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DOCTORAL SCHOOL EDUCATION, REFLEXION, DEVELOPMENT

Summary of the thesis

**CURRICULUM DESIGN FOR BUILDING AND DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS OF PRESCHOOLERS. APPLICATION FOR BIG
PRESCHOOLERS (5-6 YEARS OLD)**

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KEY WORDS:

- + social development
- + emotional development
- + social and emotional education
- + social and emotional well-being
- + social and emotional competences
- + curriculum
- + curriculum project

Scientifically, the doctoral thesis named ” *Curriculum design for building and developing the social and emotional skills of preschoolers. application for big preschoolers (5-6 years old)*” clarifies the theoretical, methodical and practical aspects which emphasize the importance of the formation and development of social and emotional skills during early years, which have a major impact over children’s long-term growth, while also assuring their adjustment in society, the cut down of unwanted behaviours and provides social and emotional well-being for the preschooler.

Understanding and managing social emotions (interacting and relating with same-age children, building positive relationships, being assertive and responsible) can be learned and developed at any age, but the advantages are bigger if the development strategies are applied at an earlier age.

The development of the new educational project implies new approaches and concepts that are meant to facilitate the evolution of contemporary didactics, so that these tactics will enforce a major evolution for the actual educational strategy. Therefore, we are talking about the interest we show in the process of social and emotional skills growth.

The theme of the project is subsumed under actual methods of holistic approach in regards to scientific knowledge and it proposes to present well-documented pedagogical solutions for the optimization of the national curriculum.

The importance of this project is magnified by the necessity of reorganizing the actual curriculum through formulating final ideas that would help the development of the social and emotional skills, in accord with the European skills beliefs.

In **Chapter I, II and III**, I have tackled the problematic theoretical aspects that are relevant for the research, but also hard, particular facts that represent valuable reference points for the preschool education.

The steps dedicated for the pedagogical experiment (Chapter IV, V, VI, VII) have had the purpose of verifying the efficacy of the application of the project, which was named ”The Development of Social and Emotional Skills”, and was targeted towards building and growing said skills for the last year preschoolers. The thesis ends with the conclusion part, the bibliography and the attachements.

Chapter I - CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TOWARDS SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EDUCATION deals with a set of theoretical and practical concepts and delimitations of socio-emotional education.

The first conceptual idea that tackled emotional and social education emerged in 1990, when John Mayer and Peter Salovey, psychologists at New Hampshire and Yale University, coined the term of emotional intelligence. They observed the fact that some people are capable of identifying their own emotions and other people's emotions much more rapidly than other people. In their opinion, emotional intelligence implies:

- ✚ The ability to sense and express emotions correctly
- ✚ The ability to access or provoke feelings whenever they prompt thinking
- ✚ The ability to identify and regulate emotions, in order to develop emotional intelligence

Salovey & Sluyter (1997) offer a revised version of the definition of emotional intelligence, stating that this implies the ability to identify, understand and express emotion in a clear way; the ability to use or generate feelings, to understand and to control them, with the aim of promoting development both emotionally and intellectually.

This concept became popular in 1995, when Daniel Goleman (1995) published in a book titled "Emotional Intelligence" a synthesis of the programs and results obtained until that date in the field. Goleman's emotional development model (1995) describes skills and competences that determine the qualities of a leader by highlighting five concepts: self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Social and emotional well-being refers to the way a person thinks of itself and of others, and how that person feels about itself and of others.

This concept includes the possibility of adapting to everyday challenges, while building a satisfying life at the same time. Therefore, there is an emphasis of behaviours and strong suits of children, and also of the strategies and methods of coping with competition.

Many of the characteristics of social and emotional well-being follow a path of development, which requires an adequate age for its implementation (Denham et al. 2009; Humphrey 2009). The cultural aspect is also an important factor for measuring well-being, mainly because of the differences between social norms and values of various cultural groups (Hamilton & Redmond 2010).

Children are using their acquired social and emotional skills during everyday activities, especially when they have to socialize with other people. Kids that benefit from well-built social and emotional skills will be able to form and keep friendships, while also having a positive attitude about learning and social events.

