experienced that many times mitted language does not convey the meaning which the writer originally wanted to convey or which the readers or listeners have understood- Inappropriate and unimaginative use of language is the basic cause of the situation of this type.

The Rigidity of timetable is not conducive for creative writing because a change of period will stop and dislocate the flow of their thinking and thus they will not be able to write anything. Students should be allowed to take part in different activities in accordance with their preferences, wishes, and likes. They should be provided subject matter for oral and written expressions. Oral expression is the beginning of written expression.

The oral ability of the student can be developed by providing them opportunities to take part in discussions, debates, to narrate stories, to stage dramas or to hold conversation with others. Students should be helped to develop their own style of writing instead of giving a particular style of writing. Their ideas and styles should be given more emphasis and attention. The grammatical mistakes can be corrected in a way that the style and ideas should not be changed.

Many times it so happens that in spite of best efforts, the students are not able to produce good writing. This does not mean that they merit outright rejection and discouragement. The use of correct language should not be emphasized. Teacher should not expect students to make use of beautiful style of writing. Their efforts should be appreciated. Students should be provided direct experiences so that they will be able to express their ideas in different and innovative ways.

1.1. Significance of the Problem

Creative use of linguistic skills provides pool proof solutions to numerous problems of human living. It is to be remembered that language is not merely a collection of words but is a means of communication and linguistic communication in social process. Therefore man has always made strenuous efforts to make his oral or written expressions effective and always tried to write or speak maximum meaningful material in minimum possible words. This attempt is by all means a creative attempt.

Creativity is perhaps most often the concern and ability to bring out something new or innovative into the existence. Creativity is psychological process by which novel and valuable products are created.

The creative process is the result of largest literature i.e. creative writing highly creative process.

Hence Researcher feels that problem undertaken is useful and a contribution in the field of education as no studies have been done in Urdu on the creativity of language expression.

The Researcher also feels that there is no provision for young and enthusiastic writers to express themselves; these studies will provide guidelines for future for a literary environment.

The Researcher also feels that there are very few opportunities provided to young and creative minds to develop their creative potential as various factors act as hindrances in their performance such as time, environment, school environment and social status etc.

The Researcher aims at finding out the various factors that may be helpful in enhancing the creative potential of young talented pupils.

1.2. Different from existing work

The research on Study in Creative Writing in Urdu has not been conducted till date that is why the Researcher took up this topic.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

“A Study Of Creativity In The Writings Of The Students In Urdu At School Level Of The Schools Of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai And Thane District With Special Reference To Boys And Girls”

Statement of the problem includes creativity, writing and creative writing of boys and girls studying in Urdu medium schools of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane. Herein Creativity represents a higher level of man's intellectual abilities. Creative ability means being familiar not only with new problems, with selecting ways of resolving them, with the transition from one situation to another, with the mobilization of previous experience, but principally with the invention of new, original and unusual solutions, and, what is more, with the identification of new problems. Creativeness is noted for original products.

Writing is a system of human communication by means of visual symbols or signs. Writing, however, continued to convey only the meaning, not the sound, of words. Writing is the formation of a coherent message, such as a letter, directions, a poem, or more complex form of writing such as an essay or term paper. Whatever the form of writing, the act of composing or putting together elements used in writing is made operative. Writing should be thought of in term of not only what one writes or produces, but also how one writes.

Creative Writing is on expressing one's feelings or one's emotions in a unique way. hi creative expression, minimum possible words are used in such a way mat maximum possible ideas are expressed in a meaningful fascinating way.

In creative writing, words employed and ideas expressed are unique in their own way and the students can opt for any stream of writing, that is, poetry, lyric, story, drama, essay or letter-writing as their medium of expression. Creative writing involves the production of original literary work, such as novels, plays, and poems.

1.4. Assumptions

It is assumed that:

1. Creativity in Urdu medium schools in present system of education is lagging behind.
2. Urdu medium students' arc lagging behind in creative writing.
3. Urdu medium students are less attractive to creative activities.

1.5. Delimitation

- The study will be confined to boys and girls studying in class IX only.
- The study is delimited to one language i.e. Urdu as the subject.
- The study is also limited to schools (Secondary) of Mumbai Navi Mumbai and Thane only.

