SELF-ESTEEM OF CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE.
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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The capacity for self-knowledge and self-appreciation of children begins and develops from a young age. Young school age is conducive to training, developing and engaging the ability to self-recognition and objective self-esteem. The objective self-appraisal capacity in primary schools is formed in the process of communication of the initial pupils with family members then with the school environment and the social environment, respectively. In this study we have proposed to analyze the ability of primary school pupils to achieve a training program developed for young school children. The activities aimed to make young children to communicate more efficiently with peers, to improve self-esteem and their interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: pupils, self-esteem, communication, interpersonal relationships.

AUTOAPRECIEREA LA COPIII DE VÂRSTĂ ȘCOLARĂ MICĂ. ANALIZĂ COMPARATIVĂ

Capacitatea copiilor de a se autocunoaște și autoaprecia începe și se dezvoltă de la o vârstă mică. Vârsta școlară mică este propice pentru formarea, dezvoltarea și antrenarea capacității de a se autocunoaște și autoaprecia obiectiv. La școlarii de vârstă mică capacitatea de autoapreciere obiectivă se formează în procesul de comunicare a acestora inițial cu membrii familiei apoi cu mediul școlar și, respectiv, cu mediul social. În studiul de față ne-am propus să analizăm capacitatea școlarilor mici de a se autoaprecia obiectiv în urma realizării unui program de training elaborat pentru copiii de vârstă școlară mică. Activitățile au avut scopul de a eficientiza comunicarea școlarilor cu semenii, de a îmbunătăți autoaprecierea și de a ameliora relațiile interpersonale ale școlarilor de vârstă școlară mică.

Cuvinte-cheie: școlar de vârstă mică, autoapreciere, comunicare, relații interpersonale.

Introduction

Self-knowledge is the self-appraisal of your own potential objectively in known and unknown situations. The age of pupils is conducive for the process of self-knowledge and self-assessment. The dictionary defines self-esteem in the following way: "Self-appreciation - knowing the qualities and defects of oneself, abilities, skills and attitudes, personality traits, and the degree of development. Self-esteem is made by comparison with other people and provides establishing the value of the products of their own labor, the meaning of social behaviors and individual peculiarities" [1, p.77].

Theoretical aspects

The school age is the age when pupils are more aware of themselves: their thoughts, emotions, impulses, motives, needs, attitudes, values, and behaviors. They can more objectively appreciate themselves and those around them. This stage of childhood is "a time when the children become able to take a step back and reflect on their own thoughts and actions, becoming more aware of the processes of thinking and more capable of reflecting on their behavior [2, p. 89]. Regarding the self-knowledge and self-respect of pupils, Tinca Creţu tells us self-esteem and the self-image composed of the following aspects of the personality:

1. The physical ego has in its foundations a strengthened body schema, its sexual identity is clear, it realizes its resemblance to the family, but also what distinguishes it from its other people. He does not pay too much attention to his physical ego, especially at the beginning of this stage. Now he runs runaway in front of the mirror, but at the end of the stage he will be more willing to consult her to ensure order in clothing and even discover qualities that might be important in relation to the other children.

2. The spiritual ego begins to be more involved, especially in school education, to be influenced by the teacher's assessments and the appreciation and admiration of his colleagues. *3. Social ego* is heavily influenced by the group life of the younger pupil, who is much richer than the preschool and to whom it is more receptive. The young pupil has the consciousness of his place in the classroom and he realizes for what his colleagues appreciate him or not [3, pp. 237-238].

Methodological Aspects

Below we describe the most significant results obtained with the Dembo-Rubinstein self-appraisal method [4]. I have repeatedly applied this method to assess the effectiveness of a training program designed for young pupils age. The activities carried out within the training were aimed to make communication between schoolchildren and their peers more effective, improving self-esteem and improving the interpersonal relationships of pupils. Within the training program, pupils were placed in communication situations that favored their self-esteem. During the training we took into account the atmosphere of the classroom, the pupils' mood and their psychological fitting, the fitting of all the pupils in their activities. After completing the training sessions, we have carried out with all the 1st and 4th grade pupils a repeated test to assess the effects of the training. After repeat testing, processing and obtaining results we compared the results obtained by pupils in the second evaluation test with the results obtained by them at the first test-finding. We then compared the results of the pupils in the experimental group (in the text we use the expression-working group) with the results of the pupils in the control group. Next we present the results in percentages obtained by the pupils in the experimental group and the pupils in the control group. Forwards are the results of nr.1 and nr.2 testing on classes (forms) (I-IV-a forms) of the experimental and control group ordered on self-esteem levels.