These types of children are accepted in their group of friends and they adapt easily, because they are more confident and have a bigger chance of academic success than others. On a long term, these kids will be able to develop and maintain long-lasting friendships, they will be efficient parents, will be able to find and keep a job, to work with others and be mentally and physically healthy. A relevant discovery for kindergarten teachers represents the fact that building and growing social and emotional skills at an early age has a major impact over their long-term development (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004; Shonkoff & Philips, 2000).

In conclusion, some observations are common to most of the researched psycho-pedagogical sources:

- ✚ social competence is based on directing your own emotions and empathy;
- ✚ childhood experiences affect adult life
- ✚ children should have many opportunities for social interaction for their emotional development;
- ✚ parents and educators should be positive examples for the child by giving him or her exemplary moral behavior
- ✚ the emotional experience of the individual has an impact on the social integration of the group.

Due to all these observations, we propose the following definition for the term social and emotional education is a set of educational actions focused on certain principles, confirmed by the totality of the influences exerted by society on the child, by providing exemplary behavioral models whose purpose is to achieve social integration and emotional pre-school children, in order to develop life skills.

Chapter II - EPISTEMIC AND THEORETICAL ASPECTS ON THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES OF PRESCHOOLERS presents the psycho-pedagogical meanings and meanings of social and emotional skills.

Over time, in addressing competence issues, it has been revealed that a key feature of the concept of competence is the existence of a strong relationship with "*real life*". Bandura (1990) concludes that "there is a significant difference between the ability to have knowledge and skills and to use them well in various circumstances, many of them containing ambiguous, unpredictable, stressful elements" (Bandura, 1990, p.35).

Connell, Sheridan, and Gardner (2003) describe skills as "*accomplished skills*" (2003, p. 142). In this respect, Mayer (2003) sums up more recent approaches to a "psychology of skills, competences and expertise" as follows: skill can be defined as the potential to acquire knowledge that supports cognitive performance. can be defined as the specialized knowledge acquired by that cognitive support performance, and the expertise is a very high level of competence " (Mayer, 2003, p. 265).

Thus, competence is not the sum of knowledge, skills and attitudes, it captures the proven ability to apply them in a certain context, generating results. That is why competencies can be perceived as a pool of knowledge, attitudes and abilities that can be successfully applied in practical situations. In addition, the learning situations that preschoolers live in become important because the context itself can not only influence the quality of the manifestation of competence, and this process is also determined to a large extent by the subjective experiences of preschoolers that are influenced by that context. Looking from a holistic perspective, competence is not limited to cognitive dimension alone. By engaging complexes of knowledge, capabilities, attitudes and abilities, competence is an effective ability to act against a variety of situations by engaging those useful knowledge at the right time to resolve problems. Any competency includes a series of knowledge, but competence is not limited only to them, but involves integrating, mobilizing, creating connections between the individual's internal resources, knowledge, abilities and capacities, but also the external resources from the environment (people, various information , documents, tools, etc.). To develop and develop a competence, it is primarily about developing the person, building skills, behaviors, attitudes or skills, using knowledge according to the different levels or stages of development identified by different authors.

Social competence

The term social competence refers to the degree of effectiveness in developing social interactions. The concept is defined by personal attributes such as cooperation and affinity for

socialization, disposition for help, and the ability to initiate and maintain positive relationships, as well as the ability to resolve conflicts (Denham et al., 2009).

Developing social skills is essential because it has to respond to the need for emotional security, the need for support and protection, social comparison or a sense of intimacy, and this is done by acquiring important behaviors for the good functioning of relationships. Equally, developing these skills reduces risk factors that lead to poor school performance and ensures the child's emotional health.

Emotional competence

Emotional competence refers to individual differences in identifying, understanding, expressing, adjusting, and utilizing one's own emotions and others.

But looking at their essence, there are three approaches, and the analyzes made with emphasis on this concept are positioned in one of these visions.

1) The first approach offered by Bar-On (1997) is that of emotional coefficient (EQ), with an emphasis on general well-being, using the Inventory of the Emotional Coefficient as a research tool.

2) The second perspective is that developed by Mayer & Salovey (1990), which focuses on emotional abilities, measured using the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Scale of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer et al., 2000).

3) The last perspective is the one developed by Goleman (1995), with an emphasis on those behaviors that generate performance, measured through the Emotional Competence Inventory (Boyatzis & Goleman, 2002).