1.6. Operational definition of the term used

1.6.1. Creativity:

For the present study, creativity refers creative potential (different areas such as Plot Building, Dialogue writing, Poetic Diction, Descriptive Style and Vocabulary) of the subject.

1.6.2. Writing:

For the present study writing refers creativity in writing of the subject.

1.6.3. Urdu:

For the present study, Urdu refers to language taken as the subject by students.

1.6.4. Students:

Students of Urdu language of class IX studying in different Urdu and English medium schools situated in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane.

1.6.5. Creativity in the Writing:

For the present study creativity in writing refers to the scores obtain by the students in Language creativity test by Malhotra and Suchita.

1.7. Objectives of the study

The following are the main objectives of the present study:

To study the different creative potential in writings of students at school level.

To compare the creative potential in writing of boys and girls at school level.

To study the relationship between creative writing & performance of the students in the examination in Urdu subject.

To prepare Creativity Improvement Programme (CIP).

To suggest and recommend changes in syllabus, textbooks, methods of teaching, aims and evaluation with regard to creativity.

1.8. Variables

1.8.1. Independent Variables

School: Different private and government schools.

Sex: Boys and Girls are two variables of the study.

Language (Urdu) is taken into consideration.

1.8.2. Dependent Variables

Performance in the subject

Faculties of creativity-Fluency, Flexibility, Originality', and Elaboration.

Improvement programme in term of creativity.

1.9. Hypotheses

Underlying the plan of the present study the following hypotheses are formulated:

There is no significant relationship between Creative writing and language of study.

There is no significant difference between Creative writing and Language of Study.

There is no significant relationship between different Creative potential.

There is no significant relationship between Creative Writings of boys and girls at school level,

There is no significant difference between Creative Writings of boys and girls at school level,

There is no significant relationship between performance in the subject and Creative Writing.

2. Introduction

Creativity is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions. Creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing. If you have ideas, but don't act on them, you are imaginative but not creative.

Creativity is a phenomenon whereby something new and somehow valuable is formed. The created item may be intangible (such as an idea, a scientific theory, a musical composition or a joke) or a physical object (such as an invention, a literary work or a painting). Benjamin B. Lahey (2002) describes, "Creativity as the ability to make human products and ideas (such as symphonies or solutions to social problems) that are both novel and valued by others." (P. 209)

Creativity cannot and should not exist in a vacuum, it is important not only to be creative, it is equally important to understand that creative expressions reach out to others in society and the needs are paramount importance to the success of creative ideal. Creativity arises as a need; it also serves another purpose-the purpose of the creator. After all, creativity is not merely the result of the needs of a people, it is

born as much from the need of the creating individual. Creativity, as quoted by Baron and Misra, (2014, P. 379) “the ability to produce work that is both novel (original, unexpected) and appropriate (it works-it is useful or meets task constraints)” (Lubart, 1994,)

A writer may write because he finds fulfillment in his work, or he may write because he has something to say, or because he is motivated by the desire to change the world, or even because he has only financial considerations. But purpose there always is, in any work that is created. That is why creativity for creativity's sake simply does not exist.

It is equally important to know that creativity influences values, forms trends and, often, causes untold damage to impressionable young minds. To those who believe that creativity exists only for self-expressions, and they would, emphatically believe that creativity has nothing to do with values. Creativity is not the mean by which values need to be taught to a society. Yet creativity needs a system of values within which to function. That is why creativity can neither exist in a vacuum, nor merely in the minds of the artist. It is bound not only by the rules of thinking; it is equally conditioned by the processes and demands of society.

It is necessary to expose children constantly to all that is creative, from painting, music and literature, to natural wonders, often, created quite accidentally by nature. Once we ourselves are sensitive to beauty and express wonder at its existence, our children will soon enough follow suit. That is why, we should be appreciative of creativity and assist children to be appreciative as well. The more we see creativity around us, the more easily do we become creative? Our children look at the world through their own unique lenses of individuality. Allow them to see pink grass or square trees, if they feel inclined.

Humor is one of the most creative ways of looking at the world. From silly jokes to ridiculous riddles, share child's sense of humour. It is intensive to be creative. Simultaneously, don't let children to be amazed from a little frog to the magnificent butterfly, life is filled with the most amazing stuff.