Practical Aspects

Class I. Test Scale Smart. A good pupil would be the one who encompasses with his knowledge all the notions and ideas, the theoretical information and practical skills in certain areas of interest. Working group educators have the ability to self-appreciate and objectively assess colleagues and develop their special skills to develop and practice their general skills. Some of pupils in the working group did not acquire as well as their colleagues in the control group their general skills. Consequently, in parallel with the self-knowledge process, the training activities helped the pupils in the working group develop their general skills, such as verbal communication, reading, writing, computing. On the basis of the general skills of the pupils, they developed their special skills: artistic aptitude (sketchs and drawings); literary skills (creating responses and poems), musical skills (creation of texts and interpretation of children's songs). During the training we have necessarily helped the pupils in the working group to objectively self-assess and to form a realistic picture of themselves. Likewise, training activities helped pupils to reflect on the skills that they need to improve. He proposed activities have facilitated and enabled pupils in the control group to explore the Ego, or otherwise the Self, and to discover their practical skills that contribute to the formation of character traits such as tenacity, responsibility, perseverance, autonomy and independence. The pupils in the training group exercised general and special skills. Practical drawing activities allowed pupils to self-appreciate and explore their thoughts, emotions, personality qualities, character traits, moral feelings to recognize them, to acknowledge them and to accept them by developing their potential.

Skills and abilities of young pupils can also be trained and developed by activities outside the school curriculum. Psychologists Eileen Moore-Kennedy and Mark S. Lowenthal propose the following recommendations. Look for activities that the child (1) can do with others, and (2) make efforts to become more and more qualified or responsible. Sports, music or dance are common choices, but there are many other possibilities. The library has a wide range of hobbies that might interest the child ..." [5, p.314].

The fact that they succeeded in carrying out the proposed activities to successfully train using the necessary materials and resources increased the self-confidence and potential of their colleagues. They have learned to be creative, flexible and adaptable throughout their activities. They have learned to be tolerant of their own learning experiences and to show a tolerant attitude for their work colleagues. The observed differences are also found in the following statistical indices obtained ($t = 2,113$; $p \leq 0,5$).

Test scale Merry (joyful). "Primary classes are the time when children learn how to make friends and keep them, how to share with their classmates what they have, how to react when they do not get what they want, and a lot of other social and emotional skills of great importance" [6, p. 205].

Usually, all primary pupils have melancholy or transient sadness. The affective state of the young pupils is often related to the situation within the family (separation from parents, brothers or the birth of a brother), relations with the teacher and colleagues (appraisals and grades received), school change and enrollment in a new group (adapting to the school program and establishing new interpersonal relationships). Most small pupils in the working group communicate and express themselves verbally harder and often embody their feelings instead of expressing them. Some of these pupils tend to isolate themselves. There are pupils in the working group that tend to extroversion, show anger and oppositional behavior, have emotional outbursts,

aggression, sadness, anger, anxiety, etc. We can argue that the parents of these children come from families where their thoughts, emotions and feelings have not been communicated, and the children's parents have not formed the capacity to become aware of their own emotions and psychological mechanisms to manage their own behavior and thus have no he knew how to teach their children how to understand what they feel, what made them feel the way they feel, how to express in an acceptable way emotions or how to master the negative impulses and emotions in a way that is suitabl to solve the situation .

Throughout the training program, we have been doing activities to help them think critically (analytically) and become aware of emotions in order to control and master them. We practiced assertive communication to develop social interaction skills. In the training activities, pupils reflected on the situations when they felt angry, scared, frustrated, sad and learned how to manage emotions and regain their emotional balance. They communicated to colleagues   communication situations in which they felt positive emotions and said who first communicated these positive emotions. Drawing activities helped pupils to translate color emotionally into their paper. Physical time have also helped to relieve mental health and improve physical well-being.