Looking at these perspectives as a holistic construct, we propose the following definition of work: ***innate potential abilities (emotional abilities) to moderate the relationship between preferred patterns (emotional traits) and active learned behaviors (emotional skills) to recognize and regulate emotions of oneself and others for the purpose of an effective and successful adaptation to the environment.***

Social competence and emotional competence are distinct attributes; however, they are interconnected in a tight manner (Denham et al., 2009). For example, children who are able to understand the emotions and feelings that others attach to will be those who have the necessary social skills in life.




These children are confident, have good relationships, can communicate well, manage at school, and persevere when they encounter a problem, have a sense of controlled control, and develop the necessary relationships between colleagues and adults to succeed in life (National Research Council and the Institution of Medicine, 2000, Pahl & Barrett, 2007). These skills can provide courage to stressors and prevent future behavioral and emotional difficulties.

Emotional and social learning includes processes through which the knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in different social contexts are acquired and practiced (Devaney et al., 2006, Gresham, 1981).

The emotional development of preschool children is reflected in the acquisition of specific abilities or skills of emotion recognition, emotional expression and regulation, skills associated with an umbrella concept: emotional skills.

It should be noted that in the kindergarten environment, ensuring / maintaining the emotional balance implies the existence of a certain affective-aptitude / affective emotional competence level, both of the educator and of the preschool, which allows them to have quality social and effective social interactions.

Variables that contribute to developing the child's emotional skills are:

-  supporting children in the socialization process;
-  pre-school temperament and level of development;
-  the way the educator carries out emotional literacy of children.

When emotional competence is adequately developed, the three variables presented above are interdependent, acting in a correlated, integrated and synergistic manner.

Chapter III - PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES OF PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM. CONCEPTUALIZATION, DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT proposes a critical analysis on the development of the pre-school curriculum in the educational system in Romania over time and of the programs of social and emotional education carried out both abroad and in the context of the pre-school education in Romania.

In our country, educational sciences specialists, such as Bocoș, M., Crețu, C., Cristea, S., Cuceș, C., Potolea, D., Ungureanu, D., express their interests towards the concept of curriculum and towards the implications that the implementation of such a systemic approach would have, and towards the analysis of its educational relevance, from an ensemble perspective over the educational system. Potolea, D. (2002) characterizes the curriculum as a "concept-construct", a

”mental construct which needs to transform into reality”, mainly because of its multidimensional approach (Potolea, D., 2002, p. 82). Deeming the curriculum as a project of educational action, the author approaches it from a structural, functional and product-based standpoint.

Taking into consideration the progressive perspective from the curriculum as a learning experience, Crețu, C. (2000, p. 30), it treats the idea of it as a learning experience in both a formal and non-formal environment, which stimulates a learning experience that would be assimilated by the child.

Emphasizing the vision of a flexible process, it attributes a certain definition for the curriculum, that would concentrate on the end results that need to be achieved (Cucoș, C., 2006, p. 182).

Thinking of the curriculum as a ”fundamental concept” (Cristea, S., 1998, p. 47) built on certain norms, there is an stress on the fact that the end results are priority, therefore there have to be selected the didactic contents, learning methods, organizing procedures and result evaluation.

The modern perspective that encompasses the transformation of contemporary education, Bocoș, M. (2007) defines the curriculum as a ”integrating concept, approached globally and sistemically in regards to educational actions, its components and their interactions”. (Bocoș, M., 2007, p. 95).

The present perspective shows the fact that the specialists’ definitions point to the same result: ”the making of the curriculum needs effective planning for the learning process of preschoolers, and that necessitates prefiguration”. (Bocoș, M., Jucan, D., 2017, p. 110).

Our analysis has focused on curricular aspects – the goals, objectives, specific behaviours that prompt the development of social and emotional skills. The final results of the analysis show the specific methods through which the Romanian educational system has tried to approach the needs of the society.

The investigation emphasized the evolution of the stages and names of the concept of social and emotional development, the specific contents, while also emphasizing the necessity of rebuilding the actual preschool curriculum by formulating final results that would help this cause.

The program and the curriculum have known quite a few oscillations over time, but presently there is a positive evolution in regards to the social and emotional education, which is a

key interest for us. We can observe a progress that has occurred overtime, that has gone through different stages and names.