We all are creative. Whether it is creativity in thoughts or words or in things that we make. There is neither superiority nor inferiority in creativity. So there is need to remove minds blocks that children have, that only some people can be creative- If they trust their instincts they too can be creative. That is why we should give children things to make and do, whether they are activities with objects, or puzzles with words. It gave them an opportunity to call themselves creative.

In order to encourage creativity in children, help should be provided to become innovators. There is need to trigger their imagination with ideas- Children will soon be creating not only their own characters but their own worlds as well. Creativity like all things requires practice to be perfect. So, It is important to give children the opportunity to practice being creative, at all times, everywhere. Every person they meet, every experience they go through, every encounter they have, can be converted into a creative moment. Creativity is just simply something we all have-we only need to be aware of, and announce its existence. Creativity is not merely a mind skill, it isn't merely mental gymnastics, it is, in reality, a practical approach to problems, to decision making as well as to new perspectives. As perceived by Robert S. Feldman (2011), “Creativity is the ability to generate original ideas or solve problems in novel ways.” (P. 261) There are many who have consciously or unconsciously use creative techniques in order to achieve their ends.

Creative writing is any writing that goes outside the bounds of normal professional, journalistic, academic, or technical forms of literature, typically identified by an emphasis on narrative craft, character development, and the use of literary tropes or with various traditions of poetry and poetics.

Creative writing, a form of artistic expression, draws on the imagination to convey meaning through the use of imagery, narrative, and drama. This is in contrast to analytic or pragmatic forms of writing. This genre includes poetry, fiction (novels, short stories), scripts, screenplays, and creative non-fiction.

In her work, *Foundations of Creativity*, Mary Lee Marksberry references Paul Witty and Lou La Brant's *Teaching the People's Language* to define creative writing. Marksberry notes:

Witty and La Brant...(1963) say creative writing is a composition of any type of writing at any time primarily in the service of such needs as

1. the need for keeping records of significant experience,
2. the need for sharing experience with an interested group, and

3. the need for free individual expression which contributes to mental and physical health.”
(P. 39)

Creative writing can technically be considered any writing of original composition. In this sense, creative writing is a more contemporary and process-oriented name for what has been traditionally called literature.

It is also believed by some in the academic sphere that the term "creative writing" can include "creative reading" which is the reading of something not typically understood to be a creative piece as though it were creative.

3. Methodology

The study was a survey based sample study. The samples are private and government school children studying in 9th class of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane. Equal representation was given to boys and girls. The Study is based on a random sample.

The test (Pretest) has measured the creative ability in writing. Language Creativity Test was used to obtain the result. The test has been developed by Malhotra and Sachita (1989). This test is meant for assessing creative ability, which means, the ability to produce new solutions and meaning to problems. The available test is divided into five areas.

After reviewing the related literature, The Researcher decided to administer Language Creativity Test developed by Malhotra and Suchita. Researcher found that test is more suitable for the present study as it will measure creativity in writing. Other tests such as Passi and Mehdi Creativity tests are meant to measure general creativity.

3.1. Creativity Improvement Programme (CIP) was administered. Under which:

- 3.1.1. One topic was given to the students by the researcher to know the talents in writing. They were asked to write one essay on that topic. Some words were also be given to use in essays. It was a controlled composition.
- 3.1.2. They were asked to write one essay on a topic, which was based on their own choice. They were free to write the essay in their own language style.
- 3.1.3. Different exercises were given to students to improve creativity in writings.
- 3.1.4. Their essays were compared to test the different traits of creativity
- 3.1.5 A post test post test was also be given to see the improvement in the creativity level after administration of Creativity Improvement Programme (CIP).
- 3.1.6 Half yearly examinations marks in the Urdu language of class IX from school records were taken to compare their creative in writing. Questionnaires were prepared for teachers. Experts' opinion were taken on the topic.

4. Research Design

Since the present study was aimed at testing the differences between creative potential in writing of boys and girls, therefore these differences were tested after measuring their creative potential by testing null hypothesis with the help of 't' test.

The relationship of creative writing and performance of students in the examination was also tested with the help of null hypotheses.

4.1. Research Tools

Malhotra's and Suchita's Language Creativity Test

Creativity Improvement Programme (CIP).

Questionnaire for teachers.