Pschigologist Christine Wilding recommends parents to develop emotional self-knowledge for children. In order to develop the emotional intelligence of the children, the parents in their communication should follow the following five steps:

1. Be aware of the child's emotions (just as you've learned to become aware of yours.)

2. Consider these emotions as an opportunity to have an individual discussion with the child.

3. Listen with empathy and do not diminish the child's emotions.

4. Help the child find the right words to define the emotions he feels.

5. Explore with your child the ways to solve the problem instead of limiting yourself to telling them not to be so emotional [7, p. 235].

Pupils in the control group are generally self-confident, well-meaning, authentic in expressing their emotions. They are aware of the connection between thinking, emotions and behavior. When performing these activities, these schoolchilds were the first to talk about their emotions. They were the ones who provided the most elaborate answers, the most beautiful examples of family behavior, school and society, their behaviors being based on moral feelings like respect, sincerity, altruism and friendship. Asked how they manage their negative emotions, many of them said they talk to loved ones or prefer interactive activities: lecturing, walking outdoors, watching movies, building from lego pieces different objects.

These pupils, if they understand the purpose of their activities and what they have to do, enthusiastically, create beautiful answers and come up with original ideas. Knowing that they will present their work to colleagues and teachers make the most of their effort, and when they present the works they are waiting and they like to be appreciated and applauded. Because their works are displayed on the activity panel they see their result and enjoy it. The positive influences of the training are also found in the statistical differences obtained (t = 2,061; p≤0,5).

Class IV. *Test scale Smart*. In the 4th grade the schoolchilds in the working group are bigger and they can already see the special aptitudes and the tendencies they have in the literary, artistic, exact sciences or sports activities. They are interested in man and his development, nature and natural phenomena, flowers, birds and animals, the technique and functionality of things, books of different fields and different games.

As part of the training, besides general skills, special skills were developed, such as drawing drawings, creating original replies, reproducing a poem or song, making posters. During the activities in the schools in the working group can observe the qualities such as: diligence, perseverance, ambition, tenacity, active for carrying out the activities. Also, the small schoolchilds exercised the ability to solve the problems presented in the problems situations: they identified and acknowledged the problem; they have defined and explained it as they understand it; they sought ideas and solutions, explored more possibilities to apply them; have chosen the best solution and evaluated the results of their application. They communicated and collaborated with each other to solve the problem.

The control group schoolchildren have the developed thinking and a better working ability than the schoolchilds in the working group. Within the proposed training activities, schoolchilds have been able to develop critical thinking by solving typical situations and making decisions. In their activities young pupils have learned to identify strategies for creative work resolving. They delivered ideas and proposed solutions. They have proposed drawing patterns, and disposal plans. They have identified and adapted methods and

means of work to carry out the training activities. They have learned to explore more opportunities to do an activity, to solve a problem, to complete and improve their own works with original ideas. They have learned to self-appreciate their works and appreciate the work of their colleagues. The positive influences of the training are also found in the statistical differences obtained ($t = 2,254$; $p \leq 0,5$).

Test Scale Good. The character of pupils at the early school age is still in training. The way they appreciate, show their attitude and behavior towards their parents, acquaintances, teachers, colleagues and friends are behaviors learned and taken over from important adults in their lives. Pupils in the working group come from a socially vulnerable environment. Understanding social factors (separation of parents, parents' lack of interest towards the child, lack of personal space, lack of a healthy lifestyle) helps us to better understand the negative behaviors of the young schoolchildren in the working group. Pupils in the working group sometimes show irresponsible, negligent behavior, hide the truth, call colleagues, tease them etc. Pupils have analyzed the effects of negative character traits such as: lying, hatred, envy, laziness, carelessness, egoism, pride and discussed ways in which can be corrected or removed.

By communicating and interacting with each other during the activities, we have taught small pupils to be more receptive to the needs of others, more positive, more friendly, more tolerant and more empathetic towards each other. They have identified and analyzed their own thoughts, emotions and behaviors. They practiced situations in which to identify their own emotions and the emotions of their colleagues if negative emotions were taught to show empathy, compassion and even to calm them by saying words appropriate to the situation.