Although the results of any educational system will be visible over a larger period of time, the social, economic and cultural circumstances represent an essential aspect, therefore they have to be carefully tracked in order to find if they are viable and if they can provide the functionality and efficiency of the educational system.

The kindergarten plays a significant role in the global development of children, especially in regards to social and emotional values. Taking into consideration the fact that the kindergarten represents a micro-society for the child, we believe that the development of social and emotional skills has to be of utmost importance.

In order for a child to be capable of realizing valuable intellectual acquisitions, he has to possess a strong stable social and emotional bond. Its presence can help the intellectual development of the preschooler, while its absence can hinder its growth.

Understanding our own emotions and other people's emotions, the capacity to control those emotions and behaviours, but also the collaboration between peers and teachers offers the security the child needs. Children need to be able to cooperate, to follow instructions and be attentive. Based on what we've already mentioned, we could say that the development of curriculum projects is essential for the future academic success of a certain child.

The reconfiguration of the actual curriculum, with an emphasis on the introduction of social and emotional skills in order to actualize it, represents an important step in the doctoral thesis. This research has been conducted due to the necessity to find practical solutions for the lackings of the actual curriculum.

The fundamental aspects of the curriculum are centered on the development of the social and emotional skills.

The doctoral thesis showcases preliminary results which underline the importance of developing activities that are centered on social and emotional skills growth, and it proposes specific management activities and also curricular recommendations that are flexible and open.

Daniel Goleman (1995), in his work, anticipated the fact that programs that focus on the importance of emotional intelligence in preschoolers will contribute to the prevention of possible problematic behaviour that can arise in children. These programs are benefic for every child (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011, Hester et al., 2004). Merrell K.W.

(et al. 2009) considers that children who are not able to develop their empathy and their social abilities are more likely to have social and emotional problems, like isolation and low self-esteem. Launched in 2008 and approved by MO 5233/2008, the Curriculum for preschool education, the Plan of Education, Application methodology, key objectives, behavioural types, represent reference points which sustain the whole process of social and emotional development.

The curriculum project that we are proposing wants to promote the most adequate techniques and formation strategies for social and emotional skills.

Children who experiment stimulating learning techniques socially and emotionally are capable to identify their own emotions and of other people, and to use their cognitive abilities to solve conflictual situations. As a subdivision of the previous chapter, we have presented a series of strategies and social and emotional techniques, in order to change unwanted behaviours and managing interpersonal issues.

The strategies and techniques of social and emotional education, intervention, represent methods through which the teacher can learn the children the necessary abilities in order for them to develop harmoniously. The practice we discuss are an important resource that will help the kindergarten teacher with the implementation of the project. The existent studies show that the first five years of life are extremely important in the development of social and emotional abilities. The relationships they have with their own peers and with the adults are of utmost importance for the development of their own identities and feeling of belonging. Therefore, the teacher plays a significant role by promoting the social and emotional abilities, both during childhood and afterwards.

Chapter IV - ORGANISING AND IMPLEMENTING THE RESEARCH: EXPERIMENTING THE PROJECT CURRICULUM, IN ORDER TO FORM AND DEVELOP SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES IN PRESCHOOLERS

The research conducted in chapter IV, V, VI, VII, had the purpose to verify the efficacy of the curriculum project named "The Development of Social and Emotional Skills", based on the growth of said skills during the last year of kindergarten.

On these lines, the doctoral thesis named "Curriculum project for the formation and development of social and emotional skills of last year preschoolers" presents a targeted research on the educational methods practiced in Romania.

The goal of the research is to test the efficacy of the curriculum project. Therefore, we decided on conducting a comparative analysis on the results we got from applying this curriculum, alongside the curriculum for children aged 3 to 6-7 years.

Mixing both the theoretical aspects and the practical ones, both nationally and internationally, we've managed to formulate the next hypothesis:

GENERAL HYPOTHESIS

Enforcing the Development of Social and Emotional Skills curriculum, which emphasizes educational strategies and techniques that help eradicate unwanted behaviours, while also solve interpersonal problems, communication, interaction and relationship problems, manages to significantly influence the growth of social and emotional skills in last year preschoolers.

SPECIFIC HYPOTHESIS

It is assumed that there are notable differences between the scores obtained from the experimental sample and the control sample, during the STRS, PKBS, PEDa screenings, after the curriculum was implemented.