4.2. Population

Nearly 40 schools were chosen for sample from three cities namely Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane. Some schools were co-educational, some were schools for boys and some were schools for girls. Urdu and English medium schools were selected for the sample. In schools of Mumbai, the population figure was more than 200 in IX class and classes were divided in no. of sections ranging from to 5 or 6. In Navi Mumbai schools, population figure was fewer ranging from 25 to 40 and consisting of only a section. Schools in Thane city, the population was less than 100 and classes were divided into 2 or 3 sections.

4.3. Sample

- Four hundred (400) students from 20 Private and Government schools of Urdu medium of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane.
- 200 boys and 200 girls from class IX for Pre-test.
- 200 boys and 200 girls for Creativity Improvement Programme and post-test
- 50 Urdu language teachers.

4.4. Sampling Method

After the selection of schools, the class sections, for sampling, for class IX were randomly chosen. 400 hundred students were chosen for the sample. Equal representation was given to boys and girls. All the students chosen for sample were administered the Language creativity Test (LCT).

Creativity Improvement Programme was applied on 400 students. A set of 16 exercises was administered on students. The total period of administration of CIP was 6 months. Further students were administered LCT. The total time allotted for LCT was 2 hrs and 47 minutes

4.5. Tools

A Standardized Test was used to judge the creativity in writing in the language of Urdu medium students. Malhotra's and Sachita's Language Creativity Test was used to measure the creativity in writing. The Researcher has measured creative writing by going through the writing material of students.

4.6. Description of the test

This test has 27 items in five areas. They are plot building, dialogue writing, poetic diction, descriptive and vocabulary styles. It measures total language creativity and its four components are fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. The total maximum time required for completion of the test is 147 minutes. All the items in the Language Creativity Test are verbal in nature and can be administered in a group or individually. The sub-tests in the language creativity test can be administered collectively. It is desirable that while using the language creativity test in the language stop-watch or common watch is used. It was standardized on 600 Boys and Girls from School and College for VIII to Graduate Student. The reliability of the test is 0.84 and content validity of the test is 0.79. A brief and specific outline of all the five sub-tests and their respective items is given below:

4.6.1. Plot Building -Items in this sub-test are based on Guilford's (1952) Multiple Story Plots. Herein a hypothetical situation is presented so as to encourage free play of imagination. Following types of items are included in it: (a) Story construction on a given proverb, (b) Story on a given Situation, (c) Story construction on a *given* title, (d) Story with two endings, (e) Story on imagination, (f) Modernizing the classical theme.

4.6.2. Dialogue Writing - This sub-test has items on writing dialogue. This sub-test is designed after Guilford's (1952) Multiple Emotional Expression and Multiple Social Problems wherein the subject writes many different things that a person might say when he is feeling a given emotion. There are three items in it, the details of which is as follows: (a) Suggesting the title to given dialogue, (b) Writing dialogues on a given topic, (c) Writing dialogues on the given situation.

4.6.3. Poetic Diction - This sub-test comprises of three items concerned with composing poems. The pattern of the sub-test is based on Guilford's (1952) Expressional Fluency and Word-Pair Revision. There are three items in it: (a) Writing a poem on given topic, (b) Writing Parody, (c) Writing a poem from given words.

4.6.4. Descriptive Style- This sub-test has items based on description developed on the pattern of Guilford's (1952) Controlled associations. The purpose of this sub-test is to evaluate the descriptive style of the student. It includes four items. (a) Based on observation, (b) Based on Emotional Experience, (c) Based on imagination, (d) Based on Comparison.

4.6.5. Vocabulary Test- This sub-test is based on Guilford's (1952) Expressional fluency, controlled association, Multiple grouping, Work-pair revision and work fluency tests. It has ten test items that are miscellaneous in nature but independent of each other. (a) *Writing equivalent words*, (b) *Numerical Combination Test*, (c) *Test on Comparison*, (d) *Writing matching Attributes*, (e) *Writing with pre-fix and suffix letters*: this is a set of two items (f) *Descriptive Completion*, (g) *Implied uses*, (h) *Vocabulary items*: this is a set of two items.

4.7. Development of the tool (Creativity Improvement Programme)

The Researcher has developed Creativity Improvement Programme (CIP).