The pupils in the control group generally have a positive and appropriate behavior to the social contexts they meet. As part of their training activities, they showed their goodwill by facial mimics, voice tones and behavior towards the teacher, trainer and colleagues. During the training, the pupils in the control group practiced situations where it was necessary to help colleagues to creatively resolve various communication situations (assertively communicate thoughts and emotions, diminish conflicts, provide backing and moral support, take the necessary action). The pupils in the control group during the training were sociable, expressing their thoughts and emotions assertively and peacefully. Young pupils express opening when they discuss with the teacher and colleagues. In many cases, they were available to help colleagues who did not know how to solve an activity by helping them with ideas. Many times they offered help without being asked to do it. They unconditionally accepted colleagues' thoughts and emotions. She manifested the desire to collaborate with colleagues in the proposed activities in the training. They were kind, creative, cheerful, energetic, humorous. They knew to accept their personal faults but also worked on them. They have identified the similarities and differences between them and their colleagues. Generally, these pupils show tolerance, acceptance, and a positive, benevolent attitude towards all of their colleagues. He respects both them and their peers. They positively appreciate themselves and know the qualities they are appreciated for. The positive influences of the training are also found in the statistical differences obtained ($t = 2.31$; $p \leq 0.5$).

Test scale With friends. Why are friendships important? The feeling that the pupils is understood, accepted and respected for what he has is of particular importance in forming self-image and self-confidence as well as interpersonal communication and interpersonal skills. When a small schoolteacher feels self-confident and positively self-assessing, he has the ability to appreciate the value of his fellows. Below we present the functions of friendship proposed by child psychologist Hilary Pereira:

Friendships have four main functions:

1. They make it easy for children to learn and develop the social skills needed to link longer-term relationships, namely cooperation and reciprocity.

2. Provides important emotional resources, both in terms of joy and inner comfort.

3. Allowing children a framework in which to learn about themselves and others.

4. Can be templates for later life relationships that children will have [8, p.16].

The pupils have made friends among their classmates those children who have about the same attitudes, values and interests (hobbies, sports, music). Along with their friends, pupils live their successes and frustrations, share their ideas and impressions, their social experiences, thus developing the feeling of empathy and comradeship. In small school training they learned to identify the qualities of a good friend: sincerity, honesty, trust, empathy and generosity. They practiced skills to listen carefully, look in the eyes, smile, be sympathetic and communicate effectively, take other colleagues into consideration, accept colleagues and collaborate with them.

The Pupils in the control group also had positive experiences with their colleagues. The fact that they are included and accepted in the classroom conveys a sense of continuity and belonging to the group. These positive feelings support the development of self-confidence and the self-respect of children. It is the age at which they are vulnerable and are affected when they are accepted or refused in a school activity or in a game. "Because of friends or group influence, children feel stronger; they are motivated to overcome their weaknesses and can adapt more easily to the various emerging new situations that they may not dare to face alone" [9, p.233].

The appreciation of parents, teachers and peers, the results and successes of the school, relationships with friends are important aspects that determine the feeling of happiness and the emotional balance of pupils. In the framework of training, schoolchild's in the control group learned to communicate effectively, to appreciate themselves, to tolerate defects, and to admire the qualities of their colleagues. They practiced compartments to initiate, establish and maintain friendly relations. They analyzed the qualities of a good friend. They showed empathy, altruism, tolerance in situations where this was necessary. The positive influences of the training are also found in the statistical differences obtained ($t = 1.281$; $p \leq 0.1$).

Test scale Merry (joyful). The feeling of happiness of the little pupils is often determined by good mental health, emotional maturity, solid communication and solid interpersonal relationships, developmental environment and good physical health. "The emotional maturity of the child during the instructive process influences everything – the self-perception, emotional safety, the ability to adapt to stress and change, his ability to socialize and learn" [10, p.166].