Research variables

The independent variable of the research:

V.I. – Implementing a part of the Development of Social and Emotional Skills curriculum to last year preschoolers

The dependent variables of the research:

V.D.1. – the degree of emotional development is quantified by:

1. Understanding and expressing personal emotions
2. Understanding emotions
3. Regulating emotions

V.D.2 – the degree of social development is quantified by:

1. Social relationships
2. Pro-social behaviour
3. Rule compliance

During our research, we proposed a sample of 146 preschoolers. The preschoolers were selected on the account of their age, kindergartens, teachers, class, sex. The research was conducted in 3 kindergartens from Tîrgu-Mureş.

While selecting the content sample, we've taken into consideration the fact that the experiment was going to take place during a whole day (during personal development, games and didactic activities). The content sample complied with the 3 to 6-7 years old rule.

The method through which the experiment was held respected the curriculum entirely, the only interventions that took place were in the implementation of specific development and growth of social and emotional skills.

Chapter V - The pre-experimental phase

The goal of this phase was to identify the initial level of social and emotional behaviours, both in the experimental and the control samples.

The teachers who were involved in the research first participated on a formative course called "Techniques and strategies used for the formation and development of social and emotional skills for preschoolers". During the course, which took place at Casa Corpului Didactic Mureş, the teachers were taught different strategies to help with the development of social and emotional skills (identifying emotions, frustration tolerance), fixing unwanted behaviours and fixing problems between peers. The strategies were taught exclusively through direct instruction and role play.

The teachers were given the curriculum project in order to get familiarized with its contents before being officially implemented. In January 2017, the curriculum project was implemented to the experimental sample. It contained 10 themes that approached the emotional well-being of preschoolers. The measuring data contained: **The behavioural analysis scale of preschoolers (PKBS-2;** Merrell, 2002), **The teacher-preschooler relationship scale (STRS;** Pianta, 2001), **The PEDa evaluation platform** (emotional screening for teachers), **The PEDa evaluation platform** (emotional screening for parents).

In order to validate the curriculum project it is necessary to utilize two types of groups or samples, an experimental one and a control one. For the experimental group, we will implement the formative program and emphasize the differences between the two steps of the evaluation, while also investigating the control sample.

Because of the fact that preschoolers are taking part in educational programs that are included in the actual curriculum, it might be possible to find important differences even in the control sample. On the other side, preschoolers that are evolving can be exposed to the maturing effect. This effect can be proved by comparing peers and it can generate different scores in

between children (Radu and others, 1993). This is why, in order to receive an objective feedback, it is necessary to prove that the absence of this curriculum does not interfere with the evaluation steps during the first and second semester.

The data processing was done in different steps, while taking into account certain necessities in regards to verifying scientific criteria translated from Anglo-Saxon literature: faithfulness analysis, factorial confirmation analysis, power analysis, descriptive analysis and comparative analysis.

Chapter VI – Experimental phase

The formative experimental phase focused on creating and implementing the curriculum project in the experimental sample.

The principles of the intervention plan were: the preschoolers were to be guided by teachers authentically and quality-based; the teachers were to facilitate the process of learning holistically by planning, projecting and implementing relevant learning experiences; preschoolers should be engaged actively through games in order to develop their own social and emotional skills.

Based on the curriculum project, the teachers carefully planned the acquisitions of these abilities during daily activities and games with their children. Knowing and understanding the way children develop and learn can help the teachers to plan and facilitate important learning experiences for the children. The activities were thought and implemented in such a way that the children were able to form their own self-consciousness, strong suits and skills.

During this project, each type of activity aimed to regulate emotions and teach children how to have positive interactions with their peers, while also emphasizing learning strategies for social and emotional skills.