After reviewing the related literature the investigator constructed a rough draft of Creativity Improvement Programme (CIP) containing 30 exercises. It was then administered to 15 students for the purpose of a preliminary try out. Then the items not clearly understood by the subject due to ambiguity were deleted and only 16 exercises were left. Most of the exercises were based on cartoons as Researcher felt cartoons attract children's and Urdu medium students are less interested in creativity. So Researcher made use of cartoons to attract them.

The Researcher has taken the opinion of Experts in the field. Validity and Reliability of the test was set down through expert committee. The draft exercises were shown to an expert committee formed by the investigator. An expert committee was formed by investigators to observe, evaluate and examine the CIP. The committee was consisting of one Principal of College of Education and also a psychology person, one senior lecturer in college of education and a person of psychology and an expert in Urdu language and one principal of High School. Two other experts in the field were also consulted about the exercises. In this way, final form of CIP was obtained. The Experiment was conducted on 15 students to establish the difficulty level of the CIP.

A feedback sheet comprising 25 statements/questions was prepared by the Researcher to find out the views of teachers about creative writing and creative potential of their students. The Researcher has also taken the opinion of Experts in the field to set the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

5. Statistical Technique

1. In order to test the hypothesis regarding the difference between Creative potential of boys and girls. Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' value were calculated.
2. In order to find out the relationship of creative writing with performance co-efficient of co-relation (r) was calculated.
3. Pre test and post test post test of student's creativity level in writing were compared to find out the difference in the creativity level in writing of students.

5.1. Data Collection

Language Creativity Test (LCT), a standardized test developed by Malhotra and Suchita, was used to collect data for the present study. All the 400 students from 20 schools were given the test. This test is divided into five subtests. In all, the responses to the five tests were of divergent nature. For each tool of measurement, a separate system of scoring had been devised-

After application of CIP, the same test LCT was used to collect data on 400 randomly selected students of 20 schools.

In the other stake holders, 50 language teachers were selected randomly and given a structured questionnaire to know the creative writing and creative potential of their students in Urdu.

5.2. Objectives Studied

The Researcher has personally visited the schools of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane conducted the language creativity test and help was taken from teachers of schools for Creativity Improvement Programme. Questionnaires were distributed to the Urdu language teachers to know their views on creativity of their students. Researcher again visited the schools to administer the post test . The Tests and exercises sheets of the creativity improvement programme were collected. Questionnaires were also collected from teachers. Later, the researcher tabulated and analysed the data received from tests, exercises and questionnaires.

5.2.1. Objective: 1.

To study the different creative potential in writings of students at school level.

In order to accomplish the first objective of the research, data was acquired through a creativity test and a questionnaire.

Table 1. There were 27 items in the test divided into five areas. The time required and spread of items in different sub-tests of Language Creativity Test in Urdu.

Sr. No.	Subjects	No. of Items	Sr. No. of Items	Maximum time required
1.	Plot Building	7	1-7	50 minutes
2.	Dialogue writing	3	8-10	15 minutes
3.	Poetic Diction	3	11-13	30 minutes
4.	Description Style	4	14-17	25 minutes
5.	Vocabulary Test	10	18-27	27 minutes
	Total	27	1-27	147 minutes (2hours & 27 minutes)

The test was administered on 400 students of class IX of Urdu and English medium students. Equal representation was given to both boys and girls. When difficulty level is considered, the only 37% Students attempted item no. 13. The 99% students attempted item no. 23. Only 16 % students attempted to complete test. In the group of 400, only 56 students completed the whole test. 48 students attempted only 5 items in pre test pre test . After giving exercises through creativity improvement programme tremendous changes occurred in creativity level of students. In the post test, 168 students completed the whole test. Surprisingly, 5 students did not attempt even single question but figure of items attempted increased from 5 to 15.

To judge the creative potential of students, a feedback sheet was given to Urdu language teachers. In the feedback sheet, they have given a picture of interest, talents, attitude and creative potential of their students. Some are the findings:

74% teachers think that creativity is inborn.

62% teachers think that creativity cannot be taught.

50% teachers said that opportunities are not provided to improve creativity in schools.

58% teachers think that students are confident about their abilities.
46% teachers think that students are able to find solutions to a task.
66% teachers said that students never write for school magazines.
70% teachers feel that students love to write in their mother tongue.
40% teachers feel students only read headlines related to creative writings.
60% teachers feel that students imagine themselves as writers.
66% teachers feel that creativity is necessary for students.
70% teachers suggest creativity workshops should be conducted always.