Pupils in the working group have less developed consciousness of their own emotions and feelings. They have less developed ability to control their reactions, impulses, actions, achievement of goals, consciousness of their own emotions, and sensitivity to the feelings of others. Most people communicate and hardly define what they feel about certain subjects, certain people or things because they have not developed the awareness of their own feelings and do not have a vocabulary of emotions developed. They often define emotions either at the maximum or at a minimum without being aware that there are intermediate emotions of astonishment, anger, annoyance, irritation, etc. However, during the training of the pupils in the working group they were able to analyze both positive and negative types of thinking, behavior and the consequences of choosing a certain behavior. They were trained patiently by the questions to learn thinking and follow a positive behavior. They have practiced more opportunities to react in problematic situations and to solve them independently (where appropriate). They each formulated a working plan and behavioral goals that made them increase the self-respect of pupils.

The pupils in the control group are generally balanced, honest and open to communication, have good mood, are cheerful, optimistic, smart, dare. In the training when they did the activities they were self-confident, independent, autonomous, energetic and lively. They were delighted and passionately involved in the proposed activities. They were involved and competing with each other, looking for quality and speed in doing business. Compared to the pupils in the working group, pupils in the control group have a predominantly positive mindset, are self-satisfied, positively self-assessing whatever results they get, are enthusiastic and curious about everything new. The positive influences of the training are also found in the statistical differences obtained ($t = 2,389$; $p \leq 0,5$).

Test scale Hardworking pupil. Pupils in the working group are not particularly interested in educational activities, and it is therefore necessary to be motivated by different methods and means of teaching or to stimulate their intrinsic motivation of captivating them to discover and learn something new through the game or in a way interactive. Sometimes it is necessary to repeat the condition and the explanations because they do not receive the information well. Their thinking is slower and therefore they need more time to do them, as well as simple and easy to accomplish tasks. The successes that make them feel good. If the activities relate to the situations they meet day by day and can apply what they learn then they do it with enthusiasm. They need more time and serenity than colleagues in the control group to focus and to do the proposed activities. If they have colorful and interesting materials, they are happy to do their work. Good and well-done activities increase their interest in other learning activities. They need to make small breaks between activities because they get tired faster than their peers.

It is necessary for the trainer to provide at least the beginning of activities exhortations, recommendations and positive feedback to enhance their young pupils confidence in their own capabilities and that they fail to

realize the way activities. "Personal dosage of confidence in their own ability solving the theme can increase their motivation to solve by themselves" [11, p.66].

Pupils in the control group showed curiosity when they did the training activities. They usually listened to the condition of their work, and they were thinking independently of how to do it, asking questions to clarify what they did not understand. If they encountered new notions or unknown things, they approached the trainer to explain them. Pupils in the control group trust them when they do their work and when they respond to what they have done. They are not afraid to discover and expose new things. They have the patience and the effort to achieve quality what is required of them. The positive influences of the training are also found in the obtained statistical differences (t = 2,663; p≤0,5).

Conclusions

After analyzing the scientific literature and the results obtained by the pupils in the second test, we can deduce that the training was efficient and had positive influences on the pupils. The statistical differences obtained tell us about the efficiency of training and a more objective and appropriate self-awareness and self-esteem ability of small pupils. Authentic and positive self-reflection and self-esteem are of vital importance. The pupil ego and self-consciousness are formed in the process of communication and relationship with parents, teacher, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, etc. The self-esteem of a young pupil and self-esteem of peers enables them to communicate effectively, to have proper self-esteem, trust in their own potential, to establish and maintain authentic interpersonal relations.

The training with pupils was effective in giving the pupils the opportunity to communicate self-knowledge and to know new things about others; to become aware of personal qualities and to work on their defects; to express their thoughts, opinions and emotions in a proper way; to look at things from the perspective of others; to show care, empathy and sensitivity to others; to identify the needs, desires, preferences, aspirations of personal interests, and to communicate tacitly to their peers identifying the similarities and differences between them and others; to establish friendship; to analyze the consequences of own behaviors and behaviors of peers; to practice assertive, positive, and altruistic behavior towards others.

Therefore, the formation, development and involvement of self-knowledge and positive self-attrition influence the way the pupil perceives himself, how he thinks, how he manifests his emotions, how he communicates with and interacts with adults and peers, assumes responsibilities, how do young pupil perform different activities, in other words, how young pupil develops and capitalizes on his own potential as an individual of modern society.

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