<i>Nr. Crt</i>	GENERAL SKILLS	SPECIFIC SKILLS
	<i>Developing one's self-consciousness</i>	1.1. Identifying one's needs, strong suits, preferences and dislikes 1.2. Identifying and understanding emotions

<i>Nr. Crt</i>	GENERAL SKILLS	SPECIFIC SKILLS
		1.3. Cultivating a positive self-image 1.4. Creating the concept of national identity
	<i>Regulating one's emotions and behaviours</i>	1.1. Expressing and regulating emotions positively, without hurting anyone 1.2. Regulating pro-social behaviour: the knowledge of the fact that their actions can have positive and negative results; understanding the need to control impulsive actions or thoughts; discussing the proper ways to control impulsive actions; the ability to control negative and positive actions. 1.3. Understanding the needs of their peers and finding constructive solutions to control emotions
	<i>Manifesting pro-social, diversity accepting behaviours</i> ”	3.1. Admitting the fact that each person is unique (their thinking, race, looks) 3.2. Manifesting respect towards others 3.3. Identifying emotions and being emphatic towards other people's emotions
	<i>Communications, interaction and relating with others</i>	4.1. Being attentive towards others 4.2. Cooperation between peers 4.3. Making friendships 4.4. Being articulate
	<i>Assuming responsibility for one's actions</i>	5.1. Analyzing possible outcomes of problems 5.2. Analyzing the results and consequences of their own actions 5.3. Reflecting over one's choices

Chapter VII – Post-experimental phase

This phase presents a comparison between the experimental sample and the control sample, in order to evaluate the results of the project.

In order to obtain the correct validation of the intervention program, a few comparison steps had to be followed. The first type of comparison (in-between subjects) uses the "t" parameter for independent samples in order to measure the value of means obtained by the experimental sample and by the control sample. Just like we mentioned in the hypothesis, we are expecting the means to be similar before the implementation of the curriculum, because the children have been selected aleatorily.

After the implementation of the curriculum, in the final phase, regarding the experimental sample, we are expecting higher levels of social and emotional skills, and lower behavioural problems. The insignificant differences in between the experimental and control samples are considered essential and mandatory for the final results, mainly because the different levels found during the final phase might not be related to the initial phase and therefore not to the implemented curriculum.

The second type of comparison uses the same "t" parameter, but this time it refers to the pair samples or associated ones, and it compares preschoolers from the same samples before and after the implementation of the curriculum. We are expecting a higher level of social and emotional skills for the experimental sample and a decrease in problematic behaviour. As for the control sample, in which case there wasn't implemented any formative program, only the usual curriculum, we are expecting slight changes, but not of big importance. The absence of differences in the control sample is important, because if there were any bigger differences, even without implementing the curriculum, the project would be useless.

Therefore, except for the notable differences from the experimental sample, it is extremely important to emphasize the fact that in the control sample there are no significant chances.

Regarding the social skills, there are no significant differences between the experimental and the control groups in the initial phase, the indices "t" for the independent samples are insignificant at a threshold $p > 0.05$. In the final phase there are found significant values of the comparison indicators for all social abilities, as follows: Social cooperation ($t = 2,832$, $p < 0,01$),

Social interaction ($t = 2,570$, $p < 0,02$) Social independence ($t = 2,623$, $p = 0,01$), Total Social Skills Score ($t = 3,849$, $p < 0,01$).

Therefore, analyzing the values of the comparison indices, both for the independent samples and for the pair samples, for the two samples, it can be said that the implemented program for increasing social skills is efficient. Even though the initial level of social competencies is located in the area of high functionality, yet its level increases under the influence of the formative program, the children described by high social skills and the tendency to be extremely pleasing to colleagues and adults is even more evolving. In the case of the control group, without the influence of the training program, the situation remains unchanged, the differences between the final and the initial phase being insignificant in this case. In this situation we can discuss the confirmation of the specific hypothesis formulated and the rejection of the hazard or chance hypothesis, the results obtained due to the implemented training program. Thus, the inferential approach demonstrates the effectiveness of the formative program.

As for the comparisons with the paired samples in the experimental group, between the initial and the final phase significant differences are noted for all the assessed behavioral problems: Egocentric / Temperamental ($t = 10,667$, $p < 0,01$), Attention / Hyperactive ($t = 10,982$, $p < 0,01$), Antisocial / Aggressive ($t = 14,903$, $p = 0,01$), Social isolation ($t = 4,207$, $p < 0,01$), Somatic anxiety / somatic problems ($t = 6.794$; $p < 0.01$).