5.2.2. Objective: 2

To compare the creative potential in writing of boys and girls at school level.

For the fulfillment of this objective, students were given equal representation in terms of sex. Out of 400 hundred 200 boys and 200 girls were selected as sample. For creativity improvement programme 100 boys and 100 girls were chosen randomly. On the basis of the test, it is found that girls are more sincere than boys to complete the task. Nearly 80% girls completed the whole test. Only 20% boys completed the whole test. It is found that girls' responses were very common whereas boys took it creatively.

5.2.3. Objective: 3

To study the relationship between creative writing & performance of the students in the examination in Urdu subject.

In order to achieve the third objective, students results (Marks in Urdu subject) were taken from the office record. Those who achieved higher marks in a subject, their performance in creativity test was poor. Even some students who secured 80% marks in a subject they have attempted only 5 or 6 items in the test. After giving exercises of creativity improvement programme, they have enhanced their creativity but still it was not matching with their results.

5.2.4. Objective: 4

To prepare Creativity Improvement Programme (CIP).

To fulfill this objective researcher prepared a creativity improvement programme. In this programme, there were total 16 exercises and these exercises were spread in different areas such as:

Originality, Fluency, Flexibility, Ideas generation, Story Building, Expressions, Mind mapping, Imagination, Innovation, Critical thinking, Multi Ideas Syndrome etc.

Students had shown greater enthusiasm while conducting this programme but parents and school did not show any interest as they were worried about their syllabus. Creativity Improvement programme received tremendous response from students. After conducting the programme students have shown interest in creativity. In the post test their creativity was enhanced. Experts and colleagues' help was taking while preparing the programme.

5.3. Objectives Achieved

The four objectives were achieved through administering the test, creativity improvement programme, the performance of students in Urdu and feedback from teachers. By going through the test attempted by students, performance of students in their subject examinations, the implementation of creativity improvement programme researcher found that:

5.3.1. Objective: 1.

- a) Students have shown less creativity in poetic diction than vocabulary.
- b) Plot building also got a good response.

c)Description style got an average response.

d)Dialogue writing has shown a moderate response.

5.3.2. Objective: 2

a)Girls have shown more sincerity by completing the test.

b)Boys have shown more creativity as they wrote differently.

5.3.3. Objective: 3

Higher achievers, usually, in a subject have shown less creativity.

5.3.4. Objective: 4.

Students' have shown improvement in creativity after conducting the creativity improvement Programme.

6.Conclusions

Even though their activities were guided, they were encouraged to discover new knowledge and formulate it by themselves. Study of this kind provided them not only with factual knowledge but also helped them to familiarize themselves and to take note of objects and phenomena, to approach problems without fear, in fact, to seek them out and to solve them. They were taught to feel joy in solving the tasks set for them and to be curious and open. Their interests were aroused. Besides intellectual development, social relations among the pupils were also fostered. Pupils got to know their abilities and compared them with their schoolmates; they gained self-confidence, had no fear and learned to learn from their mistakes.

But our children already have preconceived notions about everything. They think they have all the answers, they believe they know all the solutions. But in reality, most of their conclusions are either one that their peer group has given them, or that they are following blindly. This attitude should be changed and it can be changed through creativity. Creativity can be enhanced through education. Children will learn that there could be more answers to the problems, more than one way to looking at things. They would rediscover the connection between areas that had no apparent similarity; they would revive their faith in their own potential. They would begin to imagine all over again, they would learn to play and play to learn. They would understand that all of life is only an experience in growing and reaching out and finding fulfillment. In so doing, they would rediscover themselves as new creative children.

6.1. Suggestions for further studies

The following suggestions are recommended for further studies:

Investigation of creativity in writing may be undertaken in all languages, which taught in schools.

Different age groups may be studied at different level of classes.

A Similar study may be conducted in Maharashtra or on the Nationwide.

The creative potential in writing may be investigated in different levels of schooling.

A study may also be undertaken to compare Creative writing & Creative reading in Urdu & Hindi medium.

Acknowledgment

I am grateful to the students and teachers who participated in this study.

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