In the case of the control group, no significant differences were found between the initial and the final phase, with behavioral problems remaining at the same level. The values of the comparison indices and the significance thresholds in this case are: Egocentric / Temperamental ($t = 0.311$, $p > 0.05$), Attention / Hyperactive ($t = 1.035$, $p > t = 1.248$, $p > 0.05$), Social isolation ($t = 0.622$, $p > 0.05$), Anxiety / Somatic problems ($t = 0.499$, $p > 0.05$).

After analyzing the values of the comparison indices, both for the independent samples and for the pair samples, for the two samples (experimental and control), we find the efficiency of the formative program, because for all the types of behavioral problems evaluated there is a decrease in their intensity. For the Egocentric / Temperamental component, the significant reduction is, according to the test manual, the transition from the moderate problem level to the average problem category.

If, prior to the implementation of the formative program, this meant frequent engagement of children in anti-social behaviors, after the program, children rarely manifested problems that

could raise concerns from educators or parents. From the perspective of attention / hyperactivity issues, diminishing causes the same type of refraction, from moderate to extreme, with an improvement in the prosex level and only isolated manifestations of hyperactivity. These occasional manifestations seem to have been maintained only in conditions of unsatisfying desperate children's desires, normal in the educational instructive process or at the end of activities when the state of fatigue is in place.

The same situation is present in the case of the antisocial / aggressive component, the decrease in framing (from moderate to the limit) also signifies changes in the behavior of children, the antisocial and aggressive reactions being significantly diminished. In the case of the social isolation component, there is a reduction from a high level, with frequent manifestations of retractility, poor communication and avoidance of the group, to a type of moderate frequency manifestation, children after the implementation of the formative program becoming more open to social interactions , more communicative and open to other children and to educators. Concerning anxiety and somatic problems, the frequency decrease is within the same category, moderate, from the maximum limit to the minimum limit. The children, after implementing the program, had fewer somatic accusations ("my stomach aches" or "my head hurts") and were less anxious, they approached with greater confidence the new, unknown situations.

And in this situation we can discuss the confirmation of the specific hypothesis formulated and the rejection of the hazard or chance hypothesis, the results obtained due to the implemented formative program. The effectiveness of the formative program in this situation is aimed at reducing behaviors considered undesirable / disadaptive.

The comparison of paired samples for the experimental group is significant for all types of child-educator interaction: Conflict ($t = 4,575$; $p < 0,01$), Appropriation ($t = 6,932$; $p < 0,01$) = $5,959$; $p < 0,01$). In the case of the control group, no significant values of the comparison indices for any component of the evaluated pedagogical relationship are identified. The values of the comparison indices and the significance thresholds in this case are: Conflict ($t = 1,435$; $p > 0,05$), Appropriation ($t = 1,430$; $p > 0,05$) 05).

It is also confirmed in this case the effectiveness of the implemented program, the relationship between children and educators being considered less negative or conflictual, educators perceiving children as less furious and unpredictable and consequently feeling safer,

confident in professional skills and more less exhausted by the sustained effort to manage conflict situations.

At the "Approach" scale the values increase after the formative program implementation, the relationship between children and educators being closer and warmer, communication being more efficient and more supportive behavior.

On the "Dependency" scale, the significant drop in the level represents important steps that children do in their effective way of educating them. It increases self-confidence, the ability to make optimal decisions, and relieves the educator of the exaggerated attention he has to give. We also discuss in this situation the confirmation of the specific hypothesis and the rejection of the hazard or chance hypothesis.

The whole methodological approach is preserved in the case of the assessment of emotional competences by parents and educators, the average values in the bar graphs, comparisons and the relevant significance thresholds being verified in this way.

The comparative index for pairs in the experimental group is significant for all types of emotional skills: Understanding emotions ($t = 7,381$; $p < 0,01$); Expression of emotions ($t = 4,132$; $p < 0,01$); Emotional self- $t = 10.269$, $p < 0.01$).

In the case of the control group, no significant values of the comparison indices are found for any emotional competence assessed by the parents. The values of the comparison indices and significance thresholds in this case are: Understanding emotions ($t = 1,739$, $p > 0,05$), Expression of emotions ($t = 1,101$; $p > 0,05$), Emotional self-regulation ($t = > 0.05$).

It is also confirmed in this case the effectiveness of the program implemented - emotional skills, as assessed by parents, which develops by following the implementation of the formative program. We also discuss at this stage the confirmation of the specific hypothesis and the rejection of the hazard or chance hypothesis.

Pair samples for the experimental group are significant for all types of emotional skills: Understanding emotions ($t = 6,060$, $p < 0,01$), Expression of emotions ($t = 6,003$, $p < 0,01$), Emotional self-regulation ($t = 6,137$; $p < 0,01$).

In the case of the control group, no significant values of the comparison indices are identified for any emotional competence assessed by the educators. The values of the comparison and significance thresholds in this case are: Understanding emotions ($t = 0.494$, $p > 0.05$), Expression of emotions ($t = 1.650$, $p > 0.05$), Emotional self regulation ($t = 0.263$; > 0.05).

It is also confirmed in this case the effectiveness of the program implemented emotional skills as assessed by educators develops following the implementation of the formative program. We also discuss at this stage the confirmation of the specific hypothesis and the rejection of the hazard or chance hypothesis.

We consider the overall hypothesis of our work to be the application of the development of Social and Emotional Skills (DeCo - SE) curriculum that valorizes strategies and techniques of socio-emotional education (identification of sentiments, tolerance to frustration), intervention strategies in modeling undesirable behaviors and strategies to solve interpersonal problems (relaxation through deep breathing techniques, methods of anger control and destructive behaviors) significantly influence the formation of social and emotional skills of large group preschoolers.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions present the personal contributions - theoretical and practical - which emphasize the importance of introducing activities aimed at shaping the social and emotional skills of preschoolers within the Romanian pre-school education system. In addition, we have identified the limits of this study, the educational implications of the research, and future research directions.

As far as regarding the scientific innovation of the PhD thesis, both the social and emotional competencies formulated in the curriculum project, as well as the examples of scientifically validated behaviors in the pedagogical research, are highlighted. The strategies for training the social and emotional behaviors, proposed through the training program, were based on: knowing the child's strengths, his / her preferences in terms of activities and play; positive and respectful interactions with the child's feelings, the ability to calm the child quickly, respect for cultural differences, the ability to listen to the child's ideas, encouragement to express feelings, providing explanations when the child's program undergoes some changes, shaping a certain behavior, encouraging the child's independence and accountability.

The research undertook the effects of the curriculum project implementation, and the obtained results revealed that the behavioral problems of preschoolers diminished significantly, while those in the control group did not undergo any changes.

The comparative results presented in Chapter VII come to reinforce the findings of other international studies (Merrell, 2010, Merrell et al., 2008), according to which the implementation

of the curriculum Development of Social and Emotional Skills (DeCo-SE) contributes to reducing undesirable behaviors, children being modeled in a positive way, having a positive social attitude, managing to easily adjust their emotions. These results underscore once again that the program is pragmatic and confirms the hypothesis formulated by us.

Relations between educators and preschoolers have improved overall in all aspects, proving the effectiveness of the curriculum project which was implemented. In addition, the level of conflicts dropped significantly in the groups where the curriculum project was applied, while in the control groups the level of conflict increased. It can be said that by participating in the activities included in the curriculum project, preschoolers from the experimental group have been given the opportunity to exercise control of their own emotions in an environment where they feel comfortable, which has led to a significant increase in the levels of social skills and emotional and a reduction in behavioral problems.

We conclude that the results obtained confirm our expectations. It can be said that the study carried out within the PhD thesis gave promising results on the prevention and reduction of undesirable behaviors, the identification of emotions, tolerance to frustration, relaxation through deep breathing techniques, methods of controlling anger and destructive behaviors among preschoolers. Educators have found that the benefits of implementing the curriculum Development of Social and Emotional Skills (DeCo - S.E.) are invaluable in terms of developing the social and emotional skills of preschoolers.

We consider the general hypothesis of the doctoral approach as valid, **applying the curriculum Development of Social and Emotional Skills (DeCo - SE) curriculum, which valorizes socio - emotional education strategies and techniques, intervention strategies in modeling undesirable behaviors and strategies for solving interpersonal problems all of them having a major impact upon significant formation of the social and emotional skills of large group preschoolers.**

Also in this chapter were presented the **limits** of this research and **educational recommendations**. As an opening to the expansion of research, we propose to introduce some tools to assess the effects of implementing social and emotional competencies in the daily routine of the group, introducing parent-filled charts and performing longitudinal studies from the small group to the large group .

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